Hollywood Holidays:

Case studies of global film tourism sites and their ideological impacts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a study of film tourism through considering the emergence of the film tourist and of film tourist sites in the mid twentieth century in California. The thesis traces the development of the phenomenon globally over the century and into the new millennium. This area is now a vibrant field of research in tourism studies and my own focus for the thesis is on the concept of the film tourist gaze as it is enunciated in the work of John Urry and others. This study explores the rise of film tourism and its impacts, through a cinema-culture conduit: both studio-created tourism and locations-based travel. I investigate the real impacts of film spectatorship upon local ecologies, and national branding campaigns on national cinemas.

I argue that film tourism sites, through acts of “real-life” visitation after a screening experience, enhance the ideological messages contained in originating film texts through the tourist’s repetition of the film’s core narrative and themes at film sites. The practice of film tourism materialises the ideological fantasies contained within the cinema form, yielding interesting insights into the motivations of the film tourist. In each chapter, both the narrative of the individual film(s) and the tourist space itself are interrogated for their prevailing ideologies. The capitalist modes of consumption and production and the fetishisation of loss that the locations invoke, are revealed. From an analysis of five case studies – including three location-based case studies and two studio-based – I map out a constellation of cinematic cultural sites that are crucial to understanding the development of the contemporary film tourist gaze.

I consider how film tourism has the power to convey negative stereotypes and damaging images about place/race onto locations that are destinations in the second last chapter and in the last chapter, I examine how national cinemas may become susceptible to tourism sector policy shifts as the economic benefits of film tourism become globally recognised. I show how this has the potential to impact upon the types of films and narratives that are selected and utilised by national cinemas for film tourism campaigns.
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Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) The thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated.

(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

(iii) The thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Gemma Blackwood
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Introduction

Projected Fantasies: The Film Tourist Gaze

Today leisure is first of all and for (nearly) all a temporary break with everyday life. We are undergoing a painful and premature revision of all our old “values”; leisure is no longer a festival, the reward of labour, and it is not yet a freely chosen activity pursued for itself, it is a generalised display: television, cinema, tourism.¹

![Guest Book Page](image)

Figure 1. Photograph of guest book page for the Ross Bakery (Ross, Tasmania), which apparently inspired the animation for Japanese Studio Ghibli film Majo no takkyûbin (translated as Kiki’s Delivery Service, dir. Miyazaki:1989). Ross Bakery receives a continual number of Studio Ghibli fans who record their feelings about the location in a provided guest book (Author’s photograph, 2010).

This study is concerned with examining the altered relationship between tourism and cinema through an analysis of the contemporary phenomenon of film tourism. I define film

tourism in this dissertation as touristic interest and visitation generated toward major cinematic filming locations, whether a closed studio set, public location or attraction. I examine the phenomenon of public visitation of the real-life locations and sets of film productions. More particularly, the thesis studies a specific form of real travel that has been at least partially inspired by the prior viewing or the virtual tour of some kind of filmed entertainment. In this thesis I identify a new form of cinematic spectatorship that I call the film tourist gaze. My arguments are then tested against a number of case studies. Those selected are all examples of economically successful film tourism sites.

Film tourism has become a popular subject in tourism studies and sociological studies – indeed, there have been at least two tourism-based monographs and one sociological monograph published on the subject in the last decade and many more individual articles. However, a broader field of research remains untapped, requiring attention from a textually oriented cultural studies and cinema studies perspective. The emergence of contemporary film tourism has made cinema a destination-marketing tool, which has been variously harnessed by film studios and film commissions for the promotion of film spaces. This thesis revisits the current debates on film tourism from the field of tourism studies and casts a new critical light upon them in order to raise awareness of issues that may impact upon cinema cultures. In this thesis I am carefully proposing that we complicate the current understandings of film tourism that have been offered quite exclusively by scholars in tourism studies, in order to point out the full scope of its discursive range in cinema studies. The introduction of film tourism into our culture means that cinema needs to be considered as a full consumerist activity and cultural practice.

I argue that an analysis of the current discourses of contemporary film tourism challenges the previously theorised categories of the cinematic spectator offered by cinema studies and cultural studies. Previous studies of cinematic spectatorship have primarily utilised psychoanalytic and Marxist perspectives and looked at how cinema works to interpellate the film spectator, and connect the spectator’s desire with particular ideological frameworks. In her summary on cinematic spectatorship, Pamela Wojick suggests that this analysis also indicates how cinema works to “conceal this ideological process by providing the spectator with comforting assurance that they are a unified, transcendent, 

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meaning-making subject.” In Stephen Heath’s work on ideology and cinema, *Questions of Cinema*, we are asked, “what is the role of cinema in capitalist society as a point of investment and a form of representation and meaning production? What does it sell on? At what levels – how – does analysis need to operate?” There is a correlation between these works on spectatorship in both cinema studies and tourism studies. For example, John Urry’s sociological study of tourism argues that an examination of a “tourist gaze” is a good method for interrogating societal ideologies, and in his words to get “at just what is happening in the ‘normal society.’” For Urry, this gaze shifts over time and place, constructed by cultural, political and social forces.

In this thesis, I draw from both approaches. However, I ask: how might the emergence of contemporary film tourism sites impact upon and add new meanings to these older models of cinematic and touristic spectatorship? To rephrase this question, how might film tourist sites, like the films themselves, work to interpellate the film spectator *cum* tourist? Film tourism sites, I argue, can be read alongside films as cultural texts for discursive ideological messages, and modes that fulfill the original claims made by film theorists about the capacity for films to function as conduits for consumerist fantasies. In this thesis, my research indicates that film tourism sites are more likely to enhance the discursive ideological messages contained in originating film texts through the tourist’s reenactment (“visitation”) of the film’s core narrative and themes at location sites. The ideological fantasy that is contained within the film tourism site is symptomatic of cinema’s latest apparition as a multi-form intertextual commodity. Borrowing from Urry’s term of the “tourist gaze”, I call this fantasy the object of a “film tourist gaze”. The practice of film tourism, I argue, materialises the ideological fantasies contained within the cinema form. Therefore, the contemporary film tourist gaze needs to be analysed and unpacked in order to understand what these fantasies entail, and what effects and impacts they have on our perception of travel and cinema. The chapters that follow each focus on different manifestations of the film tourist gaze from the 1960s to the present.

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6 Ibid.
Indeed, the contemporary suturing of cinema and tourism seems to make true Urry’s prediction that post-Fordist societies would see an increased fusion of tourism with other cultural forms, joined in the common pursuit of promoting consumerist activity, which Urry named as an aspect of contemporary “postmodern” culture, defining it thus:

Postmodernism involves a dissolving of the boundaries, not only between high and low cultures, but also between different cultural forms, such as tourism, art, education, photography, television, music, sport, shopping and architecture….What I have termed the tourist gaze is increasingly bound up with and is partly indistinguishable from all sorts of other social and cultural practices.\(^7\)

The intersection between cinema and tourism represents another “dissolving of the boundaries” between cultural forms, and therefore the film tourist gaze represents a further intensification and manifestation of this logic. This study, then, is a reappraisal of the business of film tourism as a complex phenomenon that cannot be easily identified under traditional models and categories of cinematic and touristic spectatorship. Situating my study between theories of classical cinema spectatorship and the current research on film tourism in tourism studies means that for my method I critically engage with a range of discourses from psychoanalysis, Marxism, tourism studies, sociology, critical theory, gender studies, post-colonialism and cultural studies. It is important to recognise that in this study the film spectator *cum* tourist is an imaginary construct rather than an empirical entity. My emphasis is to examine the methods by which cinematic and current touristic institutions inscribe ideological standpoints that a supposed real tourist might be asked to identify with, one that sets in advance the film tourist’s view and experience.\(^8\) My objective in this dissertation is to initiate the beginnings of a merging of cinema spectatorship-inflected research with the film tourist gaze, rather than to be conclusive about the long-term meanings and impacts of contemporary film tourism. For this thesis, film tourism remains a contested concept and the full-scale effects of the phenomenon are still being determined.

In this study, my approach toward understanding the film tourist gaze is to survey the interaction of economic and/or government policy impacts on select film tourism sites, the \(^7\) Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.82.  
\(^8\) Wojick, ‘Spectatorship and Audience Research’, p.366.
experiences of film tourists at these sites, and the ways in which these factors might connect with the narratives of the films themselves and enforce particular ideologies. The recent coupling of cinema with the contemporary tourism industry – for example, in Thailand, New Zealand and Australia – suggests the incorporation of both the narrative of the text and its cultural context, or as Heath says, a critical approach needs to take account of the industry – “the direct economic system of the cinema, the organisation of the structure of production, distribution and consumption” – machine and the text. While it may be tempting to generalise about film tourism’s overall impact, here I take a different approach by adopting a theoretical framework that focuses on questions of cinematic style and narrative form, on text and context within the broader field of film tourism. In each chapter both the narrative of the individual film(s) and the tourist space itself are interrogated for their prevailing ideologies, in particular concerning the capitalist modes of consumption and production, but also the overriding fetishisation of loss that the locations invoke. From an analysis of five case studies – including three location-based case studies and two studio-based – I map out a constellation of cinematic cultural sites that are crucial to understanding the development of the contemporary film tourist gaze.

A second aim of this thesis is to situate the phenomenon of film tourism within a more nuanced historical milieu than has been given to it by scholars in tourism studies. Contemporary film tourism has not emerged suddenly out of nowhere; rather it has slowly emerged due to the increasing ease of communications and transportation between two already inter-connected visual cultural forms, particularly from the end of World War II onwards. Therefore, in Part One of this study – called “California Dreamings” – I examine the ideological impacts of films before film tourism was identified as a real world-wide phenomenon. I examine the formation of two cinematic Californian cities – Los Angeles and San Francisco – both through organised studio tourism and by imaginative remappings through movie-based fandom. I examine the emergence of Hollywood film tourism from the late 1950s to the 1990s via analysis of two sites: the film Vertigo (1958) which made use of scenic shots of San Francisco and constitutes a cult film tourist site, and Universal Studios in Los Angeles, which contains within it references to countless mainstream Hollywood films. For the latter, I examine the history of the Universal tourist experience from its novel but experimental beginnings in the 1920s to its classic landmark

9 Heath, Questions of Cinema, p.7.
period of the 1960s, and then conclude with the re-birth of the Studios as a contemporary theme park in the era of contemporary film tourism. In these three chapters, I demonstrate how ideologies function to both control the film tourist gaze and to reinforce the touristic experience, and the deep connections made between film and travel. For Vertigo, the narrative of the film serves to foreground the ideological and psychological process behind travel, revealing the structure of fantasy as one built on the co-ordinates of cinematic framing – a gaze which searches for a lost object. At Universal Studios, the film tourist gaze in the 1960s operates to fuse tourism with film spectatorship and consumption, outside the traditional practice of film viewing. More recently, the theme park has absorbed the ideologies of blockbuster or high concept cinema, and the rides on offer help to reinforce “out-of-this-world” locations and experiences that cannot be emulated in the “real life” without tremendous risk, only in the safety of the cinema screen or the theme park.

Like many of the films that have been classified as “tourism-creating” movies, the films that constitute this study all demonstrate a visible preoccupation with travel and/or tourism within their narratives. In these cases then, it is not simply the case of “showing off” a beautiful location or region on the screen in order to attract tourists, but rather that the narrative of the film itself is in-built into the location’s ideological meaning and serves to substitute its beauty or naturally attractive qualities. I examine the ways in which these popular films draw upon devices and themes of tourism, anti-tourism and travel, and even distinctions within tourism itself, for example, categories such as pilgrim, traveller, and tourist, in order to accommodate for the complexity of film tourism. Furthermore, I examine how visitors, tourist commissions and studios have willingly adopted film locations as viable and significant tourist sites. Part Two of this thesis, called “Global Set-Jetting” examines contemporary Hollywood film tourism from an international perspective and discusses the impact upon local film industries and communities, enacted through ideologies of orientalism and nationalism. Here I concentrate on contemporary films – all released in the last decade – that have either inspired film tourism or else might be thought to contribute to a film tourist gaze, and the ways by which they have been caught up into debates about film tourism. The films that I focus on are The Beach (2000) and a trio of Australian films Wolf Creek (2005), Rogue (2007) and Australia (2008). The Beach and Australia might be thought of as canonical films of the film tourism era. The Beach is renowned for the subsequent tourism it created to Thailand, while Australia is a
well-known example of a film that was caught up in a national branding campaign that attempted to encourage tourism to the entire nation. Through these case studies I show that the film tourist gaze constitutes a broad discursive field.

**The Film Tourist Gaze**

Evidence has been mounting about the growing connection between cinema and travel. Especially since the success of *The Lord of the Rings* increased tourism in New Zealand, it has been acknowledged in the field of tourism that the cinematic lens can be a powerful inducer of travel. Certainly, over the last decade, there has been a palpable change in public knowledge about film tourism, or “set jetting” as it is now snappily referred to in mainstream journalistic articles.\(^{10}\) One tourism commissioner in Scotland in 2003 described the search for a tourism-inspiring film as the new “holy grail” of the tourism industry, a quasi-magical solution to attract consumers in an increasingly competitive global tourism market.\(^{11}\) Indeed, rather than being restricted to a niche demographic in limited locations – for example, the privately guided studio tours that run in Hollywood – the phenomenon of film tourism has become a recognised aspect of the global tourism industry. Tourism research suggests that alongside *The Lord of the Rings*, a number of film inspired fantasy-scapes have emerged to re-map the world afresh, and that this trend will continue, as it is becoming a normalised part of tourist marketing strategies. It is this re-mapping of the world that I call the object of the film tourist gaze.

The film tourist gaze is now commonplace. For example, television travel shows and magazine supplements feature specials on movie tours of various locations – for example, in Australia the release of Baz Luhrmann’s film *Australia* (2008) was co-released with a special magazine supplement in *The Weekend Australian* newspaper announcing it was a


Such journalistic interest in the phenomenon of cinema sightseeing has resulted in a flurry of hyperbolic articles on the touristic power of movies, have also acted as a further promotional tool for film tourism, which has resulted in a consolidation of its initial growth. However, Sue Beeton - who in 2005 published the first book on film tourism - cautions that one effect of popular media studying this form has been the propagation of spurious information linked to film tourism’s power on potential destination choices. Beeton examines the mass of information that was circulated around the release of The Lord of the Rings, which is the film-tourism site that has received the highest amount of coverage in recent years. Her results suggest that the well-reported fact that New Zealand’s tourism increased by four hundred percent is not an accurate figure.

Still, evidence of the predominance of the film tourist gaze can be found in the number of texts that have been published on film tours and the set-jetting phenomenon. In the new millennium, at least two major guidebook series published global guides to visiting the locations of film-sites: in 2001 The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations (a compendium put together by British journalist Tony Reeves) and the Museyon Guide three-book series on Film + Travel, published in 2009. In Reeves’ book, this twenty-first century version of the Baedeker is interspersed with thematic colour features on: Swinging London; a Star Wars film tour; Star Trek USA; the world of James Bond; Salzburg’s The Sound of Music; English heritage; Tarantino’s L.A; L.A Neo-Noir; Woody Allen’s Manhattan; New York’s Mean Streets; and Vertigo’s San Francisco. That most media-literate adults of the English-speaking world would immediately know and recognise these predominantly Hollywood pop cultural references, highlights both the prevalence of Anglo-American popular feature films and their profound impact on the cultural imaginary. Reeves suggests in his introduction, “if you’re staying at home, The Worldwide Guide To Film Locations is a fascinating look at the trickery and the expertise that go into movie-making...(B)ut the real joy of this book is as a travel guide, and I hope you get the chance to visit at least some of these sites. Do go and see.”

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12 'Australia: A Baz Luhrman Film’ (Supplement), The Weekend Australian, 22 November 2008.
These more recent texts follow in the wake of earlier film-travel guides that appeared throughout the 1980s and 1990s, such as: Richard Alleman’s *The Movie Lover’s Guide to Hollywood* (1985) and *The Movie Lover’s Guide to New York* (1988); Leon Smith’s *Hollywood Goes on Location: A Guide to Famous Movie & TV* (1988) and Famous *Hollywood Locations* (1993); and William A. Gordon’s *Shot On This Site: A Traveler’s Guide to the Places and Locations Used to Film Famous Movies and TV Shows* (1996). In tandem with this surge of print publications, the emergence of the Internet in the mid-1990s has seen the appearance of film-tourism web pages, by institutions such as Visit Britain’s movie map of the United Kingdom. Reeves’s companion web page for his book – serves as an act of homage by film fans – for example, “Scotland: The Movie” and “Vertigo… Then and Now” both began as non-profit fan-based web pages. More recently, the development of virtual globe programs – popularised through the success of Google Earth from 2004 – allow satellites using aerial photography to pinpoint the precise locations of film sites. These locations have also been collected and put up onto several fan-based webpages.

A number of recent works in media and cultural studies emphasise cinema’s potential as a promotional apparatus and its double life as commodity form: in particular, the work on the blockbuster’s function as part of an “entertainment super system,” to use Marsha Kinder’s phrase. The film tourist gaze can be considered an extra-textual kind of filmic spectatorship – one in which knowledge of the location of a film’s production is

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17 Tony Reeves, ‘Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations’ <http://www.movie-locations.com/>; Douglas Hill, ‘Scotland The Movie’ <http://www.scotlandthemovie.com/>; “Vertigo...Then and Now” <http://www.basichip.com/vertigo/main.htm>, Accessed March 2 2009. To note, *Scotland The Movie* was started in 1995/96 by a movie fan, Doug Hill. He writes about the development of this site, as “put up by a fan with no help from official tourist organisations...The site started out as a fan site for the Hamish MacBeth television series...I got into doing the Hamish MacBeth filming locations which gave me the opportunity to visit and photograph an area of Scotland I previously knew nothing about...I then extended this into some movies (firstly *Highlander*) that I knew the filming locations for. This eventually resulted in scotlandthemovie.com.” Private correspondence, September, 2005. In the UK, the website <http://www.visitbritain.com.au/things-to-see-and-do/bluelists/reeling-around-britain.aspx>, Accessed March 5 2009 has a section entitled “reeling around Britain.”


tantamount to a new form of cultural pleasure and also “cultural capital”; and potentially, a way of asserting superior knowledge of a film’s production over those who only know commonplace details such as the film’s key actors and director.\textsuperscript{20}

The film tourist gaze can occur on local levels (\textit{Amelie}), regional levels (\textit{Brokeback Mountain}), national levels (\textit{The Lord of the Rings}) or even continental levels (such as the interest toward \textit{Out of Africa} [see Figure 2]), and is usually directed toward one of two possible places: the film’s setting, or the film’s shooting location. It can include the tourism generated by tourist and documentary films, and by films that are fictional narratives (whether live action or animated). While this concept includes the studio tourism created at Hollywood studios such as Universal, 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Fox, and Warner Brothers – Universal Studios has been offering spectacular staged tours of its popular locations and props since 1964 (and even offered tours when it first opened in 1915) – in this thesis I do not refer to locations that only reference filmed entertainment. For example, the theme park of Warner Brother’s Movie World at the Gold Coast, Australia, which features a variety of the studio’s classic film characters in the theme park, is not a well-known shooting location and therefore falls outside of the parameter of my research. However, it is also important to recognise that not all films will lead to large-scale touristic success – a complex interplay of factors contributes to the popularity of each current film tourism site, the same way a film itself will not necessarily be a successful or popular release, even if it is a high-budget blockbuster film.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} Looking at the tourism generated by \textit{The Beach} (1997), Mike Crang makes the same observation except he looks at the idea of “cultural capital” as a primary effect of travel: “using Pierre Bourdieu’s terms we could see trips as a means of accumulated ‘cultural capital’…where, just as economic resources can be accumulated, so too can cultural ‘wealth’ be stockpiled.” Mike Crang, ‘Cultural Geographies of Tourism’, in A.C. Lew, A, C. M.C.Hall and A.M.Williams (eds.), \textit{A Companion To Tourism}, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2004, p.80.

\textsuperscript{21} Stefan Roesch, \textit{The Experiences of Film Location Tourists}, Channel View Publications, Bristol, 2009, p.47.
For older tourist sites that have experienced a loss of consumer interest, the film tourist gaze has the potential to rejuvenate flagging figures. For example, in Queenstown, New Zealand, tours have been repackaged as “rings” tours for a range of film locations. As Chris Rojek observes, cinema is able to impose new meanings onto older spaces.²² The cinema and the television lens has the power to make relatively banal locations such as the suburbs popular tourism destinations, such as the Australian television soap Neighbours in Melbourne’s Eastern suburbs, or the London suburb of Notting Hill, popularised by the 1999 film of the same name. Similarly, the gaze can turn rural areas without distinctive cultural or natural features into exciting and exotic spaces. For example, the flat, nondescript plains of rural Minnesota was made a popular tourist site through the cult film Fargo (Coen Brothers, 1996). In another example, the arid desert regions of Tunisia were popularised due to their use as locations for the first Star Wars (Lucas, 1977) film. As Peter Corrigan suggests in the quotation below, the use of cinema as an alternative narrative for the construction of new meanings is similar to the rise of “heritage” tourism as a whole, which he likens to a form of “time travel”:

The most filthy, boring, ugly and unhealthy industrial town now also has a reason to pull in the tourists, promising an escape from present woes and troubles through the

²² Rojek, ‘Indexing, Dragging and the Social Construction of Tourist Sights,’ p.53. Rojek’s chief example here is a disturbing one, looking at the new meanings taken on by the Holocaust site Auschwitz since the release of the Steven Spielberg film Schindler’s List (1993): now, one can take film tours of the site rather than strictly historical ones.
elegantly simple device of time-travel. Even a piece of waste ground can become an attraction, if a story can be attached to it. Clearly, this strategy can be used by any town at all and, hey presto, we get a tourist spot. All are citizens of Heritage Country.23

The film tourist gaze can also help to enhance a travel experience made to an already dramatic, historic or romantic landscape, such as the musical *The Sound of Music* (Wise, 1965), which was filmed in Salzburg, Austria, and has inspired travel to its locations for four decades. The camera can even glamorise riskier locations based in economically and politically precarious regions and hence make these areas a lot more marketable. The film *Gorillas in the Mist* (Apted, 1988), for example, attracted tourism to Rwanda. We shall return to issues surrounding the global distribution of film tourism spaces in later chapters, but here I simply want to indicate that film is able to incite tourism on a global scale, although factors such as each nation’s political economy and transport infrastructure are obvious impediments for some locations as potential destinations.

Also of significance with regard to a film tourist gaze is the public indifference to location authenticity. That is, when as a case of “mistaken identity”, the film image does not need to correspond to any real-life location to inspire film tourism: often the semblance or the suggestibility of a location is enough.24 Many films and television shows that have been set in one particular location have been carefully recreated in studios – like the vast majority of American films made during the classical Hollywood period, from the 1920s to the 1940s – or else are shot on location in entirely different area. This means that a film shot in one location and set in another has the potential to inspire tourism for both locations. Kevin Costner’s production *Dances With Wolves* (1990) was partly set in Fort Hays, Kansas, but entirely filmed in South Dakota, and yet the two locations were both successful as film tourism sites.25 Similarly, Ang Lee’s *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) was set in Wyoming but filmed in British Columbia, Canada. The American state was the recipient of a sizeable tourism boost as consequence of the award-winning Hollywood film. Later in this thesis I will examine the Australian horror films *Wolf Creek* and *Rogue*, which each created terror in West Australia and the Northern Territory despite being

24 Roesch, *The Experiences of Film Location Tourists*, p.11.
predominantly filmed in South Australia and Victoria. As a final example, Thomson Travel in the United Kingdom reports that one of the most popular film sites for British travellers to Australia is Bells Beach, famously dramatised in the surf movie *Point Break* (1991) [see Figure 3].

Although this setting was vital for the denouement of the narrative of the film, the production never actually filmed in Australia. Tony Reeves specifies in *The Worldwide Guide To Movie Locations* that:

The stormy finale, set at [sic] Bell’s Beach, Australia, was filmed on the coast of Oregon at Wheeler, Ecola State Park, on coastal highway I-101, about twenty miles south of Cannon Beach and 60 miles west of Portland, though the titanic waves, where Swayze (or his stunt double) finally disappears, were filmed back on Oahu at Waimea.

![Figure 3. Movie poster for Point Break (dir. Bigelow: 1991).](image)

Finally, visits to real life locations can be created by animated films, such as the attraction toward the Ross Bakery in Tasmania, which has been said to have loosely inspired the bakery in the Studio Ghibli classic *Kiki’s Delivery Service*. Despite the dubiousness of the connection, the bakery nonetheless experiences visits from high numbers of Studio Ghibli fans who visit especially to see a real life Kiki-related setting [see Figure 1].

Certainly, it is this ambiguity or plasticity of the fictional cinematic image – as technically, one is able to travel to any location in the world or else able to use the narrative and/or

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26 ‘Report on Film-Induced Tourism’, Thomson Travel, United Kingdom, 2004.
visual cues to aid him/herself – that perhaps explains the buzz about the concept in the tourism industry, and in the field of tourism studies and popular journalism around the world. In this form of tourism, there is a certain elasticity between image and fantasy, which does not require a strong sense of location authenticity. The ambiguity of the fictional cinematic image is crucial for enacting this changing effect. Cinema-viewing audiences – particularly in the era of new media technology, with its supplementary video “making-of” featurettes – have learned to expect this kind of spatial deception through a more sophisticated knowledge of post-production special effects.

One Tour To Rule Them All…

![Three The Lord of the Rings movie posters](image)

*Figure 4: Three The Lord of the Rings movie posters: The Fellowship of the Ring (dir. Jackson:2001); The Two Towers (dir. Jackson:2002); and The Return of the King (dir. Jackson:2003).*

It is true to say that the recent mania for film tourism started with a hobbit. The phenomenon of film tourism was highlighted on a staggering international scale through the success of Peter Jackson’s blockbuster trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-03), a New Line cinema production filmed in a number of memorable locations around New Zealand [Figure 4]. *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy foregrounded the concept of travel and exploration on our screens, through the narrative of an epic quest and adventure in the fictional land of “Middle Earth”. The well-known story of Frodo Baggins, his best friend Sam and wizard Gandalf was a fantasy sequence written by English author J.R.R Tolkien (the first novel of the series was published in 1954). It was set in a mythic, fantastic,
romantic landscape of soaring mountains, deep forests and wide expanses. This sublime world and fantasy cult classic found its audio-visual antecedent in the South Island of New Zealand (particularly around the Queenstown area), thanks to the influence of the Hollywood trilogy’s director, New Zealand native Peter Jackson. Jackson was able to draw upon a local team for the important special effects that defined the movies, make a deal for tax breaks with the New Zealand government (representing major savings for New Line cinema), and employ lots of antipodean locals for both cast and crew. The artistic director of the project, Alan Lee, also suggested that the country of New Zealand was perfect for Tolkien’s world:

I found New Zealand more than matched my hopes as a setting for *The Lord of the Rings*. It has such a wide variety of landscapes, from lush farmland, woods and drivers to dramatic gorges, endless plains and soaring mountains uninterrupted by road and pylons.

The films were remarkable box office successes, and popular worldwide. The New Zealand government, in dialogue with New Line cinema, launched a major campaign to cash in on the global success of the films, identifying tourism as a key way for the production to impact upon the national economy. The national tourism industry of New Zealand profited significantly in the wake of the trilogy’s success, from the free advertising of the country in the films, and the entirely free international media exposure the nation received for the length of time that the films were in box office and top-selling as DVDs. “Millions of years to build the set,” one of the promotional catchphrases of the “100% Pure” Tourism New Zealand campaign of 2002-03, was a calculated attempt to profit from the worldwide box-office success of the films [See Figure 5]. The New Zealand government even went as far as to rename a minister as “Minister of the Rings”, a humorous and savvy move that attracted additional international mass coverage whilst magnifying the films’ importance to the country.

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31 Tourism New Zealand (TNZ), 2002-03.
the world in other ways too: for example, Air New Zealand called itself the “Airline to Middle-Earth” and decorated special 747s with LOTR motifs seen world-wide.\textsuperscript{33} Ian Brodie wrote a definitive and popular guidebook to the film series showing explicit and literal references to all of the accessible “rings” locations, a text that received critical contribution from Jackson and the production itself.\textsuperscript{34}

References to the films abounded during a visit to Queenstown in December 2003 (which was conducted when the final film was premiering in Wellington) at the very height of “Rings fever”, even on shop windows of the city [See Figure 6]. There was a range of individual operators based in Queenstown attempting to profit from TLOTRE events. For example, Nomad Safaris was running a one-day “Safari of the Rings” [see Figure 7]; Golden Fox Tours offered a “Walk to Middle Earth”; Air Fiordland offered a “Wings over the Rings” flight tour; Glenorchy Air offered a “trilogy trail”; finally, Anywhere-Anytime-Tours offered a 3 day “Lord of the Rings Scenic Tour”. Many of these tours seemed to be revised versions of previously existing tours: for example, the latter’s adventure encompassed the typical landmarks of the South Island – Mt Cook, Lake Tekapo, Milford

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure5.jpg}
\caption{The landscape posited as leading attraction of The Return of the King. 100% Pure Tourism New Zealand campaign, 2003.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{34} See Brodie, The Lord of the Rings Location Guidebook.
Sound – all places that did not actually feature as film locations in the movies. Middle
Earth is seemingly applicable for all of the South Island, even all of New Zealand. 

Nearly a decade since the first film’s release, the franchise still generates strong tourism to
its shooting locations both through individual visitations and by strength of organised
tours.\(^\text{35}\) Tourism impact has been well documented. For example, Glen Croy, analysing the
results of NFO New Zealand’s 2003 report *Lord of the Rings Market Research Summary Report*, made clear:

The impacts of the LOTR films were that 9 percent of visitors indicated that LOTR
was one reason, though not the main reason, to visit New Zealand, and 0.3 percent
stated that LOTR was the main reason for visiting New Zealand. Sixty-five percent
of potential visitors, noted that they were more likely to visit New Zealand as a result
of the films or the associated publicity. The scenery presented in the films and
publicity was the main influencing factor.\(^\text{36}\)

\(^{35}\) Roesch, *The Experiences of Film Location Tourists*, p.10.

\(^{36}\) Glen Croy, ‘The Lord of the Rings, New Zealand and Tourism: Image Building with Film’, Department of
2007>
The impact of this film on travel and tourism therefore is significant. Not only did the films create tourism and interest in the country, but they helped to change the self-image of the country on an international setting to a more sophisticated and savvy global participant and developer of vibrant and commercially viable culture and arts industry. As Deborah Jones and Karen Smith have acknowledged, *The Lord of the Rings* was not just a successful film for New Zealand, but one that has helped to transform the entire country’s global image and its sense of ability to create a strong culture industry out of cinema:

> The *Lord of the Rings* project has become the poster child for a new kind of New Zealand national identity, while reworking them in terms of an emerging narrative of creative entrepreneurship.37

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Figure 7. Tourists being shown a Lord of the Rings filming location outside of Queenstown, as part of the Nomad Safari Lord of the Rings-themed 4WD tour, 2003. Below in the picture is a second group on a similar tour by same operator (author’s photograph, 2003).

The case of New Zealand and The Lord of the Rings is entirely unprecedented as an example of a successful film tourism site. There were of course additional factors that contributed to the success of the project: for example, Jones and Smith acknowledge that the three films, with their three year highlighting of New Zealand through the New Line film deal was also unprecedented and contributed to the success of tourism ventures in the country.38 The Lord of the Rings is a film-phenomenon along the lines of blockbusters such as the Star Wars sequence, Indiana Jones or The Matrix series. Undoubtedly, a large part of its success as a promotional film tourism site was because the films themselves were so successful and therefore seen by so many worldwide. Regardless, New Zealand’s decision to sell the entire country as a part of the greater setting for Middle Earth was unique. However there had been a precedent set by the Australian tourism industry, around the success of Crocodile Dundee in the late 1980s (hence a focus on “Top End” travel to the Northern Territory). Yet New Zealand interpreted The Lord of the Rings as part of its own national fiction as a country-wide branding ploy. According to the marketing spin, anywhere in New Zealand was part of this “Middle Earth”, and areas of

38 Jones and Smith, p.929.
the country not used by the film could still expect a rise in tourism. The political effect of the emergence of this phenomenon of nation as cinema-site will be later investigated.

**Development of the Film Tourist Gaze**

Despite the importance of *The Lord of the Rings* for the development of the film tourism niche market, the film tourist gaze, of course, has a much longer history. One can trace a line between the incipient emergence of mass tourism and the “Picturesque” in the eighteenth century, to the development of proto-cinematic and cinematic technologies in the late nineteenth century. Emerging from an era in which photographic and visual image culture was transforming the epistemologies of modern society, cinematic technologies originate from the last decade of the nineteenth century. Although there are competing versions as to the first instance of a cinematic screening event, the generally accepted one is the Lumière brothers first public screening of a short, *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (Arrival of a train at Ciotat Station, 1895). Many of the early short films developed and projected in Europe and America were documentaries emphasising movement and novelty.

Cinema was developed in an era in which mass tourism was also beginning to emerge and prosper. From its earliest days, cinema was often, as Vivian Bickford-Smith has argued, used to “attempt to capture the wonders of urban modernity”. Early films also had an ethnographic impulse – like photography, cinema could be used to capture important places in new colonies and ancient cultures. Ellen Strain, in her comprehensive account of ethnography, travel and visual culture notes “during the first years of cinema’s history, cameramen deployed across the globe captured on film the contrast between privileged travelers who left home via luxurious ships or newly built railroads and non-Western peoples who awaited their guests with empty rowboats and unsaddled donkeys.” Cinema captured sights and locations film spectators could watch in their home cities and fantasise about visiting, in other words, it promoted a form of armchair travel. Like literature,

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cinema was undoubtedly an important force in helping to strengthen and shape the twentieth century tourist gaze – and this importantly includes the simple desire to visit filmed locations – although it only seems to be formally recognised and understood since the more recent emergence of contemporary film tourism. John Urry proposes that cinema, alongside other cultural forms such as literature, television and advertising, has long been one of the major influences on the touristic fantasy throughout the twentieth century.43

As mass tourism and cinematic technologies have developed across the twentieth century and beyond, so too have the possibilities for a film tourist gaze been literalised. While cinema was initially considered to benefit spectators by creating a vicarious form of “armchair travel”; so too has cinema been considered more of an impetus for travel rather than a replacement for it.44 Particularly since the end of World War II, the shooting locations of films have become increasingly accessible and known. The sites have become more accessible as travel has become more flexible and mobile for greater numbers of people on a global level. Modern tourism, which first developed in tandem with the industrialisation of Europe and America, became a major mass industry in the 1950s with the development of commercial jet travel capable of trans-oceanic transit.45

At the same moment, a trend towards mass-suburbanisation introduced mass car ownership and increases in disposable income, as well as available leisure time.46 The tourism industry has moved toward more flexible tours over this period rather than the older prescribed tours of early mass tourism.47 Partly as a result of this global mobilisation and flexibility, the introduction of budget international carriers means that long-distance travel is becoming available to broader sections of society in the industrialised world. The ongoing canonisation of cinema and screen entertainment as a “high art form” also means

43 Urry, The Tourist Gaze, p.3.
45 Writing on the initial emergence of tourism in the mid 1800s, Hans Marcus Enzensberger indicates that there was a definite correlation between the developing genre of guidebooks and the growth of the travel industry, the period of the initial standardization of the “sights” of mass travel. The exponential explosion of these guidebooks evidences, while at the same time helping to foster, the increasing emergence of film-related travel as an integral aspect of contemporary tourism. Hans Marcus Enzensberger, ‘A Theory of Tourism’, New German Critique, vol. 68, Spring/Summer 1996, p.129. Originally published as Enzensberger, ‘Vergebliche Brandung der Ferne: Eine Theorie des Tourismus’, Merkur, 126, Aug. 1958, pp.701-20.
47 Urry, The Tourist Gaze, p.41.
there is an accumulation of film sites. A globalised economy led to major US-financed films being made in many locations around the world.\textsuperscript{48} This global film-touristic space means locational availability. Shooting locations for Hollywood films have also become more publicised since the 1950s in a variety of ways. A number of factors have contributed to this knowledge, including first of all the standardisation of location shooting. Contemporaneous with the large-scale travel and leisure movement in the wake of the Second World War, cinema needed to compete with the rise of real tourism and other leisure forms by offering more realistic and spectacular effects. Hollywood began to shoot on location because it was cheaper to do so than in the old studio backlots. These days, international on-location shooting has become a standard of Hollywood film production and not, as in the “classic” phase of cinema, its exception.

