

Research Article

The exploitation of movie sets in filming locations

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Introduction

Without a doubt, movies are generally perceived, by the public, as a series of images projected in the cinema halls. Consequently, the fact that a number of steps is required for a film to reach cinemas, is often overlooked.

In particular, the completion of a film requires the coordination of artistic and technical requirements, which include among others writing the script, funding and post production. Therefore, it is obvious, that cinema has a dual nature, as it consists of the complete film we see in the screen but also of an activity that is part of a whole industry. This particular paper will not focus on the image of the film we see in the cinema halls, but on the process of making the films, and more precisely on the sets created each time for a particular movie.

More precisely, in order to begin filming, the director, the producer or the films' location manager have to choose the site in which the movie will be shot. After the shooting is completed, these sites are either abandoned or exploited as tourist attractions. This paper will analyze the use of abandoned shooting sites, the way they are integrated in the specific locations where the shooting took place and their subsequent exploitation.

In the cases in which particular sets are created at the locations, they are, often, used as tourist attractions developing in this way the phenomenon of film tourism. Film tourism, in general, is defined as the visiting of places where television programs and films have been shot, as well as tours at production studios, including theme parks inspired by the particular films (Beeton, 2005). According to a second definition, film tourism is the phenomenon of tourists' visiting an attractive destination, as a result of its appearance on the cinema screen, DVD or TV. (Busby & Klug, 2001).

As far as research related to film tourism is concerned, it examines the exploitation of shooting sites and their subsequent use as a means of attracting tourists due to the films. In these locations, in most cases, there are no movie sets preserved, but because of the beauty of the various locations, the audience has vivid memories of their portrayal in the movies. Therefore, cinema is used as a vehicle for attracting places of exceptional beauty.

This paper, however, will not analyze the rationale of attracting tourists due to environmental wealth and beauty. But, it will focus on the locations where parts of the sets of the film

created for its needs, have been preserved. As far as these areas are concerned, we will study the way in which the movie sets are integrated in the area and the ways they are used by locals in order to exploit their preservation. Initially, the exact site where the sets are located will be determined in relation to the specific country; the structure of the sets will be analyzed, as well as the policy which resulted in their preservation. Moreover, we will examine the ways in which they are currently used. Finally, the consequences of this use for the local community will be highlighted, in particular as far as the attraction of tourists is concerned. In order to perform this analysis, 5 different movie sets, "Hobbit Holes," from the filming of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy in New Zealand's Matamata, the "Pirates of the Caribbean" set in Wallilabou, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the "Liban Quarry" in Krakow from the film "Schindler's List", the Eastern State Penitentiary, a historic prison in Philadelphia in the United States of America, where scenes of the movie "12 Monkeys" and "Old Mill" in North Little Rock, Arkansas in the United States of America, which was used in "Gone with the Wind".

Wallilabou Anchorage-Pirates of the Caribbean

Wallilabou Anchorage, a hotel unit, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was the main site where the 2003 movie "Pirates of the Caribbean" was filmed. The set was built around the hotel and in the restaurant, while the rooms were used as "Green Rooms" for the actors. Port Royal, the port in which the hotel is built, was used as the pirate city of the film. The manager of the hotel decided to maintain the setting and in the years that followed, he has created a museum in the site which includes the remnants of the film sets and proposes a series of activities to visitors, linked to the film. In addition, several costumes of the protagonists are preserved, and there is also the possibility for tourists to take photos wearing them.

In order to fully approach the question of the use of the site and the consequences of its' use in the local community, a questionnaire was sent to the hotel unit in order to obtain the information required for the relevant analysis. The questionnaire, which was sent to all of the relevant authorities responsible for exploiting the movie sets, included the following questions: 1. Distance from closest city/village/settlement 2. Population of closest

city/village/settlement 3. Location of closest city/village/settlement in the country (e.g. Center, North, South, East, West) 4. What do the movie sets left at the location consist of? 5. Were the movie sets left at the location due to government and local policy in order to be exploited or were they abandoned by the film production company? 6. Are the movie sets used in connection to the movie (e.g. Tourist attraction, Theme park, Museum)? If yes, what kind of activities are organized related to the movie? 7. Is or was there in place a promotion campaign related to the movie set, in order to attract tourism? 8. Has the number of tourists grown in the places where the movie sets are located? If yes, could you provide some relevant numbers?

