'Bruceland', the 'Promised Land' and the 'Land of Hope and Dreams'

Constructing Music Tourism: Bruce Springsteen Fans and the Meaning of Visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey Shore

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Abstract
Recently, the niche of music tourism has become increasingly significant and widespread. Even though research into music tourism has also started to develop more broadly, the perspective of fans travelling someplace out of fandom of a musician, band, or music scene remains rather neglected. This research will focus on the case study of fans of Bruce Springsteen and his ‘adopted’ hometown of Asbury Park, New Jersey, as well as its neighboring towns of Belmar, Freehold, and Long Branch. In this thesis, this area is referred to as Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. This research will focus on an interpretation of recurring themes in the ways in which fans of Bruce Springsteen describe their motivations for visiting this area, as well as their experiences. As such, this research aims to add to an understanding of the ways in which (fan) tourists add to a construction of a music tourism destination; in other words, how do fans of Bruce Springsteen shape an image of said destination in their discourses? What makes their visit meaningful? How do they contribute to a particular tourist landscape?
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Introduction

The market of contemporary tourism is constantly transforming and expanding, due to rapidly increasing possibilities for tourists as well as their wide-ranging motivations to travel. The meaning of travelling to a certain place may differ greatly from one tourist to another, which makes tourism an interesting as well as relevant cultural phenomenon to study. As stated by researchers Chris Gibson and John Connell: “as tourist numbers increased, and tourism became a regular phenomenon, the quest for new sites, sights, and experiences grew more complex, while travelers sought, at least on occasion, specific forms of tourism that met their personal needs,” and subsequently, “niche tourism became increasingly significant” (Music and Tourism 1). One such form of niche tourism is music tourism, and Gibson and Connell dedicate their aforementioned book entirely to discussing the increasing importance of music tourism for culture, economics, and identity.

Music tourism can be considered a type of cultural tourism in which people are motivated to travel to places after having become familiar with the place through cultural products that they like or admire. For example, some travel to see the locations that inspired their favorite author, like tourists travelling to the Lake District to see the picturesque landscapes that British poet William Wordsworth wrote about, others travel to Croatia to see where their favorite television series Game of Thrones was filmed, and others travel to Memphis to feel connected to their music hero Elvis Presley. Music tourism is not necessarily a ‘new’ phenomenon, as Gibson and Connell describe how already in the late nineteenth century many admirers of German composer Richard Wagner visited his birthplace and home Bayreuth in southern Germany (Music and Tourism 11).

More recently, however, music has become an increasingly significant aspect of tourism. Gibson and Connell argue:

Whether associated with classical or popular music, or linked to visits to places of performance […], places of musical composition, places enshrined in lyrics, places of births and deaths […] or museums, [music tourism] grew in significance in the last decades of the twentieth century. It has shaped distinct patterns of recreation and tourism, transformed some places, become a valuable source of income generation, and reshaped memories and identities of music and musicians. (Music and Tourism 9)
Remarkably, the phenomenon of music tourism has, in itself, not been studied quite extensively yet. The best known and most comprehensive work on music tourism is the aforementioned monograph by Gibson and Connell: *Music Tourism: On the Road Again*, published in 2005, and the first complete one on the subject. In their monograph, they aim to explore as comprehensively as possible how music tourism “is an important, if neglected, component of cultural tourism and how it is a particular practice in itself, with its own histories, sites, economic trends and social practices” (17). As such, they provide an extensive outline of the variety of ways in which we can understand music tourism.

Others have written more specifically about music tourism destinations, such as Elvis Presley’s Graceland, or U2’s Dublin, but from various perspectives. Some authors took the approach of the supplier, and analyzed how a particular place of music heritage is used to appeal to (fan) tourists. Others have focused specifically on the consideration of music heritage sites as places of pilgrimage, and analyze the ways in which fans travel to a site like Elvis Presley’s Graceland remind us of a form of secular, cultural pilgrimage.

Even though these aforementioned topics provide interesting insights in the phenomenon of music tourism, in my opinion, the tourists’ perspective has remained largely neglected. A significant category of tourists in music tourism are the travelling fans (of musicians, of bands, of music scenes, etc.). Only a few authors have focused specifically on fans traveling to a site of music heritage. Studying the motivations and experiences of this category of tourists, whom we could consider ‘fan tourists’ (e.g. tourists who travel to places predominantly because of, and related to, their fandom), will lead to a better understanding of how, and why, a particular tourist landscape develops at sites of music heritage.

One such site of music heritage is Asbury Park, New Jersey, where the roots of American rock ‘n roll musician Bruce Springsteen lie. Even though Springsteen was born in another Jersey shore town called Long Branch, Asbury Park has become his ‘adopted’ hometown as, throughout his life, he has spent much time on the Asbury Park boardwalk and in its music venues, and he lived there for a while when he was starting his career as a musician. Stories of life and leisure along the Asbury Park boardwalk became an inspiration for both Springsteen’s early music as well as his autobiography *Born to Run*, released in 2016; to illustrate, he starts off his autobiography as follows: “I come from a boardwalk town where almost everything is tinged with a bit of fraud” (1). Moreover, in 1973, Springsteen released his first album, titled *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*, consisting of a number of semi-autobiographical narratives of the lives, hopes, and dreams of a young Springsteen and his peers in Asbury Park.
Following the release of this album and Springsteen’s successful career as a musician, the seaside town has become increasingly associated with the American musician. Nowadays, for example, the *Lonely Planet* travel guide of ‘New York and the Mid-Atlantic’s Best Trips’, describes Asbury Park as the town that “Bruce Springsteen immortalized in song” (110). Similarly, in an article on their website about Asbury Park, *The Guardian* also credits Springsteen with putting Asbury Park on the map: “[Springsteen’s] 1973 debut album *Greetings from Asbury Park* thrust the town – and its pushers, peddlers and conmen – into rock’n’roll imagination.”

Despite the town’s popular image as ‘Springsteen-town’, Asbury Park’s history has not exactly been rose-colored. As the website of the *Lonely Planet* informs its readers, “during decades of economic stagnation, the town of Asbury Park had nothing more to its name than the fact that state troubadour Bruce Springsteen got his start at the Stone Pony nightclub here in the mid-1970s.” In the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Asbury Park had already been a well-known and thriving seaside resort, drawing many middle- and working-class visitors from nearby cities; but unfortunately, starting in the 1950s, unfortunately Asbury Park struggled with severe (physical and socioeconomic) deterioration, and tourism to Asbury Park decreased up until the point where the town’s former hotels were turned into occupancy residences for deinstitutionalized mental patients (Ammon 159).

Then, starting in the 1980s, a range of private actors actively attempted to revive the city (Ammon 160). And, since approximately the turn of the century, Asbury Park has indeed seen a revitalization; a change that can be largely attributed to Springsteen’s overt connection to Asbury Park and music tourism (Ammon 160). Over 40 years after Springsteen released his album on Asbury Park, the town, as well as some of its neighboring towns on the Jersey shore (such as Freehold, Belmar, and Long Branch, where a number of Springsteen ‘landmarks’ like his former homes can also be found), have drawn the attention of many (fan) tourists looking to witness where Springsteen’s musical and personal roots lie. On the website of magazine *Chorus and Verse*, journalist Matt Mrowicki published an article in 2002 called ‘Can A Music Tourism Industry Thrive in New Jersey?’. He outlines how various local stakeholders participated in a meeting held in Asbury Park in 2002 in order to discuss the possibility of focusing on the town’s musical legacy and use it to help revitalize the town. The author writes, “[Springsteen] has added to the magic and legend of the area … and ‘Springsteen even made the New Jersey Turnpike cool’.” Moreover, two fans living in the Asbury Park area, Stan Goldstein and Jean Mikle, published their own Springsteen-themed
travel guide, called *Rock and Roll Tour of the Jersey Shore*, describing and informing (fan) tourists about all Springsteen-related landmarks in Asbury Park and along the Jersey shore.

Even though they do not go into further detail, in *Music and Tourism*, Connell and Gibson also acknowledge this area as an interesting music tourism destination by noting that “Bruce Springsteen fans [often] seem to be engaged in a pilgrimage” to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. Since, in studies of music tourism, the perspective of the travelling fans is still relatively understudied, this research will focus on the significance of travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore for fans of Bruce Springsteen, and the ways in which a touristic landscape in Asbury Park and the Jersey shore have been shaped by these fans. This thesis will then aim to answer the following research question: how do fans of Bruce Springsteen construct a narrative of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore area as a (Springsteen-based) tourist destination? In order to answer this question, this thesis’ structure will be based upon the following sub questions: in which ways do fans of Bruce Springsteen describe their motivations for visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore? And, subsequently, in which ways do fans of Bruce Springsteen describe their experiences of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore? As a method, a questionnaire focusing on these two sub questions will be distributed among fans of Bruce Springsteen, and their responses will be discussed by means of a thematic analysis. Subsequently, key themes in the fans’ responses will be identified and interpreted in a discussion of the ways in which Asbury Park and the Jersey shore are described as meaningful places for these fans. This discussion will be grounded in theories from, for example, cultural studies, cultural geography, and tourism studies, focusing on concepts and ideas including the meaning of ‘place’, place attachment, the relationship between ‘place’ and music, fandom, and community. These ideas and concepts, as well as the methodology, will be explained in more detail in the following theoretical chapter. Furthermore, relevant theories and concepts will be also be repeated and discussed in the analyses of the fans’ responses in the second and third chapters. The second chapter will then focus on a discussion of the discourses used by Springsteen fans to describe their *motivations* for visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, and the third chapter will focus on a discussion of the discourses used by these Springsteen fans to describe their *experiences* of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.

In doing so, this thesis will then add to a better understanding of the ways in which the fans’ discourses shape an image of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore area as a (music) tourist destination. Consequently, in the context of music tourism, it will shed a better light on (the variety of motivations of) why fans travel and the kinds of experiences that these fan tourists
are looking for. In doing so, it will also contribute to research in music tourism studies focusing on fans as significant actors in constructing music tourism destinations, since there currently exists a lack of studies of the fans’ perspectives in music tourism.
Chapter 1

“Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.”: Theoretical Framework

In 4Th of July, Asbury Park: A History of the Promised Land, Daniel Wolff writes in his introduction: “This is the history of a place that never existed. This is a history of the promised land” (10). Asbury Park, Wolff writes, is mainly known these days through the legacy of Bruce Springsteen: “If we’ve heard about the city at all, it’s as the beat-up shore town where Springsteen came of age” (10). Wolff’s monograph on the history of Asbury Park is not meant to merely outline economic and social developments in the city, but mainly aims at placing the city’s history in a broader context of what Asbury Park has meant, and still means, in public imagination. Wolff concludes that the city is mostly a place of imagination, and he outlines the ways in which Asbury Park has symbolized an American culture of freedom and leisure in the past century. In her article ‘Postindustrialization and the City of Consumption: Attempted Revitalization in Asbury Park, New Jersey,’ Francesca Russello Ammon also refers to Asbury Park as a “city of consumption” due to its previous symbolic status as a “[space] of commercial leisure and tourism” (160). Furthermore, Wolff notes that Springsteen played a significant role in narrating these symbolic connotations to the public: “The music made Springsteen famous – and Asbury Park famous, again. [Because of Springsteen,] Asbury Park [became] part of a shore sound – beach music – that was all about the sometimes contradictory ideas of freedom and fun and democracy” (11).

As already mentioned in the introduction, before Springsteen put Asbury Park on the ‘musical map’ in the 1970s, the city had already once flourished as a seaside destination from the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century (Ammon 158). During this time, many middle- and working-class visitors from nearby cities, including New York City and Philadelphia, frequently visited Asbury Park’s beaches, hotels, and amusement centers, until approximately the 1960s, when Asbury Park experienced socioeconomic and physical decline (Ammon 158). Better affordable automobiles, the rise of highways, and the rise of commercial aviation offered more options for relaxation at places further away, and the tourist economy of Asbury Park declined (Ammon 158).

As a result of Asbury Park’s deterioration, white residents were drawn out of Asbury Park, and by 1970, the number of colored residents increased to more than 40 percent of the total population, eventually leading to riots due to racial tensions (Ammon 159). Ammon
discusses how the violence involved in these riots injured over 170 residents, and how much of the city’s infrastructure and buildings were destroyed (159). “Over just three quarters of a century,” Ammon concludes, “the city had transformed from middle-class seaside refuge, to working-class resort, and finally postindustrial ruin” (159).

In her article, Ammon discusses the ways in which, consequently, over the past three decades a number of private and public actors have made various attempts at bringing back the city from this socioeconomic and physical decline. In addition to privately funded waterfront redevelopment and gentrification led by the city’s large LGBTQ+ population, one of the most significant ways in which this has been done, she argues, is music tourism-based historic preservation (Ammon 158).

In order to explain her argument, Ammon describes how a community of Springsteen fans saved part of a building, which they considered a significant Springsteen-related landmark in Asbury Park from being demolished. In 1998, news reached a number of fans that the Palace Amusements center in the city of Asbury Park was to be taken down. This amusement center features in various songs by Springsteen; most notably in “Born to Run,” a song released in 1975 and arguably Springsteen’s best-known hit: “Beyond the Palace hemi-powered drones scream down the boulevard.” The Springsteen fans knew that they would probably not be able to gather sufficient funds to save the entire building, so, instead, they proposed to rescue a small portion of the building’s concrete façade, which, according to Ammon, “held significance for them because of two important icons: a cartoon clown, named Tillie, depicted on the concrete; and Bruce Springsteen, the rock and roll legend who had helped popularize the Tillie image” (Ammon 164). An image of Springsteen and his band posing in front of the image of Tillie had featured on T-shirts for Springsteen’s live tours in the 1970s and 1980s, and thus, Ammon argues, “Tillie’s advocates were not traditional historic preservationists, but enthusiasts of a particular music history; and they adopted the clown face as their symbol” (165). In 2000, the growing community of Springsteen fans gathered together to ‘Save Tillie’ managed to nominate the Palace to be listed on national as well as state historic registries, granting the building a historic status (Ammon 166). Unfortunately, this listing did not – and could not – prevent the building’s private owners from demolishing it, and the Palace was eventually taken down in 2004. The cartoon of Tillie, however, was saved: plans were proposed to “literally cut out a piece of the wall and use it in some part of the new structure, or put it on display. … In short, [the firm’s chief operating officer said,] ‘we’re going to save Tillie’” (qtd. in Ammon 166). Tillie can still be seen,
visited, and photographed in Asbury Park today, now part of the music venue the Wonder Bar (see image 1).

It should be noted that the fans who initiated the project were not from Asbury Park, or any place near there; instead, they were from all over the world, from Washington D.C. to Germany (Ammon 164). This shows the involvement that fans felt with the city of Asbury Park, symbolized through the image of Tillie, even though they did not reside in Asbury Park themselves.

Moreover, remarkably, during this entire process of “saving Tillie,” Bruce Springsteen himself did not step in or comment on the pending demolition once. It was an effort initiated and carried out by fans – and fans only. This example illustrates how fans of Bruce Springsteen appropriated a physical space as ‘theirs’, belonging to their *fandom* of Bruce Springsteen – not necessarily to Bruce Springsteen himself. The fans did not want to save the building (or rather, Tillie) because it was important to Springsteen. They wanted to save Tillie because through Springsteen’s music and through their status of being a fan of Springsteen and his music, it became important to *them*.