The second factor in the growing knowledge of cinematic shooting locations is the introduction and popularity of cinematic playback technologies. These technologies enable the constant replaying of films and hence can allow the fetishisation and the commodification of filmic locations. To a limited extent, the introduction of television allowed older films to be exhibited again, although the image could not be altered in any way. In the 1970s, the introduction of the playback video allowed the film spectator not only to own films and view them at leisure but also to pause, stop and rewind over cinematic scenes of interest. This domestic film experience has been expanded and further popularised with the advent of DVD, Blue Ray and 3D technology. As well as the ability to manipulate the cinematic image, enhanced DVDs often provide location and sightseeing guides as part of the “Special Features” component, which helps to expand the knowledge of the spectator. A third factor is due to an increase of communication and information technologies available. There was the development and proliferation of mass communication and information technologies such as television (featuring “making-of” film specials) and the Internet, which became popular in 1995. The Wide Wide Web is able to provide both official and unofficial information about film locations through simple word phrase searches on web page search engines such as Yahoo! and Google. Modern forms of advertising and film promotion are also included into this category.

A fourth reason for the emergence of public knowledge on film locations is the development of film commissions. Beginning in the 1970s, film commissions began to have a role in the United States film industry where they would use the success of films to promote particular regions for economic benefits. This expansion of film commissions accelerated around the world in the 1990s, with many offices keen to promote their region for economic profit. Finally, the emergence of high concept or blockbuster movies must also be taken into account. At the same time as the development of film commissions, mainstream American cinema was also undergoing significant change to get through to major global audiences. Across the 1960s, a number of film studios were bought out by conglomerates and brought in a new, more market-oriented attitude towards filmmaking. High concept film from the 1970s onwards had the effect of ushering in a new age of films with special effects and high international profiles, which was paralleled by a changed perception of cinema as cross-media form (for example, computer game, toys, theme park site). The transformation of the Universal Studios as tour site into a theme park (examined in this thesis) was partly due to the success of high concept cinema and its influence on cinema spectatorship. A reason for the emergence of high concept cinema is partly due to a new generation of Hollywood studios that were bought out by major conglomerates in the 1960s. The importance of this turn in filmmaking and the industry is significant for the shape of contemporary film tourism as it stands today, as the majority of film tourism sites analysed in this thesis can be classified as “high concept” movies.

Not only did the Post-War period witness the popularisation of mass, leisure-based tourism, but it also saw an efflorescence of cinematic forms and technologies explicitly tied to a spectacular touristic gaze. The relative difficulty of travel across the nineteenth century prevented tourism from taking off until at the end of World War II. It was the post-war boom that put tourism on the agenda as mass cultural pursuit: it is logical, then that the production of mass touristic spaces occurred in the late 1940s and 1950s. Other

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50 Wyatt, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*, p. 156. Wyatt writes: “Market research began to gain a great deal more prominence, however, in the 1970s. This new stature followed from the earlier attempts to make the film industry appear to be a logical, economic business. As the founding studio moguls died or retired, the studios were acquired by conglomerates: MCA acquired Universal in 1962, Gulf & Western, Paramount in 1966, Transamerica, United Artists in 1967, and Kinney National, Warner Bros. in 1969…. Consequently, the conglomerates were more receptive to market research techniques, with many executives familiar with the processes from packaged-goods marketing and merchandising.”
researchers have drawn attention to the production of this new type of space, even before the concept of “postmodernity” had been properly defined or named. For example, in his sociological study *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), Dean MacCannell – who also considers the tourist to be “one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general” – notes the emergence of a type of social space that:

…is opening up everywhere in our society. It is a space for outsiders who are permitted to view details of the inner operation of a commercial, domestic, industrial or public institution. Apparently, entry into this space allows adults to recapture virginal sensations of discovery, or childlike feelings of being half-in and half-out of society, their faces pressed up against the glass.51

In Hollywood cinema, the representation of life-like images of global tourist destinations began to occur with more frequency in the post-war period of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the growing prevalence of real travel meant that it suddenly became more naturalistic to represent real locations with verisimilitude. Hollywood, which relies upon the use of a kind of reality effect, attempted to imitate life. Robert Ray argues in his ideological analysis of Hollywood cinema between 1930 and 1980, that this American form of visual media also acted to promote the supposed everyday values and consumer desires of the American way of life. Ray asserts this was achieved through a kind of mimicry or semblance of real life: as he put it, “by helping to create desires, by reinforcing ideological proclivities, by encouraging certain forms of political action (or inaction), the movies worked to create the very reality they then ‘reflected.’”52 Charles Eckert, citing a former industry analyst James True, records how profoundly this reality effect works on international spectators, inspiring hordes of overseas spectators impeded only by the inability to move to the United States:

The peoples of many countries now consider America as the arbiter of manners, fashions, sports, customs and standards of living. If it were not for the barrier we have established, there is no doubt that the American movies would be bringing us a

flood of immigrants. As it is, in a vast number of instances, the desire to come to this country is thwarted, and the longing to emigrate is changed into a desire to imitate.\(^53\)

Therefore, tourism-oriented films started to appear with more rapidity when mass tourism itself had become an important part of the American lifestyle, causing a kind of symbiotic relationship between the two forms. Hollywood film studios made use of touristic desires and perpetuated them through the experience at the cinema. Recognising the similarity of cultural forms such as tourism, cinema, television and shopping, Anne Friedberg’s sensitive analysis of post-war media and transportational technologies reveals the extent to which cinema and travel were linked, even through mundane everyday experiences such as trips to the shopping mall. The ability to purchase products was reiterated through the experience at the mall cinema: a strong visual media culture led to as she called it a process of “windowshopping.”\(^54\) So too can the film tourist gaze be thought to have been inspired by the process of “window shopping” made available by cinema.

At the same moment as the mass tourist boom at the end of World War II was underway, American cinema was beginning to suffer at the box office. John Belton points out audience attendance in the United States dropped from 90 million per week in the late 1940s, to 60 million per week in 1950, to 40 million by 1960.\(^55\) Reasons for this include the increased leisure opportunities available to most Americans – sports, travel and television were beginning to compete with older pastimes such as cinema viewing – and therefore Hollywood cinema attempted to distinguish itself from television as a grander and much more spectacular viewing format to solve its problem. As Belton notes, the extreme widescreen cinema also used luxurious stereo sound to achieve a greater sense of realism for its audiences.\(^56\) The introduction of specialist widescreen cinematic technologies such as Cinerama, Todd A-O and CinemaScope in the 1960s were introduced to combat this drop in box office. The unexpected success of Mike Todd’s *Around the World in 80 Days* is a good case study of this new touristic way by which films aimed to show off spectacular worlds and geographical locations – in other words, a new form of cinematically-inspired armchair travel. In effect, cinema had reinvigorated itself by

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\(^{54}\) See Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*.

\(^{55}\) Belton, *Widescreen Cinema*, p.70.

\(^{56}\) Ibid, p. 201.
absorbing into its narrative the touristic desires that had fed its competitor in the tourist industry. In a continuation of this style or genre of the new “tourism movie”, the James Bond movies (from 1962 to the present) are good examples of expensive films that serve as promotional opportunities for glamorous international destinations. While such films show off luxurious locations, somewhat incidentally they have also inspired subsequent touristic urges. It is perhaps unsurprising that many of the James Bond films, partly due to the high profile nature of the film series to this day, are now known to have created active film tourism locations around the world, from Spain to Thailand.57

There are other important indicators in the rise of film tourism internationally in more recent times. Stefan Roesch has identified that the massive rise in budgets from the 1980s to the 1990s for Hollywood blockbuster films, along with the increased spending on marketing can also be cited as a key reason for the sudden enhancement of film location sites.58 Finally, runaway film productions must be considered as another important factor for the rise of contemporary film tourism. “Runaway productions” are those films, which are:

...developed and are intended for initial release/exhibition or television broadcast in the U.S., but are actually filmed in another country. There are two major types of runaway productions – “creative” runaways, which depart because the story takes place in a setting that cannot be duplicated or for other creative considerations, and “economic” runaways, which depart to achieve lower production costs.59

As the Monitor report identifies, there is a strong economic reason for the use of runaway productions; however, oftentimes a movie will need to be located in an authentic and matching locale for aesthetic and imitative reasons. The previously mentioned point that mass tourism contributed to film tourism is one of the reasons why runaway productions have become so popular, another way the film industry has taken advantage of the commercial tourist market. Hollywood cinema has been an important part of this process

57 For example, a small Thai island of “Ko Tapu” shown in the 1974 film The Man With the Golden Gun is now unofficially known by Western visitors as “James Bond Island” and inspires a lot of travel. For further information please see the fan-generated web site <http://www.jamesbondisland.com>, accessed 23 June 2009>
58 Roesch, The Experiences of Film Location Tourists, p.9.
of the development of runaway productions. Richard Maltby writes that since 1960 more than a third of movies classified as “Hollywood” movies have been made on foreign shores.\textsuperscript{60} Then, in terms of the economics of this process, studios frequently seek production finance from overseas investors. For example, in 1953 the value of the international market exceeded the United States market, and since this time the concern has been to produce entertainment that appeals to the broadest range of society possible, regardless of cultural group, gender, class, education level or age. As mentioned earlier, the development of the blockbuster in the 1970s was a continuation of this global-minded approach toward film production. It was a new genre and form that featured special effects and usually with a simple plot designed to appeal the broadest demographic possible.\textsuperscript{61}

Indeed, in 2006, runaway productions represented about fifty percent of theatrical releases.\textsuperscript{62} In the 1990s, the Canadian and Australian dollars lost twenty percent of their value against the US dollar – at the same time, they both emerged as successful Hollywood production centres.\textsuperscript{63} The prospect of cheap, low-cost production facilities and exotic locations attracted the new mould producers and directors of the Global Hollywood generation. In 2001, after an increase in runaway productions, levels of employment in the California-based film and TV industries dropped twelve percent.\textsuperscript{64} Sometimes the runaway productions are taken to other US states – whichever one might be offering the best tax incentive – and sometimes the productions are taken overseas. When the US dollar is weak, the trend in productions is to return to America. A weak US dollar also increases the value of international box office returns.\textsuperscript{65} With this rise in “runaway productions” the expansion of Hollywood has also run into a course of problems. The concerns about protecting local culture and environment are primary. Yet there are many other issues at stake, when a Hollywood production comes to film on location in some corner of the world. This thesis is interested in identifying a range of ideological impacts that occur, even at subtle levels. The difficulty of such a task lies in the range of effects location

\textsuperscript{61} See Wyatt, \textit{High Concept: Movies and Marketing}, Ch.3.
\textsuperscript{63} Maltby, \textit{Hollywood Cinema}, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
production has for different countries. As Elmer and Gasher argue about this issue of location production on a global scale:

[l]ocation production means something quite different from country to country and from region to region within film-producing countries...its implications vary from sector to sector within film centers themselves.66

Thus, the cinema industry has altered in immeasurable ways since the nineteenth century – particularly, since the post Second World War period – and consequently, film tourism might be considered to one of the parts of a new global direction that mainstream cinema is heading towards. Joe Sisto says, the economics of film production seem to insist that we may be entering into an era in which:

The market will dictate where projects are shot. The issue is not one for independents alone – the majors, themselves subsidiaries of multinational corporations, answer to shareholders and are no longer beholden to Hollywood as a geographical must. The need to stretch a dollar to its conceivable limit has inevitably led film and TV producers, among many other “manufacturers,” beyond U.S. borders.67

Given this new economic imperative, it is also likely that film tourism will continue into the foreseeable future as an adjunct to the touristic locations featured in widely seen films.

Tourism Studies and the Film Tourist Gaze

Figure 8. Movie poster for Close Encounters of the Third Kind (dir. Spielberg: 1977).

With more people becoming spectators to various sorts of screens, it is likely that movie and media induced tourism will flourish in years to come. They may visit the scene they viewed on the screen.\(^{68}\)

Film tourism was initially discovered as a viable niche market by tourism researchers after the introduction of “high concept” Hollywood blockbuster films from the 1970s and 1980s. These films triggered larger numbers of visitors to the real-life shooting locations that featured prominently in the film narratives. While John Urry had suggested that a link lay between cinema and tourism in _The Tourist Gaze_ in 1990, there was no direct or empirical evidence to support his claim. Taking Urry’s contention as a starting point, the concept of “movie-induced tourism” was first coined by North American tourism researchers Riley, Baker and Van Doren in the mid-1990s.\(^{69}\) In their 1998 article of the same name, this group of researchers in effect proved the existence of the phenomenon through quantitative studies of the popularity of filmed sites both before and after the exhibition and distribution of blockbuster productions. They describe the process of film tourism thus:


Through movies, people are sometimes induced to visit what they have seen on the silver screen. If this gaze is directed at objects or features which are extraordinary and thus distinguish the “site/sight” of the gaze from others, then the properties of a movie – whether scenic, historical, or literary – qualify as icons for tourists to gaze upon.\footnote{Riley, Baker, and Van Doren, ‘Movie Induced Tourism’, p. 920.}

Riley, Baker and Van Doren align film tourism with film spectatorship, with John Urry’s influential reading of tourism as enacted by a “gaze” directed at sights of interest, although they do not speculate on the impacts this gaze might have upon the cinematic medium. However, despite only drawing basic connections between film tourism and a “gaze”, Riley, Baker and Van Doren opened up the possibility of further scholarship on the concept of the film tourist gaze. Using their key concept “movie-induced tourism”, Riley, Baker and Van Doren include all forms and genres of cinema – from the fictional blockbuster to the non-fictional documentary – into their theory, even though they really only focus on fictional, mainstream Hollywood films, and so it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the global cinematic medium from their specific initial research.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 925-26.}

The other important aspect of their research in regard to this thesis is their argument for the importance of a film’s particular narrative or storyline on film tourism. In “Movie-induced Tourism”, Riley, Baker and Van Doren hypothesise that narrative films that fully dramatise space become the most successful as later touristic catalysts:

Many movies present the backdrop of the setting of the film as more than mere “scenery”, producing icons that are central to the storyline…Movie icons can be recurrent… or single climatic events with which viewers (and then later as visitors to the site) identify.\footnote{Ibid, p. 924.}

Riley and Baker and Van Doren’s central example of an early case of movie-induced tourism is Steven Speilberg’s \textit{Close Encounters Of The Third Kind} (1977). This blockbuster film narrates the arrival of aliens to the United States who telepathically transmit messages to visit the site of their space ship at the volcanic mountain, Devil’s
Tower in Wyoming. What Riley, Baker and Van Doren see as effective for film tourism is the way the film dramatically integrates the location into its narrative, forming an “icon” within the film that transcends importance as a real life tourist attraction. This, in combination with the film’s popularity, caused a 74% increase of visitors to the Devil’s Tower Park from 1977-1978, an indicator of the influence that just one film can have on a location.\(^73\)

Directly following on from the publication of Riley, Baker and Van Doren’s work, there were a few other key articles that focussed on proving the existence of film tourism: Cousin’s and Andereck’s ‘Movie Generated Tourism in North Carolina: Two Case Studies’; and Tooke and Baker’s ‘Seeing is Believing: the effect of film on visitor numbers to screened locations’.\(^74\) Tooke and Baker are the first to see the impact that film tourism might have upon national cinemas as part of a direct marketing strategy. They suggest that the film tourist location might be commodifiable, and therefore for national bodies to consider attracting film and television productions, and to maximise exposure once film locations have been secured:

This point should not be lost on those bodies concerned with the national film and television industry, particularly where they are looking for ways of financing a fledgling national industry. It should be possible to convert the marketing value of using this destination as a location into seed-corn finance for the production. For example, a subsidy might be justified to encourage film companies to choose locations which display attractive national landscapes or urban vistas. This…has implications for policy makers at national as well as local level, including national tourist agencies.\(^75\)

Further research on film tourism in the late 1990s connects it to forms of heritage and historical-based tourism, which also has links to national tourist industries. In 1998, Amy Sargent coined the expression “The Darcy Effect” to refer to the increased visitation to

\(^73\) Riley, Baker, and Van Doren, ‘Movie Induced Tourism’, p.923.
\(^75\) Tooke and Baker, ‘Seeing is Believing’, 93-94
British heritage estates after their appearance in BBC historical television dramas like *Pride and Prejudice* (Langton, 1995). Sargent suggests that television and films are increasingly being used to promote tourist and heritage spaces and that the British film industry is particularly susceptible to such marketing strategies, concluding that “all in all, the British film industry is contemporary heritage, currently being toured somewhere near you. Far from distancing itself from the heritage industry, cinema seems more embroiled than ever.” Heritage and historical associations become then the destination image. Therefore, in this process of the commodification of filmed space, a television series such as *Pride and Prejudice* takes up an older, literary narrative and makes the most of popular heritage architecture through its incorporation into the narrative of the series. For Andrew Higson, the intimate connection between the British heritage industry and the number of British “heritage” films that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s – *Howard’s End*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *A Room with a View*, et al – had a direct correlation to the rise in visual-cultural forms. Interest for one bleeds into the other, and vice versa. The apparition of the heritage film, then, might be said to have an ideological agenda; to promote the older dominant culture in the name of preservation, yet at the cost of cultural innovation and the emergence of new styles of cinema.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, there has been a significant increase in academic work on the phenomenon of film tourism in tourism studies. This has been accompanied by a similar upsurge of interest in film tourism in the media, as I have mentioned earlier clustered around the New Zealand tourism success of Peter Jackson’s *The Lord Of The Rings* trilogy. A number of articles have addressed the film tourism of specific locations. Some cinematic genres have become the subject of discussions about film tourism, for example the touristic-minded Greek musical of the 1960s inspired a sudden rise of tourism

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to certain locations around Greece. Examining a different form of British cultural heritage, Graham Busby and Julia Klug looked at the popular British film *Notting Hill*, and conducted a visitor survey to examine how many had been inspired by the film. Busby and Klug noticed visitation that occurred to these locations also related to the British Tourist Authority’s movie map of the United Kingdom, which raised awareness of a number of British film locations to local and international visitors. Busby and Klug also acknowledge the connection between film tourism and the importance of popular culture as a decider for travel choices, adding a more nuanced perspective that “movie tourism is not simply a function of media influences but a medium through which a range of cultural meanings and values may be communicated.”

Other works on film tourism have questioned the motivation for such form of travel, wondering whether it provides an authentic or inauthentic experience. Writing about tourism on the sets of *Coronation Street* in the United Kingdom, Nick Cauldry argues that despite the claims of film tourism representing something of a postmodern experience, the motivations for visiting a television set were that it promised the realisation of a remembered televiusal experience. Cauldry states:

> The basis for the Street’s significance is very simple: that it is the place where the programme is filmed, and therefore *the actual place* that you have watched from your home over the years. That is the main reason people expressed for going. The significance of the Street as the place of filming was marked routinely in people’s language. To be on the Street set is to be on the “actual Street”; it is “actually” to be “there”, where they “actually film”. It is a “real place” of filming, not a mere “mock-up”.

From 2005-2009 there has been the release of three significant monographs on film tourism. The first is Sue Beeton’s 2005 book *Film-Induced Tourism*. Beeton examines the impact of both location-based film tourism and studio tourism, and as the first monograph

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on the subject it is an important contribution to the research on film tourism and generating further academic interest. As Rodanthi Tzanelli states, Beeton’s contribution to tourism scholarship and to film tourism research is rich because it “incorporates Marxist sociological and anthropological approaches to tourism, largely forgotten in contemporary research that celebrates consumerism but brushes aside its pitfalls.”\(^85\) Beeton theorises that film-induced tourism can be thought of as an extension of the modern-day cult of celebrity: as famous stars have often occupied the shooting locations of popular films, the spatial co-incidence between film and real life provides for the tourist “contact with famous people” that “in turn makes the individual more worthy,” and acts further as a kind of modern-day religious pilgrimage.\(^86\) While this interest in fame and spectacle is a vital factor in understanding the phenomenon of film-induced tourism, Beeton is careful not to be too hasty and draw the conclusion that a society in the era of film-tourism is more celebrity-obsessed than in the past. Beeton argues film tourism can also be thought of as a type of souvenir for a visitor: “as well as creating destination images and encouraging tourist visitation, films are often consumed after the visit, as (usually unacknowledged) souvenirs.”\(^87\) Therefore, the legacy of cinema takes on a new identity as a post-touristic souvenir of a lived experience. As well as exploring the numerous ways, by which film tourism can be classified, from a type of souvenir to an extension of celebrity worship, Beeton also considers the impacts of such tourism on local communities in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom formerly unexposed to such instances of mass travel. What Beeton’s analysis does not capture though is the sense of spectatorship involved in film tourism. People travel all over the world to film locations not necessarily out of a sense of wanting to experience spaces occupied by celebrities or obtaining a souvenir, but to experience another way of consuming/seeing the film itself – in some cases (as covered in the thesis) – to re-enact its ideological narrative. Therefore, we are dealing with subjects who do not simply perceived themselves as consumers and tourists, but as participants and interested cinephiles.

Two other monographs on the phenomenon of film tourism focus on the tourists themselves rather than on the broader experience and context of film tourism. Published in 2007, Rodanthi Tzanelli’s *The Cinematic Tourist: Explorations in Globalization, Culture*


\(^{86}\) Beeton, *Film-Induced Tourism*, p.32.

\(^{87}\) Ibid, p. 12.
and Resistance examines film tourism as a global phenomenon – a text that draws out its ideological implications as an extension of socio-economic globalization. Although Tzanelli shares parts of my own research interests, the research in this thesis is geared more towards analysis of specific location sites and their ideological impacts on the broader communities as an interconnected whole, rather than directly on the individual tourist’s experience and perception of such communities. Furthermore, Tzanelli presents an ambitious methodology in her analysis, drawing from a mix of sociology, structural linguistics, semiotic analysis, postmodernism and postcolonialism, which at times, leads to rather abstract arguments. No discussion is given on the role of the film tourist gaze. More recently, Stefan Roesch has authored the monograph The Experiences of Film Location Tourists (2009), a predominantly tourism-oriented text that foregrounds the central experiences of film tourists, and the implications that such experiences might have for tour operators, marketing organisations and film commissions. As Roesch puts it, his analysis of the tourists was conducted to serve “as a means to make film and tourism stakeholders around the world aware of the opportunities to profit from film productions that are out there.”

Roesch’s work seems to follow the aims set by Sue Beeton in her own research, in finding the concrete sociological analysis of why people visit film locations in order to strengthen a nascent industry and give it more qualitative insight into the phenomenon.

Hence, why film tourism is now an apparent part of the niche tourism-marketing landscape, and has now become the subject of study in both tourism studies and culture-focused cinema studies. A growing body of literature now exists focusing on the tourism generating potential of a film or set of films. Increasingly, there are stories of how destination marketers and film commissions are attempting to exploit the occurrence of film tourism. Hudson and Ritchie observe that some nations such as Canada and the Bahamas have operators or commissions who have hired public relations experts to put their regions on the film map.

As Beeton also suggests, a relationship is building between tourist groups and film production companies: “an increasing number of tourism associations are working with their associated film offices by encouraging their regions to become ‘film friendly’, and at the same time recognising the ongoing tourism benefits”. As the discourse on film tourism begins to mount and show the possibilities of what film

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88 Roesch, The Experience of Film Location Tourists, p.20. My emphasis.
90 Beeton, Film-Induced Tourism, p. 21
sites offer to tourists, questions arises over how will this impact upon national film industries and local film production.

In the field of tourism studies, film tourism has been put under critique, particularly as it is often the case of a big film Hollywood company using a location with little concern for the potential negative consequences on the region. The major concerns raised by these studies have related to three main concerns. Firstly, the people who reside in the region in which the film production takes place, secondly, there is the long-term sustainability of the location and thirdly there is maintaining the ecology of the location. For example, Sue Beeton suggests that “an undesired tourism image can result from one that is too successful in attracting visitors – increased visitation giving rise to negative community impacts such as loss of privacy, crowding and cultural amenity.” The negative impacts of film tourism are considered to be similar to the impacts of mass tourism – primarily based around issues of the effects on culture and ecology. However, in this thesis I am interested in a more profound examination of the ideological consequences of film tourism locations. Consequences such as altering economic policies within developing countries, a privileging and encouragement of western tourism and investment, and marginalisation of localised and social antagonisms, and the re-representation of geographical locations that appeal to a film tourist gaze. Not only do I examine mass tourism sites from around the world, but I am interested in film studio sites also – namely, Universal Studios Hollywood – and the development of a kind of hybrid film tourism (which I call studio-based tourism), which involves travel, yet to an artificial space.

Examining in more detail the relationship between film companies and destination locations, Beeton notes that “the loss of privacy and peace for the local community is a necessary and acceptable evil that the local population will have to suffer in order to reap the economic rewards of film tourism.” By conducting surveys and interviews with local residents, Beeton deduced film productions can still result in negative experiences for those local communities. Subsequently, Tim Mordue in another separate analysis of the television series Heartbeat demonstrates that the relations of power between “locals” and impacts from film productions can often be nuanced and abstract and not as a result clearly

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91 Ibid., p.154.
visible. In his case study, Mordue noted that residents of Goathland attempted to take
control of the effects tourism had after on their community after the success of Heartbeat.
Yet, these attempts failed, and what became apparent was that there was a division over
how tourism development can be objectively assessed, whether from the basis of nature-
lovers or tv-based tourism, quality or quantity.93

The Film Tourist Gaze: Theorising the Ideological Construct of Film Tourism

…illusion is not on the side of knowledge, it is already on the side of reality itself, of
what people are doing. What they do not know is that their social reality itself, their
activity, is guided by an illusion, by a fetishistic inversion. What they overlook,
what they misrecognise, is not the reality but the illusion which is structuring their
reality, their real social activity. They know very well how things are but still they
are doing it as if they did not know… this overlooked, unconscious illusion is what
may be called the ideological fantasy… even if we keep an ironical distance, we are
still doing them.94

In The Sublime Object of Ideology, Slavoj Zizek outlines the dynamic interplay between
ideology and fantasy based on the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan. For Zizek,
“illusion” structures our real social relations, and the fantasy function of ideology is a
necessary part of film narratives themselves.95 As Judith Mayne analyses, psychoanalytic
theory has been a strong element of theories of cinema spectatorship, particularly the
concept of repression:

…a far more pervasive psychoanalytic influence is the assumption that whenever a
structure is created or imposed, something is repressed. The process of textual
analysis therefore is the attempt to retrace the evolution of structure and attendant
process of repression.96

332-45.
95 Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, p. 50.
96 Judith Mayne, Cinema and Spectatorship, p.107.
Tourism has been theorised as an enterprise where illusion or fantasy is a necessary support for its appeal. The emergence of film tourism reveals more fully that motivations for tourism are dependent upon imaginary representations: in ways, film tourism feeds off iconic images and archetypal narratives of travel. Then, film tourism differs from the models of traditional film spectatorship in that there is a touristic space involved – a material site or location where the ideology-fantasy is evoked. Through the set-up of the film tourist location, a sense of authenticity attaches itself to something that was originally and perhaps never intended to be authentic in the first place. It is as if film tourism gives the ideological function of cinema a “second life”, an opportunity to reproduce itself in the ‘real’ geographical world. The film tourist location becomes the “frame” which stages the fantasy – which immediately isolates it from other ordinary spaces. What is important here is the “framing” (gaze) aspect of the phenomenon of film tourism, not so much the particular empirical objects contained within such a space (e.g. the bridge in *Vertigo*), but the space itself (its “cinematicness”, if you will).

To paraphrase Zizek, film tourists may well know what they are chasing is an ideology-fantasy (a construction of their own making). Yet they still *do it*. Film tourism combines the journeys of character in the film with the spectator-tourist’s outside the film, which itself is an act of ideology-fantasy that conceals the material differences between life and art. Hence, the film tourist gaze is this self-reflective category. We cannot then simply underestimate the lure of fantasy with regard to film tourism and more specifically, the film tourist gaze. Film tourism then can be seen as not just a nexus between cinema and tourism, but as a way for late capitalism to rejuvenate ideological-fantasy practice itself in contemporary culture. It is important to remember, that on this level, ideology is not one-sided, imposed by a “dominant class” – in the case of the tourist industry interpellating the tourist - but rather in film tourism there is a kind of mutual consent or collaboration between the fantasy-driven tourist and the apparatus-structured industry. Therefore, film tourism is divorced from any emancipatory goals, or socially responsible ideology that aims to benefit the cultural heart of local communities, the environment, or enable new ethical practices. If it truly benefits anything it would be a surplus (value-enjoyment), a support-fantasy, and a globalised economy based on a purely capitalist system.
Chapter Outline

Chapter One “Vertigo: A San Francisco Film Tourism Site and Allegory of Tourist Obsession”, discusses Alfred Hitchcock’s Vertigo. This film, I argue, helped reshape the city of San Francisco by collectively arranging rather seamlessly, a network of desires related to travel, fantasy, nostalgia, and disappointment within one narrative and one place. The chapter focuses on how the film was able to personalise the touristic experience. Fredric Jameson famously contended that one of the chief signifiers of the postmodern age is the loss of a sense of history: in its absence, nostalgia may approximate this older sense, but it is a stylistic and impressionistic reworking that borrows a range of elements from many periods. The film tourism site complicates this idea further: even if a film is not “nostalgic” in theme, visiting a film tourism site can be read as a re-enactment of the original film’s narrative, a way of reclaiming the memory of the film and adding oneself to what can become a highly personalised remake. The case study of Vertigo demonstrates how this kind of personalised film tourism operates and becomes structured by a particular mode of travel. The narrative of Vertigo is closely engaged with memory, loss, and nostalgia, which are also generally associated with the film tourist experience. The chapter examines the function of the film tourism space when it acts as a specific site for nostalgia, and what it might mean to seek out both a personal past and a fantastic utopia – or dystopia – from a symbolic memory of space through the conduit of film.

Chapter Two, entitled “Star-lit Universes? The Development of Hollywood Studio Tours in the 1960s”, historically outlines the emergence of the Universal City studio tour as it was developed as a legitimate film tourism attraction for the film studio. This is the era of history in which tourism and cinema are first firmly linked; indeed, in which one studio learned how to control the film tourist gaze for immediate commercial benefit. In this case study, Universal uses the metaphor of the “city” to create an effective touring experience that emulates that larger “cinematic” city of Los Angeles that encompasses the studio. I analyse the audience reception of the Universal City themed experience through research conducted on print media reviews of the tours of this era. Universal marketed itself as a place to see stars, the mechanics of Hollywood filmmaking and “behind-the-scenes” production of special effects. However, in this analysis of this historical moment in the

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97 Frederic Jameson, Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, ix-x.
emergence of the film studio tour we can also see its limitations – through an inability to show stars and celebrities, and the limited life of novelty experiences, the theme park moves toward more enhanced special effects and animatronic experiences. This analysis of Universal in the 1960s shows the fledgling theme park in a state of constant evolution.

Chapter Three “The Cinema of Attraction Parks: The Perilous Touring Fantasies Enacted at Universal Studios Hollywood” discusses the second major period of the Universal Studios tour. In the mid-1970s, Universal and soon after the other Hollywood studios made a number of dramatic changes to their mode of film production, distribution and exhibition, and these included spending increased amounts on single high-concept films and the development of aggressive new marketing and merchandising techniques – which has remained a standard for the last thirty years. This chapter examines the way that blockbuster cinema has helped to provide a market for film tourism. One of the interesting facts about this analysis is that a lot of the rides or studio tour attractions are based upon films with a strong motif of travel or touring (e.g. Jurassic Park, Jaws, The Mummy, Psycho, Back To The Future, Waterworld, and Terminator II). The chapter examines the evolution of this link between narrative and tourism as it emerges in such Hollywood blockbusters. The spectacular form of the blockbuster might be partly responsible for inspiring the desire to travel – after all, the blockbuster film often sells itself as a virtual “ride,” and so metaphors of travel have remained a crucial aspect of the sales pitch. My analysis of these film narratives within the logic of the theme park suggests that what has emerged is an ideological package so to speak, where the ride has become so symbiotically intertwined with the film, that the difference between film experience and tourist experience has dissolved. The “horror holiday” trope indicates an ideological stance about the attractions of the theme park itself: as in the horror films, enjoying rides based on these films provides a way for film tourists to allay fears about travel through the safety of the theme park experience.

In the second half of the thesis discussion, we move from California and the studio tourism within Hollywood to examine the global arena of film tourism, looking to examine runaway US productions and their impact upon national cinema industries around the world, as well as the case of an independently made Australian films and its relationship to a Hollywood. This section consists of case studies of two countries and four touristic films: The Beach (Boyle, 2002) in relation to Thailand and Thai cinema; Crocodile
Chapter Four, “Paradise Glossed: Touristic Orientalism in The Beach and Thai Film-Tourism”, focuses on the 20th Century Fox film, The Beach, and looks at the ways by which the influence of Hollywood film tourism can affect smaller nations. Filmed in Thailand by Danny Boyle, during its production there was negative media coverage of this film due to the alleged ecological damage to the region caused by the film production, which belied the anti-tourism message in the film’s narrative. In this chapter, I define the concept of “touristic Orientalism” as the latest global permutation of imperial Orientalism, and map out its discursive range through studies of Hollywood cinema and tourism. Then, I turn to analysing the narrative of The Beach for the way that touristic Orientalism is configured as an incipient form that disavows itself. I conclude this chapter by canvassing the ways that touristic Orientalism might be grasped by local cultures in order to attenuate change from this global binary of East-West that still causes anxiety and destruction at a local level. The Beach indicates that there is no easy solution to such problems – in this case, there is a notable clash between governmental groups in Thailand keen to advance the country’s national profile through tourism, and grass-roots environmental campaigners.

The final chapter “Shooting Tourists: Brand Australia and Recent Australian Cinema” spotlights the Australian film industry and its interconnectedness with the tourism industry. In the 1980s Paul Hogan and the successful Crocodile Dundee franchise helped to bring about a major boost in international tourism across Australia. From the framework set by Crocodile Dundee, the chapter shows how this paved the way for more recent Australian films that engage with issues surrounding tourism and the Australian Outback. Firstly, I examine Wolf Creek a film that was produced in Australia and became internationally successful after being bought and distributed by Miramax at Sundance. The film maximises gore and violence, and uses real true-crime cases to add authenticity to the plotline. Unlike the Hollywood films discussed in this thesis, its bleak subject matter might drive tourism away from the Australian outback rather than bring it in. The negative representation of the tourist and the “Aussie bloke” in this film, while terrifying, still conforms to a typical positive and authentic brand image of “danger”, “wildness” and “authenticity” that means the film can ultimately be considered a boost for Australian
tourism. Secondly, I look at *Rogue*, another Greg MacLean production, and *Black Water*, which both extend upon a similar narrative to *Wolf Creek*. Reprising the role *Crocodile Dundee* played out two decades earlier, the chapter examines the Baz Luhrman directed *Australia*, and how it collaborated with tourist advertising campaigns. The chapter raises the issues of the role and influence of film policy from state film commissions across Australia, and the links between tourism and film production.
PART ONE

CALIFORNIA DREAMINGS
Chapter One

Vertigo: The Film Tourist Gaze’s Allegory of Touristic Obsession

Figure 1. Poster for Vertigo.

Why do humans want to see things again? Three motivations are certain: the pleasure of repeating an experience of pleasure. A desire to obtain a fuller perception of what has already been seen. A change of opinion. Another catalyst – realising that one has failed to see or was noticing the wrong things the first time – may sometimes appear after a further viewing has taken place for spectators endowed with the faculty of introspection.

- Paulo Usai, *The Death of Cinema*. ¹

Scottie: It’s all there! It’s no dream. You’ve been there before. You’ve seen it!
Madeleine: No, never...
- Dialogue in *Vertigo*.