Initially, according to the replies of the director of the hotel, the setting is in Wallilabou, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, it is located 400 meters from the village of Keartons and 1660 meters from the city of Barrouallie. The nearest town has a population of 9000 people and the nearest village is just south of the set. Moreover, according to the answers given to the questionnaire, the set consists of three buildings representing a market building and two residential complexes. According to the answer given to the question of whether the scenes were preserved by private or public initiative it became clear that the movie set is located in private property. More precisely, it was preserved thanks to the insistence of the owner of the hotel who agreed to compensate Disney Pictures for its use.

The set today is mainly used as a tourist destination. It features objects from the film and photographs taken during filming. While, part of the scenery also functions as an archaeological site. The next question was whether or not there was a campaign promoting the site as the location where the film "Pirates of the Caribbean" was shot. According to the answer, before the film, Wallilabou Bay was already a yacht port. However, the years following the film, it has become a favorite destination for cruise tours for passengers and specific film-tourists. There is also a relevant website about the tourist attraction created by the hotel and advertisements are included in relevant magazines and tourist guides. As far as tourism in the area is concerned, the directors of the hotel answered that the exact number of tourist inflows after the shooting of the film is difficult to determine. However, tourism is estimated to grow 5% per season (November to March) each year. It is estimated that the site attracts about 5000 visitors per month.

Concluding, we should firstly point out that this set is located in a very small country in the Caribbean, which is mainly approached with flights of 6-8 hours from the United States of America, from Miami. Despite the small size and the fact that it is located so far from the US, an effort has been made to maintain the set and actively exploit it in order to attract tourists. Therefore, the efforts of the locals to attract additional tourism thanks to the film and the existence of the scenery are evident. In addition, it should be noted that this is a private effort and not a public initiative, as the film was shot in a hotel. The directors of the hotel were those who took the decision to compensate Disney for the exploitation of the set and its use for touristic purposes. As far as activities at the set are concerned, it should be mentioned that, according to the

answers to our questionnaire, the opportunity of trying costumes of the movie, taking photos and buying souvenirs is given to the tourists. Moreover, according to the answers to our questionnaire, there has been a significant rise in tourism. In conclusion, due to the increasing flow of tourists in the region, the acquisition and exploitation of the scenery by the hotel is judged as successful.

Matamata New Zealand

The trilogy of the movies of the "Lord of the Rings" used as a set, for a number of its scenes, an area called Matamata in New Zealand. While the last movie of the trilogy was projected in cinemas in 2003, the set has been preserved till today and the whole area was given the name "Hobbiton Movie Set".

Firstly, we should note that a questionnaire was sent to the area, which was answered. According to the answers given, the area is in the center-north part of the island, 15 minutes from Matamata and 45 minutes from the area Hamilton/Rotorua/Tauranga. The closest city is Matamata, with a population of 30.000 people.

The "Hobbiton Movie Set" functions today as a theme park. Moreover, an entire industry has been created around it. As far as activities proposed are concerned, firstly, guided tours are offered to tourists in the area and the film set. In addition, there are restaurants with delicacies and beverages which were consumed by the films' protagonists. There is, also a souvenir shop and there is an area which can be used for events.

Regarding the way by which the site is promoted we should note that the permission for the set to be preserved was ensured by an agreement between the owner of the area and the films' director Peter Jackson, who is also from New Zealand. As far as the promotion is concerned, we should note that New Zealand has engaged in significant touristic promotion of the site. Precisely, "Hobbiton Movie Set" co-operates with New Zealand's official touristic service, "Tourism New Zealand". According to the answers to our questionnaire, in 2011 the number of tourists was 25.000 and in 2017, 640.000. It is, therefore, evident that the function of the "Hobbiton Movie Set" as a touristic attraction can be regarded as successful.