*Image 1. The Wonder Bar in Asbury Park, showcasing the remains of the Tillie symbol. Photo by author.*
Bruce Springsteen and ‘place’

Bruce Springsteen, an American rock and roll musician, is known for writing about the hopes and dreams of the American working class. A number of academics have pointed out Springsteen’s precision when it comes to his style of songwriting as American narratives, and the way in which he vividly paints a picture of the setting of his songs. In her article on ‘Music and the Politics of Change,’ Daithi Kearney argues that Springsteen, in his songs, constructs images that “paint a complex, detailed portrait of the social environment” (5). Similarly, Marya Morris argues in her article ‘Bruce Springsteen’s Use of Geography, Landscapes, and Places to Depict the American Experience’ that Springsteen’s place-based imagery has been a hallmark of his career as a songwriter (3). Furthermore, Bob Crane – one of the founders of the ‘Save Tillie’ project – is also an academic who considers himself a ‘Springsteen scholar,’ who has published a monograph on Springsteen’s use of ‘place’, called A Place to Stand: A Guide to Bruce Springsteen’s Sense of Place. In this monograph, published in 2000, Crane mentions that up until then, Springsteen has referenced 46 different American cities or towns, of which 25 are located in his home state of New Jersey, and he has referenced ‘home’ over 200 times in his songs (404). Moreover, Crane argues that these places in Springsteen’s songs are not merely geographical references, but that “instead, Springsteen allows [place] to take shape as a character, and, at its best, as a force that influences the choices and decisions of his protagonists” (404). Morris similarly argues that Springsteen “links the voices of his characters to the landscapes where they stand” (Morris 3).

The significance Springsteen attributes to ‘place’ in his lyrics already became apparent when he released his first album in 1973: as mentioned before, Springsteen’s first album is named after his hometown of Asbury Park: Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J. The cover of his first album shows a tourist post card of the city with the same text. Springsteen purposely dedicated his first album to the town of Asbury Park, where he had, thus far, spent a large part of his life. In his article on Springsteen’s use of ‘place’ and ‘space’ in his lyrics, published in a monograph called Reading the Boss, Frank P. Fury quotes Springsteen as follows: “The [Columbia Record executives] were pushing for this big New York thing, this big town. I said, ‘Wait, you guys nuts or something? I’m from Asbury Park, New Jersey. Can you dig it? New Jersey?’” (qtd. in Fury 79). Almost all songs on this first album by Springsteen, as well as a number of songs on later albums, are clearly situated in Asbury Park or someplace else along the New Jersey shore. According to Springsteen himself, especially the stories on his
first two albums, *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* and *The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle* are “twisted autobiographies … rooted in the people, places, hangouts, and incidents he’d seen and events he’d lived” (qtd. in Morris 4). Morris then argues that many fans in New Jersey “not only know where some of these places are – Highway 9, the New Jersey Turnpike, the boardwalk, Greasy Lake – they feel a kinship with the songs’ characters, whose lives mirrored their own as well as those of their families and neighbors” (3). Springsteen’s stories are therefore not only American stories – they are also local stories.

The appeal of Springsteen’s use of place, however, has not remained limited to his fans in New Jersey, who were already acquainted with the places he wrote about. In his volume *Tramps Like Us: Music and Meaning among Springsteen Fans*, Daniel Cavicchi researches the Springsteen fandom based on “insider narratives” which he gathered through interviews, and the ways in which Springsteen fans connect to Springsteen, his music, and other fans. Cavicchi touches upon the subject of fans travelling to Asbury Park. Even though his research does not focus on music-based tourism and his observations regarding this subject therefore remain rather limited, they do provide an interesting starting point for further research the connection between Springsteen fans and Asbury Park. He argues that, for many fans, “Springsteen’s down-to-earth quality lies primarily in his music which makes much use of actual sites and streets from the areas in New Jersey where he grew up. In fact, one of the major activities among fans is making a ‘pilgrimage’ to the New Jersey Shore and locating all the different streets and sites mentioned in his songs” (Cavicchi 70). One fan interviewed by Cavicchi actually showed him photographs of sites in Asbury Park that she had taken during her ‘pilgrimage,’ including Asbury Park’s boardwalk and a card-reading shop called Madame Marie’s, which is mentioned in Springsteen’s song ‘Fourth of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)’. When asked to describe her experience, she is quoted in *Tramps Like Us* as follows: “I just thought it was really neat. Like: there it is! Madame Marie’s! It’s a real place! This is so exciting! It was just neat. Everything he sings about – there it was!” (qtd. in Cavicchi 70). This fan seems to be quite impressed by the authenticity of Springsteen’s lyrics and the fact that the places he sings about actually exist. This interview implies that through the authenticity of place in Springsteen’s song-stories, fans who are not from New Jersey themselves, and merely visit the place as a tourist, are also able to form a connection with a place – Madame Marie’s in Asbury Park, in this case – through Springsteen’s music.
A number of scholars have already engaged with studying the relationship between tourism, music, and place, but the subject is still rather understudied. As stated by Gibson and Connell in their article “Music, Tourism and the Transformation of Memphis,” “music tourism is a rapidly expanding and diverse tourist niche, although rarely acknowledged by geographers or tourism scholars” (160). Gibson and Connell themselves have perhaps written most of what is currently available on the subject. They published the aforementioned case study on music tourism to Memphis, and they demonstrate how music can shape tourist spaces and contribute to new kinds of cultural and economic networks in a tourist destination. They have also published two monographs on the relationship between music and place, namely *Music And Tourism: On the Road Again* and *Sound Tracks*. The former provides a quite extensive overview of the different ways in which music and tourism are interrelated, whereas the second focuses more on the ways in which music may shape our perspective and experience of a place, or the so-called ‘soundscape’ of a place.

In these insightful monographs on music-based tourism, Connell and Gibson mainly discuss well-known examples of music tourism such as Elvis Presley’s Graceland and the music scenes of New Orleans and Nashville. Unfortunately, they do not provide detailed analyses of other, less researched case studies, therefore these monographs may function as a starting point for others interested in conducting more research into lesser known case studies. Additionally, the aforementioned monographs in my opinion lack a detailed analysis of the tourist perspective, or, more specifically, the fan’s perspective, thereby not recognizing the degree of agency that (fan) tourists have in constructing music tourism.

Similarly, Robert J. Kruse’s article ‘The Beatles as Place Makers: Narrated Landscapes in Liverpool, England’ provides very interesting insights on the ways in which music can be used as a marker of place in tourism by studying how Liverpool is marketed as the geographical ‘heart’ of the Beatles. In his article, he emphasizes the interesting relationship between music and place, and analyses this relationship based on themes such as commodification of the Beatles’ heritage for the purpose of music tourism to Liverpool. Still, the fan’s perspective is largely neglected, as this article focuses on how the Beatles function as place makers in Liverpool’s tourism landscape, whereas it could also be argued that tourists, especially the Beatles’ fans who visit these places, also play an important role in the
construction of these places as Beatles landmarks and their transformation into tourist attractions.

Kruse’s other insightful article on Strawberry Fields, John Lennon’s memorial in Central Park in New York City, similarly illustrates the significant relationship between music tourism and place by arguing that Strawberry Fields can be considered a place of secular pilgrimage. However, even though Kruse very interestingly illustrates the “power of music in producing place” (154), yet again the role of (fan) tourists travelling there is largely neglected.

The following authors who wrote about the phenomenon of music tourism did mainly focus on the tourist (or fan) perspective. Leonieke Bolderman has published an article on the tourist experiences, as well as how music tourism adds to fans’ construction of self-identity, of Wagner’s Bayreuth, ABBA’s Stockholm, and U2’s Dublin. As such, Bolderman touches upon the significance of what music tourism can mean for fans, instead of what music tourism can mean for the place. Furthermore, Derek Alderman has written an article called ‘Writing on the Graceland Wall: On the Importance of Authorship in Pilgrimage Landscapes’ in which he discusses the phenomenon of Elvis Presley fans travelling to Graceland to inscribe messages on the fieldstone wall outside of the estate, arguing that this sense of authorship and agency are substantial in the fans’ experience at Graceland. In doing so, Alderman emphasizes these fans’ agency in constructing music tourism in that place; an emphasis that is often neglected in research of music tourism.

Furthermore, David Leaver and Ruth Smith also emphasize the (fan) tourists’ experiences in music tourism in their article ‘Before they were famous.’ In this article, they investigate the nature of music-based tourism by analyzing the significance of music icons’ childhood locations, including the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Elvis Presley. They concluded that music-based tourism is often predominantly emotion-driven, especially on sites of music production, sites of artists’ birth and death, and other places which shaped artists’ early history. Additionally, they argue that music-based tourism can often be linked to ideas of pilgrimage, nostalgia and heritage (220).

Apart from these articles, the extent to which fans have been considered, or credited for their role in constructing music tourism, in scholarly research remains rather limited. Bolderman, too, notes that, for example, “research that has been carried out exploring and supporting this role of identity-work in music tourism from the tourist’s perspective remains limited” (166). Thus, there is still much more to be researched and discovered about the ways
in which music fans connect to a place through their music fandom, so much so that they become a music tourist, and travel to these places. Therefore, in my research, I aim to combine the aforementioned perspectives of, for example, Bolderman and Alderman: by analyzing what (visiting) Asbury Park and the Jersey shore means to Springsteen fans, why they want to go there, and how they experience their visit, we will come to a better, more extensive understanding of how (fan) tourists may add to the construction of a place, in this case Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, as a music tourism destination.

Additionally, other forms of cultural tourism, such as film- or TV-induced tourism or literary tourism (think for example of the recent phenomena of *Game of Thrones* tourism or *Harry Potter* tourism) are more comprehensively researched in academia than music tourism and often focus largely on the ways in which a narrative is transformed into a place to be seen, and a place to be experienced by (fan) tourists. However, music tourism may also include a form of literary tourism (think, for example, of song lyrics or musicians’ biographies) or visually-based tourism (think, for example, of album covers). And, moreover, music tourism has the potential to add an interesting and possibly quite complex level of how tourists experience sound in relation to these other, more commonly researched senses in tourism studies, such as seeing and feeling.

As discussed earlier, Bruce Springsteen’s image, music and lyrics are all strongly connected with Asbury Park and the Jersey shore – and, consequently, connects fans to those places as well. The example of Springsteen fans’ ‘Save Tillie’ campaign already indicates that taking a closer look to the meaning of this connection in the context of music tourism has interesting potential for research. Moreover, in their *Music and Tourism: On the Road Again*, Connell and Gibson imply that researching Springsteen-based tourism is of potential interest when they acknowledge that for many Bruce Springsteen fans, music tourism is a way of extending and performing their fandom, with experiences based primarily on feelings of connection and community (208). Yet, unfortunately, they do not go into a further discussion of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.

Furthermore, as someone who has visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, I was struck by the little attention Springsteen receives in the place’s touristic environment: there are no ‘official’ Springsteen landmarks to be visited; no Springsteen museum, no ‘Springsteen-lived-here’ signs, no official tourist offices offering music tourism tours. This indicates that, in Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, Springsteen fans play an essential role in constructing Springsteen-based tourism in those places and turn ‘regular’ places into tourist
destinations, and research into these fans’ motivations for and experiences of visiting these places will lead to insightful conclusions about which places are constructed as meaningful to (music) tourists, and, specifically, why.

**Theories and Concepts**

In this thesis, I will build further on theories and concepts concerning (the relationship between) music, place, and tourism from cultural studies, cultural geography, and tourism studies. Below, I provide a short introduction to the theories and concepts functioning as starting points for the discussions in this thesis. In the following chapters I will provide further delineation of the theories and concepts relevant to this thesis in order to ground the analysis theoretically.

**Place**

In order to understand the ways in which (fan) tourists attach meaning to place, we first need to get a better idea of the concept of ‘place’. Well-known (cultural) geographer Tim Cresswell makes an important distinction between a location and a place. Places, according to Cresswell, are spaces that people have made meaningful: “they are all spaces people are attached to in one way or another – this is the most straightforward and common definition of place: a meaningful location. … We experience it. The same cannot be said of location” (7). The meaning of a place, then, is not fixed, but it is socially and culturally constructed through the meanings that we ascribe through it, for example through personal memories and experiences, through media, through literature, or, indeed, through music. In his essay ‘The Sense of Place’, Wallace Stegner even argues that “no place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments” (202). Songs about a place therefore also add to the construction of its meaning. In his research on cultural tourism, Stijn Reijnders similarly argues in his article ‘Stories that move’ that “stories are crucial to the way we interpret the world around us and provide meaning for us” (374).

Furthermore, the concept of ‘place’ may also be essential in the formation of self-identity or the definition of community. As Wallace Stegner argues, “if you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are” (205). In the *Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography* this notion is described as ‘place attachment,’ referring to the formation of emotional bonds between a place and an individual or a community, which may provide a sense of belonging or communal unity: “the positioning [of] inside versus outside of place is
an important distinction with respect to identity, resting as heavily as it does on belonging and exclusion” (Price 125). In other words, being someplace may result in being considered an ‘insider’ of that place.

These notions of ‘places’ as constructed meaningful locations are important to take into account when researching why, and in which ways, fans feel connected to a particular place, so much so that they become tourists of that place.

**Place and Music**

In addition to understanding the concept of ‘place’, it is also important to consider the various ways in which we can understand the relationship between place and music. What can music add to our sense of place, or in which ways can music add to the construction of ‘place’? In his article ‘Imagining Strawberry Fields,’ Kruse outlines a number of interpretations of the relationship between place and music.

Firstly, he argues that “music also *produces* places,” as musical practices, such as going to a live concert, to a festival, or just sitting in the car listening to the radio, all take place *somewhere*, and influence how a (potentially meaningful) memory of that time and place are created. Moreover, a place’s soundscape -meaning the sounds and music that we associate with a particular place- can also influence how we interpret and remember a place: “as sound, music fills and structures spaces within us and around us, inside and outside” (qtd. in Kruse, ‘Imagining Strawberry Fields’ 155).

Then, Kruse argues, music is also often used to *represent* place, thus adding to the construction of a place’s narrative, “including specific lyric references as well as particular instrumental sounds and musical structures” (Kruse, ‘Imagining Strawberry Fields’ 155). For example, regional folk music, nationalistic music, or songs with lyrics about a specific place may all contribute to how particular places are conceived.

Lastly, music may also add to the construction of place as a social setting; “musical practices have been shown to establish, maintain, and transform social relations, and to define and shape material and geographical settings for social action” (‘Imagining Strawberry Fields’ 155). In other words, music can also play an important role in the creation of social places, such as clubs or concerts, but also places of music tourism, where people come together and interact with one another. Thus, since there are various ways in which music and place relate
to one another, it is all the more interesting to consider the role of (fan) tourists in this relationship.

(Fan) Tourists and Place

Some places become so strongly associated with a particular fandom that the place becomes a tourist site for fans. In his book *Fan Cultures*, Matthew Hills refers to these places as “cult geographies” (149). A place becomes a “cult geography” when “the cult fan’s affective experience is quite literally mapped onto spatial relations” (Hills 149). Hills defines such “cult geographies” as spaces related to “cult icons” which “cult fans take as the basis for material, tourist practices” (149). In other words, when fans travel to a particular place based on their fandom (e.g. a ‘cult geography’), they transform their fandom into a tourist practice. Moreover, in his article, Hills presumes that inhabitation, or embodiment, of such a place may form an important part of the fans’ expression and identity as a fan, as well as the position of a fan as an ‘insider’ within the fan community.