Cinema, as Paolo Cherchi Usai observes in his polemic text *The Death of Cinema*, allows humans the illusion of seeing things again. The same can be said for film tourism, which operates through the propagation of visual desires disseminated through media fantasies.²

² Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 3.
The film tourist gaze is governed by the spectator’s repetition and rediscovery of a film text through the joint acts of cinema viewing and visitation. Unravelling the metaphor of “vertigo”, this chapter examines the film tourist gaze’s application of repeating visions, both within a particular Hollywood film text - Alfred Hitchcock’s celebrated 1958 film *Vertigo* about displaced romantic desire and loss – and the real life practice of film tourism as a nostalgia for seeing again a location first viewed on the movie screen.³ The choice of *Vertigo* for an examination into such issues is twofold: firstly, it is one of the most famous Hollywood “San Francisco” film tourism sites, and frequently cited by Hitchcock scholars and tourism researchers as important cultural artefact for San Francisco. It is a film that is now designated a Hollywood “classic”, which as Stephen Roesch acknowledges, has “the potential to draw visitors to screened locations long after their premiere.”⁴ As a director, Hitchcock was famous for his meticulous planning of every scene of his films. Far from being accidental or convenient, the geography of his films was also carefully chosen to match the complex drama of the narrative. Writing on *Vertigo*, the film critic Charles Barr writes the following in his monograph on the movie:

> No other film has inspired such a flow of pilgrims to its locations. Spoto’s book records perhaps the first such systematic pilgrimage; writing for the *San Francisco Magazine* in 1982, Lynda Myles and Michael Goodwin anatomised and recommended the “*Vertigo* tour”, and countless fans have followed that tour since, as I did myself back in 1997 (how else could I have presumed to write this book?)⁵

By asking the question of “how else?” Barr signals the importance of actually visiting the film’s locations not just for fan homage, but even academic criticism. More importantly in the context of this chapter, Barr highlights a connection that the film’s location-tourists seemingly *must* hold with the central characters: namely, an obsessive longing for the past that is misdirected as travel. Therefore, the second reason I have selected this film is because the narrative of the film itself poses issues that are central to philosophical

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understandings of the romance of tourism and the film tourist gaze. Hitchcock’s films were often set in glamorous international cities, such as Paris in *Rich and Strange* (1931), Vienna for *Waltzes from Vienna* (1934), Monte Carlo for *To Catch a Thief* (1955) and later Copenhagen for *Topaz* (1969). In these films, he used well-known tourist attractions economically to establish geographic location, which proved “convenient shorthand for the entire cities that encompass them.” At the same time, he was able to alter the ordinariness of these monuments into something more strange and reflective of the psychological state of his characters. Although these issues appear clearly articulated in *Vertigo*, the level of film criticism has been limited to a fetishistic repetition of such logics via the nostalgic Hitchcock tour. This suggests that an analysis of both the film narrative and the real life site together warrants a closer investigation.

First of all I shall turn to a brief outline of the narrative of the film to reveal the motifs that provide comparative connections to film tourism.

*A Synopsis of Vertigo*

*Vertigo* was based on Pierre Boulieu and Thomas Narcejac’s novel, *D’Entre Morts* (1954). The novel’s title has been translated into English as *From Among the Dead* and *The Living and The Dead*. Hitchcock chose the word “vertigo” instead of the original title to emphasise the main protagonist’s condition. But it is perhaps telling that the word “vertigo” also has a connection to travel and movement: etymologically, “vertigo” is Latin for a “whirling or spinning movement”, derived from the verb *vertere* (“to turn”). In its modern context, “vertigo” refers to a pathological condition, yet this relation to whirling and turning in some ways better describes the nature of the business of tourism itself.

The film *Vertigo* tells the story of a police detective – John “Scot tie” Ferguson - who has acquired the eponymous condition after his own near-death experience and the death of a

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6 Steven Jacobs, *The Wrong House*, p. 46
8 See *Oxford Dictionary*, p. 3568.
9 The common tourist industry expression “a whirl-wind tour” suggests the sensation of vertigo as well as the superficiality and perhaps also the heady euphoria of a fast moving, transitory journey across a foreign landscape.
colleague. Retiring from the police force, he is hired by an old friend Elster to follow the trail of his wife Madeleine. Madeleine seems possessed by the spirit of her dead grandmother Carlotta Valdes. As Scottie follows her through the urban centre of San Francisco, he finally makes contact after saving her from drowning in the bay underneath the Golden Gate Bridge. His help and subsequent feelings for Madeleine seem to be of no avail after she leaps from the bell tower at San Juan Bautista – and because of his vertigo, he is unable to stop her or witness her actual death. After being acquitted at the inquiry into her death, Scottie suffers a nervous breakdown and “falls” into a catatonic state for a number of months, and during this time is looked after by his doting female friend Midge.

Once recovered, Scottie encounters Judy Barton, a woman who looks uncannily identical to Madeleine, but who claims she is a working class brunette from Kansas. Scottie remains obsessed with the memory of Madeleine and induces Judy to resemble her as closely as possible. Although temporarily satisfied by her transformation, when Scottie sees that Judy is wearing Carlotta’s necklace he believes that Judy actually is the same person – and that she had helped Elster murder his real wife by exploiting Scottie’s fear of heights. Despite Judy’s new-found love for him, Scottie makes her re-climb the steps at the tower at San Juan Bautista and confess her guilt. He seems finally cured of his vertigo at the same time that Judy is frightened by a ghost-like apparition, a nun, and falls to her death from the same location, at which point the film ends.

**The Film Tourist Gaze in Vertigo (The Portals of the Past in Vertigo)**

**Scottie:** Why do you go there?

**Madeleine:** Because I love it so. It’s beautiful there.

However, since reality rarely provides the perfected pleasures encountered in daydreams, each purchase leads to disillusionment and to the longing for ever-new products. There is a dialectic of novelty and insatiability at the heart of contemporary consumerism.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) Urry, *The Tourist gaze*, p. 13.
In *Vertigo*, Hitchcock’s use of location as a kind of armchair tourism is intertwined with his creation of mystery. He sets up the viewer to be both attracted to and puzzled by the locations presented. Hitchcock’s aim in *Vertigo* appears to be to emphasise both the beauty and mystery of his locations, but also, and perhaps most importantly, their danger(s). Hitchcock quite deliberately seems to associate the typically “safe” tourist location with the lure of dangerous adventure to create a situation in which the eponymous “vertigo” can emerge. As Hitchcock presents the tourist site as a metaphor for the character’s attempts at re-connecting with the past, the very identification these characters project, becomes entangled with loss and a self-destructive mystery.

Borrowing a term from Alain Silver, Steven Jacobs in *The Wrong House: The Architecture of Alfred Hitchcock*, describes how the repetitive scenes of Scottie’s driving through San Francisco in *Vertigo* have a “landmarking effect” on the viewer.\(^\text{11}\) Jacobs argues that Scottie (as though in anticipation of the location-tourist) travels like a *flâneur* through a dead city under the spell of a haunted past in a vehicle that is commonly used for sightseeing. He adds that:

this form of sightseeing brings us to another striking urban icon playing an important part in Hitchcock films: the tourist site. The British Museum, the Royal Albert Hall, the Statue of Liberty, the Jefferson Memorial, the Golden Gate Bridge, the United Nations Headquarters and Mount Rushmore are eternally connected to films such as *Blackmail*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Saboteur*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Vertigo*, and *North By Northwest* respectively.\(^\text{12}\)

As Jacobs analyses it, the tourist site is not just applicable to *Vertigo*, but is a persistent theme in the Hitchcock oeuvre. His urban imagery is so closely connected to familiar tourist sites, that Jacobs says, “[u]ndoubtedly, famous buildings and places attracted more tourist attention because of their prominent role in Hitchcock’s films. Hitchcock, consequently, both tailed and stimulated tourism.”\(^\text{13}\) Hitchcock added to these familiar tourist locations another level of meaning by employing what Jacobs calls an “Eisenstein

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\(^{13}\) Jacobs, *The Wrong House*, p. 46.
montage of attractions”, that produced “a kind of look that transforms the city into a series of static postcard images.” Touristic fantasies and their subsequent memorialisation operate in a way similar to montage sequences in films, effectively, constructing a “sacralization of specific places”. As Jacobs quite observantly states, Hitchcock “does not only rely on the tourist gaze, he also comments on it.” Some critics however have argued Hitchcock is actually contemptuous of tourism (or more specifically cinema as tourism). But as Jacobs continues, it is not so much contempt, but that Hitchcock “transcends and undermines the tourist gaze. He made a habit of wielding postcard views in his films to lull his audiences into false security.”

For a film such as Vertigo, John Urry's concept of the tourist gaze finds a valid case study. Despite the novel D'Entre Morts being set in France, the choice of San Francisco was part of Hitchcock’s vision. According to his daughter Patricia, Hitchcock thought San Francisco was an “American Paris” ripe for cinematic representation. Before filming, Hitchcock had sent Production Designer Henry Bumstead to San Francisco on several trips to scout for locations. The final scriptwriter for the film - Samuel A. Taylor - was recommended to Hitchcock because of his deep knowledge of San Francisco. In particular, Hitchcock was interested in specific monuments within the city such as San Juan Bautista and Mission Dolores Cemetery for their picturesque and symbolic qualities - signifying a kind of filmic postcard. In particular, San Juan Bautista is represented as a museum and monument to San Francisco’s past. Scottie and Madeleine dramatically kiss in the stables where there is a fake plastic horse set up next to a cart for visitors to imagine themselves time travelling back to the nineteenth century.

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14 Ibid, p. 47.
18 Dan Aulier, Vertigo: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic, London, Titan Books, 1999, p. 30. Chris Marker wrote that “Taylor was in love with his city (Alex Coppel, the first writer, was ‘a transplanted Englishman’) and put all his love into the script; and perhaps even more than that, if I am to believe a rather cryptic phrase at the end of his letter: ‘I rewrote the script at the same time that I explored San Francisco and recaptured my past … Words which could apply as much to the characters as to the authors’”. “A Free Replay (Notes on Vertigo)”, in John Boorman and Walter Donahue (eds), Projections 4 an a Half: Filmmakers on Filmmaking, Faber and Faber, London, 1995, p. 128.
In *The Tourist Gaze*, one of John Urry’s fundamental claims is that tourism is a “leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work.” In *Vertigo*, while Scottie has left his conventional job as a police officer for free-lancing as a private detective, by trailing Madeleine we are reminded to remember that he is actually on the job. The irony is that while Madeleine appears to be a woman touring the city at her leisure – a *flâneuse* - the real Judy is also undertaking paid work to deceive Scottie, albeit by a criminal in Elster. Therefore, while this film appears to employ conventional touristic features, there is of course something very different going on. Even though Scottie and Madeleine appear to be at leisure, they are also bound into the conventional duties of paid work, and therefore the study of the touristic aspects of the narrative have to take account of underlying economic context of their activities. Urry writes that another presupposition of the tourist gaze is that it is, “directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience...[T]he viewing of such tourist sights often involves different forms of social patterning, with a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than normally found in everyday life.” Again, the tourist gaze is supposed to result in a kind of heightened awareness of the surrounding world, yet for Scottie precisely the opposite of this occurs – he becomes deceived by the gaze into believing the false reality it has opened up. Or perhaps more specifically, Scottie’s obsession with the beautiful architectural spaces that frame and seemingly almost clothe the female body - remember, at the beginning, Midge’s brassiere designed on the principles of a cantilever bridge makes this direct correlation between engineered urban space and femininity – works to distract him from the truth.

Many of the characters in *Vertigo* are transfixed by memories of the past, which is another vital aspect of the film tourist gaze, which requires a prior screening (and therefore memory of the past film). Scottie and Madeleine-Judy are frequently shown in the act of remembrance, whether it is for lost love, or for a lost and glorious past. And while the two characters look back, they also look around: a large part of the film is in essence a celluloid travelogue of the streets and landmarks of San Francisco and the surrounding region. The main protagonists continually draw attention to their contemporary space as a memory aid. When the couple visits the redwood forest, they examine calibrated tree

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stumps that emphasise history and time travel. Later, when Scottie embraces his vision of Judy as Madeleine, he is brought back in time through their kiss to his last kiss with Madeleine by the false horse in the stable at San Bautista. The carousel-like nature of the camera at this moment suggests that this embrace is another manifestation of his whirling, skewed vision, and “vertigo.” In the narrative, there then appears to be a strong connection between an involuntary Proustian-like remembrance of things past and particular places. Memory and place become so interlinked throughout the film that they reach a point where they cannot be divorced, as represented by Scottie re-visiting the sites that Madeleine had visited before she “died”.

Similarly, Gavin Elster is also caught up by a very specific vision of old San Francisco, as he tells Scottie: “San Francisco’s changed. Things that spell San Francisco to me are disappearing fast.” While his knowledge of the history of the city is one of the first clues to the murder – his knowledge also made it easy to make up the story about the “MacGuffin” of Carlotta Valdes. Yet, when describing Madeleine, he says, “a cloud comes into her eyes and they go blank. She’s somewhere else, away from me, someone I don’t know.” Drawing upon a romantic image of a possessed woman – innocently pulled into the past – Elster makes the comment, “and she wanders. God knows where she wanders.” Already, the film has engaged with two characters under a spell or condition of a longing for the past, and who also describe themselves as “wanderers”: although “only one is a wanderer, two together are always going somewhere” says Madeleine at one point to Scottie. Elster’s other description of Madeleine to Scottie proves equally significant. He mentions that she

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23 Although the Proust connection is rather indirect, it is interesting to note the strange parallel of the involuntary memory effect that Scottie experiences via the character of Madeleine in Vertigo and the “episode of madeleine” in Remembrance of Things Past: volume one, Swann’s Way, where a strong vivid memory is experienced by the protagonist after from tasting a madeleine cake. Robert E. Goodkin has discussed comparatively Vertigo and Proust, see “Fiction and Film: Proust’s Vertigo and Hitchcock’s Vertigo,” in Around Proust, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1991, pp. 89-104.

24 A “MacGuffin” is a plot device used to attract the audience’s attention and precipitate the action of the film. In an interview with Francois Truffaut Hitchcock made this explanation of what a “McGuffin” was: “It might be a Scottish name, taken from a story about two men in a train. One man says: ‘What’s that package up there in the baggage rack?’ and the other answers ‘Oh that’s a McGuffin’. The first one asks ‘What’s a McGuffin?’ ‘Well’, the other man says, ‘It’s an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands’. The first man says ‘But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands’, and the other one answers ‘Well, then that’s no McGuffin!’ ‘So you see, a McGuffin is nothing at all.” Cited in Francois Truffaut, Hitchcock, Martin Seeger and Warburg, London, 1968, p. 138. Interestingly, Zizek considers the MacGuffin in Hitchcock’s films as the Lacanian objet petit a, “a gap in the centre of the symbolic order – the lack, the void of the Real setting in motion the symbolic movement of interpretation, a pure semblance of mystery to be explained, interpreted”. “Alfred Hitchcock, or, The Form and its Historical Mediation”, in Everything you wanted to Know About Lacan but were afraid to ask Hitchcock, Verso, London and New York, 1992, p. 8. We will discuss this notion of objet petit a (lost object) later in the chapter.
regularly visits and stares at the “Portals of the Past” situated at Lloyd Lake in Golden Gate Park. Like Scottie, Madeleine seems deeply caught up by the past glories of San Francisco. Elster claims that Madeleine’s obsession with this place is due to a connection with the colonial past of Carlotta Valdes’ San Francisco. He emphasises that she often stares at the “pillars” on Nob Hill past Lady Lake, which represents the only remnant of the A.N. Towne mansion after the catastrophic 1906 earthquake. Once again, it is the architectural monuments of San Francisco that help the characters to locate themselves within the city.

In an analysis of urban views, Michel De Certeau contrasted the experience of surveying the urban space of New York City from the top of the World Trade Center with the lived experience of mapping out the city on foot. The birds-eye view of New York is one of supposed mastery and comprehension (clear-sightedness), but the chaotic lived experience of the flâneur provides the participant with strategies for moving against monumental structures and hence re-appropriating space. De Certeau’s points are relevant to Vertigo, in the scene in which Scottie has been stripped of the institutional mastery that he retained as a policeman of the city. For Scottie, a birds-eye view of San Francisco in the original police chase results in near-death, and it is as if by acquiring vertigo, Scottie fears re-experiencing the controlling and monumentalising (or the institutionalised) gaze.

Scottie is directed by highly recognisable and iconic tourist locations in his surveillance of Madeleine, “passing” as a tourist or conventional San Francisco resident. When she is looking for Scottie’s apartment, Madeleine likewise uses Coit Tower as a landmark to find her way. In some ways, this pretence at tourism enacts one of the paradoxes of tourism itself: that many deny the identity of “tourist,” instead wanting to achieve a more authentic and highly individualistic appellation such as “traveller” or “pilgrim”. Scottie turns to this surreptitious policing because the trauma of the man’s death at the beginning of the film means that he cannot perform the police tasks that involve chasing and hold-ups. For Scottie, driving around in a car provides a grounded experience of San Francisco streets, as do his shorter walking expeditions at Claude Lane and the entrance to the

26 When Madeleine mentions that she was only able to locate Scottie’s house because of the phallic Coit Tower close by, Scottie suggests “that’s the first time I’ve been grateful for Coit Tower.”
florist, at Union Square. Such wanderings reinforce the point made by Jacobs mentioned earlier, of Scottie as a *flâneur*. Yet when Scottie finally understands the truth and is “cured” of his vertigo, this is the same moment when he returns to the monumentalising gaze rather than Madeleine’s labyrinthine traps.

**The Spectator’s Role: Film Tourism and *Vertigo***

![Figure 2: Tourists at Fort Point, February 2007 (Author’s photograph).](image)

*Vertigo* seems like a travelogue of San Francisco and the surrounding area’s famous historical sites, monuments, architecture and luxurious businesses from the 1950s. Hitchcock had a remarkable ability to capture the subtleties of time, place and spirit in his films… While *Vertigo* is a notable suspense masterpiece, it is also a remarkable testament to Hitchcock’s passion for the San Francisco Bay Area.  

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27 Jeff Kraft and Aaron Leventhal, *Footsteps in the Fog: Alfred Hitchcock’s San Francisco*, p. 74
Vertigo makes spectacular diegetic use of a number of iconic locations in and around San Francisco in the late 1950s such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Park, giant native redwood forests, historical missions and has consequently inspired hordes of Hitchcock cinephiles to (re)visit its precise film locations out of both curiosity and homage. Interestingly, Hitchcock had used familiar locations, assumedly, already popular with tourists. The experiences of visitors to these locations (whether as film tourists or not) after its release were re-filtered by Hitchcock’s lens and narrative, and thus the film effectively haunted these locations.

Currently, in the era of contemporary film tourism, there is a large variety of real-life tours, textual and audio-visual responses that focus on Hitchcock and Vertigo settings in the San Francisco region. There are numerous web pages that feature virtual tours of the Vertigo film locations. Vertigo can be considered a quite complex film tourism site alongside the new popular film tourism site of The Lord of the Rings in New Zealand, because of the large number of sites that are publicly accessible to view, the range of tour operators that use the sites, and the distance between the sites. Some Californian tour operators offer trips that range in expense, time and textual detail to see a few or many of these Vertigo sites. For example, “A Friend in Town Tours” offers a Vertigo tour hosted by a local historian and accompanied throughout by the original Bernard Hermann soundtrack. 28 It also appears that individual sites have become more profitable enterprises when linked to the movie. The Empire Hotel - so crucial within the film’s narrative - has been renamed and rebranded “Hotel Vertigo” since 2008, and all rooms have a TV channel screening the Hitchcock film continuously. The hotel’s web page puns on the film title suggesting that the visitor will “become dizzy with possibilities…sometimes one needs to risk new heights to take in the best view of themselves.” 29 These individualised tours appeal to the more cinephilic tourist or pilgrim, who in the former can spend up to ten hours personally experiencing each of the locations without being part of a group of tourists en masse. Therefore, it is quite noticeable how the tourism industry has fed on the success of Vertigo. Interestingly, despite the assumed differences between film experience in a cinema and the tourist experience of location, the two have converged in the case of

Vertigo, where the film’s representation has reflexively re-shaped the geographical space itself.

On my own visit to the city in February 2007, I selected a four-hour “San Francisco Movie Tour,” which was partly chosen because it was an inexpensive option that allowed me to see the operation of the Vertigo film sites as well as other popular zones and sites for film tourism as part of my wider research for the thesis. According to the web page for the tour, the San Francisco Movie Tour was founded in 2004 “to fill the market need of providing motorcoach tours to famous San Francisco movie locations for both individuals and groups.”

Certainly, I found it difficult to visit such locations myself, as I had no car on this trip and the locations were dispersed throughout the city, making it a long trek directly on foot, and impossible for me to see all in the limited free time that I had in the city. Still creating my own unique tour of Vertigo sites, I used this tour in conjunction with my own private visit to Mission Delores Cemetery by public transport (so that I could spend as much time as I wanted there). I also took a non-film tour to see Vertigo-like redwood forest (it was a Muir Woods tour, although the Vertigo locations were actually filmed in a similar forest but further outside of the city and harder to get to). While I wanted to, I did not get to travel outside of San Francisco to see the iconic San Juan Bautista site because of my time constraints before a return flight to Australia.

On the San Francisco Movie Tour, the advertising promises that one can:

…[S]ee San Francisco through Hollywood’s eyes. Bringing movies to life, San Francisco Movie Tours takes guests on fun and entertaining tours to locations made famous by both current blockbuster and classic San Francisco movies.

As its name suggests, this tour does not just show *Vertigo* film sites but a whole range of locations from popular “San Francisco” movies. The tour includes up to sixty different ones from films as far ranging as *The Maltese Falcon* (Huston, 1941), *Dark Passage* (Daves, 1947), *Bullitt* (Yates, 1968), *Dirty Harry* (Siegel, 1971), *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Columbus, 1993) and *The Rock* (Bay, 1996). It also features locations of television shows - such as the house exterior for the well-known sitcom *Full House* (Franklin, 1987-95) – which indicates that while it catered for high-brow cinemaphile it could also appeal to low-brow television buffs. This tour is similar to a number of recent successful film and television location tours that have been established in major cities in the United States: most notably in the highly-filmed metropolises of New York and Los Angeles.\(^{31}\) The tour bus that I took was fitted with a television screen and audio-visual equipment to screen a DVD video of relevant movie clips showing footage of relevant San Francisco locations [See Figure 3]. Therefore, with those tourists without a strong memory of all the San Francisco films featured in the tour, the footage helps to resuscitate old memories. Furthermore, the San Francisco Movie Tour even *creates* subsequent interest in lesser

known films that featured the city. The San Francisco Movie Tour is ideally suited to the conventional mass tourism venture, because the historic city centre is compact by vehicle and therefore a half-day tour is able to cover a broad space across the city, from the central business district to Old Beach and Golden Gate Park.

Film tourism is often depicted as the ultimate form of film fandom: because frequently enough, great amounts of time, money and effort are required to physically visit film production locations. For example, the San Francisco Movie Tour describes its operation as an act of “bringing movies to life” – an ultimate form of film appreciation that will somehow bring about a happy ending to this ongoing pathology of obsessive and excessive film spectatorship. On one tour’s website, a visitor has praised the tour for exceeding expectations: “It was nice to get the unexpected ‘extras’ of the Avenue of Tall Trees, the sanatorium-hospital, and the Portals of the Past.” To use the language of Mieke Bal, visiting film locations allows the spectator to integrate personal life with film narratives. Similarly, such a visitation can also result in the creation of a surplus of meaningful and “mastered” memories, and one internet advertisement for the movie tour suggests quite knowingly the following to the potential tourist: “Sometimes we bring our enchanted day to a climax with a breath-taking ride in the St. Francis’ glass elevator—to test your vertigo.”

The fact that many parts of the original sets have been lost in time has not dissuaded those wishing to visit the sites. Jeff Kraft and Aaron Lowethal in Footsteps in the Fog: Alfred Hitchcock’s San Francisco noted that the number of visitors to Mission Dolores Cemetery increased after the film. As an ironic result, the headstone of the fictional Carlotta Valdes in the cemetery, which was designed by the props team, remained on site after filming and was quite popular amongst the tourists. The prop was later removed after complaints that it was sacrilegious and not “authentic.” However, the headstone prop of Carlotta Valdes in the cemetery, or the bell tower at San Batista, arguably integral to the film can still remain

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32 For example, I became keen to watch the remake of the horror film The Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978), after the tour highlighted some key locations throughout the city and appealing scenes matched from the film.
34 http://www.toursanfranciscobay.com/tours/hitchcocks-vertigo.html
36 Jacobs, The Wrong House, p. 46.
part of the narrative of the film sites despite their material absence, as the sites have already been represented as places of loss. The experience of the film tourist parallels Scottie’s journey in the second half of *Vertigo*, which is the most direct representation of Scottie as tourist. Marilyn Fabe suggests that those who desire to return to the places where *Vertigo* was shot, “replicate or perform the actions of its hero through much of the second half of the film... both experience the wish to recover an impossible object, something devoutly desired that was fictional and hence never existed in the first place.”

The visitor to these sites can be fully aware of this “impossible object” prior to their visit, yet still be inspired. The character of Scottie anticipates this fascination in the film in his search of Madeleine despite the knowledge of her death. Scottie continually revisits the same places depicted in the first half of the film, Brocklebank Apartments, the Mission Dolores Cemetery, and the Palace of Fine Arts. After being released from the Sanatorium, he visits Brocklebank once again and sees the same green car driven by Madeleine. Interestingly, Scottie immediately inquires about its owner, in not too a dissimilar way to that of a tourist. During the second half of the film, Scottie becomes increasingly aware that something is missing. His fantasy of the past has no material support in the real. Even when he hangs out with Judy, attracted by her likeness to Madeleine, he seems nevertheless, still to be unhappy. Yet he attempts to re-create the fantasy, rather desperately, by objectifying Judy in order to fit the appearance of Madeleine, “the parameters of his fantasy ideal”, despite her resistance. The film presents Scottie’s touristic obsession as a process which has a culmination or endpoint, just like the curl in Carlotta’s hair. For Scottie becomes “cured” of his vertigo (idealisation), via his awareness that Judy was “a copy of a copy”. But does the film tourist who re-enacts a lost past become “cured”? The paradox and aim of the tourist is to not lose the obsession that consumed Scottie. While Scottie overcomes the paradox at the expense of the whole material support of the fantasy dying, the tourist endeavours to maintain both the real and imaginary effects. Any disappointment felt by the film tourist then is not the fault of the guide, or the tourist industry, but of the spectator themselves for they are connecting the real and imaginary through personally visiting these sites. The same logic applies to seeing a film itself, for the viewer cannot critique a film based on its lack of pure realism.

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Vertigo is one of the canonical texts of feminist film theory. It has become a vehicle for theorising the gendered cultural biases within classic Hollywood, and this long tradition of analysis of the ideological components of the film certainly cannot be overlooked in this chapter on the ideological function of a different kind of “gaze”. Laura Mulvey, in her seminal essay for Screen, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” argues that Vertigo propagates a phallocentric cultural gaze over the consumed female body, which she sees as endemic within classic Hollywood:

… in Vertigo, erotic involvement with the look boomerangs: the spectator’s own fascination is revealed as illicit voyeurism as the narrative enacts the processes and pleasures that he is himself exercising and enjoying. The Hitchcock hero here is firmly placed within the symbolic order, in narrative terms. He has all the attributes of the patriarchal superego. 39

In support of Mulvey’s thesis, the film does appear to privilege Scottie’s point-of-view: indeed, there are only a few scenes without the central protagonist. Yet while the “male gaze” is foregrounded, even the opening credits reveal the gazing female, showing a woman’s eyes up close, turning into the spiralling signifiers of vertigo:

Hence the spectator, lulled into a false sense of security by the apparent legality of his surrogate, sees through his look and finds himself exposed as complicit, caught in the moral ambiguity of looking. Far from being simply an aside on the perversion of the police, Vertigo focuses on the implications of the active/looking, passive/looked-at split in terms of sexual difference and the power for the male symbolic encapsulated in the hero. 40

40 Ibid.
The major crux of the debate in feminist studies on film spectatorship since the publication of Mulvey’s article has revolved around the degree to which the *Vertigo* viewer might choose to identify with the camera’s subjective view and hence with Scottie’s warped phallocentric universe. *Vertigo* has been subject to a wide range of debates that seek to position the central protagonist and the agency of the viewer.\(^{41}\) Other scholars have drawn attention to Hitchcock’s self-conscious use of perverse themes and plot devices: as Michael Hall argues using one of the director’s interviews with Francois Truffaut, Hitchcock acknowledged that the protagonist’s desires in *Vertigo* were deliberately intended to be fetishistic.\(^{42}\) The gaze of Hitchcock’s protagonist is not intended to necessarily privilege a patriarchal model of spectatorship. For as the film’s plot unfolds, Scottie’s initial gaze of Madeline and the obsession that ensues leads to an insecure subject, and arguably Scottie becomes a victim of his gaze. Therefore, such a gaze cannot be simply read as uniquely “male”, but could be identified within anyone who is truly obsessed. Nicholas Haeffner argues that Mulvey’s thesis “assumes that the active spectator of the feature film is male and that the organisation of looks within the film privileges the male leading character.”\(^{43}\) Mulvey’s key point regarding *Vertigo* is about the coerced identification that the film induces in the spectator.

Hitchcock’s skilful use of identification processes and liberal use of subjective camera from the point of view of the male protagonist draw the spectators deeply into his position, making them share his uneasy gaze. The spectator is absorbed into a voyeuristic situation within the screen scene and diegesis, which parodies his own in the cinema.\(^{44}\)

As it appears, Hitchcock is not privileging a male desire, but rather revealing the fantastical structure of desire itself, *à la* Lacanian psychoanalytic model of “desire as lack”.\(^{45}\) Furthermore, *Vertigo* is not simply a film about sexual desire as it engages with


many aspects of desire and longing. One that stands out, and perhaps has been under
examined is the tourist’s desire for the past. The tourist gaze appears a stronger motif than
the male gaze in Vertigo considering Hitchcock’s juxtaposition of Scottie’s desire with its
setting and a “historical” back-story. For without San Francisco and Calotte Valdes (place
and its mysteries) as the background for Vertigo, how could Scottie really become
obsessed with the character of Madeleine? Virginia Wexman suggests location in Vertigo
is as important as the beauty of its female lead character, stating:

Hitchcock selected these picture-postcard settings early in the production process and
had the movie’s script tailored to accommodate them. Like Kim Novak, San
Francisco is part of Vertigo’s beauty, beauty defined by a consumerist function. Both
the romantic ideal of the love goddess and the escapist ideal of the tourist attraction
have a material dimension, for both beauty and travel are multi-billion-dollar
industries.\(^{46}\)

Returning to the central issues in this chapter about film tourism, could the film’s well-
established “tourist gaze” and spatial revisitation summon a particular kind of
identification from the film tourist different to the characters of the film? This is a
contentious issue in relation to Vertigo: while debate continues over gender representation
and the gaze in films like this one, in this chapter I suggest that an examination of the film
locations in Vertigo can provide a new angle on older debates about film spectatorship and
fan identification. Therefore, the gaze remains a relevant trope for film studies, but it is not
one we should consider only in the context of gender alone.

“It’s not just sightseeing”: Critical Obsession with Vertigo

Visiting the San Francisco film locations of Vertigo has something of a cult following as
well as mass tourist appeal. Stefan Roesch in his text on film tourism suggests that

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what Lacan called “objet petit a”, the object cause of neurotic desire that drives a “barred subject” to
overcome its primordial loss with the Maternal Thing. In Zizek’s words, objet petit a “is the chimerical
object of fantasy, the object causing our desire and at the same time – this is its paradox – posed retroactively
by desire, in ‘going through the fantasy’ we experience how this fantasy-object (‘the secret’) only

\(^{46}\) Virginia Wright Wexman, “The Critic as Consumer: Film Study in the University, Vertigo, and the Film
“arguably, fans of a cult movie might be more easily stimulated to visit a film location than the average spectator, because such a film is more meaningful to them.”\textsuperscript{47} This seems to be the case for the critics that have written on \textit{Vertigo}. In a subsection of Chris Marker’s documentary montage \textit{Sans Soleil}, the narrator recounts their strange experience of travelling through film locations in San Francisco as part of searching for Hitchcock’s “secret” about time. An interesting result of written criticism on \textit{Vertigo} is the tendency to meditate on the meanings of the places within the film. In his article, “Caveh Takes the \textit{Vertigo} Tour”, filmmaker Caveh Zahedi describes both the strangeness and seductiveness of taking the \textit{Vertigo} tour.\textsuperscript{48} Zahedi communicates both the cynicism and fascination of the modern and knowing tourist, who wants to refuse the label (and film tourism industry), yet is seduced by playing out the fantasy. Zahedi takes the “personalised” tour given by Jesse Warre mentioned earlier, the tour which apparently \textit{Vertigo} fans from overseas will contact him to schedule their own tour and make their travel plans based on its availability. Furthermore, they pay up to $500 US dollars for a 10-hour tour: “Some people are very into this movie. It’s almost a spiritual journey. It’s not just sightseeing.” According to Warre, many of the visitors on the \textit{Vertigo} tour like to be left alone at the location sites in order to commune with the place in silence, a silence reminiscent of the quiet that accompanies meditation and prayer.\textsuperscript{49} Taking the \textit{Vertigo} tour Zahedi says is like visiting the Stations of the Cross in the Holy Land.\textsuperscript{50} But how one experiences it is entirely a function of the faith and enthusiasm of the tourist – or how much of a “buff” you are. Zahedi notes whilst experiencing his own tour:

It was then that the irony of the situation struck me: here we were, two strangers trying our best to recapture a moment from the past and act the part of someone else, which is precisely what \textit{Vertigo} is about. In that sense, the \textit{Vertigo} tour perfectly mimics the central conceit of the movie. It allows fans of the film to inhabit the implicit contradiction of the film, the always impossible but all too human attempt to make our illusions real.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{47} Roesch, Stefan, \textit{The Experiences of Film Location Tourists}, p.96.
\textsuperscript{48} Caveh Zahedi, “Caveh Takes the \textit{Vertigo} Tour”, \textit{Films in Focus}, December 1, 2008, at: http://www.filminfocus.com/article/caveh_takes_the_vertigo_tour
\textsuperscript{49} Jess Warre, cited by Zahedi, at: http://www.filminfocus.com/article/caveh_takes_the_vertigo_tour__take_one_
\textsuperscript{50} In “Obsessed with \textit{Vertigo}” the two restorers refer to \textit{Vertigo} sites of San Francisco as “hallowed ground”.
\textsuperscript{51} Zahedi. As part of his article for \textit{Films in Focus}, Zahedi has his friend documentary maker take photos of him re-enacting scenes from the film (see: http://www.filminfocus.com/article/caveh_takes_the_vertigo_tour__slideshow__) – an impossible task Zahedi
Writing on the cult appeal that the sites of *Vertigo* have for visitors, Douglas Cunningham argues that the film goes beyond summoning mere touristic pleasures, but speaks personally to its fans and their own memories, inducing what he calls the “cinephilic pilgrimage”. His article is a part theoretical and part personal account of his many pilgrimages to the sites of *Vertigo*. He says, “[l]ike Scottie and Madeleine, these pilgrims search for personal, subjective spaces within an ephemeral, metaphysical narrative… Whether searching alone or in pairs, these pilgrims can never, as Madeleine asserts, reach a specific, final destination, for the true cinephilic pilgrimage is always a ‘wandering’.”

For Cunningham, *Vertigo* is the film that best defines what is meant by “cinephilic pilgrimage”. Although he does not use the term “film tourism”, his own term can be assimilated into the same field of inquiry, as he admits pilgrimage and tourism cross paths. However, Cunningham suggests that the “specific motivations” for pilgrimage and tourism differ. The aspects Cunningham draws the most out of are the spiritual meaning contained within the act of cinephilic pilgrimage, the phenomenological level of the individual’s own lived experience and personal memory.