In conclusion, we should, firstly, point out that the permission given concerned a private property and not a public area which already belonged to the country. We should also refer to the fact that the set was preserved in the specific area where the movie was shot, due to the directors' actions. There may have been an official attempt to ensure the permission; however, it ended up to be awarded due to the initiative and intervention of a local, the director, Peter Jackson. However, even though the acquisition of the permission involved the director, after its acquisition it became a matter of official touristic promotion via different touristic services. More precisely, as we have already pointed out, its promotion has been a co-operation between "Hobbiton Movie Set" and "Tourism New Zealand". The basic fact we should note, which is the characteristic that differentiates this case from all of the others we have chosen to study in this analysis, is that New Zealand has put in place a whole industry concerning "Hobbiton Movie Set". The "Hobbiton Movie Set", is not, therefore, just a private attempt

to attract tourists as for example in Wallilabou. Finally, we should retain the fact that there has been a significant rise in the number of tourists. It is, therefore, evident that this attempt has contributed to the boost of tourism in New Zealand.

Eastern State Penitentiary-12 Monkeys

The Eastern State Penitentiary, during the 19th century, was one of the most prestigious and important prisons in the world. In particular, it was, especially, known for its architecture. Moreover, as far as the treatment of prisoners is concerned, the prison was known for its strict discipline. More precisely, notorious criminals were held in this prison such as Slick Willie Sutton and Al Capone. Today, it is used as a museum with guided tours for both private individuals, and schools. It also contains historical exhibits and art installations. In addition, there is space which can be rented for events. The basic reason for which the prison is preserved and still used as a museum and exhibitions' center is the portrayal and understanding of the history of imprisonment and justice in the United States from its birth to the present.

The prison area was used as a set for the shooting of the movie "12 Monkeys" in 1995. The film is directed by Terry Gilliam starring Brad Pitt, Madeleine Stowe and Bruce Willis. The prison area was used in many scenes of the film, according to the plot, as an asylum in which the protagonists were held.

A questionnaire was also sent in this case to the relevant department, but it was not answered probably because the site is not strongly connected with the shooting of the particular film. Therefore, specific sets of the film which possibly were built or transferred for the particular shooting, in the prisons' area, during the filming such as e.g. suits or furniture, have not been preserved. The site, nowadays, functions as a museum, with its main object being the history of the prison and justice in the USA and is not intensively connected with the film or the organization of relevant activities. It is possible that during the tour, the guide mentions the shooting of the film. But there is no further connection of the site with the movie "12 Monkeys". However, we should point out a single event related to the movie that took place in the Eastern State Penitentiary, which was an outdoor projection of the film "12 Monkeys" during the summer of 2011.

In conclusion, as far as this particular case study is concerned, it should be noted that the shooting took place in an area that operates autonomously as a museum and thus as a tourist attraction. Without a doubt, the prison is not an area which would acquire a special tourist stream, exclusively, thanks to the film, as it had already operated autonomously for a great number of years and was already a notorious institution. Therefore, it is observed that there was no real need to attract additional tourists due to the film, as there was already a tourist stream for the prison per se. In addition, it should be noted that this is not an area of exceptional beauty such as the St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which can enhance its tourist flow through the projection of the beauty of the filming location. Moreover, it was not used in the film in a way that highlights the story of one of the true life prisoners or in a way that is related to a part of history that has become a center of interest throughout the

world like, for example, Oscar Sindler's story (the shooting of the related film will be examined subsequently) which has to do with the Second World War. The film is basically, a sci-fi film which centers its attention to a fantastic story of a virus which destroyed humanity and the efforts put from a group of people to save mankind. Therefore, we reached the conclusion that, for the above mentioned main reasons, the Eastern State Penitentiary did not include film-related activities in its program. Nevertheless, it remains a question whether the existence of related activities would trigger a particular and significant tourist flow.