Some scholars consider such a journey to sites of musical heritage a form of secular ‘fan pilgrimage’. Kruse has theorized that the meaning of pilgrimage should not be considered fixed; instead, a pilgrimage is largely based on the emotional experience of the pilgrims. Therefore, the concept of pilgrimage suggests a multitude of interpretations and motivations, including cultural ones: “whatever motivations may move pilgrims, sites of pilgrimage are places of heightened meaning on the cultural landscape” (‘Imagining Strawberry Fields’ 155). As such, a pilgrimage can also be *secular*, and a site like Strawberry Fields (John Lennon’s memorial in New York City), as well as other music-based sites of memory such as Elvis Presley’s Graceland, can therefore be understood as a “pilgrimage site devoted to *cultural religious heritage*” (Kruse, ‘Imagining Strawberry Fields’ 156). David Alderman similarly argues that ‘cultural religion’ “involves the sanctification of figures and themes from popular culture and mass media” (Alderman 28). Thus, places that are strongly associated with, dedicated to, or memorializing a famous musician may be transformed into sites of secular pilgrimage by (fan) tourists travelling there.

Fans, Fandom, and Community

Furthermore, since I am specifically discussing *fan* tourists in this thesis, it is also important to get a better understanding of what constitutes a fan. According to Michael Williams in his article on rock concerts, community, and cultural identity, “fans [in the context of rock music] are individuals, spectators and entire audiences who are enthusiastic about a rock band”; in
this case about American rock musician Bruce Springsteen. It can be argued that there are many different ‘types’ of fans (‘die-hard’ fans, ‘casual’ fans, etcetera), but the common factor of all fans discussed in this thesis is that they are all Bruce Springsteen enthusiasts, that Springsteen and his music play a significant role in their lives; and, most importantly, they all self-identify as a fan of Bruce Springsteen.

Fandom refers to the subculture of a group of fans who share a common interest, specifically in the context of popular culture. As observed by Daniel Cavicchi, it is important to understand that “fandom is not generally attributed to other kinds of cultural behavior like religious devotion, intellectual study, or personal relations” (5). Unfortunately, participating in fandom often has negative connotations, according to Cavicchi this is because “fandom’s origin in … capitalism and technology has meant that fandom has often come to epitomize those changes” (6). However, fandom may provide highly personal, and emotional experiences, and for many, being a fan of something or someone is integral to how they self-identify. Thus, following Cavicchi’s reasoning, “[we should] think about music fandom as the creation of much-needed meaning in the lives of people, a way in which [people] make sense of themselves and their relations to others,” and therefore “it might be more useful to think about what [fandom] does, not what it is” (9). In other words, what do fans do and in which ways are those activities meaningful to them?

Moreover, it has been theorized that fandom provides a vehicle for not only experiencing a sense of identity, but also of community and belonging (Williams 242). In the field of music studies, Simon Frith proposes that the notion of community is “key to understanding the significance of rock culture” (qtd. in Williams 243). Moreover, he argues that central to a sense of community within music fandom is a distinct, collective identity; members of a community “have ‘something’ in common with each other which ‘distinguishes them’ from other groups” and as such “a community’s identity exists within the distinctions between commonality and difference” (qtd. in Williams 247). As such, these communities are symbolically constructed, and should be considered more in terms of social relations and identity than as place-specific entities (Williams 247). In terms of Benedict Anderson, we could consider it an “imagined community” rather than a face-to-face community. Such an “imagined community” is famously defined by Anderson as a community of which the “members … will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (49).
Music, and music fandom, then, are not only meaningful to fans in terms of personal, emotional experiences, they also connect fans to a (symbolic) community of similar minded individuals. Music (for example during live concerts) may offer fans a communal experience, and music fandom offers fans a shared, emotional connection based on collective beliefs and experiences.

**Methodology**

As there is no music tourism without music enthusiasts, and no Springsteen-tourism without Springsteen fans, I believe that in order to get a better understanding of this type of tourism it is essential to look at the ways in which fans add to its construction. Especially in the case of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, where the supply side of tourism seems to pay little attention to Springsteen-tourists, it is interesting to get a better understanding of the ways in which fans contribute to establishing a ‘tourist narrative’ of those places based on their fandom of Bruce Springsteen.

In order to do so, I will focus on the ways in which fans describe their motivations for their (intended) visit to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, as well as the ways in which fans describe their experiences of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. Notably, I am aware that it is impossible to uncover exactly how these fans feel about visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey as that is ultimately personal; but it *is* possible to study the ways in which these fans *describe* their motivations and experiences of visiting the place, and interpret how subsequently meaning or status is attributed to (visiting) a particular place through their fandom. As such, studies like this can reveal a lot about how a narrative and discourse of a place are constructed by (fan) tourists, especially within a fan community.

For that purpose, I created a semi-structured qualitative questionnaire (see appendix 1). The first eight questions are demographic questions, to get an overview of the variety of fans who completed the questionnaire. The second set of questions (six questions) asks the respondents about their fandom of Bruce Springsteen, in order to get a better understanding of what Bruce Springsteen means to these fans. The third set of questions (20 questions) focuses on the fans’ motivations and experiences of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore in order to get a better understanding of what these places, and (potentially) visiting these places, mean to these Springsteen fans.

I also requested fans who have not yet visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore to complete the questionnaire and to focus on the questions regarding their motivations and to
leave the questions on their experiences open. Their responses regarding their motivations for a (potential) visit, as well as the reasons why they have not yet undertaken the journey, have been taken into account in the thematic analysis in the second chapter.

With the exception of one question, the questions were all open ended. Since this research focuses mainly on how fans describe their motivations and experiences, my intention was to leave the respondents with as much freedom as possible in interpreting the questions and choosing their own words in their responses.

The questionnaire was distributed on Bruce Springsteen fan forums (Greasy Lake and Backstreets), in international Facebook groups of Bruce Springsteen fans (including Tramps of the Lowlands and Spring-Nuts), and it was posted on the Bruce Springsteen Twitter fan-account My Bosstime. In total, 188 enthusiastic Springsteen fans completed the questionnaire. Notably, the group of respondents is quite wide-ranging; for example, the respondents varied in age from 19 to 67. In total, 48.9% of the respondents identify as female, 50.5% of the respondents identify as male, and 0.5% would rather not say. Nationalities also vary, with most respondents living in the United States or Europe, as well as some respondents from countries in South America, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. Occupations of the respondents were also very diverse, including teacher, art director, librarian, chef, family therapist, vice president of a hotel, nurse, realtor, secretary, retired, or unemployed. The respondents’ religious preference also ranged from atheist to Jewish, with a majority indicating that they are Catholic, and some respondents remarking that they belong to the “church of Bruce.”

In the discussion of the questionnaire in the following chapters, the information provided about the Springsteen fans will be limited to their responses in order to ensure their anonymity. Furthermore, in this research, it is not my intention to create a representative model of (fan) tourists based on gender, age, nationality, etcetera. Instead, I intend to discuss the interesting variety of fans’ views and sentiments on visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, based on their being a fan of Bruce Springsteen.

Based on the guidelines of SAGE Research Methods, I interpreted my findings following a thematic analysis approach, which is a systematic approach to analyze qualitative data based on identifying themes and patterns of cultural meaning. As outlined in SAGE Research Methods, the method of thematic analysis should not merely be considered a research method, but also as a “sensemaking approach,” as the guide terms it. In this
approach, the basic analytic strategy is coding, a process of close-reading qualitative data and looking for recurrent topics and themes, then labeling and categorizing them for later theory-building (Lapadat 2).

Such an approach is especially useful when you have to reduce and manage “large volumes of data without losing the context, for getting close to or immersing oneself in the data, for organizing and summarizing, and for focusing on the interpretation” (Lapadat 2).

Thus, in conclusion, in this research I intend to extend our understanding of the variety of tourist motivations and behavior in the field of (music) tourism. The aim of this study is therefore not to create a general model or theory in music tourism studies, but rather to add to a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of motivations and experiences of music tourists. By adding to our knowledge of which places are meaningful to a particular group of tourists and why, we can get a better idea of why fans (in this case fans of Bruce Springsteen) become tourists, and choose to visit particular places. Furthermore, we can also get a better, more comprehensive idea of the ways in which a particular place is constructed as a (music) tourist destination, in this case for and by fans of Bruce Springsteen.
Chapter 2

“Where it all began”: Bruce Springsteen Fans’ Motivations for Visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore

“I can be halfway around the world and they ask: ‘Do you know Bruce Springsteen?’ Their eyes shine, because Springsteen and Asbury Park are inextricably linked.” – Asbury Park local, quoted in June Skinner Sawyers’ ‘Racing in the Street’.

“Meet me in a land of hope and dreams,” sings Bruce Springsteen on his 2012 record Wrecking Ball. For many Springsteen fans, Bruce Springsteen’s hometown area of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore constitutes their ‘land of hope and dreams,’ hoping and dreaming of the possibility to visit it one day. Hereafter, I will discuss and interpret discourses used by Bruce Springsteen fans to describe their main motivations for visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. In order to do so, I have thematically analyzed the responses to three open questions of the questionnaire, asking the respondents about their main motivations for travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, as well as about the expectations of their trip, and how important travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is for them as a Bruce Springsteen fan. For this chapter, the responses of all fans were taken into account; also the responses of fans who have not yet visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore but who were nonetheless able to fill out the aforementioned questions on (possible) motivations, expectations, and importance. In this chapter, I will illustrate that feeling a connection to Springsteen by ‘being there’, and gaining a better understanding of Springsteen, the origins of his music, and his lyrics, are central to the discourses of Springsteen fans’ motivations for visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. Additionally, I will illustrate that the importance and meaning these fans attribute to the place and their (intended) visit resonate with previous research of (cultural) tourism as a form of modern-day pilgrimage.
Springsteen’s well-known song ‘My Hometown,’ released in 1985 on the album *Born in the U.S.A.*, is dedicated to his first hometown of Freehold, New Jersey. However, in the lyrics of the song, Springsteen paints a rather bleak picture of the town’s problems with poverty, criminality, and race riots in the 1960s and 1970s, singing that it “seems like there ain’t nobody wants to come down here no more.” Nowadays, many Springsteen fans *do* want to visit Freehold, New Jersey (as well as other places along the Jersey shore where Springsteen has lived, like Long Branch, New Jersey and Asbury Park, New Jersey) precisely because they were, at some point during his life, Springsteen’s ‘hometown’. In the following section, I will discuss the ways in which fans have described Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as significant places providing a connection between themselves and their favorite musician.

In his monograph *Tramps Like Us: Music and Meaning Among Springsteen Fans*, Daniel Cavicchi discusses what it means to be a ‘fan’ of Bruce Springsteen and analyses a number of Springsteen fans’ discourses on how they describe their own fandom. Cavicchi, on the basis of interviews with many Springsteen fans, observes that “most fans ... agreed with startling consistency that, in the end, being a fan is about having a special ‘connection’ with Bruce Springsteen” (40). Cavicchi continues that this idea of connection “means more than just having an affinity for Springsteen’s music; it means making the music a deeply felt part of one’s life, of having an ongoing, shared relationship with Springsteen the artist” (41). This notion resonates with many of Springsteen fans’ responses in this thesis’ questionnaire; when asked about what Bruce Springsteen means to them, many responses included the notion of regarding Springsteen and his music as an integral part of their life: “[He means] everything, his music is the soundtrack to my life” (respondent 4), “he is a guidepost in my life” (respondent 17), “Bruce has been my guiding light for 40 years” (respondent 24), “he is a life companion” (respondent 37). Some of these responses also show that being a fan of Bruce Springsteen is a highly emotional experience:

His music has been the soundtrack to my life, it's intrinsically linked with all my memories and can be a solace, an uplift and a joy. It's a really hard question to answer because I literally cannot imagine my life without his music. As a performer
he is always inspiring and as a man he holds the same values in life that I do. (respondent 43).

Cavicchi also observes that many fans “report feeling an odd closeness to [Springsteen], referring to him by the familiar ‘Bruce,’ as if he were some sort of close friend whom they have known for many years” (52). This sense of familiarity is also illustrated by the fans’ responses in this thesis’ questionnaire: “He has been with me all my life. His music gives me support, comfort or energy anytime. I like to think of him as an old an dear friend” (respondent 10), “outside of my immediate family and friends, he is the person I care most about in the world” (respondent 60), “his music can cover all my feelings and help me when I struggle, his music is like a good friend, listen to it when you would like to see your friend” (respondent 67), and “his music, and as a result him, are like part of my family. He is the soundtrack to my life” (respondent 72).

These aforementioned responses illustrate the significance Bruce Springsteen holds in the lives and identities of these fans. Similarly, Cavicchi concludes that being a ‘fan’, in this case of Bruce Springsteen, should not merely be understood in terms of activity (such as going to a musician’s concert) or possession (such as owning a musician’s albums), it should be seen as an inherent part of one’s identity: “connecting with Springsteen means that he becomes a part of each fan, a continuing presence to which they may turn again and again. On the whole, fandom is not some particular thing one has or does. Fandom is a process of being; it is the way one is” (59). Yet, very often being a fan is considered simply in the “broad economic context of mass society” and various academics have considered being a ‘fan’ mainly as ways of how people act “as consumers of mass-produced, widely marketed ‘texts’ of popular culture like television shows, romance novels, and [music] albums” (Cavicchi 89). However, such an approach seems to neglect the highly personal and emotional experiences that come with being a fan. As Cavicchi observes in his analysis, “it is the moments of direct connection with Springsteen - at concerts, for example - which are central to [the fans’] understanding of what it means to be a fan. … For Springsteen fans, music is not a product to be consumed but rather a performance to be experienced, not a static ‘text’ that is mass-marketed but rather a dynamic event of communication unfolding through various media in space and over time” (89). Fandom should therefore not merely be considered in the context of consuming mass-produced products of popular culture, but experiences are a central part of fandom as well. Especially experiencing a sense of (emotional) connection is essential to the fandom of many Springsteen fans.
Consequently, Cavicchi mentions that travelling to New Jersey is one of the most significant ways in which fans of Springsteen aim to ‘experience’ a closer connection to their favourite musician: “fans … [attend] Springsteen’s club shows, [make] pilgrimages to sites in New Jersey, and [try to meet] Bruce on the street or at the stage door. In those moments, … Springsteen becomes a real presence: a person who has moved them with his music” (72).

Indeed, many responses to the questionnaire indicate that traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is a way for fans to feel closer to Springsteen. For example, when asked about the main motivation for their visit there, one fan responds: “to see and feel the Bruce Springsteen mecca first hand, and to feel connected” (respondent 54). Similarly, another fan responds: “I want to feel the mystic and be part for a few days of how it feels to be part of Bruce’s ‘hometown’” (respondent 176). Thus, these fans both indicate that being in the place provides a feeling of connectivity. Other fans similarly respond that “if it is such an important place for Bruce, it feels important for me to see it” (respondent 60) and that visiting these places “make[s] you feel close to him” (respondent 141). For another fan, visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is the way to get closest to Springsteen when not able to attend one of his concerts: “It’s a place where I can connect to the man and music outside of attending a concert” (respondent 72). A significant aspect that these responses have in common is that these fans all write in terms of feeling and experiencing the connection between a fan and who they are a fan of, a connection that is provided by a place. Moreover, when asked about what Asbury Park and the Jersey shore mean to them, one fan responds that the place offers a sense of “connectivity when you are there - a kind of, ‘Bruce walked these streets’” (respondent 27). Thus, visiting this place provides fans with the opportunity to feel connected to Springsteen by being physically present in a place where Springsteen himself has also been physically present. The significance of this kind of embodied experience resonates with previous research in tourism based on popular culture; in her study of Harry Potter-induced tourism, Abby Waysdorf argues that it is through this sense of embodiment “that we gain a real sense of a place” (8).