The problem within any pilgrimage is that the object remains forever intangible. The film tourist may perceive their own pilgrimages to sites of *Vertigo* as a spiritual kind of journey, yet such a perception only mystifies further what it is that is inspiring the travel. But where *Vertigo* succeeds as a suitable film tourist case study is in the way Hitchcock can reflexively portray all tourist journeys as “wanderings” and re-imaginings of the past. Louis Althusser’s well-known idea of “interpellation” argued that ideological state apparatuses have a material existence and function through particular practices and rituals. The practice of visiting the sites of *Vertigo* itself commits one to the ideological space between physical reality and fantasy (the “psychophysical space”) – where one has to re-imagine the film.

notes. Slavoj Zizek in his documentary, *A Perverts Guide to Cinema* does exactly the same thing, whilst describing the meaning of such scenes.  
52 Douglas Cunningham, “‘It’s all there, it’s no dream’: *Vertigo* and the redemptive pleasures of cinephilic pilgrimage”, *Screen* 49:2, (Summer 2008), p. 123.  
53 Cunningham, “‘It’s all there, it’s no dream’: *Vertigo* and the redemptive pleasures of cinephilic pilgrimage”, p. 135.  
Vertigo does not promise the reunification with a (singular) lost object or “imaginary signifier” (the past), but the opportunity to experience the search for that object, that is, of having to project that object and recreate Scottie’s obsessed “wandering”. As Cunningham elaborates, Vertigo demands the cinephilic pilgrim to exercise “creative agency.” The actual icons such as Mission Dolores (etc.), “serve merely as springboards for a potentially much larger phenomenological – and even spiritual experience. For this reason, cinephilic pilgrimages stand apart from the casual ogling of curious film buffs”. Therefore, Vertigo is a clearly unique case study of cinephilic desire, which goes beyond novelty or curiosity. Involved in this phenomenon is a serious love of and commitment to the film. For Cunningham, cinephilic pilgrimage has a certain kind of healing power, while apparently the tourist experience is a fragmented one. Upon re-visiting, Cunningham says, deriving from his personal experience: “My physical desire to occupy this moment, in a space and time under my control… has eclipsed the real romantic angst, that inspired re-viewing of the film in the first place.” The repetition involved in re-visiting the sites for Cunningham leads to “healing” the divide between the real and imaginary. But what Cunningham neglects are the conditions from which this kind of “authentic” pilgrimage (and “healing”) is possible these days. He discounts the possibility that his pilgrimage could be another case of film tourism.

How can cinephilic pilgrims really dissociate their experience and identity from the film tourist (or self-aware tourist), or for that matter, the tourist gaze? Especially, when there is no “authentic” object (or experience) to be embodied or possessed in the first place. For both the pilgrim and the tourist, Vertigo involves really the same thing: the search for the lost object that was never possessed, nor ever could be. The way Cunningham describes his own experiences as a pilgrim (e.g. “I did try to capture Scottie’s feelings”) does suggest that the pilgrim may actually suffer the effects more than most visitors, and that the psychophysical (imaginary) space between film representation and reality commands fusion if one is to be a true obsessive. Although attracting personal commitment (assumedly a cinephilic quality), the lure of film locations can speak to any kind of traveller or tourist as it only requires a temporary suspension of disbelief. It may be that a key difference concerns a film location visitor’s response to “interpellation”. Zizek

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55 Cunningham, “‘It’s all there, it’s no dream’: Vertigo and the redemptive pleasures of cinephilic pilgrimage”, p. 124.
describes Scottie’s response to Midge’s own copy of the portrait of Carlotta with herself as the subject instead as “terrifying”. Midge had sought to impose/include herself in Scottie’s fantasy.\textsuperscript{57} It may be that the cinephilic pilgrim like Scottie would resist/disavow a similar intrusion/substitution by commercial tour guide or a site alteration (re-construction) for example, while the “tourist” would see no significant difference, given there is no authentic object to begin with.

Furthermore, are we to put aside all those visitor’s experiences that do not find personal enrichment, but rather are awakened (like Scottie) to the banality and even petty motives behind the staging of film locations? For as Fabe notes, “not all spectators get caught up in the fantasy”.\textsuperscript{58} What needs to be considered for any study of why people would find these experiences somewhat “authentic” or meaningful, even if they are knowingly immaterialised (psychological and personal), is how the tourist industry itself draws an economic interest from the paradoxical attraction. Thus, this phenomenon of film tourism leads to a fetishisation of loss. The “pilgrim” may walk away with a knowing but deeply felt connection with the film site (which we can’t take away), but because the power of this connection resides with the individual’s projection, actually leads to luring more tourists to these sites, and subsequently, feeds an industry willing to accommodate such desires to visit these sites and connect. The “authentic” experience of the pilgrim and its attempted reproduction by the tourist industry are caught in Urry’s “dialectic of novelty and insatiability”.

**Nostalgia, Disappointment and Restoration**

The Greek word for "return" is nostos. Algos means "suffering." So nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return.\textsuperscript{59}

Frederic Jameson briefly alluded to the noir-ish side of Hitchcock’s filmic geography, when he wrote that “[t]he hallucinatory San Francisco of Vertigo is undateable, out of time; its very foregrounding of the mesmeration by the image and voyeurism in some

\textsuperscript{58} Fabe, “Mourning Vertigo”, p. 365, fn. 4.
sense subverting and precluding the practice of nostalgia film and image culture.”

This idea of “nostalgia film and image culture” is part and parcel of touristic fantasies or the tourist gaze. The question though that arises with Vertigo: is how much does Hitchcock subvert or “transcend” this nostalgia or “tourist gaze”?

If nostalgia is a psychical coping mechanism for loss of the past, a cultural form of nostalgia such as tourism also extends itself as a kind of time travel experience in representing a known past. David Lowenthal writes in The Past Is A Foreign Country, an explicit analogy between travel and the past, that “long uprooted and newly unsure of the future, Americans en masse find comfort in looking back”. Methods of “looking back” manifest in various ways within cinema cultures – re-releases, remakes or adaptations of older stories, postmodern set-designs evoking ye olde worlde qualities, new films set in earlier decades – and therefore the act of “looking back” at the settings of a classic film such as Vertigo and visiting its real locations offers yet another method of achieving such comfort and pleasure for Hitchcock fans. Time and history are emphasised in the film – hence the title of the novel’s original reference: the “living and the dead”. Lowenthal suggests that “memory transforms the experienced past into what we think it should have been, eliminating undesired scenes and making favoured ones suitable”. Thus, the motive behind film tourism in the case of Vertigo could be this kind of act of “looking back”, but one importantly that can be controlled. The Hitchcock subversion within the narrative of the film is that an “impossible object” (MacGuffin) determines nostalgia, yet as previously discussed, even this “truth” of nostalgia can still wield power.

But we must discuss how, despite the motives and even paradoxical joys of film tourism that emerge from the case study of Vertigo, this phenomenon is still underpinned by a deeper socio-economic legacy. As a niche tourism attraction, Vertigo locations present the opportunity to add an idiosyncratic element to what has arguably been theorised as a homogenising urban landscape. Michael Hough’s analysis of the relation between market forces and place argues that “technologization as agents that homogenize the landscapes of

places that were otherwise unique” will hence deprive them of their “special character.” In this sense, film tourism might be considered a way of hiding the reality of the city. For tourism marketers to craft a niche consumer base, such as the “cinephilic pilgrim”, the use of a fictional Hitchcock stage-set onto San Francisco’s urban space adds a unique identity that might gloss over the way that some San Francisco tourist markers – such as Fisherman’s Wharf, for example – are now themed environments and identical to other themed zones throughout the United States. Not only is the representation of space similar to other themed environments, but the sheer quantity of tourists present in such spaces means that a niche industry such as film tourism, offers tourists some creative agency to distinguish themselves from the mainstream tourist, and to hence cross from tourist to “unique traveller” or even “pilgrim” category.

The end of *Vertigo* embodies the sense of disappointment the film has intimated throughout. As soon as the mystery is unravelled (just like Madeleine’s spiral curl), Madeleine as the object of desire becomes revealed for what she was – a fantasy. But also, the last scene also reveals the extent to which Scottie had identified with this fantasy. Through a repetitive act of confronting his vertigo – he becomes actually cured from it through his discovery of the secret of Madeleine. Slavoj Zizek makes an important point when he says “Scottie’s fury at the end is an authentic Platonic fury: he is furious at discovering that he was *imitating the imitation.*” It is important for his acknowledgement that this fury is “Platonic” – that is, metaphysical. Or as Jacobs puts it more plainly, “[i]n the end, Madeleine turns out to be an artificial construction as the painted portrait of Carlotta Valdes.” The touristic sacralizing of space and its dissolution of the gap between physical reality and cinematic image is finally revealed as one between the living and dead and this is an impossible identification that narratives of cinema can only attempt to conceal. In tourism, the desires drawn out in *Vertigo* find their formalistic correlate: the disappointment caused by the object not matching a preconceived notion or imagined (“Platonic”) ideal of a space. The cinematic representation of space cannot match the real life voyage to the locations that are available: in this sense the *Vertigo* tour is unrepeatable and impossible to achieve. It is in regard to this problem that John Frow has written that

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“the structure of the tourist experience involves a paradoxical relation at once to the cultural and ontological Other... It is tourism itself that destroys (in the very process it constructs) the authenticity of the touristic object.”

When Scottie enters a catatonic state after the trial dealing with Madeleine’s death, the doctor diagnoses him as suffering “acute melancholia”. For Marilyn Fabe, this diagnosis is quite significant. It actually explains the reason behind Scottie’s obsession with a non-possessable lost object. Fabe argues that the reference by local historian Pop Leibel to Carlotta Valdez’s daughter actually reflects something about Scottie’s own condition. The daughter created an “ideal mother” in place of her real mother who always “wandered” and finally abandoned her. Fabe calls this condition that is indirectly implied by the film as “an insecure attachment”. According to Fabe, Scottie falls in love with Madeline (impossible object) because she is fictional and thus “safe”, while Midge is not. Midge is not just a sideline character; she plays as important and symptomatic part of the story. She is a sign of Scottie’s failure to commit to a relationship, and his indifference to “domestic [material] relationships”. So is the film tourist likewise suffering a form of “acute melancholia”, and is an insecure subject like Scottie pursuing “safe fictions” (ideals) in place of suffering material “lost objects”? Judy’s death at the end could rather represent once again Scottie’s insecurity. Far from being “cured”, Scottie is rather more distanced from facing his vertigo and falling in love with a real person (Judy) – and instead blaming her for shattering his fictional construction.

*Vertigo* demonstrates the inherent disappointment in attempts to acquire an object of desire. Likewise, disappointment has been theorised to be a typical aspect of tourism. A psychoanalytic reading of tourism would suggest that the fantasy space of the Other cannot be achieved in material reality. Only at the moment of consummation, or the point at the end of the spiral, does Scottie realise that his ideal had never existed in the first place. Perhaps this is the lesson that there can be no more pleasure at the repeating of pleasure, the fuller perception and introspection has been achieved. Usai’s book on the death of cinema emphasised the impossibility of a completely restored (or resurrected) past. And likewise, Lowenthal, writing about the preservation and reconstitution of the past,

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67 See Usai, *The Death of Cinema: history, cultural memory and the dark digital age.*
indicates that restored or rebuilt structures are not only dead but impossible and therefore anachronistic.  

While *Vertigo* is a product of a reproducible medium, to an extent this holds true for this film too. Famously, the original film was restored in 1996 by Robert A. Harris and James C. Katz. Likewise in the film, Judy becomes a “site” for Scottie to be renovated or restored back into the ideal Madeleine, in an attempt for Scottie to be able to repeat his experience forever. Scottie’s sublime moment when Madeleine’s image reappears again at the hotel represents a movement toward infinity – a moment that leads inevitably to self-destruction. The Orphean strains of this scene and its connections to the tourism industry are all too apparent: through travel, the tourist must “look back” and destroy the object of his/her desire. In this sense, the film narrative enacts the central disabling paradox of tourism itself. Yet the whole lesson of this paradox does not enact a “cure” – the repetition continues, either out of a deep insecurity or a will to believe.

It appears we do not stop being tourists once we work out the structure of our desires. While some who visit the sites leave unaffected or disappointed, there are always some who are transformed. Scottie is representative of the tourist who submits fully to their fictional obsession at the cost of material world (in this case, two people’s lives) in order to be cured. Hitchcock emerges as a critic of nostalgia-inflected tourism in that he reveals how any obsession can unfold in dangerous and fatal ways. But the conclusion of the film is ambiguous, whether Scottie is really cured after Judy’s death is unanswered. Despite the cure, he has lost everything, and his perverse characterisation in the final part of the film distances him from audience identification. Fabe suggests that those who “seek vestiges of *Vertigo* continue Scottie’s doomed quest to make a fantasy real... to seek an illusory means by which to overcome loss.” For Fabe, Hitchcock makes us all “melancholics” – in that the problem presented to us, which we subsequently obsess over, is the “doomed” attempt at overcoming loss. Fabe reveals that there is a deep connection between film tourism and narratives of loss and nostalgia in *Vertigo*, but as this thesis will demonstrate, we can also find other cases that play on this connection.

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68 Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, p. 278.
69 For example, Douglas Cunningham represents one of these “transformed” visitors.
As we have explored in this chapter, travel and touring are key themes represented in *Vertigo* – whether by Madeleine’s feigned embodiment of the past in the character of Carlotta Valdes, Scottie’s obsessive search for Madeleine, or even Midge’s secret trailing of Scottie. Each character at some level represents an inability to grasp the present moment and its mundane realities. The central characters seem to time-travel to a non-moment located in a nostalgic other time. And hence, there appears a similarity between their personal journeys and the act of film tourism itself, even tourism in general. It is perhaps this similarity between the film’s narrative and the narrative enacted in contemporary discourse of mass tourism that is most relevant. Do tourists visit *Vertigo* locations because they want to, that is, out of some classical touristic desire or gaze to find pleasure? Or, could it be that the *Vertigo* tourists or pilgrims are attracted to experiencing a “staged” disappointment – a revelation of the nature of time itself that is interpreted as “authentic”? I am mindful that these questions have no simple answers, as the personal motivation of each tourist is too manifold to be reduced to simple formulas. On the other side of the coin, the textual analysis of *Vertigo* does help us to think about the fetishisation of travel and place in contemporary western culture, which is frequently cited as one of the vital hallmarks of a de-centred subjectivity.

Before concluding my discussion of *Vertigo* it is worth noting the temporal dimensions imbedded in these processes. Nostalgia tourism reinvents narratives of the past. Graham Dann has provided a potent example of film tourism’s reinvention in an examination of the case of Hollywood icon Marlene Dietrich in Berlin.71 A cottage industry of Dietrich memorabilia and tour sites now exists in the city, despite the fact that the actress left Germany in 1930 and never lived there after this point in time. The Film Museum Berlin houses a permanent exhibition of much of Dietrich’s costumes and personal material. The return of her memorabilia to Berlin after Dietrich’s death in 1992 has allowed the city to reclaim the actress and to some extent reinvent the past and her position within German society. As Dann puts it, through the set-up of the Marlene Dietrich tourism industry in Berlin, “Marlene has at last come home to the fatherland.”72 In our case study of the *Vertigo* film tourist gaze, there is a similar urge to reinvent the past, which seems to dovetail with the film’s own resuscitation from mixed reviews at point of release to its rise

72 Dann, “Nostalgia in the Noughties,” p.43.
to top the critical lists of the world’s greatest films in the 1980s and 1990s. A combination of cinematic pilgrimage and critical analysis toward the San Francisco sites that serve as the basis of Vertigo’s film tourism spaces might provide a new mode of critical meta-analysis of the film. Such a meta-analysis would acknowledge that the film tourist gaze might easily become a fetishistic denial of the contemporary realities of modern urban life, such as the city’s 11.8 percent poverty rate. The character Gavin Elster warns the spectator - and arguably, the future film tourists: “San Francisco’s changed. Things that spell San Francisco to me are disappearing fast.” Similarly, place marketers creating tourism sites can “pro-actively subject the past to a very controlled and deliberate reinterpretation.” In an ideological analysis of the Vertigo film tourist gaze, one might ask the question of what else is at play in this obsession with negotiating the sites of a decades-old film. In Vertigo, real life tourist sites are not only correlates to cinematic locations, but are also spaces that have many other meanings unrelated to the film. The power of the film tourist gaze is clear enough, when we realise that these San Franciscan locations are now primarily mediated by an obsessive focus on them as film sites of the past, concealing their presence as real life locations. To speak of my own journey to these locations, as I walked hurriedly through the Mission District to get to the Mission Delores complex, I overlooked the urban fabric of the suburb and its residents in my haste to reach this fictional locale.

In this final ideological context, I would like to think of “vertigo” as it has been read in political cultural theory as the de-centred subjectivity reflective of contemporary late modernity. A kind of subjectivity irrevocably mediated through speed and dislocation, and exacerbated by the developments in globalised communications and travel technologies from the steam-train to the Internet. “Vertigo” in this sense then might be thought of as kind of metaphor for the perils and the anxieties of the city that have been created by the contemporary era of post-industrial mass tourism. For spectators, Vertigo alludes to a simpler past and an increasingly distant one, an impossible (pre-modern) San Francisco.

Stephen Barber suggests that “the innumerable disparities and enigmas that comprise the gap between the contemporary city and its filmed surfaces form the vital core in every human obsession with filmic urban space.” As this case study illustrates, such disparities between Hitchcock’s San Francisco and the real life locations will continue to fuel this fascination and obsession with the film and encourage a manifestation of the film tourist gaze, despite its effects.

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Chapter Two

City of Stars: Harnessing the Film Tourist Gaze in the Development of the Universal Studio Tour in the 1960s.

At long last one major studio, Universal Pictures, has decided to show a little more hospitality to the movie-going public – and also make some money in the process.¹

[T]his institutional activity can do an “image” job for Hollywood that no high-priced outside public relations expert could ever deliver.²

At the same time as Vertigo was first released to the public and demonstrated the power of the film tourist gaze, the late 1950s and early 1960s marks a vital transitional period for Hollywood cinema. Audiences had begun to decline dramatically, from 90 million per week in the late 1940s to 60 million per week in 1950, and to 40 million by 1960.³ Leisure activities such as sports and travel, along with television, had appeared as rival entertainments to the previous doctrine of cinema viewing. Hollywood responded by adopting a number of innovations in order to try and reinstitute high box office returns. The changes inaugurated resulted in an altered and more business-like attitude toward movie production. The Hollywood studios would never be the same again: this is an era in which commercial synergies between cinema and other products and leisure practices began to occur more frequently, and one of these instances is the appearance of studio tourist attractions as part of a fuller cinematic experience.

This is the era in which tourism and cinema is first explicitly connected for profit, when the film tourist gaze is first commodified through the introduction of studio tours. In this chapter I argue that the appearance of the film tourist gaze in post-war Los Angeles – in tandem with a rise in mass tourism – operates to fuse tourism with film spectatorship and commercial consumption, outside the traditional practice of film viewing. This chapter discusses the development of studio-based film tourism as a form that tried to harness the

potential possibilities that could result from the film tourist gaze. I will focus on one specific Hollywood studio, Universal Studios. Since its inception in 1915, Universal has discontinuously been a site for a variety of film-touristic incarnations. This chapter examines the introduction of a revised studio tour that began in 1963. While Disneyland was the first studio to create a film-based theme park experience that started from 1955, Universal Studios – or Universal City as it was then known – was unique in its attempt to represent a “behind-the-scenes” look at filmmaking that is akin to the forms of film tourism that have been identified in its current incarnation.

In the field of tourism studies, despite the acknowledgement given by scholars of film tourism such as Sue Beeton towards the emergence and influence of Universal Studios and Hollywood as early tourism sites, no scholarship to date has focussed closely on the effects of the Hollywood film studio tour attractions in the 1960s. Universal Studios is usually discussed in its contemporary incarnation as a multinational company and cinematic brand; however, this does take into account how different the attraction was while it first established its identity as a zone for cinematic encounters. This chapter redresses this imbalance by showing how Universal Studios forms a vital part of a more nuanced history of the film tourist gaze. In this chapter, I argue that Universal controlled and exploited the film tourist gaze of the 1960s through the creation of a novel type of space that attempted to emulate its environs in the cinematic city of Los Angeles. Universal was the first film studio to play on the concept of a symbiotic relationship between Los Angeles and Hollywood, and to present a filmed site as part of one larger film city, therefore fusing a film location with a wider metropolitan environment. While in the previous chapter we examined the city of San Francisco being turned postumously into a giant film tourism site for Hitchcock fans, in the case of the development of Universal Studios Hollywood, we have almost the other side of this phenomenon – a studio being turned into a miniature Los Angeles, a city-as-microcosm. Los Angeles is America’s ultimate cinematic city, and in the late 1950s and early 1960s there were only a few avenues to see or participate in this Hollywood glamour: namely, through Hollywood star tours through the Beverly Hills region, and the star walk along Hollywood Boulevard and

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4 See Beeton, Sue. *Film-Induced Tourism*, Channel View Publications, 2005. Beeton provides an engaging analysis of the present Universal Studios as site for destination marketing in her text on film-induced tourism.

Grauman’s Chinese Theater. Therefore, in the sudden proliferation of film studio tours in the 1960s we find a vitally different ideological set-up – it is the studios themselves that tightly control the fan’s experience, and help to exploit the consumer impulse for film-inspired desire for profit, and to fetishise filmed spaces. The consumer desire for being part of the magic of the Los Angeles star machine was turned toward and converted into the participation of themed film studio tours.

To demonstrate my central argument of Universal creating a miniature city in order to harness the potential of the film tourist gaze, I outline the history of the studio tour theme park development in its initial opening years, from 1963 until 1968 – a period that proved pivotal for the reinvented success of Universal Studios. Secondly, I analyse the audience reception of the Universal Studios themed experience through a close analysis of print media reviews of the tours of this era. This five-year period of 1963-1968 has been selected because it is distinct from later formations of the park. After this time, the concept of the studio as city was not enough to draw interest; the theme park began to innovate upon its original design, to introduce new rides and experiences that were more in tune with amusement parks such as Knott’s Berry Farm and Disneyland, than the original displays and relatively sedate entertainments that were on offer at Universal. The park experienced a technological turn that occurred in tandem with developments in cinematic special effects and the rise of high budget blockbuster film. Also, this five year period is important because fewer media articles were published after the novelty of its opening had worn off – although after the opening of the theme park there were many reviews of the park, but by the end of the 1960s media interest had waned.

While this chapter looks at the development of a number of studio tours – the 1960s saw the commencement of a trend of tours at film and television studios across Hollywood – Universal Studios has been singled out for special attention in this thesis as an early film tourism site because it was the first in this particular model or incarnation of film tourism. Universal Studios opened a studio tour in 1963, and it has remained a popular Los Angeles tourist attraction since, despite its lack of significance for the media. At the beginning it was less of an “amusement park” experience than Disneyland; however, in terms of a themed environment, Universal borrowed heavily from the Disneyland model to set up a distinctive attraction around the concept of filmmaking. Certainly, more so than Disneyland, Universal Studios has marketed itself as a place to see the mechanics of
Hollywood filmmaking and “behind-the-scenes” production of special effects. The notable existence of studio tourism at Universal Studios and more widely in Hollywood, suggests that film tourism has been a sustainable component of a major film industry, especially one with a long-established history, cultural drawing power and ongoing popularity from Hollywood.

Both Disneyland and Universal Studios have been the most successful of the Hollywood studios to profit from opening their doors to the public. Indeed, in Universal Studio’s first year of operations in 1963-64, the Studio attracted up to 200,000 visitors, which earned the Studio approximately $400,000.\(^6\) The significance of these figures is important given the context of the state of Studio system at the time. By the 1960s, box office sales had been in decline. Universal was a studio that had in particular suffered from the slump. The Studio tour was an attempt to both recover such losses, but also reignite interest from the public into the industry itself. Like Disneyland, the growth of the Universal Studios tour experience should be examined within the context of the immediate post-war period of the consumer boom and emergence of youth culture. The factors that were identified in the introductory chapter of the thesis as influential in the development of film tourism are certainly also applicable to the studio tour in the 1960s. In Hollywood, the cross-promotional effects of television to sell the theme park were undoubtedly a crucial factor in feeding the success of the theme park. But another part of the context behind the rise of the Universal Studios tour was economical. The economic pressures and crises the Hollywood Studios were facing in the 1960s cannot be overstated. It was an industry that relied heavily on a profit margin, new films always had to outdo previous ones and find new technological innovations to continually attract audiences. The tour was a novel and relatively quite inexpensive way of maintaining interest. The tours appeared as a way to offset such losses and reigniting interest in the film industry, especially as a studio-based industry. Hence the tour proved an innovative idea in revealing the nuts and bolts of filmmaking, but conversely, reasserted the “magic” involved in film through showing visitors how space is transformed by film.

In the numerous reviews and articles that I examine in this chapter, the picture that is created of the Universal Studios theme park in the 1960s suggests a diverse city open to a

broad range of activities and interactions. Some of the contemporary writers evaluated in this chapter examined the broad variety of public reactions to the park – from indifference to excitement - while there are others who have provided more manifestly personal, and indeed pointedly subjective analyses of the self-proclaimed “entertainment center of the world.”\(^7\) My examination of these views indicates that Hollywood studio tours helped to redefine the way Hollywood movies were experienced. While the studio tour experience was initially sold as a place where one could spot or inhabit the *place* of movie stars, the use of the film-making *space* that ultimately helped contribute toward the conceptualisation of cinema as high art, with the tour space functioning akin to a museum space. At the same time, the installation of a Hollywood Museum in the Max Factor Building that sought to highlight the region’s cinematic history suggests there was growing appreciation of Hollywood cinema as a valid art form.

With the emergence of Universal Studios tours of the 1960s there was also an idea in contemporary media that Hollywood cinema constituted a high art form, rather than simply a type of mass entertainment. American cinema became the subject of scholarly analysis and renewed critical interest. During its early stages, the theme park did not take on the futuristic vision that it would do in the 1970s and 1980s when science fiction genre films became the premiere vision for blockbusters.\(^8\) The blockbuster itself originated in part from the spectacle of the theme park tour, especially in the context of Universal Studios as will be shown in my following chapter. As Angela Ndalianis notes with regard to the development of newer attractions at Universal Studios from the 1980s onwards, “each new effect marks a turning point that morphs film technology, computer technology, and traditional media forms and takes them to new limits; and each advance is accompanied by redefined audience relationships.”\(^9\) The blockbuster movies that appeared in the 1970s and 1980s seem connected to the concept of travel and rides as were the experiences that were beginning to proliferate at the studio’s theme park.

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7 This slogan is used in the first Universal City Tour Brochure (Universal c.1964).
9 Ndalianis, Angela, “Special Effects, Morphing Magic, and the 1990s Cinema,” in *Meta-morphing: Visual transformation and the culture of quick-change*. Vivian Sobchack (ed), University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota, 2000, pp. 251-72, p.257. Ndalianis has in mind here examples such as *Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Terminator 2*, each of which resulted in the directors of the films helping in the design of the corresponding theme park rides.
Given that the emergence of high-concept cinema from Universal Studios in the 1970s, with films such as *Jaws*, and later in the 1980s, *Back to the Future*, one might look to the introduction of spectacular themed tours in the 1960s as a key turning point that influenced blockbuster cinema. These later films, I argue, constructed a new kind of relationship to the audience. The context of the beginning of media conglomerations in the 1960s had a direct effect on Hollywood cinema in the decades to follow; the introduction of studio tourism at Universal in the early 1960s is a signifier of this change. In Chapter Four, I will continue to analyse the more recent Universal Studio tours and their relationship with the blockbuster genre. I will do so by examining the function of the theme park in the contemporary era, and also by performing readings of some of the current rides and attractions that encode ideas about travel and tourism into a self-fulfilling logic.

The research in this chapter is directed toward reviewing the media reception of the initial studio tours in order to draw out the wider cultural significance of the tour as a manifestation of the film tourist gaze.\(^{10}\)

### The Development of the Universal Tour

The idea to relaunch Universal as a themed entertainment park as well as a film and television production centre in the early 1960s happened through the interplay of six key factors, ultimately identified and cultivated by new management at Universal, headed by Lew Wasserman and Albert Dorskind, who were from MCA, the new owners of Universal.\(^{11}\) MCA bought out the studio lot from Universal-International in 1958 and then the entire company in 1962, and it is only after buying MCA that visitation reappears and the studio tour was developed. Therefore, the evolution of Universal into a media

\(^{10}\) My research took place primarily at the Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles in February 2007. I was also allowed access to the research library at Fox Studios, in particular their archived material on the first Fox tour attraction, which included material on the Universal Studios tour. Unfortunately, I was unable to visit the Universal Studios research library, as access to the Universal archive is currently restricted. Previously, Universal had opened up its archive to outside researchers in 1998 with Christopher Horak as presiding archivist, but it was closed again in early 2005. This exemplifies the position of a company that is both a producer of culture and the producer of a commodity, a so-called “dream factory” creating visual art for the appreciation of domestic and global audiences: on one level it functions like any privately-run business and on the other hand it must contend with its status as a custodian and repository of a kind of film history. Indeed, it is the recognition of this particular dynamic that enabled Universal to allow tourism behind its doors in the first place: part of a broader scheme of economic expansion and integration by executives to turn the film-based experience into a mega-entertainment venue.

conglomeration was the first crucial factor that enabled the expansion of touristic experience. At Universal after the takeover of MCA, the approach became much more businesslike, and the development of the Universal tour was at least partly conceived as a profit-making venture as much as it would satiate the interest of a curious public, as was suggested by one critic at the time:

The primary success of the venture is due to the fact that an alert management is filling a consumer need for information about the world’s most important communications force, the motion picture.\(^\text{12}\)

The second factor concerning the development of Universal’s studios tour grew out of the studio’s frequently publicised history of public spectacle since its first opening in 1915, of which the 1960s tour might be thought to form part of a continuum. The story of Universal’s benevolent creator Carl Laemmle Sr. and his innovative approach to interactive audience experiences had become the stuff of legend by the time MCA has taken over in the 1960s.\(^\text{13}\) In a revealing article about the Universal opening extravaganza of 1915, Cecilia Rasmussen documents that the event served to showcase spectacular film stunts and skills, and some of these events presaged elements that are later used by the tourist experience in the 1970s and 1980s.\(^\text{14}\) The event was a significant one for Los Angeles at the time, and drew crowds of up to ten thousand people. Laemmle organised a Wild West “shootout”, a group of cowboys were dramatically “washed away, along with flimsy wooden set-houses, when the water tower ‘burst,’ sending a controlled flood down the set.”\(^\text{15}\)

Right from the beginning, Laemmle seemed to reserve a different concept of a studio than the other studio heads in Hollywood. He imagined a fully functioning film “city” rather than a studio – which even meant keeping enough people living at the site so that it could

\(^\text{12}\) Cassyd, Syd. “Universal Studio Tours”, p.11.
\(^\text{13}\) Even in the 1950s before the takeover by MCA, Universal was emphasising its relatively long-lived industrial history for promotional purposes for example, in 1955 when the studio was celebrating its fortieth anniversary, Universal proclaimed itself through newspaper advertorial spreads to be the oldest continuously-running Hollywood studio. Unknown newspaper, c. mid1960s (clipping on Universal Studios at Margaret Herrick Library).
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid. As Rasmussen explains, tragedy struck on the second day of the opening extravaganza. During a stunt, a biplane crashed into the nearby Cahuenga hillside, and the pilot was killed falling from the aircraft. As might be expected, Laemmle cancelled the rest of the opening celebrations after this setback, but afterwards the studio continued to attract inquisitive onlookers.
be declared a separate city from Los Angeles. His decision to distance the studio from “Hollywood” by building in the Cahuenga countryside gave the studio a vastly different spatial identity from the others. The studio featured a zoo stocked with lions, leopards, elephants, monkeys, apes, gorillas and baboons. The other main activity for tourists was to watch silent films in production, in which filmed scenarios were watched live as if at a stage play. According to the souvenir booklet Universal City Studio Story, Laemmle constructed bleachers above the cinema stages and charged twenty-five cents per viewing. The visitors were able to make as much noise as they wanted, as the silent films did not rely upon any audio recordings. The only impediment for the audience was the necessary gauze on the open-air stage filtering the strong west coast sunlight, which obstructed the view into the filmmaking area.

The studio ceased these visits at the end of the 1920s due to changing audio technologies, a difficult economic climate, and also a change in management style when Laemmle’s own son Carl Jr. took charge in 1928. Above all, the introduction of sound technologies meant that crowd noise would now jeopardise the film recordings. As an indicator of how much unwanted loud noises were at Universal at this time, in the late 1920s and early 1930s when the first sound technologies were installed, the equipment was so aurally sensitive that “UNIVERSAL PICTURES – QUIET” was printed on the roofs of the sound-stages so that noisy aircraft would keep clear. The zoo was also sold off during the sound period. Then, in 1936, Carl Jr. retired as head and sold his studio to the Standard Capital Company. It took until the post-war period of the 1950s before the focus would return to visitation and tourism, an era that in general witnessed an increase of major tourist attractions in the greater Los Angeles area, including Disneyland and Knott’s Berry Farm, which brings us to the third factor in the development of the movie studio tour – the birth of the theme park.

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16 In 1926, visiting journalist Margaret Chute notes how Universal remains a city: “at night, when the workers go home, twelve people must live inside the gates, else the title of ‘city’ would be lost in accordance with state law. After a journey around this amazing place, I felt puzzled no longer about use of the word ‘Universal’ for all the world and its races may be found inside the city walls.” See Chute, Margaret. “The Cosmopolitan Capital of Filmland.” The Graphic, November 6th, 1926.
17 Universal City Studio Story (Universal Souvenir Booklet) c.mid 1960s, pp.3-4
18 Unknown author. “So You Want to Visit a Studio? Don’t bother with VIFs”, Los Angeles Times, July 19th 1964, p.3.
20 Universal City Studio Story (Souvenir Booklet), pp.3-4
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
The development of Universal Studios as a themed experience is contemporaneous to the rise of the theme park and themed environments in the United States in the post-war period of the late 1940s to the early 1960s. 23 Walt Disney’s Disneyland at Anaheim, Los Angeles, was the first themed environment with a movie-related theme to make a significant impact in California when it opened in 1955. 24 It is important to note here that the themed environment should be distinguished from an amusement park. There are two theorists who have outlined such a difference. Firstly, Constance Balides has argued in respect to how theme parks have commercialised the leisure industry:

[themed entertainment, or the use of thematic material from a film for a theme park ride, is a key example of the blurring of the boundaries of film across multiple sites and forms of commodification symptomatic of contemporary industry practices. The theme park mentality as a general practice in which commerce and culture are imbricated in simulated experiences is also at the centre of critiques of the commercialization of contemporary life. 25

As for Salvador Anton-Clavé, the theme park is a “global” space, seemingly materialising the endless fantasy-scapes provided by Hollywood:

It is not only, therefore, a place produced “for” leisure, like the traditional amusement parks, but a place of fiction that bases its existence on the materialization of a fantastic narration through shapes, volumes and performances. It considers itself an “alternative world”, which is organised like a sequence of scenes in a film. 26

When the Universal Studios tour opened in 1964, one journalist suggested that Carl Laemmle Sr.’s dreams for Universal in the 1910s had been similar to Disney’s visions of a

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24 Knott’s Berry Farm, established by Walter Knott in 1940 on Highway 39 in Southern California, had also developed organically into a theme park with rides and attractions as well, and no admission charge until 1968. For further information see Jennings, Jay. Knott’s Berry Farm: The Early Years. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.
themed adventure park, and that he had been planning to expand his touristic ventures into a “major entertainment development which, in essence, was the forerunner of the type of operation best exemplified currently by Disneyland.”27 While it is difficult for historians at this stage to ascertain the full extent of Laemmle’s vision for Universal, once the studio tour began comparisons were frequently made between Universal Studios and Disneyland, particularly as Universal began to expand its operation after its first year and move in the direction of a city-like themed experience. Visually, Universal also borrowed the colours and “magic” of Disneyland. For example, it hired Barry Upson, a talented artistic director at Disneyland, to design elements of the park, including fantastical candy-pink touring trams named “GlamorTrams.” Upson was the first of design collaborators and quite instrumental in the initial look of the theme park.28 Another key figure in aesthetic design at Disneyland was the movie art director Harper Goff. Goff met Walt Disney in 1951 at a British miniature railroad accessory store, and was instrumental as an “imaginer” of Disneyland by helping to bring set designs to life.29 At Universal, Upson helped to design the new in-house tour with the assistance of Goff on design. Both Goff and Upson therefore had been instrumental in establishing the unique look of Disneyland, and would also re-invigorate the aesthetic of Universal. Similarities were constantly drawn between Universal Studios and Disneyland by the media. When the tour became popular, one journalist noted that Universal Studios is “gaining momentum so rapidly that it may well become Disneyland’s rival,” a testament to the way by which the themed attractions were teamed together.30 Another reporter noted “one wag has suggested that the activity could be called Wasserland, in tribute to Lew Wasserman, the presiding genius of Universal.”31 Wasserman’s entrepreneurial skills were considered equal to Walt Disney in manipulating media forms to maximise profits.