North Little Rock

Our next case study concerns the film "Gone with the Wind" (1939) which filmed one of its opening scenes in T.R. Pugh Memorial Park in North Little Rock, a town of 66.000 people in Arkansas in the USA. More precisely, the scene was filmed in front of an old mill which is situated in the park. The mill was created, by the Mexican artist Dionico Rodriguez and the architect Frank Carmean, as an exhibit in the area of the park to represent an old grinding mill. It is currently listed in the «National Register of Historic Places». Moreover, it is considered as the only remaining building of the movie. In this case, our questionnaire was sent but was not answered.

Today, it is mainly used as a font for marriage photos and portraits. There are also guided tours which, however, concern the whole parks' attractions and not just the old mill. It is, therefore, possible that during the tours, the guides refer to the shooting of the film at the mill. The basic "trace" of the films' shooting in the area can, nowadays, be found in specific touristic websites like tripadvisor and atlasobscura. It is, consequently, obvious that the area is not used for touristic promotion connected with the movie, but only as an attraction situated in the park.

As a conclusion, we should firstly note that the site is not intensively linked to the movie. Apart from, the guided tours in the whole park, there are no touristic activities linked to the movie. The authorities of North Little Rock have not engaged in promoting the shooting location as part of the film. However, we should point out that there are websites and private blogs which connect the location with the movie. This lack of activities can be mainly attributed to the fact that only a short opening scene of the movie was filmed at the location. The site was not, therefore, used as a set for a great number of movie scenes. Consequently, it is possible that it has been difficult for local authorities to create activities which could connect the old mill with the film and attract a tourist flow. However, we should refer to the fact that the old mill is situated in a park which is per se a location of natural beauty. This location already attracts tourists and it remains a question if it could attract more tourists due to a possible connection to the movie "Gone with the Wind". Moreover, we should note that the movie is a truly emblematic film for a whole era of Hollywood films. It is also considered one of the top films ever made. In addition, the old mill is the only movie set used in the film still remaining. For all these reasons, it is thought that the creation and carrying out of special events connected to the

movie could result in a touristic flow at the whole area.

Liban Quarry

In 1992 Steven Spielberg delivered the film “Schindler’s List” which concerned a story placed in a concentration camp in Poland during the Second World War. For the needs of the scenario the “Liban Quarry” in Krakow was used as the concentration camp of the movie. In this case we also sent a questionnaire to the local authorities in Krakow but it was not answered.

As far as the location of the quarry is concerned, it is placed near the real Plaszow Camp, which was destroyed by the German troops before the end of the Second World War. Moreover, it is located 4 kilometers far from the center of Krakow. The set used, during the filming, was created by both newly made installations and remnants of the quarry. For example, a road of tombstones was created exclusively for the movie.

As far as the situation and exploitation of the set nowadays, we should point out, that it is entirely abandoned, surrounded by plants and rocks. Consequently, it is obvious that, local authorities have not attempted any connection of it to the film “Schindler’s list”. The only referral to it as a shooting location takes place in individual blogs and websites. In addition, there are testimonials that not even the locals know that the movie was filmed at the “Liban” Quarry. It is, therefore, evident that the filming in the location has been totally forgotten and no activities have been put in place in order to attract tourists. The only activity we should note, concerning the movie and mainly the true story of Oscar Schindler, is a museum of the factory of Oscar Schindler and a Holocaust monument in the city of Krakow. However, this museum is neither located at the “Liban” Quarry nor particularly connected to the movie. On the contrary, it is situated in Krakow and linked, basically, to the life and the activities of Oscar Schindler.