Likewise, other fans’ responses illustrate that travelling to the Asbury Park area is not only a way for them to feel closer in an emotional, but also to physically be closer to Springsteen: some fans include the wish to meet or see Bruce Springsteen in ‘real life’ as a motivation to travel to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore; for example: “Hoping to run into Bruce which people tell me happens” (respondent 11), or to “possibly meet him on the boardwalk” (respondent 28). In ‘Have you found what you’re looking for?’ Bolderman argues that “wanting to be close to the artist or the composer in music tourism says more about the
tourist than about the artist” (172). Similarly, Stijn Reijnders argues that we live in a media-saturated society, where there is often a need for proximity, which we can understand as a need for moments of ‘unmediated’ reality (qtd. in Bolderman 172). Therefore, fans often attribute significance to being close to their idol, because in such moments, fans get the chance to experience their idol in an unmediated way, which can “take their parasocial relation with the idol to a new level” (Bolderman 172). Thus, not only feeling close to Springsteen but also the chance of physically being close to Springsteen forms an important aspect of these fans’ motivations as it allows for the opportunity of an unmediated connection with Springsteen.

Moreover, some fans attribute a high sense of importance to travelling to ‘Bruceland,’ as some fans call it, and describe it as an essential aspect of their fandom; a necessity, even: “[The importance is] vital. You need to stay there to soak the atmosphere of the characters and stories of Bruce” (respondent 48). Another fan indicates that “it has to be done at least once” (respondent 24) and yet another fan writes that to “actually see and feel the places” related to Springsteen is “essential for me” (respondent 61). For this fan, the necessity of the visit is rooted in the embodied experience. Notions such as ‘seeing’ and ‘feeling’ such a place are, according to Robert J. Kruse, significant aspects of the appeal of places associated with particular artists; in his article ‘The Beatles as Place Makers: Narrated Landscapes in Liverpool, England’, Kruse reiterates that “a visit allows contact with places closely associated with admired individuals, [it] allows sight of, and perhaps the chance to touch, artifacts or memorabilia; … such places allow visitors to ‘walk in the [artists’] footsteps and see through their eyes when [they] enter these spaces” (qtd. in Kruse 91). In other words, sensory experiences such as seeing or feeling makes fans feel immersed in a place.

In addition to the significance of being able to experience the places, many fans also state that visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore allows them to better understand Bruce Springsteen and where he comes from. As such, the connection to Springsteen is not only provided by the idea of ‘being in’ the same places as Springsteen (is or has been) himself, but also to be able to better visualize and understand the narrative of Springsteen’s personal history. For example, one fan responded that traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is “extremely” important to them, because it would allow them to “see where it all began” (respondent 78). Similarly, another fan responded that to “experience the place where it all began is essential to fully understand the man” (respondent 88).

This sense of wanting to see and understand where their idol comes from is common in music tourism. In their article ‘Before They Were Famous: Music-Based Tourism and a
Musician’s Hometown Roots,’ David Leaver and Ruth A. Schmidt illustrate that “sites of births and deaths” are essential aspects of music tourism as Elvis Presley’s Graceland attracts over 600,000 visitors annually and Paul McCartney’s former home in Liverpool was bought by the National Trust in 1995 and is in the top ten most popular visitor attractions in Liverpool according to Tripadvisor (Leaver & Schmidt 220).

We see this trend not only in music tourism, but it is common in other forms of cultural tourism too, such as literary tourism; David Herbert argues in ‘Literary Places, Tourism, and the Heritage Experience’ that the first and foremost reason of why people visit literary places is because they are “drawn to places that have connections with the lives of writers”; especially former homes, in which a writer lived and worked, “may create a sense of nostalgia and inspire awe or reverence” (314).

Resonating Herbert’s explanation, some Springsteen fans remark the significance of visiting his childhood homes as a motivation to travel to the Jersey shore area. For example, one fan responds that their main motivation for undertaking the trip to the Jersey shore is to “see where Bruce lived in his childhood and feel the spirit there” (respondent 153) and another fan responds that their “main reason is being in the place where Bruce was born” (respondent 160). According to Herbert, visitors to such historic sites are “looking for an experience … based on the tangible remains of the past” (317). The same can be said of fans wanting to visit Springsteen’s hometown and former homes; they want to see and experience where Springsteen comes from by visiting tangible remains of his past, which they have heard and read about, but which are otherwise distant to them in both time and space.

In 2016, Springsteen released his autobiography *Born to Run*, in which he tells stories about growing up along the Jersey shore and provides specific locations and addresses to go along with those stories. When asked if the autobiography was an important factor for their motivation to travel to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, one fan responds: “I had wanted to visit the Shore long before the book was released, however I do feel like *Born To Run* serves somewhat as a Springsteen fan’s guidebook to New Jersey. That book literally gave us fans the opportunity to explore the Shore/New Jersey to a whole new level. With fresh eyes and more sentimentality” (respondent 61). Having read Springsteen’s personal narrative of growing up along the Jersey shore may therefore add to the emotional experience and understanding of these places.

Furthermore, another fan remarked that “it’s meaningful to see the factories where his father worked” (respondent 174). The fact that this fan attributes significance to witnessing the working-class roots of the Springsteen family is interesting, taking into account
Springsteen’s popular image as a storyteller of the American working class. As June Skinner Sawyers, editor of the anthology *Racing in the Street: The Bruce Springsteen Reader*, mentions in her introduction: “Bruce Springsteen [is] many things to many people. Iconic rocker. Archetypal American. Working-class hero” (26). In many of his songs, Springsteen tells the stories of working class characters, inspired by his own family history and environment. By attributing importance to visiting the factories where Springsteen’s father worked, this fan also expresses a sense of importance of witnessing Springsteen’s working class roots - as well as the roots of his current image.

Other fans mention that they want to visit places related to Springsteen’s ‘roots’ in order to understand not only where Springsteen himself comes from, but also where Springsteen’s *music* comes from. This is typical in music tourism according to Connell and Gibson: “in music tourism, much is made of the ‘roots’ of music in particular locations” (*Music and Tourism* 169). The following fans, for example, are looking for an experience to be immersed in a place that inspired Springsteen’s music. One fan describes Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as a “place where you can feel the music spirit” (respondent 36). Similarly, other fans state as motivations for their travels: “The main reason is being in the place where Bruce was born and where his music was born and develop. To know the places and the people that define him as a person and as a musician” (respondent 161), or “I wanted to see the places that informed Bruce's early work. I wanted to pay my respect to that music culture. I wanted to see and hear some music” (respondent 24). Additionally, visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is “important to see where he came from, where he was raised, and where his music comes from” (respondent 150). These responses illustrate that visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is of importance to them in order to understand how Bruce Springsteen was *shaped* by his environment as a musician *as well as* an individual. Therefore, the aforementioned examples illustrate how, according to Leaver and Schmidt, in music tourism, “the search for a contextual understanding is a key driver for [tourists]” (Leaver and Schmidt 220). Furthermore, not only Springsteen’s own music is of importance to these fans, but also the local ‘music scene’ which influenced Springsteen’s music. That is also illustrated by the following fans who note that visiting music shows is one of their main motivations for visiting Asbury Park: “Music!” one fan simply remarks (respondent 26), or “seeing the places Bruce sings about and seeing as many gigs as possible” states another fan as motivation (respondent 34).
Now that we know that Asbury Park’s musical landscape is also an important motivation for many fans to travel there, in the third chapter of this thesis, we will go into a more detailed discussion of fans’ experiences of Asbury Park’s so-called ‘soundscape’.

“Down the Shore, Everything’s Alright”: Asbury Park and the Jersey Shore as Lyrical Places

“Did you hear the cops finally busted Madame Marie for telling fortunes better than they do?” sings Bruce Springsteen in the song ‘4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)’ on his second album The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle, released in 1973. Even though Madame Marie, a fortune teller on the Asbury Park boardwalk, has unfortunately passed away a few years ago, her stand on the boardwalk still exists and attracts many Springsteen fan tourists. In the rest of this song, Springsteen paints a rather nostalgic and festive picture of the Asbury Park ‘boardwalk life,’ describing how, on the 4th of July, the “fireworks are hailing over [Asbury Park] tonight,” how the beaches of Asbury Park are filled with lovers dancing along the shore “with their shirts open,” “chasing them silly New York girls,” playing games in an arcade on the “boardwalk way past dark,” while “the aurora” rises above the ocean behind them and the pier lights illuminate the characters and the festivities on the boardwalk.” In this semi-autobiographical song, Springsteen invites his listeners into a part of his past as he paints a realistic yet nostalgic picture of a place that actually exists - and can still be visited today.

This song is also an example of the ways in which Springsteen pays careful attention to the (social) geography and a sense of place in his songwriting. In his lyrics, as illustrated earlier, Springsteen often includes rather detailed descriptions of the geographical setting in his songs. As noted by Frank P. Fury in Reading the Boss, the “characters from Springsteen’s [songs] tramp their way through his back streets, back alleys, open highways, deserted beaches, boardwalks, and front porches” (80). Some of these places are fictional, but many, as the example of ‘4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)’ illustrates, are real places in the United States - and many of these are located somewhere along the Jersey shore, Springsteen’s own hometown area.

Furthermore, it has been argued by various scholars that Springsteen writes his songs with such attentiveness to details that he should be considered “a consciously literary and culturally literate songwriter,” as argued by Robert Coles in Bruce Springsteen’s America: The People Listening, the Poet Singing. In his book Songs, Springsteen himself also notes that
the most important aspects to his lyrics are “the precision of the storytelling, the use of correct
details, and discovering an authentic emotional center for the song” (274). Because of this,
Springsteen has more than once been likened to American authors and poets such as John
Steinbeck, Flannery O’Connor, or Walt Whitman; for example, in Reading the Boss, Irwin
Streight and Roxanne Harde call Springsteen’s “project to sing America evidently
Whitmanesque” (2).

Because of these similarities with literature, it also makes sense to take into account
approaches to literary tourism in addition to music tourism when discussing the motivations
of Springsteen fans for visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. In the previous section I
have already touched upon the notion of fans wanting to visit Springsteen’s homes and its
similarities with literary tourists wanting to visit the former homes and other places that are
connected to authors. In this section, however, I will focus mainly on Asbury Park and the
Jersey shore as lyrical places, used as the setting and inspiration of many of Springsteen’s
(early) song-stories.

According to David Herbert in ‘Literary Places, Tourism and the Heritage
Experience’, visitors often want to “see with fresh eyes places that inspired poems or books”
(312). As an explanation for this, Herbert states that “[because] fiction may be set in locations
that writers knew[,] there is a merging of the real and the imagined that gives such places a
special meaning” (314). In other words, places provide a tangible connection between the
narrative and reality.

As such, through narrative, a particular place may become very meaningful to a
visitor. As Stijn Reijnders argues in his article ‘Stories that Move: Fiction, Imagination,
Tourism’, the notion of ‘topophilia’ is often important in thinking about the relationship
between narratives and tourism: “A form of topophilia may occur [when] the love of a place
… arises from the love of a story that takes place there” (675). Even though the narrative of a
place may be (partly) fictional, the ways in which visitors attribute meaning to that place are
very real; as Herbert argues, “places acquire meanings from imaginative worlds, but these
meanings and the emotions they engender are real to the beholder. Stories excite interest,
feelings and involvement, and landscapes can be related to their narratives” (318).

When asked about whether visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is important to
them, and if so - why, many fans indicate that visiting these places indeed also offers a better
understanding of the background of Springsteen’s song lyrics. For example, to one fan
visiting these places is important to “help you connect to his music, seeing the actual sites he
is singing about” (respondent 73). Other fans responds similarly, stating for example that they
“wanted to experience the environment that inspired [Springsteen’s] writing” (respondent 86). Likewise, another fan writes that visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is “important because you want to get a sense of what influenced a particular song. While that time period cannot be replicated, you can get a feel for the Jersey shore and how it must have been” (respondent 111). Here, again, the embodied experience of visiting a place allows fans to have an authentic encounter with tangible aspects from an otherwise intangible narrative of the past. Similarly, another fan responds that traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is “very important” because, there, “you can see his music taking life, his characters live there” (respondent 137). Thus, not only can fans experience the setting of Springsteen’s lyrics, visiting these places also helps them imagine the characters and their stories coming to life, providing fans with an “embodied sense of a story world” (Waysdorf 8).

Moreover, since Springsteen wrote multiple songs about growing up at the Jersey shore, one fan remarks that it also helps to connect a lot of Bruce’s lyrics to each other (respondent 40). In other words, visiting the various places that feature in Springsteen’s lyrics helps fans to make sense of these places’ greater narrative, as constructed by Springsteen in his song-stories.

Additionally, when asked about their main motivation for visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, one fan remarks that they “wanted to feel the vibes of those places that inspired the songs that marked me, walk those streets, smell the wind, touch those places, and above all discover that Asbury Park is a ‘living’ place, not just a pretty postcard on the top of a disc” (respondent 183). This example illustrates how visiting a specific place allows you to visualize song lyrics, and to be physically present in a place you know through song lyrics, providing an experience of total embodiment as the line between an imaginary narrative and the real world is blurred.

“The Promised Land”: A ‘Fan Pilgrimage’ to Asbury Park and the Jersey Shore

“I believe in a promised land,” sings Bruce Springsteen in his 1978 song ‘The Promised Land’ from his album Darkness on the Edge of Town. In this song, Springsteen constructs an image of the American road and car as full of possibilities for making a successful escape and achieving a better life in the promised land – wherever that may be. Springsteen does not refer to a particular place in this song – the ‘promised land’ just means someplace else, where
things are better than they are in your current situation. However, for many fans of Bruce Springsteen, Asbury Park and the Jersey shore constitute their ‘promised land’.

When asked about what Asbury Park and the Jersey shore mean to them, various fans also used the term “the promised land” to describe the place. For example, one fan remarks that “it’s the promised land, the land of hope and dreams” (respondent 24) and another fan responds that “Jersey truly is the promised land!” (respondent 70). In addition to the fact that it is also a Bruce Springsteen song, the choice of words for “the promised land” also implies certain religious connotations with travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. Other fans are even more explicit by calling Asbury Park and the Jersey shore “the holy land” (respondent 159) or stating that “it’s my mecca” (respondent 151). One fan responds to the question of whether visiting these places is important, that ‘mecca’ is the term their group of friends use to refer to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore: “My pals and I call that area, “Mecca”. If in the area, it is important to visit. It adds another dimension to our fandom” (respondent 17). The term ‘mecca’ is one that returns in the questionnaire’s responses more often: in total, 19 fans used the word ‘mecca’ to describe what traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore means to them.