The fourth factor in the development of a major film tourism attraction at Universal was the operation of small-scale tours that sought out film studios as touring locations.

Privately run tourism at Universal City Studios on the 230-acre lot in July 1963 began as a

29 Marling, Karal, “Imagineering the Disney Theme Parks”, p.50.
30 Gillette, Don. “Trade Views”.
relatively cautious experiment. For some years, Gray Line had taken visitors around the studio, but it was only a short run-through that was a part of a much wider Hollywood tour. The popularity of Gray Line’s tours alerted Universal Studios to the economic potential that the giant lot might provide its visitors if they could enter for longer periods.

The fifth factor was the interest that had already been created for a civic museum of the Hollywood region to document its film history. In the early 1960s there was a growing interest in the preservation of Hollywood’s film history. When Universal announced its plans for a visitor centre, some journalists questioned the need for a separate museum. However, the studio was careful to differentiate itself from a serious cultural centre, and suggested that it will only “serve to focus attention on the real research and educational job which the Los Angeles County-Hollywood Museum can do in the cultural field when it gets its new quarters.” Furthermore, the Hollywood museum could even be utilised to help promote the studio tour at Universal through reciprocal tie-ins:

(T)hey...[sic] forsee no conflict with the new Hollywood museum, which they describe as primarily “cultural, educational and civic.” Indeed, some sort of tie-up with the museum is a strong possibility: there have been conversations to that effect.

As for the final sixth factor in the development of the studio attraction, by the late 1950s and 1960s many major companies and/or industries within the United States had been opening up their factories and offices to the public, with educational tours and other activities available as school excursions or organised tours. This practise was part of a new era of leisure culture that glorified traditional work roles and capitalist means of production. It is a trend that proliferated throughout the industrialised world, and one that sociologist John Urry has named as “a postmodern museum culture in which almost anything can become an object of curiosity for visitors.” Urry notes this movement has been characterised by a significant privatisation of the museum industry as opposed to

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32 Unknown author. “So You Want to Visit a Studio? Don’t Bother with VIPs,” LA Times, 19th July, 1964., p.3.
34 Unknown author. “So You Want to Visit a Studio? Don’t bother with VIPs”, p.3.
publicly funded cultural centres, which has helped to produce and perpetuate “particularly new ways of representing history, as commodifying the past”\textsuperscript{37}. At the time, Universal saw film studio tours in Hollywood as an extension of this broader factory-tour trend happening within major US-based companies. Furthermore, one Universal spokesperson even suggested that the studio tour was an experiment. By opening its doors to the public it could develop a new form of film spectatorship:

\begin{quote}
We believe a great disservice has been done our industry by locking out the public. Other great businesses have not done so. You can be conducted through General Motors, American Tel. and Tel. and most beer plants, to name a divergent few.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

Tourism was being recognised as a powerful promoter of film and television. By 1964, the possibility became a reality, as MCA Vice President Albert Dorskind persuaded Wasserman to invest $4 million into designing new trams and food courts that would facilitate a studio tour. For Dorskind, the tour would “have a two-fold purpose: to increase movie attendance and stimulate TV viewing, by enabling the tourist to see what goes on in the studio, thus helping with word-of-mouth advertising. “Everything that we do here”, he pointed out, “helps the motion picture and TV industries.”\textsuperscript{39} It is interesting that these new practices were publicly justified in terms of how they reinvigorated the film industry and not for reasons of creating a new touristic industry or part of corporate expansion.

According to a media analyst Don Gillette at the time, the Universal studio tour served to benefit all of the competing studios in Hollywood.

\begin{quote}
Newspapers and magazines want stories and layouts on it. Tourist agencies, airlines, camera manufacturers, luggage firms, etc., want to make tie-ups with it. The bank and the brokerage office on the Universal lot attract more customers who can be impressed at lunch in the glamorous star-studded studio commissary.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

Ultimately, then, these factors were developed through savvy business decisions made by MCA. One reporter noticed, “as part of the four-phase development plan, Wasserman

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p.106.
\textsuperscript{38} “Tourists get royal treatment”, Unknown Source [Newspaper clipping accessed at Margaret Herrick Library, Hedda Hopper Collection], 18\textsuperscript{th} July 1964.
\textsuperscript{40} Gillette, Don. “Trade Views”. 

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hopes to convert his super-studio into a tourist attraction that will one day rival Disneyland.”

The story of Universal’s Studio tour beginnings has much to do with the MCA takeover, and the role Lew Wasserman and Albert Dorskind played in setting it up, but also how they were able to change the cultural significance of the film studio as an object for a film tourist gaze. The MCA company – the initials originally standing for “Music Corporation of America” - was formed by Jules Stein and William Goldheart in 1924 in Chicago as an agency to represent music groups. Lew Wasserman was hired by MCA as a talent agent in 1936 at the age of 22, and by a decade later he had managed to become the president of the company. In 1949, Wasserman made the decision to start producing television programmes (he would not start until 1952), but by the mid 1950s television production had quickly become the company’s largest industry. MCA purchased Universal in a deal that cost approximately $US 11.3 million. In 1937 MCA based itself in California where it had changed to also represent Hollywood actors.

In early 1962, MCA set out to complete an expansion program in order to transform Revue-Universal Studio, and that would include the construction of a large black tower building:

The long-planned project was set in motion by Tuesday’s settlement of a federal anti-trust action against the firm. Dorskind said he could not estimate cost [sic] of the program, reported at a minimum of $10 million, but that “it will be one of the biggest real estate developments in the history of the San Fernando Valley.”

This period marked the commencement of a number of large-scale changes to the studio. A black-windowed high-rise building (known as both the “MCA Tower” and “Black Tower”) – still a landmark at the current Universal site – was constructed to replace the old

43 Ibid.
administrative headquarters, as well as a new bank building and a new post office. Many of the historic and older buildings and bungalows along Lankershim Boulevard were demolished as the plans took hold [See Figure 1].

Figure 1. An aerial view of the Universal City studios, with the new landmark black high-rise MCA building in the centre. Taken from a souvenir guidebook - Universal City Studio Story - for the new tour attraction, c. 1965.

The Studio Tour

When MCA took over the entire lot and its varied operations, its executives decided that the movies needed a new public image. The people who stand in line to pay $1.75 for a two-hour movie had to be educated. If they were shown the mechanics of the manufacture of the movies, perhaps they would be better disposed to part with the high prices that most of the movie palaces now charge. Moreover, if the public could be invited to participate in some of the mysteries of moviemaking – special effects, the adoration of the cult of personality, the mysteries of makeup, of stunt men, and of the use of miniatures – a new public appreciation might develop.\textsuperscript{46}

The studio tour, then, was an extension of this rebranding on Universal’s part to be a glamorous city, a centre of entertainment, and as a location for film tourism. On the 14th of July 1964, a “VIP tour” for the press promoted the new tour that would open to the public one day later. On the morning of the 14th, American Newspaper Guild members and their partners were taken on the bright new trams, chaperoned by some of the Universal stars including Dick Van Dyke – who was at this time popular from starring in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (dir.? 1961-66), *Bye Bye Birdie* (1963), and in this midst of promoting his upcoming musical *Mary Poppins* (1964) – and Angie Dickinson, also well known since her breakthrough part in *Rio Bravo* (1959) and about to release *The Killers* (1964). In the afternoon, the experience was repeated when fifty California-state participants in the Miss World beauty pageant were also given a preview.

When the tours commenced, two trams would tour the lot each day. Guides and lecturers at the studio were put through a six-week training course in order to prepare for their pivotal role in directing the gaze of the film tourists. There were five tours per day that could take up to 370 people in total. The price was $US 2.50 for adults and $US 1.25 for children, and because Universal anticipated that the tours would prove to be of greater interest to an older audience they expected that predominantly they would receive the adult fare. The studio estimated a weekly earning at this time of approximately $US 4500.

The initial forays into tourism at Universal Studios were cautious and experimental in scope, despite optimism that they might prove to be a profitable enterprise. When the studio tour first opened, it was given a four-month trial over the summer 1964-65 period in case the visitations proved unpopular. A promoter for Universal noted in one interview that the tours had commenced as an “experiment throughout the summer in the firm belief that it will whet the appetite of the public toward movie making.” The promoter also suggested tours might prove to negatively impact upon the running of the studio, and therefore carefully stated, that “if [the studio tour attraction] should prove to interfere with actual production, it will go, naturally.”

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47 Incidentally *The Killers* was the last film featuring the actor Ronald Reagan before he ran for Governor of California in 1967, and whom Lew Wasserman also represented. See Rogin, Michael Paul, *Ronald Reagan, the Movie and Other Episodes in Political Demonology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, p.40.


50 Ibid.
while the tour was strictly in a trial-phase, there was also concern about the impact that such tourism would have on the regular staff as well as the actors at the studio.

According to reports, a typical visitor to Universal during the first year of the studio’s tours would be taken on an approximately two-hour ride through working sets, exterior locations on the back lot and celebrity dressing rooms.\(^{51}\) Every tour would be subtly different, because the tram would need to stop at certain times when a signal indicated that filming was taking place.\(^{52}\) Tourists were given the option of being driven over to the studio commissary, where there was an added bonus of lunching with stars and/or television celebrities present at the studio. At the commissary, one (female) participant would “win” the prize of having a make-over (face and hair) completed by a studio makeup artist, which was conducted publicly in front of the group.\(^{53}\)

Universal carefully assessed the visitor’s experiences on the tour. During these first months, the visitors to Universal were given feedback questionnaires to fill in so as to improve the visitor experience in development, which reveals how serious they were in investing into this new area of film tourism. Such questionnaires asked the participants “what they liked and what they didn’’t; what other So. Calif. Attraction [sic] they had or planned to attend; whether they attended motion picture theatres and watched TV regularly or infrequently.”\(^{54}\) In return, Universal sent out information about local screening dates for the featured TV shows and films the participants had watched at the studio.\(^{55}\) In this savvy instance of cross-promotion, the reward given to park patrons by Universal was to promote the television and film features seen first hand, as well as to forge an indelible link between the visitor’s own experience at the studio and a later “filmed” experience at home or the cinema.

This early tour demonstrates the strength of Universal’s ideological push and vision as a movie-city. If you are to believe the studio’s sales pitch, these tours are about the general

\(^{51}\) Bart, Peter. “For Happy Tourists Universal Opens Doors To a Paying Public”; Hopper, Hedda. “New Studio Tours Generate Goodwill,” Chicago Tribune, [Newspaper clipping accessed at Margaret Herrick Library, Hedda Hopper Collection]. 1964. In the Hedda Hopper collection at the Margaret Herrick Library is a hand-written draft of this article.


\(^{53}\) Hopper, “New Studio Tours Generate Goodwill.”

\(^{54}\) Graham, Neal. “Universal Studio Tours have mostly class.”

\(^{55}\) Ibid.
public “entering” from the ordinary world (and ordinary life) into a fantasy-driven and complete world of movies and movie culture. Such a strategy clearly targets the imagination (gaze) of potential film tourists, appealing to both their sense of travel and curiosity. Therefore, it seemed as if the studio thought it could stimulate interest by its gesture of “opening its doors” that implied there was a “world” to enter which the public were previously divorced from – again, a sense of mystery like that used with *Vertigo* to summon the film tourist gaze. But also, what is perhaps most telling is that the Universal Studios tour borrowed the iconography and aspects of the contemporary 1960s mass tourism industry for city tours – special tour-trams, a visitor center for souvenirs, trained tour guides – making the tour resemble both a museum tour and a guided tour of Los Angeles. Universal Studios legitimised itself through the usage of such promotional accoutrements as the premier city and destination of movie culture. Contained within Los Angeles, the studio suggests that it is a microcosm of the greater city’s moviemaking output – or the epicentre or real heart of Hollywood. Let us look in more detail at the early development of the themed attraction through a close focus and analysis on the first brochure that was produced for the studio tour.

**Case Study: Universal’s First Brochure**

The initial brochure that was produced for the tour – before the new tourist commissary was opened in 1965 - makes clear the active participation of the spectator within the processes and the spectacle of movie-making, as well as the connection as being a kind of city [See Figure 2]. The copy of the brochure states:

SEE ACTUAL SCENES FROM MOVIES BEING FILMED AT THE STUDIO…AND DON’T FORGET TO BRING YOUR STILL AND/OR MOVIE CAMERA.

For the first time you will be permitted to film (either motion pictures or stills) the many fabulous sights inside the world’s largest motion picture studio. You will be
able to take pictures of special sets constructed for your use as a memorable token of your visit to UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS.\footnote{Universal City Brochure. Universal: c.1964. [Reproduced from a copy available at the Margaret Herrick Library.]}
date back in motion picture history and to the very beginning of the world’s most glamorous industry… and more!

Figure 3. The back half of the first brochure produced for the Universal studio tour, 1964.

As a “Special Extra!” the brochure presents a transformative makeover for one person on each tour:

See Hollywood’s famous make-up experts at work in a special demonstration in our Tour Center. One lucky visitor on each of the five daily tours will be the subject of a complete make-up demonstration conducted by a Universal City Studios make-up man. All of the beauty secrets of Hollywood’s most glamorous stars will be applied right before your eyes…
The brochure finally promises that visitors will see “many other live demonstrations of ‘behind the scenes secrets’ of the world’s most glamorous business.”

Analysing the use of rhetoric in this promotion, the first brochure focuses on three major elements as part of its drawing power, Firstly, there is emphasis on the modernity of the studio: of the state-of-the-art technology, facilities and special effects to enjoy at the site. Secondly, the brochure draws out the history and established film tradition existing at the studio – in some way aligning it with the culturally perceived importance of museum space(s). Finally, there is a sense of novelty of the studio as a “world-creating” simulacrum, as nothing like anything else. Importantly perhaps, there is no reference to meeting stars. Some of the older history of the region around the Universal lot does not figure in any official part of the sightseeing tour, especially in regard to land claims. Universal staff appeared cognisant of the history, although it did not seem to be foregrounded frequently in the promotional material – the brochures and souvenir booklets about the studio attraction that appears in the 1960s. We should also pay close attention to the language in these brochures. On more than one occasion the word “see” is emphasised in clear bold lettering and used as imperative active verb. Universal is obviously interpellating the tourist through such language, but also structuring the film tourist as one who finds pleasure in seeing (scopophilia) – both film viewer and general tourist are positioned as visually centric consumers – driven by a (ideological) gaze. Also of note, is the instruction to take photos and even shoot your own footage, which further reinforces the idea that the studio tour is no different to any other tourist location where one would, unhesitatingly, take photos or make a “holiday movie”. These early brochures already signify the harnessing of a film tourist gaze, perhaps in a more aggressive (or controlling) way than the narrative of Vertigo had.

The Universal site was actually placed next to the site of the Rancho Cahuenga de Ramirez that had been constructed from a grant awarded in 1785 by Charles IV of Spain. At this site, John C. Fremont (from the United States), and Andres Pico (from Mexico) signed the Treaty of Cahuenga, which effectively placed the southern region of California under the sovereignty of the U.S. and consigned it to live “in a state of peace and tranquillity.” Horace Sutton noted sardonically when speaking to Universal Studios staff representatives

that “just how it came to lapse from that lofty aim is not made exactly clear by the present inhabitants.”\(^{58}\) The site of Campo de Cahuenga is adjacent to the main entrance of Universal Studios and was purchased by the city of Los Angeles in 1923 for $15,000 after the city recognised the forgotten location as a legitimate historical monument.\(^{59}\) Interestingly, on November 13\(^{th}\) 1964 – four months after the commencement of the Universal studio tours - the Campo de Cahuenga became the “City of Los Angeles Cultural-Historic Monument No. 29” and “State Landmark #151.”\(^{60}\) This was also the original date that the Universal tour was supposed to close after its four-month experimental phase, suggesting that interest in the historical site was simultaneous to the rise of the film studio attraction. Meanwhile, the Universal Studios tour featured many “historical” locations, but of course these were artificial recreations for historically themed films. The artificiality of the attractions was foregrounded, although the Parisian café and bistros were labelled “authentic” in the pamphlets.

What the pamphlet demonstrates is the importance Universal Studios gives to movie culture – while it is a self-proclaimed “entertainment center”, cinema rather than television is foregrounded completely in this first pamphlet. The pamphlet appears to be appealing to a predominantly adult audience – perhaps even a female one with the focus on what at the same time was a gendered experience of having a makeover (the cartoon image here shows a woman being made up by a male artist in a giant carousel). The image of the large flag showing where the location of Universal is situated suggests an agenda of redefining the limits of Hollywood and Universal’s position within it. Finally, the large map of the studio tour with the many attractions within it continues Universal’s selling itself as a cinema-city - the studio GlamorTram placed at the top of the image is dwarfed by this giant expanse of supposedly wondrous sights. Like a city filled with its sights of interest in tourist guides that were becoming popular in the 1960s, so too is this logic intensified at the studio – and rather than being overwhelmed by a giant city, one can see all the sights from the relative comfort of a GlamorTram in the comfortable time-limit of a couple of hours. Universal Studios was a miniature city, but it was also a substitution for touring an actual city – it offered tourists a kind of shortcut for the diverse range of places that one was supposed to

\(^{58}\) Ibid.

\(^{59}\) Fremont had revisited the location in 1889 and identified it as the correct location. See www.campodecahuenga.com/ [Accessed 25\(^{th}\) July, 2009].

\(^{60}\) Further information about the site can be found at the site’s webpage, <http://www.campodecahuenga.com/> [Accessed 25\(^{th}\) July, 2009]
experience in the movie town of Los Angeles itself. Hence, one can see the ideological agenda of Universal Studios in operation in this first brochure.

**Becoming a Modern City: The Visitor Centre and the Upper Lot**

The hilltop where it all begins is called the Upper Lot. It is a $2 million make-believe version of the facilities on the flatland below where real make-believe is made.\(^{61}\)

The relatively cautious introduction of studio tours by Universal enabled the Hollywood attraction to be deemed a success within months. The initial outlay for the project was $2 million.\(^{62}\) When the tours commenced they were held on weekdays only. The *LA Times* reported that during this period at Universal Studios, by weekend the studio would still turn into a “ghost town.”\(^{63}\) Almost one year later, on the 25\(^{\text{th}}\) of May 1965, the *Hollywood Reporter* noted that the tours had been extended to a full seven days per week.\(^{64}\) Given the success of the tours, it was perhaps inevitable then that the themed experience would be extended and improved.

To this end, later in 1965 - on the 24\(^{\text{th}}\) of August - another publicity event was held to launch the building project of the new tourist visitor center. Every city needs a mayor, and Tippi Hedren, who had just starred in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Marnie* (1964), was newly elected mayor and spokesperson at Universal City and on hand to dig the first shovels of earth for the construction site.\(^{65}\) In keeping with the other building projects on the Universal site since the MCA takeover, the commissary was designed to be modern and state-of-the-art, and in 1965 the walls were decorated with photographs of major Universal stars such as Tony Curtis, Doris Day and Sandra Dee.\(^{66}\) Therefore, it is important to note that even at this early stage, Universal was selling itself as an autonomous location for novelty and the technological cutting edge through its building projects. This is in essence similar to its construction of cutting edge special effects experiences in the later years of its operation, namely from the 1970s and 1980s onwards. It suggests the pushing of the

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\(^{61}\) Champlin, Charles. “Gold in Them Thar Fake Hills.”


\(^{63}\) Unknown author. “So You Want to Visit a Studio? Don’t Bother with VIPs,” p.3.


\(^{65}\) Unknown author. “Universal City Starts Huge Tourist Village.” *Boxoffice* 24/8/64

ideology of novelty – with a new team in a new media conglomerate, Universal wanted to push aspects of itself that were utterly new to its audience.

The journalist Syd Cassyd noticed an increase in the technological spectacle offered by Universal in 1965, and suggested that by comparison, the studio tours of the previous year were “simple”, and now they had become much more spectacular:

> with the construction of the $2.5 million studio center, the visitor takes the tour, comes back to the centre on the top of the 410-acre lot and is amused by cosmetic shows, stunt shows, trick shot techniques, etc.\(^6\)

Despite this emphasis on the new, there were still gestures to Universal’s past glories. Hedda Hopper noted that in the lobby of the commissary was a large display of old film posters and cameras, including ones that had filmed *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1909) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1916). Fashion outfits are on display, life masks and the set of *McHale’s Navy* for tourists to photograph. Hopper’s personal view of the new tourist experience offered by Universal is that it was an obvious lack in Hollywood and greater Los Angeles that had needed to be addressed, and a useful strategy for a studio to employ to attract renewed interest during an economically difficult period:

> It needn’t have taken a great brain to know that giving a movie fan a look inside never-never land could be a money making operation and also generate good will for an industry that needs it.\(^6\)

The expansion at Universal continued in the early years of its operation. In April 1965 there were ten surrey-topped trams: by July 1965, there were thirteen trams (with three carriages). The building of the Sheraton-Universal allowed visitors to stay nearby, which was envisioned as a “Hotel of the Stars” by the creators of the site.\(^6\) Again, the new architecture of the visitor centre and the administrative urban centres were designed to be ultra-modern. At the visitor centre, there were eating-places – from that movie-signifying

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\(^6\) Cassyd, Syd. “Universal Studio Tours”, p.11.
\(^6\) Hopper, Hedda. “New Studio Tours Generate Goodwill.” In the Margaret Herrick collection, Hopper wrote a personal letter to Jules Stein “Dear Jules: Thought you might like to see the quick response I get from my readers.”
foodstuff popcorn, to an upscale restaurant – and people were able to buy films “packaged to supplement the amateur movie fan’s own home movie footage.”\textsuperscript{70} The introduction of tiered classes of eating suggests the replication of tour experiences such as jet travel, which offered the consumer a tiered range of seating areas determined by price. At the same time, we can see that Universal was attempting to appeal to a broad demographic – from those wealthy enough to afford fine dining to families who could just afford the cheapest foods – a truly democratic city.

Universal was beginning to introduce rides and experiences that were similar to Disneyland’s themed entertainment, and which emphasised vertiginous movement and visual spectacle. In 1965, one of the main drawcards of the Visitors Village was the “flivver”, a special motion ride that moved up and down while a country landscape could flit by using two rollers in the background. There were also rudimentary beginnings of stunt performance, with a pair of men propelling themselves through a pair of saloon doors. Another popular feature was a spectacle created by studio rocks made out of rubber “that will permit a Milquetoast to move a mountain with scarcely a puff.”\textsuperscript{71} Undoubtedly, these novel experiences could be accompanied by photography to record the excitement caused by the Universal city.

Three years since opening and Universal was certainly a transformed “city”. By 1967, Universal had consolidated their new business – the park had twenty trams in operation, which held approximately ninety people and operating at three minute intervals during nine to five business hours from Monday to Saturday, and limited operation on Sunday. It was earning approximately $2 million per year through ticket sales. The souvenir industry was soon boosted to help with profits - tourists by this stage were able to purchase souvenir items such as ashtrays, nail clippers, six-foot portraits of Paul Newman, baby’s bibs and Universal-logoed Sweatshirts.\textsuperscript{72} The studio tour itself was a tightly scripted experience that directed the gaze of the participants allowing them to take their own photography at special stopping points, as Hopper has noted:

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{70} Cassyd, Syd. “Universal Studio Tours”, p.11.
\end{flushleft}
Halfway up the mountain the passengers were given a chance to stretch their legs and get some refreshments which they could eat on comfortable tables beneath a screening of fiberglass. The camera buffs were given plenty of props to shoot at: an airplane, a destroyer, and an old auto that bumps up and down in front of a process screen—just like they do in the movies.73

To increase consumer interest for the Universal City studio tour, publicity and media was generated in numerous ways. Public acts of philanthropy had been used as soon as the studio tours commenced, for example, during the Christmas period of 1964, the studio offered studio tours to disadvantaged children.74 On the second of July, 1965, Hollywood Reporter writes that the studio began to preview the new Universal City Center for the public.75 The function of the tour as a cultural experience was noticed by some of the journalists watching the development of the attraction. Of course, small souvenirs were available for purchase during a visit to the studio:

At $3 a head for adults, scaling down to $1.60 for kiddies over five (those under five get in free), plus 35c parking and practically unlimited opportunity to buy refreshments, film and Mexican and Japanese gewgaws of great variety, it is a very nifty piece of change.76

Alongside cinema, it is important to remember that television became an increasingly essential part of the studio tour during the formation of the park. Walt Disney had hosted his own television series in the 1950s and strategically promoted the Disneyland theme park with great success.77 Universal also attempted to incorporate a television audience into its tour marketing. In 1966, Champlin reports that alongside the makeup demonstrations, there was a room consecrated by the character of Grandpa Munster from TV series The Munsters, a lagoon in which a miniature destroyer boat fires at a PT boat,
and artificial rain falling around a waterfront curio shop. Furthermore, television celebrities, who did not have the clout of major film stars, were often enlisted to walk around the park or make special appearances for fans. They helped to create and perpetuate the aura that was seen to be a necessary part of the studios space. Other novelties, included visitors being able to dial telephones to get a series of sound effects, sit down in a small theatre to see the day’s rushes threading through on the same wavelength that the producer uses, or go to another souvenir counter to buy a Munster pencil or an interlocking jigsaw puzzle of Frankenstein’s face. Television had one obvious advantage to cinema in marketing Universal, in that a television series could be a long-term success and appeal to a broad visiting audience. A highly rating television series could be relied upon to provide interest in a tour attraction for a number of years. Finally, the combination of television and cinema at Universal City highlighted its position as a media conglomerate, which was after all, a novel perception of a Hollywood studio.

Despite this focus on television, the high celebrity of Hollywood cinema was still fetishised at the studio. Visitors referred to the tour taken through Doris Day’s dressing room, although the fact that nobody ever captured a glimpse of Doris Day there seems to suggest that it might have been a deliberately contrived attraction. “We toured Doris Day’s dressing room, where nothing was nailed down and you know how some people like to pick up souvenirs.” There appears here an uncanny parallel with Vertigo and search for the “constructed” Madeline. As for the reactions of the actors themselves to the studio tour it was reported that there were a range of responses:

Cary Grant, who likes his privacy at home and at work, takes a dim view. On the other hand, Robert Taylor thinks it’s great. “I told them the other day I’d be glad to get on a tram and conduct a tour now and then,” says Bob. “Actors and the industry have been aloof from the public for too long. It’s a nice way to say ‘howdy’ to the guy who buys the ticket at the box office.”

All things considered, the early Universal studio tour was in all respects a highly successful tourist attraction, and by the late 1960s, with the introduction of a nearby hotel

78 Champlin, Charles. “Gold in Them Thar Fake Hills.”
80 Graham, Neal. “Universal Studio Tours have mostly class.”
81 “Tourists get royal treatment”, Unknown Source.
and new visitor centre, was even more of a city than it had been in the past. As a final sign of its popularity, while the majority of the attraction was located outdoors, poor weather did not even deter visitors, and Gillette wrote that “even in the heavy downpours of the recent rainy spell, visitors flocked to the Universal lot and refused to leave until they had been given as much of a tour as was possible under the wet conditions.” As we shall see, even the competition offered by other studios, keen to take on the success of Universal, did not detract from its popularity.

*Competing Studio Tours*

![Figure 4. Photograph of a DeLuxe tour guide outside the Gotham City Plaza, c.1967. From the 20th Century Fox research library.](image)

82 Gillette, Don. “Trade Views”.

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The influence that Universal Studios had upon competing Hollywood studios during the development of its themed experience was immediate. One journalist observed the great impact that the new Universal tour had on the competing Hollywood studios in the early 1960s:

Every major studio in town is now watching with hawk-eyed attention the daring experiment going on at Universal Studios involving the sightseeing “tours” for tourists.83

By opening up some of its backstage operations to the general public, Universal Studios “experiment” had started a trend that was quickly emulated by other studios across Los Angeles. Many of the other Hollywood movie and television studios – MGM, Fox Studios, Warner Brothers, NBC, Columbia - savvy to the instant economic success of Universal’s tours in 1964-65 responded with similar studio tours with varying levels of success.84 During this era, Hollywood reporters and journalists noted that there seemed to be a plethora of opportunities for an eager public to visit famous filming locations.85 The tours were generally considered to be a positive development for movie-lovers, although some writers were cynical about the quality (and authenticity) of the sights and experiences that the typical cinephile could expect to find on these tours.86

Sometimes, studios would hire independent contractors to operate tours instead of drawing upon their regular staff, in the same way that Universal was inspired by Gray Line tours. For example, MGM at Culver City hired a local touring line, American Sightseeing Systems, to conduct visits around the studio.87 These tours cost $US3, but there was also interestingly a deluxe $US8 version that included lunch at the studio commissary and the viewing of some of the studio’s famous film clips. According to Fessier Jr., MGM received approximately 100,000 visitors in its first two years after opening its doors to the public.88 In this setup, the outside tour operator financially benefited from the partnership,

83 “Tourists get Royal Treatment.” Unknown source.
85 See as above.
86 Particularly, Michael Fessier Jr’s article articulates this cynicism.
and MGM did not need to be concerned about the logistics that Universal was in the
development of its studio space.

It’s a green and peaceful community there on Metro’s Lot 3. The tram stops and the
guests are let out to roam, some of them trekking as far as Ashley’s Gone with the
Wind manor. “The toilets are real,” Dee would tell them. Most of her spiel changed,
she said. But the head joke, a cinch boffo every time, stayed.\(^{89}\)

Warner Brothers subsequently opened its studio grounds free to the public.\(^{90}\) Columbia
Pictures opened up the studio to let audiences watch Jerry Lewis shoot his film, Big Mouth
dir. Lewis: 1967).\(^{91}\) This was partly due to the individual wish of the comedian himself;
and according to Kann, Lewis had instigated the event because he believed that he
naturally performed better in front of large crowds.\(^{92}\)

Twentieth-Century Fox also attempted to differentiate itself from the Universal model.
Contrasting from the tram rides at Universal, it introduced a walking tour, primarily
because the studio operated on a much smaller space than Universal. Like MGM, Fox
instituted a two-tiered system for distinct classes of visitors. At the expensive end of the
scale was a $50 “VIP tour” that included limousine travel, starlet guides and an upmarket
champagne lunch.\(^{93}\) According to the Wall Street Journal, the VIP tour was first offered in
October 1966, and that they aimed to offer “business executives and their colleagues,
clients or families an inside look at movieland.”\(^{94}\) Fox initiated the VIP tour by sending
five hundred corporations gilt-trimmed invitations in order to establish a clientele. To keep
the attraction exclusive, only twenty-one VIPS were taken around the studio each day –
and only seven patrons per tour – so that the impact upon production would be minimal,
and the tour would be imbued with more significance from the lucky few.\(^{95}\)

\(^{90}\) Unknown author. “The Rubberneck Rush.”
\(^{92}\) Ibid.
\(^{93}\) Unknown author. “The Rubberneck Rush.”
\(^{95}\) It appears that Fox are not only playing on a class division, but that the division here between two tours
also implying another “back stage” to the general back stage, and also serving to give the visitor the
opportunity to distinguish themselves from the general (perhaps touristic) visitor given they can afford it.
To cater to the cheaper end of the scale, in June 1967 Fox studios simply opened their gates on weekends and named the experience “Open House”, in a way that concealed its distinction with the “VIP” tour. With no set tour to follow, visitor groups were given three hours to roam around the soundstages and outdoor sets at their leisure. The gates were opened from ten o’clock to five each Saturday and Sunday.

Amateur photographers can have a field day on the Open House, with the famous sets as backgrounds, as well as life-size, free standing cut-out photographs of the starts on the sets, which provide entertaining and unusual opportunities for picture taking.

Fox also let in tourists to watch from bus windows the outdoor shooting of the popular television show *Peyton Place* (1964-69), starring Ryan O’Neal and Mia Farrow in their earliest roles. The bus acted as a form of crowd control: from inside the vehicle, no one could seriously disturb any of the performances; but furthermore, this in a way preserved the distance of the film tourist gaze from its desired object. Fox also began an in-house magazine intended for visitors to the Studio, named *Studio Star*. The inaugural issue contained an editorial from Barry Coe that read thus:

> All of us at Twentieth-Century-Fox are constantly seeking new ways to keep in step with the times. We sincerely believe that the “Studio Star” and guided tours are great steps forward.

Coe suggests, by reference to keeping up with “the times”, that what was happening with the tours was indeed a new form of film spectatorship, and therefore film tourism was a “step forward” or new territory for even the studios themselves. The newspaper contained information about the studio’s current films and television programmes, a fun map, features on particular films and actors, and material on make-up effects. A page of cartoons satirised the typical tourist’s interest in the

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This theme of an ideological division between tourist and traveller runs throughout each case I discuss in this thesis.

97 “Open House at 20th Century-Fox” *LA Times*.
studio tours and trainspotting for celebrities, and also the studio’s brochures which instruct one where and when to “look” for them [see Figure 5].

![Figure 5. A “Lot Laff” from the premiere edition of Studio Star magazine. Speech bubble One: “LOOK Movie Stars all over! There’s Charlton and Raquel”. Speech Bubble Two: “You have a long way to go Kid… That’s an executive and his secretary… they’re the ones who look like they’re stars!” Source: From the Fox Studios collection.](image)

According to *The Hollywood Reporter* the $50 deluxe tours were abandoned over summer and resumed in September, and it is difficult to determine when exactly the tours finally lapsed. The lack of fanfare and journalistic interest past the late 1960s suggests that it was a short-lived and difficult to maintain experiment.\(^\text{100}\) Overall, the introduction of studio tours across Hollywood indicates a changed attitude toward consumers, and towards the business of movie-making – now it became part of a broader realm of entertainments, encompassing television, tours and so on. However, none of the other studios managed to achieve the level of success that Universal did, in likelihood partly because they did not have the studio space to create a fully functioning, themed cinematic “city”. The problem

\(^{100}\) At Fox, the research material available on the “studio tour” only has information on the original installation in the 1960s and also a renewed attempt in the early 1980s.
with many of these ventures was due to the lack of space for a large-scale tour. Universal allowed a much larger intake of visitors that would also not impact upon the day-to-day running of the filmmaking studio.

**Audience Reaction to the Studio Tours**

At Universal the old couple from Delaware came out thrilled: “It was much better than we expected.” The kid from Toronto thought the tours he used to give through the copper mines had it beat. The Englishman thought it a “swindle” – everything seemed staged and fake. The lady from Long Island thought it was worth every penny. And so it went.¹⁰¹

So far I have examined Universal’s self-representation as a filmed entertainment city; however I have said nothing of the opinions of the tourists themselves. An attempt to deduce the level of excitement that the initial visitors felt toward the film studio tours in the 1960s is a difficult enterprise for a historian of film cultures: perhaps as complex as trying to understand the initial reactions of the first film audiences watching the Lumières Brothers filmed footage of the legendary train arriving at the station, as Tom Gunning has so memorably expressed.¹⁰² In this particular example in 1960s Los Angeles, it was the film viewers who seemed to be placed on the train themselves (or at least the tourist tram). The urban accoutrements of modern life were presented in microcosm at the theme park. In many of the early reviews and features, the writers have taken on an “ethnographer’s” perspective and have attempted to convey the reactions of the general public around them as well as their own more personal opinions. According to these reviews, the first tours elicited a diverse set of responses from visitors, ranging from high enthusiasm to bored indifference and disdain.

Many of the tourists – quite a few of whom had travelled to Hollywood from remote areas across the United States – were noted as being surprised and captivated by the special effects and behind-the-scenes props that were used in the Hollywood feature film-making

process. For example, the artificial sets were a source of wonder, with Hedda Hopper noting that “the back lot, with its many streets (Western, New York, Mexican) where so many pictures have been shot, drew ohs and ahs, especially when visitors finally got a look at what’s behind all those storefronts—nothing.” The publicisation of “magical” special effects was certainly not new in Hollywood, and has origins in the interest in optical illusions from the eighteenth century onwards. There were many magazines, and television specials for film releases would often produce “making-of” specials that would show the secrets behind the filmmaking process of a particular film. As well as these releases, popular film a clefs also deconstructed the glamour and mystique of show business—for example, Sunset Boulevard (1950) and Singin’ In The Rain (1952) are two films to make clear the ephemerality and falsity of film sets and studio worlds. Yet, there is a difference between watching such shows and films or reading about them in magazines and seeing live action demonstrations as part of a themed studio experience. The magazines and television specials were simply other virtual versions of Hollywood that arguably needed to be backed up with a physical visit to this unique space, in order to truly comprehend the nuances between the filmed image and the real space.