Consequently, we should, firstly, note the total lack of connection of the location to the movie. Local authorities were not engaged in any attempt to exploit the fact that the shooting of the movie had taken place at the particular site. However, we should point out that the film “Schindler’s List” was a highly successful film both in artistic and commercial terms. Moreover, the movie was awarded five Oscars and is a film which is today regarded as a masterpiece. In addition, as far as the particular location is concerned, it is important to mention the fact that it combines the history of the Holocaust and cinema. This combination, is highly unconventional as in every other case the various shootings did not take place in locations which included a part of the true history, as is the case with Krakow and Liban Quarry which is located next to the true Concentration camp. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the Second World War and even more the part of history concerning the Holocaust is still a matter of worldwide interest. By combining these facts and especially by highlighting the uniqueness of the shooting site which is a mixture of vivid history and art, the location could be exploited as a touristic attraction. It is believed that by reforming the site and organizing relevant activities to the movie and the history of

the Holocaust in Poland, the number of tourists at the place could rise significantly and the site could be altered to a worldwide attraction.

Conclusions

After the analysis of the various case studies, we have come to draw a series of important conclusions concerning the use of cinema sets preserved in various sites.

Firstly, we should note that cinema shootings either intervene with the locations by creating new sets or use already existing ones, but both of the above can also take place. For example, the movie “Pirates of the Caribbean” and the trilogy “Lord of the Rings” created new sets in the sites they used for their shooting. The movies, “Gone with the wind” and “12 Monkeys” used buildings and objects already installed in the locations. Finally, the movie Schindler’s list used remnants of the “Liban” Quarry but also created new sets over the remnants.

As far as their future use is concerned, there are cases in which there is no connection of the sets to the movie and no touristic exploitation, as the “Schindler’s List” and “12 Monkeys”. However, there are also cases in which the locations are used as touristic attractions as are the movie sets of “Pirates of the Caribbean”, “Lord of the Rings” and “12 Monkeys”.

Regarding the initiative for preserving and exploiting the sets, we should point out that it can be either private or public. In the case of the “Pirates of the Caribbean” for example it was the private entity of the hotel which decided to use the set. For the preservation and exploitation of the shooting site of “Lord of the Rings”, the shooting was held in a private location, however, the initiative of preserving was public. In the case of “Gone with the Wind” the initiative is also public as the shooting was also held in a public location.

In the sets preserved, there is a variety of activities organized in each case. The most important ones are tours at the locations and the creation of theme parks and museums of the movies. Moreover, there are often souvenir shops and the opportunity to take photos with the original sets or even the costumes. In addition, in some rare cases the original buildings of the movie set were preserved, as in the case of the houses and bars of “Lord of the Rings”, which they can be visited as well. Finally, the locations and sets are usually hired for events.

An important feature of the preservation and exploitation of the sets is the touristic promotion of the locations. More precisely, it varies from case to case. In the case of the trilogy of the “Lord of the Rings” it has been really organized and intense, involving the public tourism service of New Zealand. It is less intense in the case of “The pirates of the Caribbean” as the set is located in the private property of the hotel which attempts to put in place the relevant promotion. Finally, in the case of “Gone with the Wind” the location is even less promoted as the only activity organized, are tours at the Pugh Memorial Park which only refer to the existence of the movie set.

Moreover, the means employed for the promotion differ upon the movie. For example, in the cases where the promotion is not intense there are only a few tours organized and publicity

at the local press. In the cases in which the promotion is significant, publicity is given to the international press and a public campaign for the rise of tourism at the locations also takes place.

Finally, as the sets were always preserved as a means of attracting tourists, we have attempted to judge if this exploitation was successful. Therefore, we have referred to tourist numbers and the rise or not of tourism at the locations. It is therefore important to note that in the case of "Pirates of the Caribbean" we have a rise of 5% percent each year and in the case of "Lord the Rings", the number of tourist rose from 25.000 in 2011 to 640.000 in 2017. Consequently, in both the cases where there was significant promotion of the locations preserved, their exploitation can be judged as successful.

As a final conclusion, we should note, that our most important result, is the fact of the increase of the tourism in all the locations which invested in preserving and promoting the

specific movie sets. The pattern of preserving the movie sets is a trend which has emerged in recent years, more precisely, during the 21st century, and which has coincided with the rise of the trend of film-tourism. In this paper, we collected the most important film sets which have been preserved and by studying the way in which they have been exploited we have succeeded in portraying that this pattern of exploiting movie sets can aid to the increase of touristic flows in various countries.

References

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