In studies of music tourism, it is not unusual to consider the practice of travelling to a particular place out of admiration of a music scene or musician a ‘fan pilgrimage’. For example, various academics have already studied Elvis Presley’s estate Graceland as a place of pilgrimage for Elvis fans; to illustrate, in his article ‘Writing on the Graceland Wall: On the Importance of Authorship in Pilgrimage Landscapes’, David Alderman argues that fans connect with Elvis Presley through a variety of cultural practices, of which arguably the best known and most public of these practices is going on a pilgrimage to Graceland (27). Such a ‘musical’ pilgrimage like going to Graceland can be considered a form of ‘cultural religion’ in which figures and themes from popular culture and mass media are sanctified (qtd. in Alderman 28).

Places of pilgrimage are not, in themselves, sacred; rather, they are culturally and socially constructed, Alderman argues (28). They do not simply come into existence out of nowhere, but they undergo a process of ‘sacralization’ in which “tourism attractions are ‘marked’ as meaningful, quasi-religious shrines” (Alderman 8). Thus, Graceland, according to Alderman, is not a ‘cultural religious landscape’ merely because of the fact that it was Elvis Presley’s home once, but its ‘holiness’ is constructed by the behaviors and attitudes of its visitors (Alderman 28); in other words, in a way, it receives this symbolic status of a culturally sacred place through the ways in which fans and visitors give (quasi-)religious
meaning to the place. Similarly, in *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, Erika Doss states that of most Elvis fans, “going to Graceland is the deepest desire. ... ‘My dream was to see him in concert and see Graceland,’ writes a fan from Chisholm, Minnesota” (133). Doss concludes that, in the case of Graceland, the place is “special because fans make it special: their beliefs and behaviors transform it from historic home to shrine” (133).

Likewise, many of the responses in the questionnaire about Bruce Springsteen fans visiting (or wanting to visit) Asbury Park and the Jersey illustrate how fans ascribe a quasi-religious status to the place. Some fans, for example, discuss the ‘spirituality’ of the experience, noting that they want to visit these places “to feel somewhat close to the spirit of Bruce Springsteen” (respondent 167). Another fan calls Asbury Park and the Jersey shore their “spiritual home” (respondent 156). “It’s sacred ground,” writes another fan when asked about the meaning of Springsteen’s hometown area (respondent 142).

Moreover, when specifically asked if they would consider travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore a pilgrimage, a great majority of the fans responded that they indeed would. One fan remarks that “pilgrimage is an apt word” (respondent 17), another that it can indeed be described as a pilgrimage “because [the place] created one of the greatest musicians of all time” (respondent 118) and another fan explains that it can be seen as a pilgrimage because it means “looking for the spirit of Bruce’s songs on the Jersey shore” (respondent 59). Similarly, the following fan explains that it could indeed be considered a pilgrimage since “thousands go there just because of Springsteen” (respondent 69). Some fans mention that they actually use the term ‘pilgrimage’ to describe their visit: “pilgrimage was the word I used to my wife to explain the trip” (respondent 31). Similarly, another fan responds as follows: “Before going the first time in 2014 I called my trip The Pilgrimage. I posted on Facebook, “Some people go to Jerusalem, some go to Mekka. I'm off to Asbury Park...” (respondent 167).

Whether confirming that the term ‘pilgrimage’ would aptly describe their trip, or mentioning that they actually use the term ‘pilgrimage’ themselves to explain the visit, these examples illustrate that many fans indeed consider visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey as meaningful to such an extent that it may be likened to a religious experience.

Furthermore, the significant meaning of travelling to a site of pilgrimage is often heightened by the place’s difficult accessibility. Doss names the example of Graceland, which may be easily accessible when it comes to infrastructure, but takes a toll on fans travelling
amidst the heat and humidity of the summer. Furthermore, travelling to Graceland is expensive, and the average fan spends hundreds of dollars during the trip, according to Doss (133). In other words, it is not just the symbolic meaning of the final destination which adds to the construction of such a site as a modern, fan pilgrimage, but also the fact that travelling there may entail some level of difficulty.

A number of fans who completed this thesis’ questionnaire have not yet had the chance to actually visit Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, and they were asked about the main reason. Most responses indicate that the motivations to travel to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore were definitely present, but that these fans were obstructed by distance, a lack of time, and a lack of financial resources. For example, one fan remarks “I can't afford it but if I could it would definitely be somewhere I would visit” (respondent 43) and another fan mentions that the main reasons for not visiting are “time and money,” but “I will do when I can afford it (and my children aren’t rinsing me!)” (respondent 86). Another fan blames the distance, stating that: “I live in Ireland so I haven't managed to travel there yet, but it is a dream. I will go in the future” (respondent 112). As such, the often lengthy and expensive road that needs to be travelled adds to the idea of travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as a form of secular fan pilgrimage.

In conclusion, since forming an emotional connection with Springsteen is essential to the fandom of many Springsteen fans, visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is a way for many of these fans in order to connect more closely to Springsteen and his personal story, his song lyrics with narratives taking place in Asbury Park, as well as the ‘roots’ of his music. Notions of ‘seeing’, ‘feeling’, and ‘experiencing’ are central to the responses of many of these fans. This indicates that the opportunity of having an embodied experience, and being physically immersed in the stories of Springsteen’s persona, lyrics, and music in Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, is a significant aspect of what makes (visiting) these places meaningful.

Additionally, gaining a better understanding of Springsteen, his lyrics, and his music is also often noted as a significant motivation for visiting these places. That indicates that not only an emotional, embodied experience is of significance for these fans, but also a notion of increasing their knowledge of their idol.

Moreover, notions of ‘spirituality’, ‘pilgrimage’ and referring to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as a ‘Mecca’ illustrate that these places are also constructed in quasi-religious
terms, which indicates the high level of significance and meaningfulness fans attribute to (visiting) these places.
Chapter 3

“All roads lead to Bruce”: Bruce Springsteen Fans’ Experiences of Visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore

“It was natural right from the beginning that when people wanted to learn more about Bruce, that they came to Asbury,’ said one local. ‘It’s not much to look at, I know, but for rock ’n’ roll it’s a great place. It’s a rock ‘n’ roll town if there ever was one” – Asbury Park local quoted in June Skinner Sawyers’ ‘Racing in the Street’.

For many Bruce Springsteen fans, in Asbury Park and the Jersey shore area, “all roads lead to Bruce” (respondent 24). They follow in Springsteen’s footsteps by visiting Springsteen ‘landmarks’ such as Asbury Park’s boardwalk, its music venues, and Springsteen’s former homes. In doing so, they geographically map out the life, lyrics, and music of Bruce Springsteen into tourist destinations which they can experience for themselves. In this chapter, I will provide a thematic analysis of the ways in which Springsteen fans describe these experiences of visiting Asbury Park, and in doing so, in which ways they construct a narrative and image of the place as a meaningful location for Springsteen fans. When asked how they experienced their trip, some fans responded mainly in terms of behavior, explaining that they visited a music show, took photos, walked around, and bought souvenirs. Other fans responded in terms of emotional attachment, explaining the sense of ‘coming home’ and of ‘belonging’ which they got when they visited Asbury Park. Therefore, in this chapter, I will firstly discuss fans’ (emotional) engagement with the place, through the sense of community, belonging, and place attachment as described by some fans. Then, I will discuss the ways in which fans experienced Asbury Park’s soundscape and how they engaged with music on site. Consequently, I will discuss the ways in which fans explain how they memorialized, and materialized, the trip through photography and buying souvenirs.
“It felt like I was walking in a Bruce Springsteen song”: Fans’ Experiences of a Sense of Belonging, Place Attachment, and Community

As we have seen in the previous chapter, many Springsteen fans attribute a great significance and special meaning to Asbury Park, calling it a mecca, “the promised land” or “the land of hope and dreams” (respondent 24). “Any true fan would definitely appreciate going to what we Bruce-a-holics call ‘Mecca’,” says one fan (respondent 38). The responses of these fans illustrate a special connection to a particular place, based on their fandom of Bruce Springsteen. As explained earlier in this thesis, in cultural geography, this type of connection is termed ‘place attachment’, and is explained as the formation of an emotional attachment to a meaningful place. In his article, Sangkyun Kim explains that places may have such a “kind of psychological, emotional, and symbolic meaning” that it “stimulates people to develop a bond, person-place coupling, and a sense of belonging, to the extent that these places have become ‘their place’” (62). Thus, place attachment can also provide a sense of belonging, or communal unity.

Additionally, in the previous chapter, we have seen that the notions of experiencing a closer connection to and understanding of Springsteen, his lyrics, and his music are central to how many fans describe their main motivations for wanting to visit Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. Similarly, when describing their experiences of visiting these places, some of the responses indicate that the fans’ connection to and understanding of Bruce Springsteen and his music have, indeed, been strengthened by visiting the place. As one fan explains, going to Asbury Park made “the connection to Bruce feel stronger and makes it real instead of it feeling like a world away” (respondent 26). The following fan notes an increased sense of understanding: “It's a place you can be a crazy fan and no one thinks you're crazy. Somehow makes you feel you understand him better and the context of his work” (respondent 81). Thus, visiting these places may result in an increased sense of closeness to Springsteen and his music. Sometimes, this may result in an extension of their fandom and their self-identity as a fan (Bolderman 171). As one fan responds to the question what Asbury Park and the Jersey shore mean to them: “it feels like it made my Springsteen fandom complete when I visited New Jersey” (respondent 21).

When asked how they experienced visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, many fans indicate that they experienced an emotional sense of belonging, and of ‘finally being there’. For example, one fan remarks that visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore was “very
emotional. It is very hard to describe my feelings but I experienced joy, happiness, I felt that part of me belongs there too…” (respondent 176). For some, this emotional experience was provided through the familiarity of Bruce Springsteen’s songs: “It was like walking in a Bruce Springsteen song” (respondent 21) or “It was the moment the songs came to life” (respondent 61). Visiting these places provides an actual, physical encounter with a familiar narrative. As such, these fans felt emotionally immersed in Springsteen’s lyrics. For another fan, this familiarity of the place caused a sense of disbelief of finally ‘being there’: “It was a bit surreal seeing those places, though I felt like I’d been there before after seeing many photos” (respondent 42). This sense of disbelief due to the familiarity of the place through Springsteen’s music is also illustrated by the following fan: “all those figments of Bruce’s imagination depicted in his lyrics are real. It’s a real place” (respondent 164). Similarly, another fan felt “satisfied” after going to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore because “the images that roll through your mind are now real. Being in the exact places just brings everything together” (respondent 26). Thus, finally ‘being there’ provides a sense of embodiment of a familiar narrative, resulting in an emotional experience.

Notably, many fans respond in terms of ‘walking around’ or ‘driving by’ the Asbury Park and Jersey shore area when asked how they experienced their visit. As such, not only the specific sites that are visited (like Springsteen’s former homes) are transformed into Springsteen-based tourist sites, but rather the entire area is constructed as a Bruce Springsteen-related tourism destination. The following responses both emphasize a sense of ‘just being there’ as central to their experiences: “[We took] pictures, hung around, talked to people who were passing by, spending some time at each spot” (respondent 167) and: “Just walked around and took pictures, smell the air and imagine how it would have been like years ago” (respondent 153). This sense of just feeling part of the environment, of immersion, forms an important aspect of how fans described their experiences. In her research, Bolderman also stresses the significance of the act of ‘walking’ and other similar embodied practices in music tourism; she states: “through these embodied practices, the experience of ‘being there’ … can form an anchor point in a continued emotional connection to the related place, a musical topophilia” (177).

Furthermore, many fans indicate such a strong sense of place attachment and belonging after having visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, that they now refer to it as ‘home’. In tourism studies, traveling is oftentimes considered as a way of escaping the home, and the self; however, in her research on music tourists and identity, Bolderman concluded
that music tourism can often be considered an “extension of the home” and of the self rather than an escape from it (171). Many fans respond with a similar indication of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as an *extension* of ‘home’, rather than an escape from it: for example, one fan calls it “my other home away from home” (respondent 169), another fan says that “it feels like home” (respondent 151) and yet another fan similarly remarks “I consider it home really. A part of our souls are there in New Jersey and I am always drawn there and will never stop going” (respondent 26). Another fan even explains that it is not only a ‘home’ for them, but that it likely feels as a ‘home’ for a worldwide community of fans: “It seems like a kind of ‘home’ for fans from all over the world. I think fans should try to visit there at least once if they possibly can” (respondent 42). Not only does this fan then regard going to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as an essential part of what it means to be a Bruce Springsteen fan, they also consider Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as the center point of the fan community.

Moreover, some fans imply that visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is only for ‘true fans,’ thereby not only establishing their own identity as a ‘true fan’, but also already limiting the experience to a core group of people who, together, identify as ‘true’ Bruce Springsteen fans. When asked whether or not they would recommend going to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, one fan responds: “maybe, depending on the fan. As a real fan it’s something to do. You can feel the spirit” (respondent 52). Another fan similarly remarks: “Yes, [I would recommend] the key places he has talked about and lived in his music and only true fans would appreciate that” (respondent 169). Yet another fan also responds that “only if you’re a fan you can feel something different” (respondent 137). According to Michael Williams, a significant aspect of a community’s identity is its reliance on the distinction of commonality and difference (247). Thus, by visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, fans can *feel part* of a greater community of fans who have visited the place, as opposed to those who have not visited the place. Consequently, visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore may not only create a sense of belonging to the place, it may also create a sense of belonging to an (imagined) community with other fans who have had similar experiences.

In his article on a sense of community at rock concerts, Michael Williams proposes that rock music concerts provide fans with the opportunity to experience emotionally a ‘sense of community’ (248). As we have seen in the aforementioned examples, this notion can also be applied to this type of music tourism; fans of Springsteen travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore may experience an emotional and symbolic sense of community. Additionally,
Williams argues, rock concerts also function as a source of community, where fans – whether they know each other personally or not – come together and have a ‘communal experience’ (248).

Likewise, some Springsteen fans indicated the significance of having such a ‘communal experience’ with other fans while visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, for example by travelling together or sharing their experiences with other fans. As Bolderman similarly argues, music-related travel can also function as a way of communicating and sharing identities with other fans, face-to-face (171). For example, when asked about whether or not they met other fans on their trip and what that meant for them, many fans respond that they indeed met other fans on their trip and often felt an instant connection: “Love these interactions. The connections make us all closer” (respondent 26), or: “It is a family feeling” (respondent 125). For another fan, making such a connection is an important part of the experience: “I will talk to anyone who will listen and have met so many Bruce fans who are passionate like me” (respondent 53). One fan even remarks that they immediately felt a “sense of belonging” by meeting other fans on site (respondent 167). Additionally, another fan explains that this sense of connection is due to the fact that other fans understand the meaning of both Bruce Springsteen and Asbury Park and the Jersey shore: “I met up with some Bruce fans who live closely which was incredible as they know how important being in Asbury Park is to people like us” (respondent 61). Similarly, another fan says that meeting other fans meant “a great deal” as it is “wonderful to meet people who feel the same as I do” (respondent 164). Some fans even travelled together in a group: “it was a group trip of Springsteen fans” (respondent 31) and: “Went with 200 other fans, it was great to share the tour with all those fans” (respondent 47). For these fans, music tourism indeed functions as a source of community.