Another reaction that seemed expected from audiences, was the hysteria caused by the presence of the movie stars themselves on the studio tours. Sutton, writing about the tour passing the movie-lot homes of high-profile actors such as Charlton Heston and Gregory Peck, notes “(r)eady, a party could die, and several ladies aboard my coach were at swoon’s edge.” According to a MGM spokesperson, one of the largest problems the tours created at the film studio were celebrity-obsessed young women—called “little girls”—using the tours as opportunities for stalking a favourite star. For example, it was noticed that whenever Elvis Presley was present at MGM, it resulted in a large number of women “sneaking onto sets”. Crowd control or crowd management was also an issue protecting the interest and personal safety of a star. Security would grow to become a much larger aspect at all studios, but during this era there was less concern about the damage caused by

104 Hopper, “New Studio Tours Generate Goodwill;”
tourists to the working parts of the studio. Interestingly, because the expensive VIP tour at Fox aimed to be a completely immersive “behind the scenes” experience, it provoked anger from members of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) who objected to the impact that tourists would have upon individual performances:

There are indications that the Guild may soon tell its members to halt work on sets when paying visitors barge in. “We didn’t allow other studios to do this, so why should we allow it at Fox,” says a Guild Official. “An occasional VIP is one thing, but organised visitations day after day… that could ruin performances.”

Another problem that the Universal tour faced was featuring filmed locations that were unpopular cinematic releases. Some of the attractions on the tour did not interest the patrons as they were yet to be released, and therefore, such films and television shows had not become part of the popular cultural imaginary. Or else, expensive and beautiful sets may have been constructed for films and television shows that were box office failures. The following example appears to indicate audience indifference and a lack of excitement toward one filmed location on the Universal tour:

One thing our guide really loved was Universal Pictures. “How many of you,” he asked, “have seen ‘Thoroughly Modern Millie’? Put up your hands.”

Nobody put up his hand.

“Phew!” our guide said. “How many of you have ever heard of ‘Thoroughly Modern Millie’?”

A few people in Tramcar No.1 and Tramcar No.3 had, but nobody in Tramcar No.2 had. In fact, the people in Tramcar No.2 had not only not heard of “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” they hadn’t heard anything, because the speaker system in their tramcar was not working.

*Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967) was a musical film starring Julie Andrews that had been released in March 1967: it was a very successful film that received a number of

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108 According to legend, even the director Steven Spielberg was supposed to have gotten his big break in Hollywood by sneaking in to the lot from the studio tram tour in 1964. However, this story has been proven to be an embellishment on Spielberg’s part for interviews, self-mythologising to magnify his achievements at Universal (see [http://www.snopes.com/movies/other/spielberg.asp](http://www.snopes.com/movies/other/spielberg.asp)).


academy awards, yet in this instance it appears that the film has not captured the imagination of the audience that had assembled for the tour. The journalist here appears to be punning on the idea of the film’s title, “thoroughly modern”: this instance also indicates that occasionally the state-of-the-art modern technology that was required for the Hollywood tours would sometimes malfunction or under perform, and that it was so modern and up-to-date that no one had even heard of the films/television shows on display through distribution networks. To broaden visitor awareness of the Studios contemporary releases and overcome this particular problem, Universal City set up a special theatre to preview clips of Universal releases, as an example, of what was termed at the time as “crossplugging.” Universal thus saw an opportunity to further advertise itself by using the studio tour. Therefore, while Universal appeared to sell itself as a miniature cinematic city, the audience reactions to the studio still focussed on other aspects of the movie world, particularly on the presence of stars and on cinematic special effects. They wanted to have a sense of “being there” in the presence of “movie magic.” It seems inevitable that, given these audience interests, the current configuration of the park was beginning to fail to satisfy consumer interest, and it would need to innovate in order to maintain any success.

Problems for the Studio Tour

I was doing an interview with Shirley MacLaine while she was making Gambit at Universal. A tramful of eyeballs careened around a corner, bearing straight for her. “Goddamned trams,” she said and ducked behind a hedge. The sign on her bungalow read “Suzie Glutz.”

The early studio tours were certainly not without their critics. One outspoken critic of the studio tour experience was Terry Gilliam, a magazine illustrator at the time who later became a film director himself after the success of his involvement with the British surrealist comedy show Monty Python’s Flying Circus (1969-74). Gilliam provided social commentary for one article on the proliferation of studio tours in Hollywood. Gilliam’s humorous cartoon illustrations for this article demonstrate his general scepticism toward these studio tour operations in their failure to provide an authentic and pleasurable glimpse

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into the real working world of film production [See Figure 6]. Drawing an imaginary advertisement for a “Waning Bros. Studios,” Gilliam brings attention to the impossibility of real star sightings, listing events such as “SEE! Movie Stars’ names on parking spaces!” as chief tourist drawcard. On the same illustration, another point “See Movies being made,” is shown to be a ploy, the word “Movies” half falling off the concealed word “money.” Indicating the frustration of film crews, another illustration by Gilliam shows a film crew hiding behind a false-fronted set building from a tour tram packed with craning tourists.

Figure 6. Terry Gilliam’s satirical take on the studio tour boom of the late 1960s. Source: LA Times, April 14th, 1968.
Gilliam paints a cynical portrait of the film tourists as cultural dupes, falling prey to the exploitative schemes of big businesses. Many of the review writers seem caught up in the dichotomy between the tourist and the traveller: looking down upon the other visitors as an ignorant mass (i.e. the tourists), but trying to cast their own particular visit as more critical (hence, the traveller). Drawing comparisons to *The Day of the Locust*, Fessier Jr suggests that at “Universal the tourists strip the outdoor sets like locusts. A nine-foot rubber rock gets picked down to a pebble in a month.”

Fessier Jr.’s article features the Gilliam cartoon, and in his piece on the studio tour, finds the Universal tour as the prototype, one that he ascribes in a cynical fashion as a brainchild of Albert Dorskind. As he says:

…(A)bout four years ago Albert Dorskind, Universal’s executive vice president and treasurer, got the idea contemplating the vast unproductive property his company owned, 420 acres of woods and snakes and saggy, sun-peeled sets. Then he had this vision of fat men in plaid shorts and ice-cream-eating children and grateful old people, quarters and half dollars jingling in their pockets. He superimposed this vision on all that land and came up with Universal Tours.

Fessier Jr. comments reveal that the “vision” of the tour was a construction imposed on 420 acres, part of the Universal “experiment” to recover their losses and even arguably, create a new touristic market for itself. Although cynical of its significance, Fessier Jr. perhaps did not realise that Universal was part of bringing into existence the new cultural phenomenon of film tourism, and not simply a new marketing scheme. The early criticisms from the media appeared to not see the big picture at hand. It was not a “mindless mass” that visited Universal and the other studios; these visitors represented a new form of consumption, informed by a new model of film spectatorship. For example, true film fans were seeking tours and the idea of a “cinematic city” to satisfy what was to become a film tourist gaze. The problems that the studio faced were not then simply about any fundamental flaw about the whole enterprise of hosting a tour. The tour had rather failed to satisfy the desires that it fed (stimulated), that is, the film tourist gaze that sought to really “see” the “magic” of film behind the scenes. But as we saw with our previous

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113 Ibid.
case study in Vertigo, the film tourist experience is not one that fails due to consumer dissatisfaction.

According to Syd Cassyd:

The primary success of the venture is due to the fact that an alert management is filling a consumer need for information about the world’s most important communications force, the motion picture.\footnote{Cassyd, Syd. “Universal Studio Tours”, p.11.}

Universal had a good idea, but at this early stage, “image” did not appear to be making inroads through rendering the filmmaking process transparent. Props and sets and stuntmen created certain amount of interest, of course. The early crowds at the tours of the 1964-65 period had been generated from the prospect of this idealised novelty.

The tours were useful because of their promotional ability. Cassyd notes that film spectators and tourists “get an indoctrination into their entertainment hobby, giving them a great personal identification with the shows and stars they see at first hand. Listening to comments of the visitors, this is quite apparent.”\footnote{Ibid.}

At the end of the tour, everybody wanted to know where our celebrity was. Finally, our guide found him. He was Mr. Bob Hastings, of McHale’s Navy, and he was behind a cosmetics counter, where, while you were meeting him, you could also buy real Universal Pictures stars’ makeup.\footnote{Amory, Cleveland. “Backstage – almost – in Hollywood.”}

Certainly, some of the actors did not enjoy the extra attention, courtesy of the tram tours. There was another reason – studios were previously a haven, highly protected spaces, and highly patrolled kingdoms of security. The attitudes of the Hollywood stars themselves were ambivalent: “John Wayne was very sceptical, but then he took his grandchildren on the tour and loved it,” recalls a Fox official.\footnote{Kann, Peter, “Starring Jack Kuhn: $50 Fox Studio Tour Draws Affluent Fans.” Wall St. Journal January 16, 1967}
At the end of the 1960s, it started to become clear that studio tours would not bring film fans any closer to meeting well known film stars. However, star sighting was not a promise the studio could meet. Despite attempts to appease this desire, selling studios as a site for star visitations was not really possible. But as Fessier Jr. says, it was not “really enough, and Universal knew it.”

As Universal Studios tour was verging towards the brink of a make or break stage, on the 1st of August 1968, a one-month Mexican festival was planned at Universal Studios as a new temporary attraction.

(T)he entire month will be devoted to a special Mexican festival. The area is to be open from 5pm to midnight during August, with special Mexican dancers, artists acts, various artisans and shops. In an area adjacent to the tour parking lot, the festival also will present dancing for the public.

Despite the South-of-the-Border flavour of the celebrations, Greek and Bavarian dancers were also used to give a “cosmopolitan” tone to the event. A Christmas tree at the studio was converted into a giant sombrero shape, and mariachi bands strolled the area playing evocative music. The female guides on the tour were to wear bright orange costumes designed by Edith Head “to further enhance the tour.” The pressures were obviously showing that the Studios not only valued this tour, but also were relying on its success to perpetuate their image as an innovative, modern, technologically advanced and exciting front of film production.

The sheer impossibility of these upscale tours to show celebrities and stars meant that any star-related experience was limited. Universal Studios were forced to innovate through other kinds of attractions in order for the tour to be maintained. Certainly, the capacity of the studio tour as a venue for “stargazing” disappeared. What is interesting at this juncture is that it was possible to re-direct the “gaze” of the visitors towards other filmmaking related attractions. Although “stargazing” appeared the main reason for interest during this early period, it did not signify the end of any film tourist experience at Universal.

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Coinciding with the rise of the “blockbuster” in the 1970s, the new arrival of computer and animatronics effects meant that there was an entirely new way for visitors to be immersed in film culture, and one that did not require movie stars on hand. The introduction throughout the 1970s of this “orgy” of entertainment did spell the end of the first era of Universal Studio’s theme park experiment. Of course, the preservation of the studio tour still kept some links to the filmmaking connections of the theme park experience, but after this first era, the tours became strictly based around extremely popular films. The development of animatronics-based technology saw the introduction of new spectacles such as the *Jaws* experience on Singapore Lake throughout the 1970s. The park continued to grow and prosper, and occupied the position of second largest attraction in California after Disneyland. The lessons it had learnt from the first era of its experiment were quickly adhered to, and Universal had finally found how best to harness the film tourist gaze, by taking it out of the tram and strapping it in a seat in a darkened room and then projecting its fantasies.

It is important to recognise the continuities between the original studio tour experience and the theme park in its current incarnation, which is now divided into an upper and lower level as well as the free CityWalk entertainment and retail zone located at the entrance to the park (first opened in 1993). The preservation of the studio tour in the current theme park demonstrates that despite the theme park’s advancement toward special effects, high speed thrill rides and effects, Universal continues to attract tourists partly on the basis of the insights offered through the inspection of film production spaces, no matter how fleeting. Of course, the studio tram tour still includes a number of outdated special effects that have nothing to do with filming locations, but the tram ride past the old studio buildings, and the ersatz architecture of the New York streets and lakes are imbued with meaning through their function as a double for screen locations. I would argue that it is the undeniable mystique of the cinematic image that acts as a touchstone for the contemporary theme park.

Finally, throughout the development of Universal’s tourist experience, emphasis had been kept of the place as a cinematic city, which was Universal’s founder Laemmle’s vision. At the origin of the tour in the early 1960s, the absence of film-related experiences in Los

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Angeles created the need for this miniature city to manifest. Universal City filled a noticeable gap in the market: this city provided all the diversity of experiences that a regular city could offer, and it emulated the trappings of the modern mass tourism industry through its transportational rides, use of guides and souvenirs, and so on. Not only this, but it finally offered a glimpse into the fascinating life of movie making – these are all aspects that have continued as the theme park has continued to shift into its current formation.

In conclusion, although film tourism is generally considered to be a contemporary phenomenon, we can see how even at the beginning of the mass travel era there was fascination with filmed spaces, and desires to visit such places. Furthermore, Universal and other studios utilisation of film tourism indicates an attempt to harness its power for capital gain and also feed it, so to ensure a future industry. In the following chapter I shall examine the ways the studios maintained a sense of futurity to their enterprise and even anticipated the film tourist gaze. The consistency with which travel-related narratives are closely integrated with the travel experience of the park itself, suggests that many of the highest grossing Universal blockbuster films from the period of the park might be considered inherently travel-inspiring, or at least implicated within the propagation of touristic narratives. If we are to discover and analyse some of the ideological connections between the film production as imaginative place promotion and the film spectator as unique traveller and consumer, it is to these narratives enacted at the theme park that we will turn to in the following chapter. It is time to turn to the era of the blockbuster movie, and its defining relationship with the contemporary phenomenon of film tourism.
Chapter Three

Out of this World: Blockbuster Cinema, the Theme Park and Ideologies of Danger Travel

![Universal Studios Hollywood logo](image)

**Figure 1:** The Universal Studios Hollywood logo literally places Hollywood in the centre of and also outside the geographic globe.

You want the most advanced, mind-blowing rides and attractions in the world? We’ve got ‘em! You want a full day of excitement and adventure with maybe a little bit of danger thrown in? I dare you to check us out!\(^1\)

- Universal Studios advertising film, [www.universalstudioshollywood.com](http://www.universalstudioshollywood.com).

Many Theme Parks simply adopt a movie/TV title as a name for a standard iron ride or Show. Universal, Disney and Warners built their attractions around the basic premise of the film. There is a world of difference in these two strategies. \(^2\)

- Barry Upson, Interview.

Filmic genres and cycles are specific to sites and even to means of transportation, and, in turn they change the way we remap these sites. \(^3\)


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Giuliana Bruno in *Atlas of Emotion* has argued convincingly that the relationship between cinema and architectural understandings of space is a dynamic and creative one. Bruno argues that the railroad and the open landscape helped to shape the western genre film, while the outer limits of space from the imaginary of the 1960s Cold War space race (“star wars”) helped to define the emerging genre of science fiction. The car determined the road movie, and the post-war suburban home delimited the border of melodrama. In an analysis of the function of space within the genre of American film noir, Bruno points out the ways in which genre re-formed ideas about urban space:

Film noir has impressed its mark on the future landscape of the city and on the way we cognitively and emotionally navigate its space. In this sense, it continues the trajectory of the early urban panoramas, which the motion picture inherited from the shadow of nineteenth-century urban culture and fiction, remapping its penumbra in novel ways. The noir stories emerge from the site of the modern city and, conversely, leave tracings of their footsteps on the urban sites as they redraw the physiological perimeters of the city for “things to come.”

Turning from film noir, such logic seems to be applicable for the genre of blockbuster cinema itself. In the 1970s and 1980s Universal Studios became an entirely different experience from the one available to visitors in the early 1960s. Whilst Universal was at the cutting edge of blockbuster development in the 1970s – new types of films strongly marketed and utilised intensive special effects such as *Jaws* (1975) and *Earthquake* (1975) – so too it began to incorporate more live and physical experiences into the theme park, inviting the tourist-participant to act as an extra in these larger-than-life, fantastic blockbuster narratives.

The famous studio tour that had proven so popular in the 1960s now turned into a themed out-of-this world experience: where one was able to experience the feeling of being in a live earthquake, or witness to an attack from an outlandish shark. Whilst introducing these fantastic elements, the theme park nonetheless still continues to foreground and fetishise the process of filmmaking itself, hence focussing on the creation of special effects and behind-the-scenes material about the creation of movie magic that began with the original studio tour.

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In the previous chapter, I argued that the emergence of the film tourist gaze in 1960s Los Angeles coincided with the establishment of a movie-related theme park, signifying the first instance in which the film tourist gaze had been commodified. In this chapter, following on from Bruno’s theoretical analysis, I contend that the movie-based theme park, and more broadly, the city of Los Angeles it emulates, has consequently helped to shape the genre of blockbuster cinema – a decade or so after the beginning of Disneyland and Universal Studios. The originary point of blockbuster cinema is usually thought to have commenced from the release of Steven Spielberg’s film *Jaws* in 1975, which appeared only a decade after the introduction of the studio tour. I argue that the two forms of the blockbuster film and the movie-based theme park are interconnected, and I shall show this connection through an analysis of Universal tour sites and the narratives of the accompanying films. This chapter elucidates the embedded connections that lie between the two forms of theme park ride and blockbuster film. By pinpointing the emergence of an ideological shift on Universal’s part as it started to create multi-platform media products that could fulfil a number of functions simultaneously, I show how, starting with the film, then the book, the toy, the computer game, and of course, the tour. The film tourist gaze as it functions in the case studies of this chapter, therefore, manifests as a deliberate marketing strategy, again harnessed by film studios and used to create both tourists and film viewers. In the case study of Universal Studios, we can see how it constructs similar fantasies about supposedly “dangerous” or “out-of-this-world” travel, both through the blockbuster (which offers a virtual ride into “wildness”), and secondly, through the real theme park ride.

Certainly, the major rides and attractions at Universal Studios Hollywood engender narratives of travel and displacement. As a “universe” negotiated on foot, Universal Studios foregrounds and celebrates the many forms of transit that constitute contemporary life in post-industrial America, making the most of escalators, trams, boats, cars, buses and roller coasters. More than this, however, Universal Studios Hollywood celebrates futuristic forms of travel, such as space and time travel, featuring simulators and experiences that mimic the journeys undergone in science fiction films. These internal transportation devices have the effect of fetishising the operation of the contemporary mass tourism industry. In this world of simulated travel, then, the attractions at the park are predominantly hinged around action-based blockbuster movies that similarly focus on
tourism and/or adventurous travel within their diegesis. In this sense, the protagonist-hero in the films is likened to the visitor at the park who participates in and experiences these rides and attractions.

This link between the fictional narratives of the individual films featured at the park and the real-life tourism attraction suggests that Universal posits itself ideologically to be a conduit for what it constructs to be dangerous, fantastic or wild forms of travel. Justin Wyatt has written extensively about the blockbuster film as part of the new “cinema of attractions”. While a blockbuster film is theorised as positioning the spectator as an armchair tourist on a “rollercoaster ride”, travelling the ups and downs of a perilous environment, at the Universal Studios theme park there is a direct counterpart for the film tourist. So too does the theme park offer its own wild yet controlled forms of travel that would be too horrifying, were they to be experienced in reality. As James Moran points out in his description of 1990s Universal Studios, “Universal’s blockbusters spill over the screen as interactive spectacles, which in turn sprawl over the studio lots where they were originally spawned in a cycle that increasingly blurs production and exhibition.”

While the use of wild travel rides is certainly not unique to Universal Studios – the use of cutting-edge rides characterises theme parks in general – the outlandish narratives that spectators undertake as add-ons to a cinematic experience suggests a way by which the studio manages film touristic desire to create a film link between the theme park and the exciting narratives of the films themselves. However, this does not mean that Universal Studios Hollywood offers experiences that are truly frightening.

Sharon Zukin suggests that theme parks such as Disneyland were able to “transcend ethnic, class, and regional identities to offer a national public culture based on aestheticizing differences and controlling fear.” The paradigm of the theme park Disneyland had set for Universal was clearly one that had to conform to homogeneity, and balance safety with adventure. As mentioned earlier, discourses of travel in early forms of tourism were interwoven with tales of adventure, even danger. Furthermore, the development of the theme park had to negotiate how best to maintain the allure of adventure with a safe and family-friendly environment. Reiner Jaakson says the theme

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6 There are occasional exceptions to this rule, such as Shrek, etc.
7 See Wyatt, High Concept: movie and marketing in Hollywood.
8 Moran, “Reading and Riding the Cinema of Attractions at Universal Studios,” p.79.
park was able to attract tourists through the power of “recreation”. As a result of this transformation of travel and adventure, we have slowly become absorbed into the practice of safe but adventurous form of travel. As Peter Tarlow points out, “many leisure travellers tend to shy away from a location when there is a perceived or real sense of danger”. The theme park apparently achieves something that is paradoxical: it allows a visitor to undertake perilous adventures, but it is conducted via a safe environment for both adults and children. Blaire and Michel comment, “no matter how thrilling or ‘perilous’ the adventure of a theme park ride, one always emerges unscathed.” Therefore, the use of cinema, which in one sense is already a form of armchair tourism, and hence an utterly “safe” form of virtual travel despite featuring horrifying or thrilling narratives, shares a further correlation with theme parks themselves.

This chapter continues the initial analysis of Universal Studios mapped out in chapter two. With this chapter, the focus turns toward the current site of the contemporary tourist attraction in Los Angeles, and I argue how the various rides and attractions work collectively to elaborate ideologies about fantastic travel, and also how tourism functions as interactive add-ons for selected Universal film narratives. As James Moran has noticed, Universal Studios Hollywood also continues a tradition in cinema that is akin to its formation within the early years of cinema, one that has been called a “cinema of attractions”. For example, Hale’s Tours in London, which ran from 1910-1915, offered a

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13 The vital difference between the amusement parks of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and theme park environments such as Disneyland and later Universal Studios Hollywood is that the former were un-policed and run by of private business-owners, whereas the corporate ownership of the latter ensured that all aspects of the experience were controlled. To enter into one of these theme parks meant that one had to submit and conform to the ideological restrictions set by the private location. Brigham argues that after Disney’s adaptation of the Fordist mode of production, theme parks have come to “control every inch of our experience, they crowd us out as producers and as imaginative participants, offering consumerism, as many Disney critics point out, as the visitor’s single activity.” But despite this legacy of the theme park, Universal Studios Hollywood has attempted to be post-Fordist and “pitch the joys of participation as the ultimate pleasure.” This transition was made possible, Brigham argues because Universal Studios “costumes consumption as an act of production.” See Ann Brigham, “Consuming Pleasures of Re/Production: Going Behind the Scenes in Spielberg’s Jurassic Park and at Universal Studios Theme Park.” *Genders* 36, 2002, 19-20. [accessed at: http://www.genders.org/g36/g36_brigham.html]
cinematic experience in which movie cinemas were designed to emulate train carriages.\footnote{Ibid., p. 80} In describing the experience, Christian Hayes says, “phantom rides were projected onto a ‘window’ and motion was simulated in order to recreate the physical and visual experience of rail travel.”\footnote{Hayes, Christian. “Phantom carriages: Reconstructing Hale’s Tours and the virtual travel experience.” \textit{Early Popular Visual Culture}. Vol. 7, No. 2, July 2009, pp.185–198} In the case of Universal Studios, blockbuster cinema reclaims this form of “cinema of attractions”, and therefore attempts to simulate motion and manipulate the participant through the concept of “out-of-this-world” travel.

Henceforth, this chapter specifically analyses the prevalence of the metaphors of wild, “out of-this-world” travelling and touring at Universal Studios Hollywood, through case study analysis of three sites and types of imaginative travel. I have designated these three types of imaginative travel as: murder travel (through the film \textit{Psycho}), adventure travel (through \textit{Jaws}) and time travel (through the \textit{Back to the Future} trilogy). In this chapter I argue that a similar dynamic is at play between the genre of the high concept “blockbuster” film and the consumer space of tourism-based entertainment, foregrounded by the modes of transportation at the park. In turn, these artificial attractions help to redraw the physiological parameters of the contemporary world of mass tourism. In this chapter I look further at how these participatory narratives function collectively at the park to address anxieties about the concepts of touristic authenticity and contemporary Western travel cultures.\footnote{As part of this research, I visited the Universal Studios theme park in February 2007 in order to conduct site analysis of the theme park, experiencing the separate attractions and seeing how the narratives of the main attractions fitted together as a whole.} These narratives can be accessed on the studio tour as well as being a part of a virtual attraction as a film-based simulation ride. Critical analysis is given to each of these case studies and their relationship to the significance of theme park narratives in general. I also examine how tie-in external features at the park – such as the on-site themed restaurants, stores, advertising and merchandise – help to constitute and support these narratives, and also how they reveal the consumerist ideology that arises from the film tourist gaze. On a broader level, I hope to further illustrate the strong link between cinema as imaginative technology and the creation of touristic desire, even if the narrative of each film might seem to denounce the concept of travel and associate it with negative outcomes.
Using blockbuster movies as its base, Universal Studios monumentalises tame examples of wild contemporary travel, making them more appealing by filtering them as authentic by foregrounding the movie-making process. In some ways, then, Universal Studios legitimates the business of tourism, displaying itself as a place in which authenticity is achieved (by “opening its doors” as we discussed in the previous chapter), through this process of replication. However, this authenticity never appears to be fully realised. On the current Universal Studios Hollywood tour, one watches a static Norman Bates looking out from the window of his mansion, not willing to emerge from behind the screen so to speak. We are then given a glimpse of this movie-magic, yet it appears to be no different essentially that what one experiences on the screen itself. This is because there is a connection between safely packaged tourism and safely packaged cinema. Such a connection acts as a therapeutic place to circulate dangerous ideas and fantasies, before ultimately turning away and overcoming them. The translation of these dark fantasies into the real-life theme park experience has become almost as important as the film texts themselves. Before analysing these specific case study examples, I shall first turn to a broader description of the theme park itself.

Theme Park as Transit Site: Today’s Universal Studios

In a recent internet interview Barry Upson said, “at the outset, and for several ensuing years (1964 to 1980), the studio tram tour and the tour guides were the “stars” and the tram

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17 The link between terror and pleasure has been a long-lived one in contemporary Western culture and has strong links to the sublime and romanticism that started to emerge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Literary and artistic interest in picturesque, sublime locations such as vertiginous mountains and steep ravines helped to foster the rise of the grand tour and of mass travel in Europe; whilst even travelling itself at this point was still implicitly dangerous in foreign countries without the setup of the contemporary major mass tourism industry. Reiner Jaakson notes this element, writing that “travel was travail in the true sense of the French word for work: fear was part of tourism”. Jaakson suggests that the Cook’s tour of the nineteenth century was the first attempt to remove uncertainty and fear that had been part and parcel of the “Grand Tour”. The rise of the amusement park with its rides and novelties continued this newfound love of being thrilled and/or scared as a controlled form of entertainment. Amusement parks are also thought to have emerged from medieval fair traditions and also in European pleasure gardens that set up on the outskirts of towns; in the United States in the late nineteenth century the amusement park became prevalent as a strategy for trolley car companies to create more weekend travel, and therefore were usually built at the end of trolley lines. The famous Coney Island resort located outside of New York City was built in 1895. See James Buzard, “The Grand Tour and after (1660-1840),” In The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing, Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 37-52; Robert W. McIntosh, Tourism: Principles, practices, philosophies, New York, Wiley, 1986.
special effects and shows were the “bit players” at Universal.”¹⁸ In the year 1980, competition with Knott’s Berry Farm and Disneyland became fiercer – in combination with falling attendance rates – “larger, bolder and more recognisable attractions were needed to compete and build attendance.”¹⁹ Hence, today’s Universal Studios Hollywood provides two distinct types of experiences: on the one hand, it aims to preserve history and tradition of the Universal name, but on the other hand, it wants to compete as a Los Angeles centre for thrilling rides, matching the ephemerality and novelty of the blockbuster attractions it produces. Of course, the “legendary” status that is now given to the studio tour indicates the tension between the preservation of the older attractions and the introduction of newer, more “thrilling” rides. As the previous chapter discussed, Universal Studios has built itself a significant historical space that has not yet become obsolete, although with the emergence of the blockbuster, the hyped attractions at Universal are less about witnessing history, but experiencing a kind of postmodern “eternal present” that lacks any connection with the history of the film-making process.²⁰

Until 1991, a visitor to Universal Studios could only visit the upper lot and participate in the studio tour that took tram rides down the mountain to the movie sets and soundstages. However, in 1991 Universal expanded the space of the theme park and created a range of experiences at the new “lower lot”. The lower lot contains high intensity rides at the theme park – currently, Jurassic Park: The Ride (1996-) and Revenge of the Mummy (2004-). To travel between the two lots, one must ride enormous and spectacular escalators that climb the side of the steep Universal hill. The escalators seem to be part of the metaphor of “travel” that defines the theme park. Since the establishment of The Jaws Experience in 1974, Universal Studios has featured rides and sets on high-profile blockbuster releases such as: Conan the Barbarian (Milius, 1982), Back to the Future (Zemecki, 1985), Terminator II (Cameron, 1990), Backdraft (Howard, 1991), Waterworld (Reynolds, 1995), Jurassic Park (Spielberg, 1993), Dante’s Peak (Donaldson, 1997), Chicken Run (Lord and Park, 2000), The Fast and the Furious (Cohen, 2001), The Mummy Returns (Sommers, 2001), Van Helsing (Sommers, 2004), The War of the Worlds (Spielberg, 2005) and King Kong (Jackson, 2005). The majority of these films are from the science fiction or fantasy

¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ See for a discussion of the idea of “eternal present” in relation to theme parks, see Eric Smoodin, Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom.
genre that employs a range of computer-generated imagery (CGI) special effects to present heroic narratives, and are concerned with enhanced representations of movement and size. The high-intensity thrill rides inspired by Universal blockbusters are put there to appeal to visitors thrilled by cutting edge special effects.

In the current formation of the park, the iconic Universal logo fountain stands at the entranceway to the theme park, in the middle of a wide plaza. This entrance is publicly accessible to all visitors before entry into the theme park. During the day the plaza draws a constant stream of visitors who can be photographed at the entranceway to the park. While the Universal planet logo is screened at the beginning of every Universal film and television program, the prominent placement of this logo at the Los Angeles entrance-way perhaps symbolically suggests that for a visitor to the theme park, the upcoming experience aims to emulate the narrative twists and turns of a Universal movie [See Figure 1]. After the old-fashioned stucco gates and the show business “red carpet” entrance-way – the ground is red, but there is no carpet – the narrow entrance gives way to another sculptural monument of filmmakers in production.

The iconic back-lot tour continues to take people away from the themed walking section of the park – filled with shops, restaurants, experiences and rides – into the inaccessible and private realms of production. Tours are subject to re-routing – for example, on the day that I visited Universal, Courthouse Square was off limits due to the production of a new commercial. While the tour is somewhat of a hybrid and has taken on a lot of themed thrilling experiences – from the emulation of an earthquake to the *Jaws* experience, there is no denying that this tour still manages to offer the participant a greater sense of being “behind-the-scenes” of the movie industry and the filmmaking process – perhaps as close as one can be without being involved in a production. The inability to access this space on Universal except for via tram, both adds to the allure of the zone as well as signal that any “behind-the-scenes” is a strictly limited experience. In 2010, Barry Upson noted that the most recent development for the tour is that “Universal has just installed a state-of-the-art A/V system in their Universal Hollywood trams that permits guests to view scenes from

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21 The fountain gestures to the famous and much larger Unisphere built at Flushing Queens by the US Steel Corporation for the international exhibition in 1964-65. The globe also symbolises the diverse international origins of the tourists that will visit the theme park, and of the cosmopolitan nature of the theme park itself.

22 From the tram the group was able to see production vans and cameras set up in the distance.
films while traveling through the sets where they were shot, as well as other visual materials,23 which is similar to the movie tours conducted in San Francisco and New York City. On the Universal Studios Hollywood web site, the “behind the scenes” aspect of the tour is emphasised:

On the Studio Tour you will go deep behind the scenes where today’s hottest movies are being made. Keep your eyes peeled for stars!… Come experience the legendary Universal Studio Tour and go behind-the-scenes where Hollywood movies are made, and where Hollywood’s biggest stars work daily. You never know what (or who) you may see!24

Even if no real stars are seen on the tour, a number of Studio employees of the Studio walk around the upper lot dressed as screen legends, such as Marilyn Monroe and the Marx Brothers (in true Disneyland-like fashion). On the large escalators that take participants from the upper lot to the lower lot of the theme park, an in-house radio station pumps out well-known soundtrack pieces. Through a kind of suspended animation, this helps to immerse the participant into the film culture as they prepare for the thrills of the attractions available on the bottom level. This sonic infiltration certainly works to control the reception of the cinematic experiences. Everywhere there are shops and stopover cafes typically themed around the experiences they are located next to. In the lower lot, one can eat at the “Jurassic” Cove Café and at “Panda Express.” In the upper lot, there are a range of options, from “Flintstone’s Drive-In” to a generic classic diner to a chicken store based on Back to the Future.25 The cafes that are not based on a specific film or television programme still seem to hint toward the cliched American eating spaces as highlighted in classic Hollywood films (drive-ins, grills, diners and so on). Therefore, the actors, music, shops and cafes at Universal Studios Hollywood seem to operate together to situate the participant within an atmosphere of an enhanced, themed “movie world.” Furthermore, it is a world that emphasises amazing travel experiences, but also at the same time, reminds you of being a consumer, as we shall see with the following case studies, starting with Psycho at the park.

25 http://www.themeparkinsider.com/reviews/universal_studios_hollywood/
Example 1: Murder Travel with Psycho (The Bates Mansion and Motel)

The first example of this chapter focuses on the Psycho-related attractions at Universal Studios and connections to “murder travel”. The Bates mansion and motel, which have been placed next to each other on the studio tour, were both part of the original set for Alfred Hitchcock’s black and white 1960 horror movie Psycho, and have remained a part of the studio tour since Universal Studios official theme park opening in 1964. While the Bates mansion was only two-sided during the shooting of Psycho, its prominence on the studio tour resulted in it being given full three-dimensional reality. When the theme park opened officially – only four years after the release of the film – the gothic mansion was one of the first key attractions of the studio tour. Initially, the mansion was situated above “Singapore Lake” – the future site for the Jaws experience, but it was moved. “Tourists on VIP tours” of the studio used to be allowed to walk up and down the steps next to the mansion, but in recent times this has been stopped in order to cease further damage to the attraction. Since Universal Studios opened in the same historical moment as this cautionary tale, one might argue that the park became a vehicle for creating safer family-based adventure spaces while simultaneously translating murder into mainstream entertainment. Let us examine how the attraction at Universal connects with the original film’s narrative.26

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26 A number of sequels have been made, but I shall focus on the first film only.
An underlying message for the movie Psycho could be: “travellers beware,” as this is a film in which those on the move become prey to a psychopath. Psycho foregrounds the connection that exists between anonymous travel and danger. The film narrates the story of Marion (Janet Leigh), a young woman who becomes a fugitive and end up being murdered by a motel manager (Anthony Perkins) who cross-dresses as his dead mother. The manager is eventually discovered by the woman’s sister and partner. Upon release, the movie appeared to strike a nerve: while it received mixed reviews in the media, it quickly topped the box office and became a “national phenomenon”, ensuring its ongoing celebrity in American popular culture to the present day.\(^{27}\) Barbara Creed posits that Psycho is one “of the most influential horror films ever made.”\(^{28}\) It is a frequently discussed text in cinema studies, in particular the celebrated “shower scene” that utilised an innovative fusion of fast-edited montage and staccato music.\(^{29}\) The film has spawned three sequels to date, a shot-for-shot remake by Gus Van Sant (1998), and countless other cultural references, from emulation in The Simpsons (1989-) to the sampling of its Bernard Hermann soundtrack by musical pop artists.