Moreover, a fan community may also function as a source of information. Many of the respondents relied on information from within the fan community in preparing their trip to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. Responses mentioning other fans as sources of information, such as “I read reports of other fans who had visited the shore” (respondent 18) and “help from friends and the major [online] Springsteen forums” (respondent 108) return frequently. Only one respondent mentions a travel guide as a source of preparation. Other fans who mentioned that they relied on a travel guide, specify that it was Stan Goldstein and Jean Mikle’s *Rock and Roll Tour of the Jersey Shore*, which is written by two Springsteen fans who grew up in the area, and focuses specifically on informing fans which Springsteen-
related sites can be visited in the Asbury Park area. Others relied on Springsteen himself: they found information on where to go through his biography and his songs. When asked how they prepared for their trip, the following fan responds: “Writing down the cities Bruce sings about and looking them up at a map” (respondent 153). Another fan responds that their main inspiration came from “many of Bruce’s songs” (respondent 20). These examples illustrate that all of these fans are looking for a specifically Springsteen-related itinerary, which they gather information on largely within the fan community, through online forums, Springsteen-related tour guides, as well as Springsteen’s own music. As such, these fans produce, reproduce, and circulate their ‘own’ information; Williams notes that, within fan communities, this practice is quite common; the information that is specifically constructed and reconstructed within a fan community can be considered ‘fan knowledge’ as opposed to ‘official knowledge’ – which includes the information that is distributed by the culture industry, or in this case by the tourism industry (247).

In conclusion, for these fans, visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is a way to feel physically immersed in a “Springsteen landscape”; in other words, the embodied experience of ‘being there’ provides an authentic, emotional connection to Springsteen, his music, and his lyrics. Additionally, visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore may not only stimulate a sense of belonging to the place itself, but also to the fan community. Sometimes this sense of belonging to the community is predominantly symbolic and imagined, but other times face-to-face interactions also constitute a significant part of these fans’ experiences.

“There’s a little cafe where they play guitars all night and day”: Fans’ Auditory Experiences on Site

Music is, in essence, an intangible experience, so how is music translated into a type of tourism, a practice that is usually associated with visiting physical places and the visual experience? Connell and Gibson state that “music is, strictly speaking, nothing more than an assemblage of sounds judged within specific cultural contexts to have aesthetic value. As such, music is, at its core, an invisible and ephemeral sensory experience” (Music and Tourism 165). Thus, music provides an intangible sensory experience. However, “by contrast,” Connell and Gibson argue, “the essence of tourism – the ‘tourist gaze’ – relies on that which is concrete, visible and (semi-)permanent” (Music and Tourism 165). Perhaps the most used and the most discussed term in tourism studies, John Urry’s ‘tourist gaze’ relies
largely on the visual aspects of tourism; the tourist gaze, in a rather condensed explanation, refers mainly to tourists’ sets of ideas and images that have been pre-determined through portrayals of a destination constructed by social and cultural factors, such as media and popular culture.

According to William Feighey, this emphasis on the ‘visual’ in tourism is logical in our day and age; in his article ‘Developing the Visual in Tourism Research,’ he explains the contemporary emphasis on the ‘visual’ in tourism studies as follows: “we can reasonably suggest … that visual technologies (photographs, film, video, television, digital images and so on) increasingly form part of many individuals’ everyday experience” and that “such socially constructed ‘views’ … render the world in visual terms” (76).

In music tourism too, the ‘visual’ also plays an important role. Most often, in music tourism intangible musical experiences are transformed into physical and tangible places to be visited, to be touched, and to be witnessed. We have seen in the previous chapter, for example, that many Bruce Springsteen fans visiting New Jersey want to see with their own eyes the places where Bruce Springsteen has grown up, and the places where the inspiration for many of his songs came from. Places such as Bruce Springsteen’s former homes and the Asbury Park boardwalk, which are often mentioned and celebrated in Springsteen’s songs, are turned into tourist destinations by Springsteen’s fans; they become places to be gazed upon. As Gibson and Connell similarly argue, “relevant, physical reminders of music are often quickly transformed into tourist attractions, as with performers’ houses, gravestones, live venues, and recording studios” (Music and Tourism 165). As such, music tourism functions to not only physically, but also visually locate and memorialize music, something that is - understandably- predominantly understood as an auditory experience.

What role, then, does the auditory experience play in music tourism? For music tourism, the answer might seem to be quite logical and straightforward, but it actually becomes more complicated when taking into account this usual emphasis on the ‘visual’ experience in tourism, including music tourism.

In response to Urry’s well-known term the ‘tourist gaze’, Connell and Gibson coin the term the “tourist ear,” stressing that in particular places, such as Liverpool and New Orleans, “beyond the visual, sound plays a key role in creating tourism landscapes, attractions, and experiences” (Music and Tourism 165). Even though “music tourism is reflective of other forms of cultural tourism (like literature and film tourism),” it is “unique, not least in its
reliance on the aural as well as visual” (Gibson and Connell, *Music and Tourism* 185). Alternatively, the term “soundscape” is often used in tourism studies (e.g. by Connell and Gibson in *Sound Tracks*) to describe a collection of sounds that are associated with a particular place. Thus, when discussing music tourism, it is also interesting – if not essential - to take into account how Springsteen fans experience and (re)construct Asbury Park’s soundscape.

In the questionnaire, many Bruce Springsteen fans indicate that visiting a site of music production and/or performance related to Bruce Springsteen was an important part of their journey to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. When asked about which places the fans visited while in Asbury Park and the Jersey shore (or, for those fans who had not been able to make the journey yet, when asked about the places they wanted to visit), the location most mentioned is the Asbury Park boardwalk (149 respondents included the boardwalk in their list of places). This makes sense, since the boardwalk is, essentially, the heart of Asbury Park and a visit to Asbury Park without visiting the boardwalk is unlikely - if not impossible, since the boardwalk constitutes a large part of Asbury Park’s geography. Additionally, Springsteen mentions the boardwalk in many of his songs, and as we have seen before, the motivations of many fans to travel to Asbury Park center around experiencing and visiting places that feature Springsteen’s songs.

However, with 148 mentions (only one less than the boardwalk), the second-most mentioned location is the relatively small music venue ‘the Stone Pony’. The Stone Pony is located just beyond the boardwalk, and, among Springsteen fans, it is famous for being one of the venues along the Jersey shore where Springsteen and his band frequently played live shows in the 1970s and 1980s, and, presumably for the sake of nostalgia, he still sometimes returns there today, either as a visitor or for a surprise performance. Even though Springsteen also played live shows in many other music venues in the area, such as the Wonder Bar, the second-most visited (or second on the fans’ wish lists of places to visit) place among the questioned Springsteen fans, the Stone Pony seems to have received a monumental status among these fans. According to Connell and Gibson, in music tourism, sites of performance often become tourist sites, “especially when they are still used for performances … or linked to great eras of the past” (*Music and Tourism*, 62). When asked about how they experienced sites of music performance in Asbury Park, one fan responds: “The Stone Pony was great, it's a historic venue and it was very touching being there” (respondent 160). Another fan responds that they found the Stone Pony to be the most impressive place they visited during their trip,
because there “is so much history there” (respondent 146). As such, these fans attribute cultural and historic significance to a music venue through its connection with Bruce Springsteen.

Similarly, in Kruse’s ‘Narrated Landscapes in Liverpool,’ he discusses the significance of visiting the Cavern Club in Liverpool, a venue where the Beatles frequently played in their early years. The original Cavern Club closed its doors in 1973; however, a replica of the club, with original building blocks and according to the original building plans, was rebuilt in another location in 1984 and can still be visited today. Kruse himself went to the Cavern Club to experience a band play a live show in the early 2000s for his research, describing that “on a small stage at the front of the room was a quartet of four young men—a local band playing loud, hard-edged original rock and roll” (‘Narrated Landscapes’ 97). Following this experience, Kruse concludes that “in its atmosphere and its social function, the new Cavern Club was authentic, not in terms of historic preservation, but in its original function on the vernacular landscape” (‘Narrated Landscapes’ 98). In other words, even though the place itself was only a replica of the original Cavern Club, the auditory experience of being able to listen to a band in a (reconstructed) place where the Beatles used to play provides an authentic experience, an experience that connects the visitors to the Beatles’ past in Liverpool.

Likewise, when asked how the fans experienced visiting sites of music performance in Asbury Park, many fans indicated that they visited a live music show in one of Asbury Park’s music venues; 74 of the total of 189 respondents attended a show at the Stone Pony, or the Wonder Bar, Asbury Park’s second-most popular music venue, and also a place frequented through the years by Springsteen himself. Some fans mention that Asbury Park’s current live music scene was actually one of their main reasons to visit the place; “the music all over town was a huge draw for me,” states one fan (respondent 146). Another fan mentions that visiting a music show at one of the venues such as the Stone Pony should be “a part of the trip, because Bruce is present there even if he’s not” (respondent 36). Yet another fan even indicates that visiting a show at the Stone Pony is an essential part of and main reason for each of their visits: “Yes, every time we go we plan our trip around a Stone Pony show” (respondent 186).

A few fans even express a sense of disappointment because they visited the Stone Pony or the Wonder Bar but could not visit a show: “We were disappointed there was no live music whilst we were there” (respondent 60). Another fan responds that “there wasn’t [a
show] scheduled when I was there, otherwise we probably would have” (respondent 52). For these fans, the lack of an auditory experience conflicted with their expectations of their visit, implying that partaking in Asbury Park’s musical environment would have been a significant aspect of their journey as well.

Participating in the soundscape of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore by visiting a live music performance in one of the venues is an opportunity for Bruce Springsteen fans to engage with local culture. As Bolderman explains, “what makes music tourism as an activity special for tourists is the opportunity to actively connect … personal music memories to the ways music is presented as local history on site. … Music tourism thereby forms an example of a practice that involves the social role of music: the way it connects personal dimensions of experience with cultural identity” (173). Likewise, Connell and Gibson also argue that participating in a place’s musical environment can evoke feelings of authenticity and belonging since it is a highly emotional experience; “humans experience emotional reactions to music. It evokes feelings of nostalgia, elation, energy, and melancholy… [and it invites them] to feel part of a musical community” (Music and Tourism 166). Therefore, visiting such ‘musical’ places can also provide a sense of belonging to the local community - the same community that Bruce Springsteen participates in.

For example, some fans mention that they visited a show of a local band in the Stone Pony or the Wonder Bar. In these instances, the connection between the fans and Bruce Springsteen is provided predominantly by the place’s historic and cultural connection to Springsteen, not necessarily by the music that is heard. Additionally, similar to Kruse’s aforementioned experience, the experience of listening to live music in a place with such historic and cultural significance for Bruce Springsteen fans, adds to the sense of an authentic experience; one fan, for example, remarks that it is “so much fun to watch music in those great clubs” (respondent 24). Thus, by visiting a live music show, even if the show is not related to Springsteen, fans are able to participate in the place’s original function, which adds a sense of authenticity not only to the place itself, but also to the fans’ experience.

By emphasizing the musical significance of not only music venues such as the Stone Pony, but of Asbury Park as a whole, fans, in a way, ‘mythologize’ Asbury Park’s soundscape. In the questionnaire, many Springsteen fans refer to the cultural significance of Asbury Park due to its vivid local music scene and the so-called ‘Jersey Shore sound,’ which includes, but is not limited to Bruce Springsteen’s music; it also includes musicians such as Jon Bon Jovi, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, and Joe Grushecky. Because of this, a
number of fans refer to Asbury Park as a ‘music mecca’. For example, one fan calls it the “music mecca of the East coast” (respondent 4) another calls it “the musical heart of the Jersey shore” (respondent 16), and another fan mentions that they found “the music vibe in Asbury” the most impressive aspect of their trip (respondent 121). The following fan’s response, which is worth quoting in full, specifically illustrates the image they have of Asbury Park as an inherently ‘musical’ place and links it to a quite mythical feeling of being in Asbury Park:

“Asbury Park is a feeling, before visiting it, it was like a dream, a place full of legends where everything could happen, where ‘tramps like us’ would finally find that place where we really wanted to go and walk in the sun, but when you arrived you found yourself with a place that is "alive", that breathes music in every corner, in every bar, where you meet wonderful people and proud of their place, who transmits the love for what they do and makes you feel at home. A place from which we fell in love and to which we promise to always return!!” (respondent 183).

According to Gibson and Connell, in such places (‘music meccas’), “vivid myths of place are linked to music there, and local identity is partly constructed in relation to unique musical sounds or successful people” (Music and Tourism 43). Gibson and Connell then argue that such places are constructed through a combination of the distinctiveness of their sound as well as the construction of its status as ‘mythical’: “[Such places have] secured a reputation for a particular ‘sound’. In part this occurs because a few local music cultures are genuinely distinct and innovative, but specific ‘sounds’ are also bound up in wider processes through which places are mythologized: a fetishisation of localities” (Sound Tracks 110). Thus, by participating in, and talking about Asbury Park’s local music scene, fans of Springsteen contribute to the construction of the myth of Asbury Park as a ‘music mecca’. Furthermore, for these fans, Asbury Park’s soundscape extends from Springsteen’s music alone to the ‘mythical’ local ‘sound’.

Other fans engage more specifically with Springsteen’s music on site, for example by seeing a Springsteen tribute band in Asbury Park, or even Springsteen himself. For these fans, their auditory experience in Asbury Park’s soundscape is more specifically related to Springsteen and his music. Connell and Gibson also argue that engaging with music in the place where it originated “secures the authenticity of local cultural products in particular physical spaces as they move through national and global economies” (Sound Tracks 111). In other words, when music - such as Bruce Springsteen’s - ‘outgrows’ its place of origin,
engaging with that music at the place where it ‘belongs’ can, in terms of Connell and Gibson, secure - or maybe even claim - the music as local heritage. For example, Bruce Springsteen may have started his career in small music venues in Asbury Park in the 1970s, his music is now easily accessible globally due to technical innovations such as Spotify and YouTube, and his music thus seems no longer rooted in a specific place. However, for Springsteen fans, Asbury Park can function as an authentic, intimate connection to Springsteen and his music. In this place, fans can embody Springsteen and his music in a more complete sensory experience (feeling, hearing, seeing, understanding, being there). For example, as one fan remarks, “Asbury Park seems like the beginning and the end of the Bruce story. He got his start there, left and became a superstar, but he’s never really been gone. You can feel his presence and influence still there” (respondent 129). Vice versa, fans visiting Asbury Park and engaging with his music there reinforces the place’s significance in its function of connecting Asbury Park with Springsteen. In other words, fans help ‘securing’ Springsteen’s local heritage not only by visiting Asbury Park itself, but also by participating in its music environment, specifically when visiting Springsteen-related music shows.

Another way in which some fans have indicated to engage with Bruce Springsteen’s music is by listening to his songs on record while visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore. For example, when asked how they experienced their trip, one fan responds: “I went with friends who were also fans. A friend from NJ drove us around whilst listening to E Street Radio” (respondent 8). E Street Radio is a radio channel that plays music by Bruce Springsteen and his E Street Band all day long. The fact that this fan included the practice of ‘listening’ to their response when asked about their experiences, implies that the auditory experience of engaging with Springsteen’s music on site was an important part of their overall experience. Additionally, they listened to Springsteen’s music and visited the place together as fans, which implies that the listening experience can also be understood as a social interaction between fans.

Listening to Bruce Springsteen’s music on site can also be a more personal experience, as opposed to a communal or social activity; for example, one fan responded that they listened to ‘Asbury Park, 4th of July (Sandy)’ by themselves while roaming the beach by themselves (respondent 18). Another fan remarks that they visited the house in which Bruce Springsteen wrote one of his most famous songs and albums, Born to Run; this house is among many fans simply referred to as ‘the Born to Run house’. The fan describes their experiences of visiting this place as follows: “[I] sat in the car staring at the house and listening to Born to Run”
For this fan, being in that particular place provides an authentic connection to the song and album, and vice versa. For others, the music is even more an individual experience, imaginary even; when asked how they experienced the Asbury Park boardwalk, one fan responds that “[Springsteen’s] songs just started playing in my head!” (respondent 57). Similarly, another fan responds that they like to “sit on the boardwalk when no one else is there and hear the music in your head” (respondent 81).

In her own research of the experiences of U2 tourists in Dublin, Bolderman found similar examples of this individual auditory experience as well as tourists listening to U2’s music in groups; she concludes that “[the] involuntary musical imagery forms an embodied memory, which creates a private personal space for the tourist as the tourist alone hears it. By walking around and engaging with the locations, the interviewees experience music both in this imaginative, individual way and in the social dimension that replayed or live music offers” (176). As the responses of these Bruce Springsteen fans indicate, Asbury Park’s soundscape is thus also experienced both individually as well as in a community.

Similar to the aforementioned individual (sometimes internal) listening experiences, for some fans, the connection to, and increased sense of understanding that the place provides of Springsteen’s music, rather than engaging with music on site, is what shapes the place’s soundscape. This is often described as an emotional, nearly exhilarating, experience. The following fan, for example, compares the feeling they experience when they visit Asbury Park to the feeling they get when they listen to music: “What I found was that Asbury Park felt more like a home than home. Say, when you’re having a bad time and you listen to music as a way of coping and shutting the door on the world. Visiting Asbury Park is like the real life version of that. It’s like going somewhere that you can just feel free. … The magic of E Street fills the air. … It was the moment the songs came to life” (respondent 61). Other fans respond with a similar sense of feeling connected to the music by visiting the place: “It was like walking in a Bruce Springsteen song” (respondent 21) or: “You feel like you have landed in his songs. Very mystical in a way” (respondent 70). Lastly, as one fan puts it, in Asbury Park, “you can't go anywhere without thinking about [his songs]” (respondent 24).

As such, for these fans, the place’s soundscape, meaning the sounds that they associate with the place, is dictated very much by the music that brought them there. Other sounds that may be typical for a seaside resort, such as ocean sounds, remain absent from the fans’ responses. Whether it be experienced individually or communally, internally or externally, for these fans, the place’s soundscape relies solely on music - predominantly Bruce Springsteen’s
music, but also sometimes music of other local bands, and the myth of Asbury Park as the ‘music mecca’ of the East Coast.

**Picturing Asbury Park: Fans, Visual Productivity, and Photography**

In addition to *listening, feeling*, and *experiencing* the place while being there, some fans also emphasized the visual sense, by stating, for example, that they found it “important and interesting to *see* where he came from” (respondent 20). As discussed earlier, the ‘visual’ and the ‘tourist gaze’ are significant also in music tourism, which is why I will hereafter discuss the ways in which Bruce Springsteen fans responded to the theme of photography in the questionnaire.

The subject of photography is interesting (if not significant) to take into account when studying the behavior of tourists, as it is a practice that indicates which specific *sights* the tourists want to remember; it functions to create a personal, selective memory of the travel experience. As stated by Kim in his article on photography as a tourist activity, photographs “create an essential part of selective memory of a particular time, place and performance that enriches the tourist experience” (62).

Additionally, in tourism studies, the significance of photography, and the process of selecting what to photograph and what *not* to photograph, is often linked to the often-discussed subject of the tourist gaze; in *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, renowned tourism studies scholars John Urry and Jonas Larsen argue that photography is “the most important technology for developing and extending the tourist gaze” (155). How tourists make a (subconscious) selection of which sites they photograph is “largely preformed by and with existing mediascapes” (Urry and Larsen 179). In other words, what tourists deem important enough to create a tangible memory from in terms of a photograph depends for a large part on other images of that place they have seen before in various types of media.

This is especially the case with internet nowadays, in which *other* tourists have become producers of this tourist gaze as much as, for example, marketers. According to Urry and Larsen, with the internet, “tourists increasingly produce and consume ordinary photographs placed upon ‘public display’. These photographs by ‘fellow tourists’ may come to choreograph cameras as much as ‘professional’ images and TV programmes” (187).

Taking into regard Urry and Larsen’s notes on tourists ‘choreographing’ other tourists’ photographic behavior by putting these photos on ‘public display’ online, there is one often-
photographed place by Springsteen fans that is of particular interest, namely the street intersection between 10th Avenue and E Street in Belmar, New Jersey, located in the Asbury Park area. This place holds symbolic value to many Springsteen fans because of the two street names: 10th Avenue is referred to in the name of a Bruce Springsteen song (‘10th Avenue Freeze-Out’), and E Street is the name of Springsteen’s band, the E Street Band. There is no indication, however, that Springsteen named either the song or his band after this intersection, yet the intersection became a fan-favorite symbolic photo spot for many tourists – so much so that an eight-foot high replica of Springsteen’s guitar was put on display here in 2011 (Mikle and Goldstein 151) (see image 2). There is even a webpage (along with a Facebook page) dedicated to fan photographs taken in this spot, called ‘My Bosstime: Greetings from Belmar’ where many fans have uploaded their photo taken there (see image 3).

In the questionnaire, the majority of fans respond affirmatively to the question of whether or not they had taken a photo at this intersection. Moreover, the following fan’s response implies a sense of self-evidence of taking a photo at this particular intersection by writing: “of course we [took] photos on the corner of 10th Ave and E street” (respondent 183) and another fan also emphasizes the significance of this place by explaining that they took “many, MANY photos over the years at 10th and E” (respondent 38). Another fan even states that the 10th Avenue / E Street intersection is one of the “must have pictures” (respondent 166). Even
though no responses specifically mentioned the *My Bosstime* website, it is likely that these fans have seen photographs of the intersection via fellow fans, since it is a place of which its symbolic meaning has been produced, reproduced, and circulated by fans. These fans, as the image below illustrates, often share their photograph online (usually within the online fan community, for example on the aforementioned website, fan forums such as *Greasy Lake* or *Backstreets*, or in Facebook groups, not only expanding the (constructed) significance of this place, but also of this practice, within the online fan community. Consequently, by visiting the intersection, taking a photograph there, and uploading it online, fans may be recognized as part of the community of Springsteen *tourists*. In other words, such participation may “impact on fans’ status within the community” (Williams 256).

We have already seen in a previous section of this chapter that information which is (re)constructed by fans and which circulates within the community can be considered ‘fan knowledge’. Usually, this ‘knowledge’ is constructed in a process that Williams calls “textual productivity,” as this information usually takes the form of texts, like blogs or magazines, created by fans (247). However, as the popularity of the photographs at the Belmar intersection show, this process may also apply to photography. As such, we can adapt the term and call the process of fans (re)constructing and circulating this image a form of ‘visual productivity’. This process, and this example, demonstrate the significant degree of agency that fans of Bruce Springsteen have in constructing places such as this intersection as tourist destinations.

Furthermore, in the questionnaire, many fans indicate that they took photographs specifically of places where well-known photographs of Springsteen himself were taken (e.g. because they appeared on album or single sleeves), and some fans re-enacted Bruce Springsteen in their photographs. For example, one fan remarks that they took a photo in the music venue the Stone Pony, where many photographs of Springsteen on stage were taken, pretending to be Bruce Springsteen: “we stood on the stage at the Stone Pony, and posed like him in concert” (respondent 17). Another fan describes that they took photos “remembering Born in the U.S.A.” at Springsteen’s former home 39 ½ Institute Street, where photos of Springsteen himself, leaning against a tree in front of the house, were taken and appeared on his 1985 album *Born in the U.S.A.* (respondent 48). Similarly, more fans indicate that they took pictures of the location of Springsteen’s *Born in the U.S.A.* photo, and some fans even specified that they re-enacted Springsteen’s pose: “[we took pictures] leaning against the tree” (respondent 8) (for an example of such a photo, see image 4). Other fans describe similar
practices of taking photos in front of the Empress hotel in Asbury Park, where a photo of Springsteen himself was also taken and used as the cover of his *Hungry Heart* single; one fan describes that they ‘did’ the “Hungry Heart cover with the Empress hotel in the background” (respondent 21) and another fan similarly remarks that they ‘did’ the “Hungry Heart single” (respondent 50).

![Image 4. Example of (fan) tourist re-enacting Springsteen’s pose at his former home. Photo by author.](image)

This is a practice that has been studied predominantly in studies of film- and TV-induced tourism; for example, in his article on re-enacting and photographing at screen tourism locations, Kim argues that “the symbolically contextualized meanings behind this particular space provoked audiences to build a strong attachment with the place” (67). In other words, such photographs do not merely present an aesthetically pleasing view; they rather represent a tourists’ attachment to both the place as well as what or who they are re-enacting.

Additionally, re-enacting a photo is also a way of ‘placing’ oneself in the narrative of what is being re-enacted; as Kim states, the environment where a photo is re-enacted by fans is then “actively used as a performance stage upon which tourists’ own narratives and discourses are played out and re-interpreted through the re-enactment and photography, against the backdrop in terms of [the TV series]” (69). Even though this analysis focuses on re-enacting scenes and photographs from film and TV locations, the same can be argued for
these Bruce Springsteen fans. By taking photographs on the same locations as familiar photographs of Springsteen, in doing so, fans symbolically place themselves in the narrative of Bruce Springsteen’s life and music. The image taken then provides a tangible memory of the experience of an authentic connection to both Bruce Springsteen as well as the place.

“Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.”: Souvenirs as Tangible Memories of an Intangible Experience

Since (music) tourism is, in essence, an intangible experience, it is also interesting to take into account the ways in which tourists remember their trip through the purchase of tangible objects: souvenirs. According to two renowned scholars in tourism studies, there is a significant relationship between tourism, materiality, and self-identity (Morgan and Pritchard 30). They argue that “physical artefacts of tourism materialize self-identity and mediate our sense and memory of place” (30). Consequently, Morgan and Pritchard argue in their article on souvenirs and metonymy that souvenirs can be considered “part of [our] own individual projects of self-creation” and that they present a “narrative of its possessor” (34). In other words, souvenirs may function as objects reflecting how we see ourselves and how we want to present ourselves.

Since souvenirs can be considered a reflection of self-identity, souvenirs may therefore also function to illustrate the status of an ‘authentic traveler’; according to Morgan and Pritchard, souvenirs can “become important symbols of the acquired cultural capital of travel experience and many tourists engage in the collection and display of souvenirs to preserve, extend or to exhibit their tourism experiences” (39).

Furthermore, souvenirs become increasingly symbolic, they argue, when we consider a place especially meaningful, as “for some of us, certain tourism places are sacred places, charged with personal and social significance” (41).

In the case of Bruce Springsteen fans who visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, buying – and displaying – souvenirs, functions not only as a marker of their identity as a Springsteen fan, but also of a traveling fan, in both personal and social contexts. For example, one fan indicates that the souvenirs they bought indeed function as an identity-marker: “I have many things that say ‘Jersey Girl,’ a few postcards, t-shirts from the stone pony, a box covered with the Greetings album, coasters, books. They pretty much represent a good portion of my identity” (respondent 38). Furthermore, in the questionnaire, some fans
indicated that they bought t-shirts of sites like the Stone Pony and the Wonder Bar, which they wear when going to concerts. One fan responds that they bought “Stone Pony shirts for me, my wife and three kids which we all wore when we saw him in Rome” (respondent 53). Another fan similarly responds that they bought a “t-shirt with the Greetings from Asbury Park logo” which they “always wear to concerts” (respondent 122). Not only can t-shirts be considered as souvenirs and function as markers of self-identity in that way, they are also a form of clothing, which is perhaps the most obvious and visible presentation of self-identity. Additionally, such t-shirts also function as physical *embodiment* of their travels as well as their fandom. In wearing these t-shirt souvenirs to social events, such as a concert, these fans present themselves as part of ‘the fans who have been to Asbury Park’ as opposed to ‘the fans who have not’; implying not only a distinction but also a certain hierarchy *within* the Bruce Springsteen fan community. This is illustrated, for example, by the following fan who states: “I feel as if the Stone Pony shirt identifies me to other fans without being obvious” (respondent 42). As such, the body plays an active role in remembering the trip and in portraying the fandom.

Not only do souvenirs present a narrative of self, they also present a memory of a place. In the questionnaire, when asked about whether or not they bought souvenirs, many fans indicate that they bought souvenirs symbolizing the places they visited, such as the Stone Pony, the Wonder Bar, or Asbury Park itself, and that these souvenirs function as a physical memory. When asked what the souvenirs they bought meant for them, one fan remarks: “[they are] endless reminders of one of my favorite places in the world – brings me peace” (respondent 169). Another fan describes that they bought “a cup, a t-shirt, a puzzle, a can, a postcard and a magnet” of Asbury Park and that “it means a lasting memory” (respondent 48). Another fan touches upon the lasting connection that the physical object provides between them and the place that was visited: “[the souvenirs] mean a lot – my own little piece of New Jersey” (respondent 8).

As these examples show, such souvenirs can function to memorialize the places that the fans found meaningful. Additionally, since these souvenirs can officially only be bought there, their authenticity adds to a sense of engagement and connection to the place.

According to Morgan and Pritchard, souvenirs are “touchstones of memory, evoking memories of places and relationships” (41). Especially when a place is meaningful to us, they argue, souvenirs are a way of engaging us with that place, or, in Morgan and Pritchard’s terms, they function as “a personal appropriation of the world” (41). Souvenirs are, thus, more
than merely objects that we purchase: they represent memories that are shaped by our emotional attachment to a place. Consequently, souvenirs often “speak to a context of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value, it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia” (Morgan and Pritchard 45). In other words, souvenirs may also function to materialize a sense of nostalgia to a place; this sense of nostalgia is exemplified by the following fan’s response to the question of what the souvenirs mean to them, as they state it is “evidence how fast time goes.... “ (respondent 39). Another fan responds with a similar notion of nostalgia that the “Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.” is “posted at my job to remind me of my fun trip” (respondent 129). It can be argued that this sense of nostalgia especially holds true for forms of tourism, such as music tourism, that rely largely on the emotional, personal, and social significance of a particular place to fans.

In this case of music tourism, however, it does not only add to a sense of connection to the place itself, but also to a sense of connection to the musician that brought them there in the first place. Many fans responded that they bought souvenirs (such as postcards or magnets) displaying the “Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.” logo, which also forms the album cover of Springsteen’s (same-titled) first album. For example, one fan even specifically states the connection that the post card from Asbury Park still provides: “Sent my now-husband of 39 years a Greetings postcard in 1978. … [It] connects me to my lost home and to Bruce” (respondent 45).

In conclusion, the responses discussed in this chapter have shown that the experiences of these fans center largely around an array of bodily senses: Asbury Park provides a place where these fans can ‘feel’ the influences of Bruce Springsteen, where they can get a better understanding of him and his music, where they can see with their own eyes where he grew up and which places provided him with the inspiration for his music, where they can listen to Springsteen’s music or to local music, and where they can get a sense of being in the same places where Springsteen has been so often. Asbury Park provides an intimate and meaningful connection to these fans. Music tourism, thus, can therefore add a whole new level to fandom: it extends the experiences of listening to and engaging with music and transforms those experiences into a fully embodied experience through tourism.