The thriller was predominantly filmed within the confines of Universal (Revue) Studios, but there were some outside locations used as well. For example, the used car yard was real and still is in operation (located relatively close to the studio in Los Angeles).\(^{30}\) The highway where Marion is questioned by the police officer is the Golden State freeway north of Los Angeles (also used in the Van Sant’s Psycho).\(^{31}\) It is the Universal Studios set, however, that remains the epicentre for Psycho-based tourism for film buffs, even though the Bates motel is actually only a reconstruction of the original set. The set of the Bates mansion has been subsequently used as a setting in a number of films and television shows across the years, including being painted bright pink for the Chevy Chase comedy Modern Problems (Shapiro, 1981), and appearances in popular television series such as Murder, She Wrote (1984-96), Knight Rider (1982-86) and Diff’rent Strokes (1978-86). In the last decade, the mansion had an on-screen appearance in the children’s feature Big Fat Liar (2002), which was interestingly about a movie being made at Universal Studios.

\(^{29}\) An academic book has even been written on this one scene: See Skerry, Philip J., Psycho in the Shower: The History of Cinema’s Most Famous Scene, Continuum, 2009.
\(^{31}\) Ibid..
Hollywood. Gus Van Sant’s poorly received remake of *Psycho* was made using a different house entirely, that was dismantled permanently from the studio tour in 2003. Therefore, as an attraction at Universal Studios, it is certainly an easily recognisable location that makes it a great candidate to have a continuing presence on the theme park studio tour.\(^\text{32}\)

Not only is the film itself a well-known classic, but the director himself is a pop culture icon – thanks to his television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-62) – he is probably one of the most famous and recognised Hollywood directors of all time. In my analysis of *Vertigo* in Chapter Two, I wrote of Hitchcock’s preoccupation with subverting and exploiting the tourist gaze: a similar case can be made for *Psycho*. We can see that even at the time of release of Psycho, there was a preoccupation with tourism that seems to preempt the eventual use of the mansion and motel on the studio tour. A long time before the opening of the Universal Studios tourist attraction, the *Psycho* set had been used in a mock-touristic way.\(^\text{33}\) In a seven-minute Paramount trailer made for the production, Hitchcock used his celebrity from his eponymous television show *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* to promote the film, repeating the same kind of strategic thinking he used to promote *Vertigo*.\(^\text{34}\) In a heavily contrived scenario, Hitchcock addresses the camera and the spectator as if he was a tour guide or real estate agent providing information to interested buyers.\(^\text{35}\) With a soundtrack of jaunty-sounding music reminiscent of his television show, an inter-title announces: “the fabulous Mr. Alfred Hitchcock is about to escort you… on a tour of the location of his new motion picture, ‘PSYCHO’.” Subsequently, standing on the exterior of the *Psycho* set, the portly Hitchcock humorously and conspiratorially introduces the spectator to the fictional location with his striking English accent:

Good afternoon. Here we have a quiet little motel. Tucked away off the main highway and as you see perfectly harmless looking, when in fact it has now become known as the scene of a crime. This motel also has as an adjunct an old house,

\(^{\text{32}}\) One example of this is the “infamous” Jim Carrey appearance – in drag as Norman Bates’s mother - during the production of *Man on the Moon.*

\(^{\text{33}}\) *Psycho* was not even made for Universal by Hitchcock, but rather for Paramount. Universal acquired the set afterwards because Hitchcock changed contracts for his next sequence of films. In Chapter Two, I mentioned that Hitchcock had promoted *Vertigo* with his own tour of the filming locations for the media.


\(^{\text{35}}\) He also did a similar sketch to promote *North By Northwest.*
which, if I may say so, is a little more sinister looking, less innocent than the motel itself. And in this house, the most dire, horrible events took place.

Continuing the parody, Hitchcock suggests that the viewer might look inside the mansion as it is now “for sale.” He “enters” into the house and goes to the bedroom of Mrs. Bates, before going back to the motel and visiting the office and Marion’s bedroom. Whenever Hitchcock approaches vital information that could give the plot away, he quickly moves on in exaggerated fashion to the next location on the property. As he does so, he affects grimaces to convey his doleful remembrance of the horror of the events, these events that of course amount to the film’s exciting narrative. He finishes his tour of the set in the motel bathroom where the murder took place; finally opening up the shower before the trailer finally switches to flashes of the horror shower scene within the film. The original Psycho trailer indicates Hollywood’s awareness of the consumer desire for “behind the scenes” information about film locations, and yet this virtual tour is another example of illusory storytelling and misdirection, which is later used to great effect at the Universal Studios studio tour experience. It is therefore unsurprising that Hitchcock’s films would soon after be incorporated into tourist attractions, given that the director himself had laid down the framework for such connections.

The narrative of the film is also important to remember to understand the touristic impacts. The movie foregrounds travel gone wrong. The film commences with the character of Marion on the run with a large sum of money from Phoenix to Los Angeles (where her boyfriend is located), the narrative revealing straight away anxieties about the phenomenon of mobilised car travel, particularly its dangers for young, increasingly independent women travelling on their own through unknown regions. When Marion first spends the night sleeping in her car on the side of the highway, she is subject to close questioning from a policeman who ironically tells her that it is not “safe” to sleep by the side of the road.

Close to Los Angeles, Marion arrives at the one-storey Bates Motel by mistake – having driven off the main freeway and caught in a heavy rainstorm, Marion is the only patron of the motel, which is placed on a lonely stretch of road: indeed, as she arrives during a heavy rainstorm, the eerie emptiness of the place creates a perfect gothic landscape for horror and death. The architectural style of the small motel in the film appears typical of the motel-
style that had sprung up across the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s. Norman relates the story of how his stepfather had decided to construct the motel. Feigning the hospitality of a modest small town operator, Norman explains to Marion the story of the motel’s strangely isolated location:

NORMAN: They moved away the highway.
MARIAN: Oh, I thought I’d gotten off the main road.
NORMAN: I knew you must have. Nobody ever stops here any more unless they’ve done that.

Norman’s phrase, “moved away the highway”, fits into the historical context of postwar road construction and alteration, which certainly would have added to the realistic sensibility of the film when it was first made in 1960. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower instituted the Federal-Aid Highway Act, a piece of legislation that sought to enact a rapid programme of interstate highway building. During the construction of this programme, previous highways were frequently re-routed, which could result in a sudden drop in the business along the older established touring routes. At the same time as the roads were changing, the growth of large motel chains – most famously headed by Holiday Inn, which was founded in 1952 – encroached upon smaller businesses as they expanded. By 1960, the year of Psycho’s release, Holiday Inn had over one hundred motels across the United States.36

In this context, on one level Psycho is certainly a cautionary tale about the dangers of the new freedoms offered by the economic boom of the postwar era, which is partly caused by the increased possibilities for travel. Marion is able to escape from Phoenix with $40,000 stolen from her work because of her anonymity on the highway, but this same fact means that large parts of the United States were relatively un-policed and that it was possible to fall between the interstices of law and control. It is only when Norman realises Marion is traveling secretly under a pseudonym (so that no one should discover her location) that he seems to show more interest in her as a potential victim. If the highway had not been diverted, then Norman would not have been isolated. Norman, as the “norm man” appears to personify the atomization of American society in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in

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which older and traditional communities were dissolving in the wake of major technological and communicational changes. Furthermore, these changes meant that the monitoring of psychotic individuals became more difficult, and also widened alienation between the urban and rural population. *Psycho* is one of a line of horror films to represent individual man and humanity (rather than fictional monsters, etc) as the perpetrator of the horror.\(^{37}\)

Many of the travel-related themes in the film survive in the apparition of the mansion-motel on the tour, particularly given its broader context in the theme park. On the sanitised studio tour, of course, all such anxieties toward the tourist’s experience of travel have been safely ameliorated. As Judith Adams writes in her study of the theme park, “parks must engineer maximum excitement with the elimination of actual danger,” which means that a theme park must paradoxically involve destruction and security.\(^{38}\) On the current tour, the real-life tourist is driven past the mansion on the tram, and invited to look at the window, where you can see the shadowy Norman Bates watching from the inside window. While *Psycho* is certainly not a film to fit into the conventional blockbuster genre that would create tourism by way of its radical transformation of space, it nevertheless functioned as an effective precursor to the blockbuster studio tour through the opportunity it offers for vicarious murder travel.

In terms of “out-of-this-world” experiences, the example of *Psycho* on the Universal Studios tour appears to be most realistic or connected to the “real world”, yet of course there is an element of surrealism to the participant’s enjoyment of this imaginary murder scene. I would argue by visiting the *Psycho* attraction on the studio tour at Universal Studios the film spectator *cum* tourist is allowed (arguably encouraged) a vicarious thrill that is equally hyperreal and non-quotidian. Norman Bates is one of America’s most notorious fictional murderers in cinema history, and his name still signifies a type of cinema-induced menace and fear. Also, the mansion and motel’s current presence on the tour is like something of a historical monument, and therefore the attraction calls forth a time and place that is now non-existent: post-war America. As with *Vertigo*, this is another


case of tourism that allows a kind of time travel to another place. While Jacobs argues that Hitchcock in his films “transcends and undermines the tourist gaze,” perhaps the manifestation of a film tourist site for *Psycho* dramatises that even the film tourist gaze can transcend and undermine Hitchcock. Although *Psycho* was released before the true era of the blockbuster, the use of this text at the theme park demonstrates that it can equally be caught within Universal’s broader ideology, whereby the tour offers insights into locations and places that are impossible to visit in reality.

That sense of darkness on the other side of the tourist window is carried on by the next case study – another film by a famous Hollywood director – Steven Spielberg’s *Jaws*, although perhaps to slightly more spectacular effect, as it was made in the era of the blockbuster.

**Example 2: Adventure Travel with Jaws (Jaws on Fire on the Studio Tour)**

![Poster for Jaws](image)

*Figure 3: Poster for Jaws*

With the appearance of the Universal Studios Tour's newest attraction, the "Jaws" special effect, opening April 10th, many visitors may anxiously wonder just what was the ending of this popular Universal film. Is it possible that the same deadly 24-foot shark of the screen has found its menacing way to Southern California and the back lot of Universal Studios?39

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The second attraction and film(s) that I shall examine in this chapter is the animatronic shark – affectionately named “Bruce” – and the *Jaws* movie (and its subsequent sequels) that is one of the most famous and iconic features of the studio tour. As in the example of *Psycho* and the other attractions at the park, *Jaws* allows its participants to experience yet another instance of “out-of-this-world” travel – to have an imaginary encounter with a crazed, giant shark.

The *Jaws* attraction is an example of an attraction at the park that once utilised spectacular cutting-edge special effects, and has now become something of a historical monument. As with so many of the (by now) antiquated horror attractions on the tour, the ride on the studio tour – which since 2000 has been called *Jaws on Fire!* – is presented to the tourist with wry humour. The tour guide puts on a slightly mocking tone to indicate one of the most talked-about and therefore clichéd moments at the Park. The studio tour tram stops by a small lake where an unfortunate diver (made from animatronics) appears and then disappears in the middle of the lake. The tour guide notes that the diver had “real guts to be out there. Oh, and there they are.” The shark rises rhythmically out of the water, hovering next to the tram with its mouth opened wide as if to attack the visitors. For those who do not have video cameras to capture the moment, later near the entrance to the studio tour in the Upper Lot of the theme park a hanging shark (imitating the final part of the film when the great white is killed) allows photo opportunities for the visitors and an emulation of the film’s “happy ending” with the monster’s destruction [See Figure 5].
Like the Bates mansion, the *Jaws* section of the studio tour is a long-term symbol of Universal Studios Hollywood, and it figures prominently in the park’s promotional material. There is also a similar attraction at the newer Universal Studios theme park in Orlando, Florida. The “Jaws leg” of the tour replaced an older set of a Singaporean village and lake, and opened for the public on April the 10th, 1976, just a year after the film’s release.\(^{40}\) The *Jaws* attraction was coincident with cutting edge animatronic special effects, developed by companies such as George Lucas’s Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) – which proved pivotal in changing the face of special effects for films and theme parks.\(^{41}\)

Unlike the *Psycho* mansion, which was partly at least, an authentic prop, nothing of the *Jaws* set remains in the theme park attraction. This is mainly due to Universal Studios Hollywood not being used as a filming location for the movie – the film was set on Amity Island and filmed on location at the real life resort location Martha’s Vineyard in Massachusetts. Originally, the fishing boat from the film that helps to destroy the shark (the “ORCA”) was placed on Singapore Lake as part of the film tour, but it was eventually


\(^{41}\)Disneyland was the first theme park to introduce animatronics into a tourist ride, and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* opened to much acclaim in 1967, which of course in a more recent reversal, has managed to inspire a series of blockbuster films of its own (*Pirates of the Caribbean* series (2003-11)).
demolished due to long-term water damage to the wood. In terms of the film tourism and the gaze that accompanies it, which I am analysing in this thesis, it fits into the category of the “imaginary” location based on a fiction.

It is significant that there is a Jaws focus at the theme park: after all, Jaws is considered largely to be Hollywood’s first blockbuster and therefore a landmark film, and the credit has been given to Lew Wasserman in charge of Universal in the 1970s. The major change involved coupling cinema with the marketing power of television:

[Wasserman] combined mass saturated advertising on prime-time television with simultaneous saturation bookings in new shopping mall cineplexes across the US. Advertising on hit broadcast television shows became the key to turning a feature film into a blockbuster. Milking millions and millions of dollars from “ancillary rights” redefined a seemingly limitless bound of profit possibilities.

Turning to the movie’s thriller narrative, then, we find that again it foregrounds a negative travel experience – in this case, the hunt and killing of a rogue shark that has been killing tourists from a small town community called Amity Island. In fact, Jaws might be called the quintessential blockbuster creature-feature horror movie that can simultaneously be interpreted as a denunciation of contemporary mass tourism. In Jaws, the bureaucratic developers of Amity Island actually suppress information and ignore scientific evidence about the deadliness of the shark at the height of the swimming season, which results in the deaths of tourists and visitors. Fredric Jameson in his famous reading of Jaws notices a symbolic destruction between the America of “small business” versus the “new technocracy of the multinational corporations”, suggesting that such horror films have a “Utopian or transcendent potential” within their texts. Therefore, like Hitchcock’s Psycho, the narrative of the thriller film Jaws is premised around a negative representation of travel, but in this case it is much more manifestly concerned with the practices of mass tourism.

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42 In the mid-1970s location filming had become relatively normal: in an interview conducted in 1974, Spielberg mentioned that he chose to film on location because of the fake appearance of large action sets in films such as The Poseidon Adventure (1972).


44 Gomery, p.75.

In *Jaws*, Amity Island transforms from a semi-Utopian holiday space to a nightmarish location due to the arrival of a man-eating shark, which endangers the safety of tourists at the seaside resort-town for their summer vacation. In this cinematic narrative I would argue that the idea of the holiday is being violated in this film, rather than the individual bodies that are devoured by the shark, which might explain the explosive effect that the film had upon popular American culture. In the United States – and in other developed countries such as Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and Germany – the rise of mass tourism was co-incident with the allocation of approximately two to three weeks leave per year. The development of this annual leave has occurred in conjunction with the rise of mass travel in the postwar period. The cultural and social importance of this annual period of leisure activity is a crucial aspect of post-industrial US society. As John Urry suggests, everyone is a tourist, or at least has the potential to act as a tourist, for it is “one of the defining characteristics of being ‘modern’ and is bound up with major transformations in paid work.”

In fact, *Jaws* is actually considered as one of the banner films for *anti-tourism*, a film that apparently scared viewers away from the beaches rather than enticing them. Even in the present era and in entirely different countries, these films are still thought to scare tourists from swimming and leisure activities. For example, in Australia the executive of the Association of Marine Park Operators has said that whenever there is “any kind of shark attack or what they air in the *Jaws* movies and things like that, there’s a drop off in inquiries within the marine tourism industry.” Of course at Universal Studios Hollywood, the obvious solution for any such tourist angst is to visit the theme park rather than the real location. There is less risk involved in watching a mechanised shark rising out of the water on the safety of a crowded tour-tram than swimming in the ocean. Although, the tour is not the “real thing”, the film tourist is nevertheless encouraged to think the tour is related to the film, that the tour offers a form of film spectatorship. The tour reinforces the mastery of the film tourist gaze over its object (in this case danger or risk of death represented by “Bruce”), through an experience where that object is a tame and commodified copy.

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46 Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.3.
The *Jaws* attraction both ameliorates the idea of tourism as well as denying it. A large part of the dramatic tension and suspense created in the film is created by the Mayor’s arrogant insistence in keeping the beaches open to the public, despite the accumulating evidence to suggest that the shark might attack again. Yet while the mayor obviously symbolises a kind of monstrous capitalist – wanting to keep the beaches open solely to maximise his own profits from his affiliated businesses – the narrative also indicates that it is the tourists themselves who are unwilling to forgo their opportunity for relaxation and pleasure. They take risks because they do not want to lose what they feel they are rightfully entitled to – to take leave without interruptions. Fredric Jameson, recognizing the polysemous nature of the shark, asserts in one reading that “the Nantucket beaches ‘represent’ consumer society itself, with its glossy and commodified images of gratification, and its scandalous and fragile, ever suppressed, sense of its own possible mortality.”

The frequent close-up shot of crowds of endangered (white) bodies in the shallow water articulates such vulnerability. Inversely then, “Bruce” the shark could even be read as the spectre or externalisation of the tourist him or herself, reflecting the predatory nature of the tourist’s willingness to insist on their right to leisure. As in *Jaws*, the battle is for the right to enjoy a holiday. While the Mayor is presented as a despicable character, both sides are motivated by a desire to rid the location of the tourism-dissipating aspect. But as he functions in the film, Bruce appears as a allegorical symbol of anti-tourism, some kind of anarchic force that creates peace to the waters, or as nature’s response to the human colonisation of the beaches. The ending of the film – which sees the violent death of the shark – is a victory for the township, but also for these national attitudes toward leisure society as a sacrosanct ritual, safe and “fun” in American society. Although, there is uncertainty over which way to interpret the ending of the film, whatever the case, the *Jaws* ride at Universal Studios Hollywood allows the film spectator to encounter the shark and to overcome it. Therefore, the tour re-enacts the ideological function of the film (tourist/capitalism winning over shark/nature), despite the lack of “real” threat on the tour. The film tourist gaze, once again, is invited in this case to imagine a danger and conquer it. But as we have already discussed with Universal Studios, this ideological function is pre-determined by its apparatus of “safe travel” that pre-empts the film tourist’s experience to be “safe”

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packaged version. Yet we are encouraged (and willing in some cases) as film tourists to record the victory of tourism enacted in the film, through taking photographs with a ‘fake’ shark, to signify the “fake” victory conveyed in the film [see figure 4].

The narrative of a later film by Spielberg, *Jurassic Park* (1993) – which was also turned into a popular attraction at Universal Studios Hollywood – also dramatises the extent that tourists will take in pursuit of pleasure when they are told that it is “safe.” As with the watching of *Jaws* in the cinema suggests, safety in comparison to real-life swimming at the beach, so too does the *Universal Studios* experience suggest an alternative from the dangers presented by real life travel. Spielberg, perhaps even more than Hitchcock was keenly aware of the power of the “tourist gaze”. Anne Brigham has performed a critique of the Universal Studio’s ideological agenda through the use of *Jurassic Park*. Brigham suggests that the tour ride experience at Universal “offers a narrative parallel to the dramatic shape of Spielberg’s film.”  

For Brigham, the ride endeavours to reinforce the “narrative sequence” of the film of a family whose security and harmony is first endangered, but then regained. Brigham argues it is “the white, middle class, heterosexual, American nuclear family” that faces extinction in *Jurassic Park*, not the dinosaurs.  

Her argument is supported by the fact that these rides are taken predominantly by “families”. Together, the *Jaws* and the *Jurassic Park* attractions act as catalysts in revealing the bonds underlying the nuclear family unit, just as each film’s narrative reunites a separated family. Universal Studios then successfully serves the function of providing itself as a family holiday destination, for it offers the family unit relief from other commitments such as work and school, and unites them through the motifs of travel and safety.

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49 Brigham, “Consuming Pleasures of Re/Production.”, 8.

50 Ibid, 2.
Therefore, both of the Spielberg-related rides and experiences at Universal Studios provide out-of-this-world travel adventure fantasies – they enable encounters with giant, non-existent creatures. The size and ingenuity of Bruce the shark is so massive as to be completely unrealistic – but still allows an opportunity to place oneself in an environment in which the family unit is placed under a temporary sense of endangerment. Again, by offering this kind of travel experience at the theme park, Universal appears to be trying to allow the participant to be an extra in the blockbuster story itself, and simultaneously, to enable this experience as one more enjoyable at the park than a real life version of it, such as at a beach or a tropical island. In the final case study I shall look at another family entertainment movie series, the Back to the Future trilogy.
Example 3: Time travel with the Back to the Future Trilogy (Courthouse Square on the Studio Tour and Back to the Future the Ride)

Figure 6: Poster for the Back to the Future trilogy DVD box set.

At Universal, ride the wings of the future with our Cinemagicians. For 25 years, they've been taking your favorite film fantasies and making them real. You marvel and say, "What next?" Our talented team of designers, artists and engineers say, "What if?" and put your dreams and their imagination to work. "We're not afraid to explore any thought, any creative idea, any concept, no matter how far-fetched it may seem," says Chief Cinemagician Barry Upson, head of the planning and development division... Doc Brown of Back to the Future simply says, "Where we are going we don't need roads!"  

The final case study moves from the era of the studio tour to the more recent era (post 1980) of extravagant rides and attractions, as identified by Barry Upson. Here I shall focus on Back to the Future: The Ride, which opened in 1993 (and premiered at Universal Studios Florida in 1991) and ran until the end of 2007 at the theme park, and as its name suggests plays with the concept of out-of-this-world futuristic travel.  

The ride was a spin-off to Robert Zemeckis’s light-hearted Back to the Future trilogy (1985-1990). These films are also largely humorous explorations of time travel, focused on the teenager Marty McFly – forced into four-dimensional travel to change his past or future – and the crazy-haired creator of the time machine, Doc Brown. The comic and entertaining films are intended to appeal to both children and adults and have remained popular on video.  

52 Universal Studios Florida closed down the Back to the Future Ride in 2006.
53 Since my visit to Universal in 2007 – the simulator ride has since been replaced with another simulator ride based upon the film of The Simpsons Movie (another popular film with children and adults alike).
Therefore, it is unsurprising that the films have been centrally placed in the theme park throughout the 1990s and 2000s, which needed to appeal to a similar demographic.\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Waiting to take the simulator for Back to the Future: The Ride (Author's photograph: 2007).}
\end{figure}

\textit{Back to the Future - The Ride} allowed tourists at the park to emulate Marty McFly in the film and take a “ride” in a virtual simulator of a DeLorean time machine, therefore a virtual reality experience. According to the narrative of the ride, the villain of \textit{Back to the Future} “Biff” has stolen an automobile time machine, and therefore the participants are supposed to rescue the vehicle with the assistance of Doc Brown. \textit{Back to the Future - The Ride} innovated upon the conventional flat screen simulator popular at the time and used a hemispherical screen to enhance the experience of the special effects.\textsuperscript{55} The ride carried eight passengers at a time in a (fake) open-topped DeLorean car. Of course any such participant interaction with the characters and the story in question is severely limited despite the virtual simulation. Anne Brigham observes the imperative Universal places on the public to participate in the narrative built into the tour experience. She writes about \textit{Back to the Future: The Ride} that “in short, you're appointed something to do when

\textsuperscript{54} The ride has since been replaced with television show \textit{The Simpsons}.

technically you're doing nothing." Andrew Darley notes that this particular experience “produces extraordinary degrees of spectacle and visceral excitement. Indeed, this attraction might be described as a latter-day hybrid of the roller-coaster, the magic theatre, the trick film and the Hale’s Tour.” In other words, the ride used state-of-the-art special effects of the early 1990s in order to bring a sophisticated and thrilling experience for the spectator-participants, and attempted to put them directly into the universe of the trilogy’s time travel narrative.

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 8: A view into the studio back lot and Courthouse Square from the top of the park, February 2007 (Author’s photograph).*

A key location for the film is named “Courthouse Square”. While *Back to the Future* was filmed on a number of locations around Los Angeles, it made memorable use of Courthouse Square on the studio back lot, which was a grassed public square framed by generic shop buildings and faced by an imposing neoclassical building with a tetra-style portico, an imitation of the ubiquitous town square of small town America. At the top of Courthouse Square a prominent clock provides a prominent symbol to convey the act of time travel in *Back to the Future*. Like the New York City set or Mexico set, Courthouse Square had been built as a “universal” site that could be used for the production of many

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56 Brigham, “Consuming Pleasures of Re/Production.”, 22.
films and television programs. This site no longer exists: in June 2008 that Courthouse Square incurred its worst damage and was almost completely destroyed. Therefore, unlike the Jaws attraction at the theme park, Courthouse Square was a genuine location-based film tourism site for visitors, i.e. one could actually “be” at the site of the filming location.

*Back to the Future* featured heavily in the park’s promotion until recently, but the one remaining current reference is the *Back to the Future*-themed restaurant in the upper lot of the Studio. The old-fashioned weatherboard restaurant “Doc Brown’s Chicken” displays a slogan boasting that it has the “the finest chicken of all time” [Figure 9], next to a portrait of the character in characteristic oversized goggles pointing upward and holding on to a chicken drumstick. Food is repackaged as another way for the tourists to the park to experience the movies, and perhaps in this instance the connection is subtle – in *Back To The Future*, the expression that you’re “chicken” is a recurring theme for Marty McFly, and it is only when he grows out of his base reaction to rejoinders that he can “move on” (and hence end the films).

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58 Before *Back to the Future*, the square had been featured in movies such as *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962) and *Gremlins* (1984). The most recent television series that made use of the set was *Ghost Whisperer* (2005-), and the square was drastically modified from the *Back to the Future* design. The distinctive pediment was removed from the Courthouse; the colour of the buildings changed and much was obscured by tree foliage.

59 For example, in 1990, a large part of the square was destroyed by a large fire that burnt through four acres of the park and about a third of the standing sets (causing approximately $US 25 million damage). The New York set was lost in the blaze, as was the set for *Ben Hur* and priceless props and costumes. The focal feature of the courthouse itself, however, survived the disaster, incurring only slight damage.

The *Back to the Future* trilogy is an episodic comedic science fiction adventure story about time travel that among other things, allows the teen hero Marty McFly to reshape his life and the life of his family for the better. Therefore, once again, a Universal film is structured around a travel narrative that leads to re-building the unity of the family unit. Travel in this film is a four-dimensional experience, and the films celebrate the seemingly infinite possibilities of what travel can mean or lead to. This choice of the time machine – the DeLorean car - fetishises luxury travel, as this car actually became a luxury car model designed and constructed between 1981 and 1983. The Doc in the first film suggests that the choice for the car as a time machine is because of aesthetic reasons rather than having any substance: “the way I see it, if you’re gonna build a time machine into a car, why not do it with style?” Not only was it representative of the height of style in the 1980s, but the design of the car also connotes futuristic qualities: with its gull-wing doors that rise above, it suggested a futuristic design.

These time travel narratives of the three films are a metaphor for the touristic experience itself, as discussed in relation to Hitchcock’s film *Vertigo* in Chapter Two. Ellen Strain

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61 There were only approximately 9200 ever made, because the company that produced the car entered into bankruptcy Car aficionados and *Back to the Future* fans alike publicly obsess over the DeLorean and its futurism: a road trip to retrieve a DeLorean car part even features as a storyline in animated sitcom *American Dad* (2005-).
observes that tourism as a kind of time travel is a recurring trope in the touristic imaginary. In her text on cinema and tourism she analyses the way that stereographic imagery of Panama in the nineteenth century allowed American tourists and armchair travellers to imagine an authentic but distant past enacted through the pre-Modernist Central American natives, what was in effect, a harsh contrast to the Western modernist technology, building the large canal system through the country. In the case of time travel to “futuristic” locations, there is a different politics at play. The question becomes, for what reason does Universal Studios utilise this narrative of futuristic time travel?

Angela Ndalianis has offered one answer for different futuristic attractions at Universal Studios, which could include Back to the Future: The Ride. In her essay “Special Effects, Morphing Magic and the 1990s Cinema of Attractions,” Ndalianis updates Tom Gunning’s theoretical model on attractions through an investigation of 1990s Hollywood blockbusters such as James Cameron’s Terminator II and Spielberg’s Jurassic Park. She advances the argument that a number of special effects such as “morphing technologies” have inaugurated a “return to an aesthetic that dominated in earlier phases in film history, and in the pre-cinema era.” Her examination focuses particularly on the Terminator II: 3-D ride that opened first at Universal Studios Florida, which was based on Terminator II and is partly about time travel. Examining the prevalence in 1990s blockbuster sci-fi cinema of the “morphing” CGI special effects, Ndalianis argues convincingly of such technologies as being allegorical to the constant technological transformations of the film industry and the horizontal integration of film with other media. This is certainly an important aspect of the function of theme parks as mediation between non-representable special effects and the touristic “reality.” Similarly, she considers the numerous travel-related apparati and attractions at Universal could also be thought of as an allegory of film’s integration with other media forms.

In the case of Back to the Future, the concept of time travel is used in a similar fashion to indicate morphing spatiality; both which are popular subjects in science fiction-oriented high concept cinema, but in the real world are of course just contemporary travel.

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“fantasies”. In the *Back To The Future* trilogy, time travel is represented as a high energy, ultra-accelerating form of time-morphing, and the changing of eras is depicted in the DeLorean car as moving through a vortex of colour and light. In *Back To The Future II* – which explores Marty McFly’s future of 2015 – cars are also able to fly as well as drive on the road, and so *Back To The Future: The Ride* emulated this particular version of more futuristic-seeming time travel. With this ride, we can see how Universal Studios has morphed itself and altered strategies that aim to harness the film tourist gaze. With the theme of time travel and futurism, Universal has been able to conceal the ideological function of “safe travel” through the illusion that the travel can manifest in many outlandish and otherworldly ways. If *Jaws* bores, then there is *Back to the Future*. Universal is always attempting to be one step ahead of the film tourist gaze, assuming it knows what it is looking for – whether as new ways of travel or new technologies, the same narrative and apparatus structures continues.

*What about tomorrow?*

All of the films and attractions that have been surveyed in this chapter reveal a strong connection between supposedly dangerous travel and cinema. Yet these experiences are mediated through safer measures; on one hand the films provide virtual voyages, and on the other hand the setup of the theme park is designed to control and monitor the “thrilling” rides so that danger is minimised. Universal Studios Hollywood needs to maintain the balance of risk versus safety, and at the same time by doing so, the theme park risks losing its thrilling edge.

There is a film that demonstrates this dilemma. While the majority of promotional films made for Universal Studios Hollywood aim for political-correctness and non-offensive family entertainment, one unofficial film made in 1996 employs these conventions for deliberately comic effect. Trey Parker and Matt Stone, most famously known as the creators of the popular and anarchic television cartoon series *South Park* (Comedy Central: 1997 - current), were commissioned to make a sixteen minute comic film about Universal entitled *Your Studio and You*. Seagrams commissioned the film after its acquisition of MCA/Universal in 1996, and the short film helped to launch the Hollywood
careers of the two actor/writer/comedians. The film was an in-house production never intended for public release. However, the high profile stature of the filmmakers saw the film leaked onto the Internet, and at least since 2006, *Your Studio and You* has been unofficially available to watch on the web page YouTube.\(^64\)

The film imitates an old-fashioned post-war educational film, shooting in black and white, using old documentary footage of the park in the mid-1960s when the studio tour first opened. In this film, the studio tram tour containing the *Jaws* attraction is used to symbolise the studio’s inability to keep up with the times. Steven Spielberg, the director of *Jaws* and *Jurassic Park*, acts the role of a tour operator who takes the tram through this attraction that was based around his 1975 movie:

**VOICEOVER:** *Universal is also known for its thrilling theme park. Yes, these elements have all combined to make Universal Studios what it is today. But, what about tomorrow? If we don’t keep in step with the times, things that were once neat and thrilling can become old and stupid.*

**SPIELBERG:** Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, what is going on here? Ladies and gentlemen, this *never* happens. Look out, it’s a shark! Here it comes, a shark is coming!

**VOICEOVER:** *That’s right, old and stupid.*

**SPIELBERG** Look out, all you there he’s in the back of the tram! Whoa, that is one big scary shark! Oh, the humanity. Isn’t that terrifying?

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\(^64\) The film can be accessed at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqMV90pnsZ4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqMV90pnsZ4)
Figure 10: Steven Spielberg starring as a Studio Tour Guide at Universal Studios in the short film Your Studio and You.

Spielberg feigns amazement at the novelty of the *Jaws* shark while everybody else in the tram, including Spielberg’s DreamWorks co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg, looks on with ennui at the mechanical shark [See Figure 11]. The scene ends with Spielberg giving up his pretence and appearing equally tired of the attraction [Figure 12].

Figure 11. “Old and stupid”. The manifest boredom of a young child as she watches the Jaws attraction in the short film Your Studio and You.
In a later scene of the film, beloved older actress Angela Lansbury - star of the CBS television series *Murder She Wrote* (1984-1996) – is cast in the role of “Mrs. Bates” from *Psycho* (1960), obsessively cleaning the front porch of the film’s gothic homestead. The constantly repeated message behind the educational film is that “to keep up with the times, one must constantly modernise, and that’s true for our studio too.” Yet the visual shot at this point of the film of the theme-park version of *Jurassic Park* (1993) belies the “modernity” of such modernisation, indicated both through the prehistoric age of dinosaurs, and then more subtly through the five year lag between the release of the first film and the emergence of the attraction at Universal Studios. Also of interest within the film, Michael J Fox (who starred in the popular *Back to the Future* blockbusters that featured heavily at the tour attraction) and James Cameron (director of *Terminator 2*) also have speaking appearances in this comic short.

*Your Studio and You* humorously emphasises a key issue that the Universal Studios theme park must contend with: how to maintain a balance between old and new technologies of mobility, and therefore, how to be a step ahead of the film tourist gaze. As was later demonstrated in the *South Park* TV series, it would become a well-known trademark of Parker and Stone’s comedy, to make cynical jokes about the out-of-date cultural detritus of United States entertainment, based around television shows and movies released from the 1970s to the present.65 Universal Studios Hollywood is a well-known family destination that fits perfectly into the *kitsch* universe staked out by Parker and Stone. However, behind these cynical attacks on kitsch pop culture there is an underlying obsession and affection for these “dinosaurs”, that also signifies the theme park’s prominence as a Hollywood cultural monument. Also, given that the company Seagrams had commissioned Parker and Stone, one can safely assume that they still needed to highlight positive aspects of the Studio. Seagrams invested in the studio because of a belief in the brand value of Universal and the cinematic history it represents. Yet *Your Studio and You* highlights anxieties about the theme park’s position as a contemporary “must-see” attraction on the Los Angeles tourist trail, and how to sustain this into the future. It reflects then Universal’s own inner anxieties that it was losing grip over the nature of what film tourism was becoming towards the end of the century, which had less

65 See *Taking South Park Seriously* Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (ed), Albany NY, SUNY, 2008.
to do with thrilling rides and novel spectacles that had reduced the fantasy of film spectatorship.

As the voiceover of *Your Studio and You* shows, the logic of things that once were “neat and thrilling” that become “old and stupid”, suggests that the ideological pull of the initial attraction does not last forever and the original positive meanings will become detached from their first meanings. The films and the attractions at Universal Studios Hollywood work in a symbiotic network, of attracting tourism and spectators simultaneously. Do new films and the subsequent theme park rides that appear at the park obscure this dialectic of thrilling versus stupid? Michael Sorkin has commented that despite this allure of the thrill, the underlying thrust of a theme park is still to present the fantasy in contemporary society that allows tourists to experience both the sense of real danger and the suspended disbelief of safety:

>This is the meaning of the theme park, the place that embodies it all, the ageographia, the surveillance and control, the simulations without end. The theme park presents its happy regulated vision of pleasure – all those artfully hoodwinking forms – as a substitute for the democratic public realm, and it does so appealingly by stripping troubled urbanity of its sting, of the presence of the poor, of crime, of dirt, of work.66

At Universal Studios Hollywood, the armchair tourism of cinema becomes a potent metaphor for the live experiences themselves.