Moreover, in Asbury Park, the significance of Springsteen and his music is mapped onto actual geographical locations; however, who does the ‘mapping’? Who decides which locations are meaningful and worth of a visit? In this case study, the fans have demonstrated a significant degree of agency in these constructions. To some extent, of course, Springsteen
himself has played a part in the construction of particular places as possible ‘Springsteen landmarks’, by writing songs about these places, and by mentioning these places in, for example, his autobiography. However, it is not Springsteen who has transformed these places into tourist attractions; rather, the fans have decided which Springsteen landmarks are meaningful to them and therefore worth visiting, they share experiences and photographs with each other, travel together sometimes, and they engage with Springsteen’s music on site. As such, within their fan community, these fans produce, reproduce, and circulate ideas of places, often public places such as an intersection, a music venue, or a house, as specifically meaningful to Springsteen fans, and subsequently transform these places into tourist locations for Springsteen fans.
Conclusion

In conclusion, in this thesis, I aimed to extend our understanding of (fan) tourists’ perception of sites of music tourism by asking the question of how fans of Bruce Springsteen construct Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as (Springsteen-based) tourist destinations. As we have seen, Asbury Park and the Jersey shore mean a lot to fans of Bruce Springsteen in multiple ways: they often feel a (preformed) connection, or a sense of belonging, to these places through Springsteen’s personal history, his music, and his lyrics. Then, vice versa, visiting these places also strengthens their (emotional) connection to Springsteen, his music and lyrics.

The experience of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore provides fans with an authentic connection to Springsteen. As discussed in this thesis, being a ‘fan’ is more than just the consumption of products of popular culture: experiences, especially ones that provide an (emotional) connection to their fandom, are often of great significance to fans. Music tourism can provide fans with such experiences. In both the discourses of the fans’ motivations for as well as experiences of visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, the themes of ‘feeling connected’ and ‘feeling close’ to Springsteen often return. The significance of physical embodiment of the place also frequently returns in the fans’ responses; many fans describe visiting the area as an experience of finally ‘being there’. Visiting these places allows fans the opportunity to literally walk in Springsteen’s footsteps. Music tourism therefore provides fans with an unmediated, embodied experience of their fandom.

In other words, music tourism provides a spatial connection between fans and their fandom. As such, music tourism can function as an extension of fandom: it is an embodied way of performing fandom, not only by seeing, feeling, and simply being in those places, but also through listening to music they associate with the place. Whether this is Springsteen’s music or local music, whether the experience is communal or individual, internal or external, experiencing the area’s soundscape is an often returning theme in the responses of many Springsteen fans. Moreover, through the significance that fans attribute to experiencing Asbury Park’s soundscape, and by visiting sites of music heritage in the Asbury Park area such as the Wonder Bar or the Stone Pony, Springsteen fans also (re)construct Asbury Park’s mythical (quasi-religious, even) status as a contemporary ‘music mecca’.

Getting a better understanding of both Springsteen and his music is also key to the discourses of fans’ motivations and experiences. Since many fans consider Springsteen’s
cultural and social environment in New Jersey to have influenced and shaped him musically, many fans aim to get a better understanding of the ‘roots’ of his music by visiting sites of music production, like the Wonder Bar or the Stone Pony, in the Asbury Park area. Moreover, fans also indicate that visiting sites related to Springsteen’s personal life would provide them with a better understanding of Springsteen as an individual. Places such as Springsteen’s former homes provide a tangible connection to Springsteen’s past, and they allow fans to witness and experience places that have shaped Springsteen personally.

Since many of Springsteen’s lyrics are lively and detailed narratives taking place in Asbury Park or along the Jersey shore, many fans also express an interest in visiting locations that Springsteen mentions in his songs, such as Madame Marie’s or the Asbury Park boardwalk. The fans’ preformed familiarity with these places through Springsteen’s lyrics adds to the emotional connection fans experience when visiting these places, in accordance with Reijnders’ notion of ‘topophilia’, which can be defined as a love of place that arose through the love of a story that takes place there. Visiting these lyrical places provides a closer, physical connection to these songs: fans can not only visualize the lyrics, they can also feel immersed in these songs; or, as one fan put it, they can feel as if they are ‘walking in a Bruce Springsteen song’. They can, temporarily, feel like they are a part of Springsteen’s story world.

From the fans’ discourses it can also be concluded that, for many of these fans, Asbury Park and the Jersey shore are constituted as ‘essentially Springsteen’. In other words, this entire area functions as a geographical representation of Springsteen and his music. Whereas some sites provide a more specific connection to Springsteen, such as his former homes or places he mentions in his lyrics, overall, as one fan puts it, in the Asbury Park area ‘all roads lead to Bruce’. In other words, Springsteen feels omnipresent for many of these fans, which adds to the appeal of travelling there.

Another way in which visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore is constructed as a meaningful experience is through the use of religious discourses. Frequently, the places are referred to in (quasi-)religious terms such as ‘spiritual’, ‘mecca’, or ‘sacred ground’. Many fans also confirm that travelling to the Asbury Park area may be considered a pilgrimage, with some fans mentioning that they actually use the term ‘pilgrimage’ themselves to explain the meaning of their visit. Consequently, as various scholars have argued that places of pilgrimage are not in themselves sacred, but rather culturally and socially constructed, a place
like Asbury Park undergoes a process of ‘sacralization’, in which it is marked, by fans, as a specifically meaningful and quasi-religious tourist destination.

As a result of this high degree of meaningfulness, some fans express such a strong sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the places that they refer to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as ‘home’. In doing so, they symbolically appropriate the places as (partly) ‘theirs’. In other words, they not only literally, but also symbolically come to (temporarily) inhabit ‘Bruceland’.

Furthermore, experiencing a sense of belonging to the fan community is also expressed as being of significant value to these fans. Visiting Asbury Park and the Jersey shore may provide a communal experience, for example when fans travel together or when they meet other fans on site. Additionally, it may also provide a sense of shared, collective identity with a symbolic (imagined) community of other fans who have had similar experiences and who share a similar understanding of the meaningfulness of (visiting) these sites of Springsteen-heritage in the Asbury Park area.

This fan community is key to how Asbury Park and the Jersey shore are constructed as an ‘essentially Springsteen’ tourist destination. Many fans rely on information from within the fandom about which specific sites to visit. Springsteen fans constitute a location related to Springsteen as meaningful (for example through his lyrics or through his autobiography), and consequently these sites become constructed as ‘Springsteen landmarks’ as more and more fans talk about and go to visit these sites. Then, information about these ‘Springsteen landmarks’ is circulated and reproduced predominantly within the (online) fan community, and as such, it becomes ‘fan knowledge’. Through this communal construction of a specifically Springsteen-related tourist narrative of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, ‘regular’ and public places, such as intersections, homes, boardwalks, or music bars, are transformed into tourist destinations by and for Springsteen fans. In doing so, a culture of Springsteen-based music tourism is developed and reconstructed within the community of Springsteen fans.

Other aspects that add to this construction of Springsteen-based music tourism in the Asbury Park area by fans are the practices of Springsteen-related photography and purchasing Springsteen-related souvenirs. Through practices of taking (and recreating) photos of Springsteen-related sites and purchasing souvenirs that are Springsteen-related, fans not only
materialize their memories of a meaningful trip, but they also participate in typical tourist-practices; as such, they actively perform music fandom within the context of tourism.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Springsteen fans play an essential role in the construction of Asbury Park and the Jersey shore area as a music tourism destination: they (re)define tourist practices in the area as well as discourses about the area.

In addition to these concluding remarks, I would like to point out that in music tourism, there are still many topics unexplored. While I hope to have provided interesting insights regarding the perspective of Bruce Springsteen fan tourists and their role in constructing music tourism, there are still many other interesting subjects, such as the relationship between video and sound in music tourism or the relationship between the ‘host community’ and fan tourists to be researched. I believe that such subjects, and more extensive research of the variety of music tourism in general, will uncover many more insights about a type of tourism that has recently became increasingly popular and more widespread.

Lastly, I would like to leave you with the following quote by Bruce Springsteen himself, taken out of his autobiography Born to Run: “No one you have been and no place you have gone ever leaves you. The new parts of you simply jump in the car and go along for the rest of the ride. The success of your journey and your destination all depend on who's driving” (265).
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Appendix
Appendix 1

Bruce Springsteen tourism to Asbury Park (& the Jersey shore)

Dear fellow Bruce Springsteen fans,

For my final thesis of my Master's degree in Tourism & Culture, I am looking into the motivations, expectations and experiences of Bruce Springsteen fans travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.

(Note: By Jersey shore, I am referring to other towns in Monmouth County close to Asbury Park which are also related to Bruce Springsteen, such as Freehold, Belmar, and Long Branch)

For my research, I need the help of Bruce Springsteen experts! You are welcome to fill out this questionnaire whether you have visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore or not.

If you have visited these places, the following questions will be aimed at your motivations, expectations and experiences.
If you have not visited these places, please fill out only the questions applicable to you, aimed at your motivations and expectations.

This questionnaire will consist of 34 questions in total, divided into three sections (6 demographic questions, 8 questions about you as a Bruce Springsteen fan, and 20 questions about traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore).

The majority of these are open questions, since I wanted to give you as much freedom as possible to describe your sentiments and experiences. Please answer them as extensively as possible.

If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, or if a question is not applicable to you, please leave it open.

Alternatively, if you would like to further discuss your experiences of traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore with me, or if you do not have the time to fill out this questionnaire but you would like to participate nonetheless, please feel free to contact me: kimvan.helden@student.ru.nl

Your responses will be treated with confidentiality, they will not be used for any other purpose than my thesis, and the results used in my final thesis will be anonymous.

Thank you in advance!

Demographic questions

If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, or if a question is not applicable to you, please leave it open.

1. 1. Age

2. 2. Gender

   Mark only one oval.
   - Female
   - Male
   - Other / I'd rather not say

3. 3. Country of residence
4. If you are from the U.S.: current State of residence

5. Highest level of education completed

6. Current occupation

7. Religious preference

8. Political orientation

You and Bruce Springsteen
If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, or if a question is not applicable to you, please leave it open.

9. How long have you considered yourself a Bruce Springsteen fan?

10. Have you seen Bruce Springsteen perform live, and if yes, how many times?

11. Have you ever traveled relatively far (out of state or out of country) to see Bruce Springsteen live?

12. Do you consider yourself to be a part of the Bruce Springsteen fan community?

13. If yes, in which ways do you participate in the fan community?
14. 6. Last but not least: what does Bruce Springsteen mean to you?

________________________________________________________________________

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Traveling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore

Note: By Jersey shore, I am referring to other towns in Monmouth County close to Asbury Park which are also related to Bruce Springsteen, such as Freehold, Belmar, and Long Branch.

If you have not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, please only answer question 1, 2, 6, 7, 15, 17, and 20.

If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, or if a question is not applicable to you, please leave it open.

15. 1. Have you been to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore? If so, which town(s) did you visit?

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16. If not, why have you not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore? Would you like to or do you plan to visit it in the (near) future?

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17. 2. How important is travelling to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore as a Bruce Springsteen fan to you?
   Please also answer this question if you have not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.

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18. If you have been to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore, please describe the main reason(s) for your visit.

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23. **Which Bruce-related sites did you visit in Asbury Park and the Jersey shore?**

If you have not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore yet, please select the sites which you would like to visit.

*Tick all that apply.*

- [ ] Bruce's former home at 716 Cookman Avenue in Asbury Park
- [ ] Brick with Bruce's name on it, in front of Columbia Triumphant statue on East Main Street, Freehold
- [ ] The Stone Pony
- [ ] Madam Marie's
- [ ] The Upstage Club
- [ ] The Paramount Theatre
- [ ] Bruce's former home at 1703 Webb Street in Asbury Park
- [ ] Bruce's former home at 39 1/2 Institute Street, Freehold
- [ ] Bruce's former home at 87 Randolph Street, Freehold
- [ ] Bruce's former home at 7 1/2 West End Court, Long Branch (the "Born to Run" house)
- [ ] Palace Amusements (before it was torn down)
- [ ] The Circuit
- [ ] Convention Hall
- [ ] Bruce's former home at 68 South Street, Freehold
- [ ] The Wonder Bar
- [ ] 10th Avenue / E Street corner, Belmar
- [ ] "Where Music Lives Gallery" by Asbury Park Musical Heritage Foundation
- [ ] The Fast Lane
- [ ] Freehold High School
- [ ] The Asbury Park Boardwalk
- [ ] The Casino on the Boardwalk
- [ ] S.O.A.P Monument
- [ ] St. Rose of Lima Church, Freehold
- [ ] Other: ____________________________

24. **Which non-Bruce-related sites did you visit?**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

25. **How did you experience... (i.e. what did you do there and how did you like it)**

Visiting places related to Springsteen's life (e.g. his former homes or schools):

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
26. Visiting places related to sites of music production (e.g. the Stone Pony, the Wonder Bar, the Upstage Club)

27. Visiting places you recognized from his music/lyrics (e.g. the Asbury Park boardwalk, Madam Marie's)

28. Which of the abovementioned categories did you find most significant to visit as a Bruce Springsteen fan?

29. 10. Which of the sites that you visited did you find the most impressive and which did you find the least impressive, and why?

30. 11. In case you also visited sites of music production (e.g. the Stone Pony, the Wonder Bar, the Upstage Club), did you also visit a music show there?
31. 12. Would you recommend going to Asbury Park and the Jersey shore to a friend who is also Bruce Springsteen fan? If so, which sites specifically and why?

32. 13. Did you meet or talk to other Bruce Springsteen fans during your visit, and if so, what did this mean to you?

33. 14. Did you share your experiences online (e.g. on a weblog, on social media, on a fan forum such as Greasy Lake or Backstreets, etc.)? If so, where and why?
   If you like, feel free to include a link to where you shared your experiences.

34. 15. Would you describe visiting Asbury Park, the Jersey shore, and these Bruce-related sites as a fan pilgrimage? Why (not)? If so, which sites specifically?
   Please also answer this question if you have not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.

35. 16. Did your trip meet your expectations? Why (not)?
36. **17. If there were, for example, an official Bruce Springsteen museum in Asbury Park (with an affordable entrance fee) would you be interested in going there?**

Please also answer this question if you have not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.

37. **18. Have you bought Asbury Park or Bruce Springsteen related souvenirs? If so, what did you buy and what does this souvenir mean to you?**

38. **19. Did you take any 'fan' photographs? For example, posing by the corner of E Street / 10th Avenue in Belmar or leaning against the tree next to Bruce's former home on 39 1/2 Institute Street, Freehold? Which other Bruce-related sites did you find important to photograph and which ones not?**

Since music tourism is generally considered to be mostly related to sounds, I am also interested in how visual images of places of music tourism are created. If you would like to share (some of) your photographs with me, feel free to send additional photographs to: kimvan.helden@student.ru.nl The photographs will not be published or used for any other purpose.

39. **20. Last but not least: being a Bruce Springsteen fan, what does Asbury Park mean to you?**

Please also answer this question if you have not visited Asbury Park and the Jersey shore.