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PART TWO

GLOBAL SET-JETTING
Chapter Four

Paradise Glossed: Touristic Orientalism in The Beach and Thai Film-Tourism

How does one represent other cultures?¹

Figure 1. Poster for The Beach.

This chapter takes as its case study on the film tourist gaze, the 20th Century Fox film The Beach (2000), based upon British author Alex Garland’s bestselling thriller novel about backpackers in Southeast Asia. The production itself, filmed with a budget of $US50 million and produced by British company Figment Films, pivots around a young American called Richard (Leonardo DiCaprio) in search of independent travel experiences in the East.² In Bangkok, a lone Scottish backpacker who commits suicide bequeaths Richard a map leading the way to an unspoiled beach on an isolated island near Phuket. With the aid of a young French couple, Richard manages to locate the island, where the three discover a self-sufficient community of international backpackers. Over time a series of calamitous events – such as a shark attack, the threat of tourist invasion, infidelity, and murder – take the pleasure out of this initially idyllic arrangement, and Richard becomes alienated from the rest of the backpacking community. Through an analysis of this film’s depiction of tourism, this chapter argues that while it acknowledges particular impacts, The Beach fails to effectively problematise the causes behind the negative effects of

² The novelist Alex Garland was a screenwriter for Boyle in a later feature, 28 Days Later (2003).
tourism, and the role of filmic representation within it. With *The Beach* as the case study in this chapter, we investigate how the film tourist gaze materialises in regional locations and non-Western environments. The significance of western fantasies of travel in the “orient” has a long history, and with the introduction of film, this chapter argues that these fantasies become tested, but also re-modelled. I show that the filmic representation of space is equally capable of arranging and directing orientalist fantasies as other forms of representation, and extending the possibilities of film tourism itself outside America and the Hollywood Studio.

*Forget About Thailand?*

There is a scene near the end of *The Beach* that highlights the fraught real-life politics between international tourists and local residents in Thailand. In this scene, the chief marijuana farmer of an isolated island – who has allowed backpackers to set up residence at the idyllic sheltered beach at one end of the island – finally loses patience at the trouble caused by the long-term presence of the travellers. Arriving at their camp with an entourage of men with machine guns, he addresses the backpackers in English, explaining the reason for his hostility:

> You think I want to hurt you? I’m a farmer, that’s all. Understand? I work. I send the money to my family. If too many people come to this island, it’s trouble for me. I can’t work, I can’t send the money, and my family don’t eat. I said no more people, but more people come, and you, you give them the map! Now, you all go home, forget this island, forget about Thailand. Understand?

Despite his undisputed power, by employing this phrase “forget about Thailand” the farmer pleads to the itinerant community, in an utterance of deep exasperation. The leader of the backpackers, an English woman named Sal, refuses to comply, responding defiantly that, “this is our home too. This is our house, we built it with our own hands, and we are not leaving!” The resulting impasse turns into a game of Russian roulette – reminiscent of Michael Cimino’s Vietnam drama *The Deer Hunter* (1978). When the farmer gives a partially loaded gun to Sal, he forces her to shoot Richard in order to stay on the island.
Although the pistol fires a blank shot, the fact that Sal is willing to pull the trigger on a community member, causes the small group to self-implode and the film ends with the majority of occupants evacuating the island and dispersing to new locations around the globe.

While this film is a rather crude text, this scene raises the issue of negative as well as positive impact of international tourism on the social structures and culture of contemporary Thailand, and by extension, other parts of the developing world. Like Sal, Western tourism refuses to quit Thailand, with the net result that, like the farmers, local communities are frequently placed under persistent duress. A good deal of this tension is due to tourism’s untrammelled growth – largely unrestricted at a governmental level - in Thailand. The nation first experienced a tourism boom at the end of the 1960s, and during the 1970s and 1980s the proportion of tourists to the country increased fourfold to its current high proportion.3 In 1958, Southeast Asia received approximately 200,000 tourists; by the end of the century, in 1996, that number had risen to 30 million people per year.4

Tourism is one of the nation’s major industries and the Thai government routinely marshals tourism as a solution for any major economic malaise.5 For example, when agriculture and industry slumped in the mid-1980s, the government concentrated on improving services and made 1987, “Visit Thailand Year.”6 Despite its economic importance however, the model of tourism used in the country is not without its social and environmental problems. In fact, it is a model that is constantly critiqued from sources both inside and outside the nation.

5 Thailand is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which formed in Bangkok in 1967 with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. Since this time, other countries have joined ASEAN: Brunei (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos and Myanmar (1997) and finally, Cambodia (1999). It is one of the world’s stronger inter-national trade coalitions. Jörn Dosch suggests that this bipolar structure of East-West position is one that ASEAN must constantly juggle between – a part of the psychic structuring of this territory’s regional identity, in order to avoid the controlling influence of major powers, such as the United States, China and Japan. See Jörn Dosch, “Regional Security in the Asia-Pacific: sources of conflict and prospects for co-operation’, in Michael K. Connors, Rémy Davison and Jörn Dosch (eds.), The New Global Politics of the Asia-Pacific. London: Routledge, 2004, pp.119-139.
6 Anita Pleumarom, ‘How Sustainable is Mekong Tourism?’ Sustainable Tourism: A Global Perspective, Rob Harris, Tony Griffin and Peter Williams (eds.), p.146.
Tourism has been an important contributing factor to the process of commodification of art, culture and sex in Thailand. Other social problems have been in some part introduced by the uneven spread of tourism such as the rapid increase in the transmission of the HIV-AIDS virus, as well as drug abuse, gambling, crime and the rise of the niche sex tourism industry. Furthermore, the development of tourism has largely occurred at the expense of other spheres of social and economic activity such as agriculture and manufacturing – so while the marijuana farmer of The Beach conducts an illegal drug operation, he can still be read as representative of the agricultural sector in general, which has been, if not dispossessed, then certainly subordinated to the pressures of international tourism. The farmer’s phrase, “forget about Thailand,” appears to be an articulation of the deeply critical attitude of a growing number of people in developing nations toward what is perceived as a constant invasion of overseas tourists. Ostensibly, then, The Beach emerges as a critique of the contemporary global tourism industry, but of course, one that is put forward by Hollywood.

Real life controversy

Thailand was not “left alone” by the filmmakers of The Beach themselves, whose presence had a politically detrimental effect in the region. Thus, though The Beach might articulate an intra-textual critique of tourism through its narrative dramatisation of the conflict between Thai locals and tourists, in key ways its own beleaguered production and local reception ironically worked to mirror these self-same oppositions between locals and tourists. Writing in 2001, Higgins-Desbiolles asserts, “The Beach has indicated the battlelines that are being constructed around which vision of globalisation will hold sway… tourism, because of its importance in the fight, will clearly be one of the battlefields of the future.” In this sense, The Beach serves both to highlight and to question cinema’s role as an active corporate agent in the very processes of inequitable transnational social and economic exchanges represented within the film’s diegesis.

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Like the international backpackers who commandeered an isolated island in the fictional story, the production company of *The Beach* – headed by the *Trainspotting* director-producer team of Danny Boyle and Andrew MacDonald – forcefully occupied a number of ecologically fragile areas in Thailand, most notably Maya Beach on Phi Phi Le Island, which was part of a national marine park that recently became protected by new conservation laws. Controversy swiftly followed as both environmentalists and local residents became worried by the cosmetic changes to the island imposed by the production team: the planting of one hundred coconut trees; the clearing of native vegetation; the reduction of a large sand-dune; discharging paints and chemicals into the waters, and damage to coral reefs by the volume and frequency of the production’s maritime traffic. According to Thai legislation, this was in direct contravention of the new regulations governing national parks, and was an illegal operation. The production company sought special dispensation from the Thai government, hiring a UK agricultural expert to supervise the plans. However, in January 1999, a small group of protesters brought a case against both the Thai Government and Fox Studios to court. The court’s judgment was that the Studios pay a fine of five million baht to compensate in advance for any potential environmental damage. Although, national laws were broken, international film production could still go ahead regardless.

In their defence, the filmmakers claimed that Maya Beach was selected because of its unique resemblance to the imaginary beach of the film’s script, which was an interior lagoon surrounded by cliffs. The choice to film at Maya Beach thus putatively reflected a quest for artistic authenticity. “We looked all over Samui, all over the National Park in Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia. If we could have found somewhere, we would have used it,” the film’s producer Andrew McDonald said in one interview. However, the description of the beach in Garland’s novel is quite different from the film location, and digital special effects were required to remake Maya Beach into the self-enclosed, secret lagoon of the original source. The claims for artistic authenticity must also be considered.

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9 Ibid. Protest groups had filed a complaint with the police against the film-makers for violating the 1961 National Park Act and the 1992 Environment Act.
11 In the novel of *The Beach*; “A prison could hardly have been build with more formidable walls, although it was hard to think of such a place as prison-like. Aside from the lagoon’s beauty, there was a sense that the
as a part of the myth-making exercises used to create hype for the film by 20th Century Fox – in reality, the financial advantages offered by filming in comparatively “cheap” Thailand must have played a key part in determining the location.

According to Boyle, cliffs surrounded approximately eighty percent of Maya Beach, so the remaining cliffs needed to be digitally added in post-production. This point was certainly not lost upon some of the Thai media commentators, who suggested that the special effects wizardry currently utilized by the Hollywood industry would be able to create the correct setting, regardless of the location’s scenery. Indeed, environmental activists in Thailand protested loudly about the film, using mass media to raise awareness of their plight to an international audience. In response, 20th Century Fox and Figment Films swiftly worked to counter the damaging claims put forward by environmentalists, with adamant assurances given by the production company. Even Leonardo DiCaprio – the most publicly known actor in the film, and the figure who received the greatest amount of negative criticism from the eco-protesters – joined the public debate, releasing a press statement about his role in *The Beach*. Towing the party line, he suggested that the potential influence of the film on tourism could only be of positive economic effect at a national level:

> I think the release of a film like this will encourage young people to see the beauty of Thailand, and encourage more young backpackers to come here. This film will also encourage more people to explore the countryside of Thailand, and some of the isolated villages that wouldn’t normally earn money from tourism.

Shifting focus from the benefits experienced by Western backpackers to the economic effects of the film, DiCaprio’s rhetoric was strikingly similar to that of the Thai government. Entering the debate, the then Prime Minister of Thailand, Chuan Leekpai,

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cliffs were protective – the walls of an inverse castle, sunk instead of raised… The lagoon itself was almost perfectly divided between land and sea.” Alex Garland, *The Beach*, Penguin Books, London, 1996, p.102.

12 See the director’s commentary track on Boyle, Danny (Director) and MacDonald, Andrew (Producer). *The Beach* (2001) [DVD]. Australia; Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc.


cast the argument into strictly short-term economic terms, surmising that *The Beach* will “create more jobs and enhance our image, which is what every country wants.” The strength of the belief in the economic panacea of tourism creates a strong incentive for environmental or ecological issues to be quickly subdued. In opposition to the critique of tourism advanced in *The Beach* – of Thai frustration with and vocal challenges to Western invaders - the Thai government certainly does not want the West to “forget about Thailand.” This explains the growing dissatisfaction with Thailand’s democratic powers against the multinational corporations that exert influence over the nation’s political and social infrastructures. Thai activist Anita Pleumarom puts this boldly when she writes that alongside the environmental consequences, the problem created by *The Beach* returns to:

> [t]he Hollywood “big shot” syndrome and the power of money reign[ing] supreme in their world, not the dignity of a Third World country. And when the bickering and din die down, the bureaucrats will be left with the money, the people with empty promises and the country with a reputation for being an easily trampled upon banana republic.  

We see, then, that in Thailand, the making of *The Beach* in the early 2000s became a catalyst for a range of transnational debates concerning the power of foreign investment and influence of the Western media. It is clear that the governmental interest in the film was focussed on promoting the nation on the global stage as a touristic locus of desire. It is here, at the crossroads between imaginary representation and real-life appropriation – precisely where the Thai activists and the Thai government refuse to reach an understanding – that a close reading of the film’s ideological message becomes an apparent and useful intervention into this debate.

In this chapter, I will show that while *The Beach* puts on the appearance of being a critique of contemporary tourism, the stylistic conventions of Hollywood and blockbuster cinema – alongside the representations of the tourist characters versus the locals – undermines the

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contrived political subtext. Instead, the film emerges rather as a defence of global tourism, and furthermore, regionalises the film tourist gaze outside the Western landscape, away from the typical Hollywood sites and into the corners of the world. Indeed, *The Beach* - and other Hollywood representations that seek to indicate the socio-political dynamics of Eastern countries can be considered the extension of a kind of Orientalism, one that I shall define in this chapter as “touristic Orientalism.” This touristic Orientalism is one fostered and propagated through the power of the contemporary film tourist gaze. While *The Beach* has a diegetic message to “forget Thailand,” the film recycles long-established and Eurocentric representational tropes about the East as an exotic space, and these visual representations in turn, might help to perpetuate the desire for real-life tourism. Touristic Orientalism can be defined as the post-imperial extension of Orientalist discourses in the era of mass tourism and globalisation.\(^\text{18}\) Of course, Orientalism is a malleable, constantly shifting term that takes on many meanings and thus it is difficult to anchor it to a concrete definition. The following section briefly maps out the field in more detail, focussing particularly on the way that transnational forms of tourism and visual media might in fact aid the perpetuation of this problematic ideology.

**Touristic Orientalism**

Touristic Orientalism is an extension of the concept of Orientalism, which has been a mainstay of humanities research since the publication of Edward Saïd’s influential text of the same title in the late 1970s. In this text, Orientalism is simply and effectively defined as a “way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience.”\(^\text{19}\) It is therefore a way for the West to interpret and understand the East, a way of reducing and homogenising it into a more simplistic package. Saïd’s text is a historic-literary analysis of attitudes toward the Middle East in Western discourses from the birth of modernity. It examines discourses that grew to

\(^{18}\) The term “touristic Orientalism” does not imply that tourism is only a recent phenomenon and that it did not somehow help to organize or institutionalise the earlier, imperial discourses of colonial Orientalism. Many of the French and English texts that Saïd analyses fall into the non-fictional genre of the travel account, which is a popular and wide-ranging field of literature that certainly fostered the desire for travel in the modern era. Older imperial attitudes were certainly maintained by the first forms of tourism: e.g. the “grand tour” would grow to include exotic spaces from the far outposts of empire; and the rise of tourism at the beginning of the twentieth century was also influential.

\(^{19}\) Saïd, *Orientalism*, p.1.
encompass India and the Far East in tandem with the expansion of Western imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While it is clear that the on-going project of world-wide decolonisation – coupled with the new mobility in global capital and communications that has been called “flexible accumulation” – radically altered the conditions governing the meanings of the original colonising discourses of Orientalism, these discourses remain strikingly prevalent in contemporary Western contexts.

Orientalism is a dualistic ideology: it divides the world into two limited types without any room for nuance, vitality and diversity. As a result, it makes simplistic distinctions about race and culture. Both inclusive and exclusive, Orientalism assumes and promotes an us and them binary: privileging a Western gaze as the normative cultural grouping while the East is relegated to the ambiguous, all-encompassing position of “other.” It is unevenly structured: with the West as the dominant subjectivity in this power relation, and yet it is constantly undermined and threatened by the demography, geography and the ideologies of the Eastern world. Orientalism is a field in which stereotypes of East and West have power; as Saïd suggests, “the West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor…[t]he West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behaviour.” Here, then, we can begin to see one link that connects Orientalism, tourism and cinema: the way that each form is a type of spectatorship, or promoting of a “gaze”. Each in its way is a culturally important form of visual representation, reinforcing a voyeuristic mode of looking that seeks to appropriate and control its object. Said himself does not explicate the interrelations between Orientalism and the modern leisure industries of cinema and tourism, but his reading provides a suggestive framework for such an endeavour, as evidenced in the wealth of subsequent research that has detailed the varying ways in which Orientalism pervades and informs tourism and cinema alike.

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20 This affinity between colonial imperialism and the new imperialism caused by the fiscal benefits of Western tourism – both considered as invading forces exerting a heavy influence over non-industrialized/developing cultures – has been long noted. On systems of ‘flexible accumulation,’ see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell, London, 1990, Part II.

21 Perhaps the most frequent criticism of Said’s work is that in defining Orientalism, there is the risk of perpetuating and extending the East/West binary rather than deconstructing it.

22 Said, *Orientalism*, p.109. The backpackers in *The Beach* fit this description, but they appear active precisely because they are the protagonists of the film’s narrative. The frame of the narrative, then, resembles the way in which the tourist’s mind is framed by the cultural inheritance of Orientalism.
From the 1970s onwards, theories of tourism have attempted to map out the geopolitics of travel-based representations of culture and space. Prior to the initial publication of *Orientalism*, Turner and Ash’s *The Golden Hordes* was the first serious tourism-based study. They addressed political and social problems caused by new economic global developments that further divided the world into a similar Oriental-Occidental binary, which emphasised the high level of control that Western corporations holds over touristic operations in poorer nations. Presciently gauging the effect that mass tourism would have on developing nations – and influenced strongly by Frantz Fanon’s writings on the touristic exploitation of decolonised African countries by groups from the developed industrial world – Turner and Ash presented the West with the metaphor of the “horde,” this image of barbarism problematizing the typical East-West and savage-civilized dichotomies. While this binary appears simplistic from a current global economic viewpoint – a system in which exploitative populations of tourists can originate from both Eastern and Western countries – this early text clearly and effectively demonstrates the link between tourism and third-world exploitation.

Many of the theoretical texts on tourism – that perhaps tellingly, have largely appeared after the publication of Saïd’s text – maintain a close engagement with this deconstruction of imaginative geographies. For example, we might look at *The Tourist Gaze*, which remains the tourism text to most cogently analyse the technologies of “looking” as a distinct representational practice. In this text, Urry suggests that much of the low-skilled employment found in touristic third world regions “may well reproduce the servile character of the previous colonial regime,” which then poses the question, “development for whom?” Urry’s work constantly emphasises the cultural backdrop to the development of tourism, and the vastly different uses that tourism has had in certain eras and locales.

The sociological work of John Urry, Chris Rojek and John Frow, and the geographical and anthropological analyses from James Clifford, James Donald and Derek Gregory, question further the function of Orientalism or neo-colonialism as a part of the broader discourse on

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24 Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.64.

25 Ibid.
tourism theory. Remaining acutely aware of the fierce global inter-politics of tourism, in *Time and Commodity Culture* John Frow suggests that the logic of tourism is “that of a relentless extension of commodity relations, and the consequent inequalities of power, between centre and periphery, First and Third World, developed and underdeveloped regions, metropolis and countryside,” and furthermore, one that has developed from the colonial era. Similarly, Derek Gregory’s sensitive cultural geographies of postcolonial space(s) posit that the ideology of nineteenth century Orientalism is an ongoing process in mass tourism today, even if the representation is no longer owned by Western industries. In his analysis of Egyptian tourism, he suggests that the original tourist iconographies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries form a continuum with the mass tourist programmes of the current era. The purpose behind this continuity is the propagation of an exotic and essentialist image of Egypt as being somehow timeless – and therefore “authentic” – imagined outside the “real world” dynamics of modern Western culture.

It is into this representational framework that Orientalism helped to structure the dominant narratives and forms of Western cinema. Indeed, as I have indicated in chapter two, tourism and cinema developed as twin practices of modern Western leisure and both share a common investment in postcolonial discourses. Early forms of cinema were a type of armchair travel for many who could not afford to be tourists, and both the people and the places of the Orient were often represented as exotic and dangerous. For example, Hollywood films of the silent era were often set in the world of harems and despots, such as Rudolph Valentino’s *The Sheik* (1921) and the Theda Bara film *Salome* (1918). As Lara Smith puts it, these films used the stereotype of the “marauding, libidinous and clearly uncivilised Arab.” Their narratives featured more licentious and provocative characters

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and acts than Western-based ones.\textsuperscript{31} This is unsurprising, given that early Western cinema, still largely governed by styles of nineteenth century forms such as realism and melodrama, also absorbed their inherent racism and Eurocentrism.\textsuperscript{32}

Across the course of the twentieth century, the immediate racial conflict in the United States culture between white Americans and African Americans has been well documented by Hollywood film. It is for this reason that in the field of film studies, those who have focussed on representations of black American identity have often undertaken many of the examinations of alterity and Orientalism in Hollywood cinema. In the introduction to \textit{The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema}, Daniel Bernardi stresses the alterity of non-white actors, writing that in U.S. cinema “people of colour are generally represented as either deviant threats to white rule, thereby requiring civilizing or brutal punishment, or fetishized objects of exotic beauty, icons for a racist scopophilia.”\textsuperscript{33} The “either-or” stream-lining quality intrinsic to Orientalism meant that these stereotypes could be extended from the representation of the East to Africa and South America too – in fact, all developing nations seemed to be represented as part of this unknowable alterity.

According to some scholars, such representations have persisted into the contemporary era largely unchanged. In a recent text, Ziauddin Sardar suggests that the “the ferociously evil Oriental, who first appeared on the silver screen with the birth of cinema, remains consistent, indeed has found a new lease of life exactly at the point where standard Westerns became politically problematic.”\textsuperscript{34} Such a statement perhaps misses out on the finer nuances of these representations, particularly in the changing landscape of geopolitical relations characterized by the economic era of globalisation. Not all Asian characters in current mainstream films are “ferociously evil”: rather, I would suggest that

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{32} “Western narrative and ethnographic cinemas of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries inherited the narrative and visual traditions, as well as the cultural assumptions, on which Orientalism was based, and filmmakers discovered how popular Orientalism could be.” Bernstein, Matthew and Gaylyn Studlar, eds., \textit{Visions of the East}. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997. p.103.
\end{thebibliography}
this representation is more ambiguous than in earlier eras. Returning to Šaïd’s *Orientalism*, in the introduction he suggests that the further intensification of these originary Orientalist tropes is due to the homogenization of contemporary global culture:

One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media’s resources have forced information into more and more standardized models. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of “the mysterious Orient.”

Touristic Orientalism has come to thrive with the heightened global ascendancy of Hollywood cinema and the merging of mass tourism with local forms of cinematic development. Globally, well-funded entertainment conglomerates are increasingly shaping mass tourism. So, while part of the allure of film tourism is that cinema has the ability to offer lesser-clichéd visual representations of geographical space and foreign cultures than the conventional brochures and advertisements of local and national campaigns, it often is the case that films that inspire tourism are those employing and featuring these self-same images.

It is in the realm of cultural representation where one can read such underpinning ideologies; indeed, one of the jobs of media-focussed cultural studies is to examine Western representations of the Orient. How, then, should one read *The Beach*? The central characters appear to perceive the East as a predetermined concept, which has little basis in reality. The most important facet of the touristic Orientalism exercised by the Westerners in this film is the illusory sense of identification of the traveller with the land and the traditions of the East. This identification with the East also means a repudiation of the West, or at least, of what is perceived to be the negative influence of Western tourism. However, as my analysis of this film will draw out, the opposite is true – the repudiation of the West ultimately results also in a rejection of the East.

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The touristic Orientalism in the film circulates around a selfish kind of existence that can only be temporarily located. Despite the solidity of the backpacker camp setting, this film lacks a sense of any spatial permanence – this, perhaps, is the vital difference that divides the tourist from the local in any environment. The “alternative” tourist’s job is to make him or herself more exotic than the culture around him, and literally to “dis-Orient” him or herself in a foreign culture. While the backpacker’s contempt for Western tourism is paramount, the locals also fall short of the backpacker’s quite imaginary ideal of the East. Therefore, while the backpacker feels a kind of superiority over the mass tourists tenured in their mainstream travel “hotspots,” such an attitude is also extended to the locals, who are not able to truly represent the “Other” of this backpacker’s fantasy. This suggests the workings of a more sophisticated type of touristic Orientalism in The Beach than a simple critique of tourism that putatively organises the text. In this way, the underlying message of this film is remarkably similar to the ideological line of conventional mass tourism, and so this new version only helps to disguise the transformed Orientalism into a more palatable dish.

*Parasites in Paradise: Reading the film version of The Beach*

An exploitative and standardized version of touristic Orientalism is exercised from the opening scene of the film, when Richard first arrives in Bangkok. In his voiceover, the young protagonist admits his pursuit for “something more beautiful, something more exciting, and… something more dangerous.” The character has already arrived with a set of preconceptions that both mediates his time spent in Thailand and provides a contextual frame for the film. Firstly, the rhetoric of perilment here is crucial: Southeast Asia is a favourite site of what has been named “danger-zone tourism.” This can be defined as the relatively small but growing tourism sub-niche of danger-based travel, undertaken to heighten a traveller’s sense of authenticity, uniqueness and cultural capital through risk-based experiences. After the World Trade Center attack in September 2001 and the subsequent Bali bombing, the sense of danger attached to Eastern travel has recently been

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elevated by the ongoing possibility of regional terrorism. Thailand, which was the only independent South-East Asian nation during the colonial period, in recent times has enjoyed relative peace in contrast to neighbouring countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia—and therefore, remained one of the safer options for Southeast Asian travel. Therefore, Richard links Thailand up into this multi-national imaginary to emphasise Thailand’s potential as danger-zone tourism site. The concept of danger further functions as a way for connecting contemporary risk-based travel to colonial narratives of discovery. These older colonial narratives usually foregrounded the sense of danger as an intrinsic part of discovering exotic unknown places, which served to romanticise travel for their Western audiences: similarly, when the newcomers first encounter the island of The Beach, it is experienced as a largely unexplored and threatening space.

Another aspect of touristic Orientalism in The Beach is detected in the location’s isolation, which reinforces for the Western backpackers, a Rousseau-like ideal of nature with its noble beauty and ethical simplicity. The backpacker haven that Richard, Étienne and Françoise eventually encounter might be called an island paradise: literally, then, it is a territory in which the inhabitants are isolated from all others. Indeed, it is a location that cannot be reached by any of the usual forms of touristic transportation because the island is part of a marine park, so while the three are able to travel to a small nearby island by chartered boat, the last leg of the journey requires an hour of swimming across deep open waters. In this way, the island context places the film into a centuries-old Western tradition of Orientalist fabula and pseudo-historical accounts of “deserted islands” in tropical waters. This tradition arches from Shakespeare’s The Tempest to William Golding’s The Lord of the Flies to television series such as Survivor and Lost and serves an enduring part of the Western imaginary since the expansion of global trade and colonisation at the beginning of the modern age. With the exception of a tiny group of marijuana farmers, the island in The Beach is deserted, a stark contrast to the surrounding islands that show the bloated effects of Western tourism.

The sense of superiority that the backpackers feel both toward the locals, and other tourists is almost tangible. When Richard and the French couple first survey the beach and its close-knit backpacker community, Richard calls it a “beach resort for those people who hate beach resorts.” While it is an idyllic locale that would undoubtedly inspire significant
amounts of tourism were it more well-known – indeed, the narrative is framed around the
close maintenance of this secret – it is not run on standard capitalist principles. None of the
backpackers need to pay any money to live on the island. Like a typical resort, it is an
exclusive space – there is a certain luxury in the island’s seclusion – but unusually those
who are excluded are those affluent travellers who might have the money to alter and set
up a more traditional luxury resort with waiting staff and five-star service.

For the backpackers who have discovered this place then, it is literally and figuratively a
last resort, a tiny, hidden, Utopian space representative of peace and relaxation in a
country that appears to be all noise, mayhem and vice. The backpacking community are
the guardians of this Arcadian location, and the pact they have made with the Thai farmers
who control and cultivate the island is that they will not allow new travellers to arrive and
jeopardise the advantageous seclusion. Richard, Étienne and Françoise are only allowed
into the backpacking community because they escaped detection from the farmers as they
travelled across the island and because they promise not to spoil the island’s secret. They
are also readily accepted because they agree with the basic eco-philosophical principles of
the community. The backpacking community of The Beach, therefore, ideologically
distinguishes itself from other places in Thailand that are overrun, polluted and corrupted
by the negative effects of Western tourism. This distinction between us and them becomes
clear when Richard needs to leave the island with Sal in order to purchase some essential
supplies for the community. Away from the home island, Richard immediately notices the
difference between the community and the other busier tourist locations, and is now
disgusted by the latter:

When we got to Ko Pha-Ngan I just wanted to leave again. In one moment I
understood more clearly than ever why we were so special. Why we kept our secret.
Because if we didn’t, then sooner or later they’d turn it into this… Cancers. Parasites.
Eating up the whole fucking world.

The accompanying visual shots here of self-absorbed Western tourists on drinking binges -
vomiting, playing noisy techno music and dancing hedonistically on the beach - illustrates
the ugly side of tourism, as such activities impinge upon local communities, disregard
local customs and traditions and result in ecological damage to picturesque landscape
through a high turnover of visitors. These images of excessive gustatory and aural

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consumption also makes clear a symbolic connection to excessive economic consumption. By identifying himself as a special class of traveller – one who is disgusted by his fellow Western travelling citizens – Richard’s reason for travel and discovery seems partly motivated by the maxim of “getting there before it’s too late.” He becomes depressed when he notices that with travel “the only downer is, everyone’s got the same idea.” A growing touristic awareness of the finite resources of mainstream locations creates an endless drive for “new” and “untouched” spaces, and developing nations are often the primary locus for fresh sites. This, of course, is still falling squarely into the paradox of tourism – the process of getting there will still result in the tourist site’s eventual despoliation from over-exposure once the secret is out, so the gain will inevitably become a loss.

Here then, we see the illusory sense of identification of the traveller with the land and the traditions of the East. This denial of Western identity is shown in many ways. For example, the hedonism of the mainstream tourists might explain why, despite the appropriation of certain motifs that signify sixties-style “hippie” counterculture, the island community is openly critical of the promiscuous sexual pursuits that are semiotically encoded as part of the negative effects of mass tourism. Instead, they advocate a kind of anti-tourism, which is expressed in puritanical ways. The philosophy practiced by the island backpackers is one of simplicity and restraint: the consumption of simple foods such as fish, vegetables and rice, clearly defined social and work roles and the following of a strict set of juridical island codes. “Enjoy the beach and cut the bullshit,” Keaty warns Richard when he notices him gazing desiringly at the French girl Françoise. More than just a piece of personal advice, Keaty’s words seem partially to be given to protect the peace of the greater community. The backpacker leader Sal undertakes another more blatant form of sexual policing by keeping a constant vigil for the arrival of new visitors who might disturb the island’s peace. Sexual relations on the island and maintaining the secret identity of the island are closely connected. This is aptly demonstrated when Sal discovers that Richard has betrayed the secret to Sammy and Zeph. Sal punishes Richard by deliberately sabotaging his relationship with Françoise, telling the community the secret of their one-

night stand at Ko Pha-Ngan. In this context, it is easier to see that when the secret of the island is revealed, Sal retaliates by revealing a hidden secret of sexual desire.

That the island is vaguely known through rumour to many of the typical backpackers of the region is testament to the ease of transmission of the secret. Indeed, in the construction of this secret the desire for its discovery becomes even greater. While backpacking is routinely represented as a more authentic form of travel than generic mass tourism – and placed alongside ecotourism as a low-impact, less destructive alternative to mass travel – in Thailand and other developing nations these backpackers are often drawn to isolated regions because of easy access and inexpensive drugs. In The Beach, an important part of the legend surrounding the beach includes the large crops of marijuana that are putatively available to all.

Backpackers are no different from other tourists in behaving inappropriately in terms of Thai etiquette and expectations. The sight of backpackers making scantily clad “sorties” out among the host communities is the most obvious source of discontent for the demure Thai populations.

In this instance, dressing in little clothing might be understood by backpackers as a way of “going native” according to clichéd Orientalist semiotics, but the reality is that this public nudity might be the cause of great offence for the local populations. In other words, despite the backpackers’ desire to emulate the East, the disparity caused by the one-dimensional, romantic tourist clichés of exotic space highlights the real lack of communication between the two groups. Despite calling forth exotic ideas and Eastern mythologies, the backpackers here ultimately deny a direct relationship with the East.

There is a politics of the body that is played out in The Beach as well, that is racially constructed, suggesting an even deeper repudiation of Thai people. The backpackers’ self-

38 Beginning with the ranting of the suicidal figure Daffy, there is an ongoing metaphor of travellers as parasites or else as the embodiment of some kind of fatal disease. By telling the other American backpackers about the location of the beach and ruining the secret, Richard becomes a symbolic transmitter of this disease, and so when he is exiled outside of the beach community as a punishment by Sal, it is as if he is being placed into quarantine. Richard is expelled from the community in a similar way to the shark-mauled Swedish man Christo, who is put into isolation because of his highly vocal suffering. The community receives the voice as a threatening source.

39 Palmer, ‘On or off the Beaten Track’, p.82.

40 Ibid, p.83.
professed hatred for the decadence of Western tourism perhaps explains why prostitution, which constitutes such a visible aspect of contemporary tourism in Thailand, is not mentioned at all in *The Beach*, even when the characters leave the relative seclusion of the beach environment to more crowded spaces such as Ko Pha-Ngan and Bangkok. The only suggestion surfaces when Richard is watching a Thai woman massaging the back of a corpulent Western male, while he is searching with Françoise and Étienne for the secret island, an abject image, to which Richard is shown wrinkling his face in disgust. That there is also no representation of sexual union between Thai citizens and international tourists is perhaps due to the fact that any connection – even if the relationship is legitimate – is a subtle reminder of the machinations of the sex industry, and of the irresponsibility and the power of the Western body. This elision is also arguably due to the persistent Eurocentrism of mainstream US film and its on-going reluctance to depict inter-racial sexual relations. Therefore, the Thai body – male or female – simply does not enter into the sexual economy of the film whatsoever. Richard, for example, sleeps with two Western female characters in this film – firstly, with the French girl Françoise, and secondly, the British Sal, who as an active sexual partner reflects her status as the leader of the island community.

Emphasising the lack of cross-cultural exchange between the backpackers and locals in the film, representations of Thai women are kept to a minimum, and when they are featured they are older and not sexually tempting to the key hetero-normative male characters. The Thai women are also depicted as industrious workers, such as the old female worker in the Bangkok hostel who risks electrocution as she washes a faulty light fitting with a wet mop, only to vanish mysteriously at the same moment when Richard discovers the map of the beach and turns to her for an explanation. This representation of servility is a long-lived one in Western literary narratives of the Edenic East – especially in the representation of island cultures that has been strengthened through contemporary touristic fantasies. Ian Campbell has noticed in his examination of these tropes:

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41 This issue of sex tourism in Thailand has been carefully treated in Jeremy Seabrook’s ethnographic study: *Travels in the Skin Trade: Tourism and the Sex Industry*, 2nd edn, Pluto Press, London, 2001. In the introduction to this account, Siriporn Skrobanek suggests that: “Thailand is like a stage, where men from around the world come to perform their role of male supremacy over Thai women, and their white supremacy over Thai people. Through their own words, we see that they do not want to learn about the people and culture, they just want to exploit the natural beauty and the female body.” p.viii

42 Richard’s obsession and identification with the dead Scottish traveller Daffy – which intensifies when he is living alone in the jungle on the island – also hints at latent sexual desire.
If there are any natives in this picture, they are friendly, smiling, hospitable, and probably servile. But in many fantasies of this kind, there are no natives at all, as in Robinson Crusoe’s early years of involuntary exile.\(^{43}\)

By contrast, the portrait of Thai masculinity that emerges in *The Beach* constantly constructs Thai men with imagery of danger and peril to the backpackers. When they appear, Thai men are depicted in authoritative and menacing occupations wielding either institutional or physical forms of power – such as the police officers in Bangkok who interrogate the backpackers at the hostel, or the farmers on the island who carry machine-guns at all times and constitute the *deus ex machina* for the narrative. Then there is Richard’s first “authentic” travelling experience in Bangkok – drinking fresh snake’s blood – which is facilitated by a Thai local who propositions him on the street. Richard flees this environment as soon as he has performed the dare, which he perceives a kind of initiation act. This evasion implies another instance of the way that the touristic Orientalist position occupies a strictly limited, temporary time-zone.

The film employs a number of strategies to subdue any problematic concerns about the lack of cross-cultural communication between Thai locals and the backpackers. For example, anxieties about encroaching cultural imperialism and Euro-centrism are lessened due to the presence of at least two non-white figures in the international beach community which emphasises the ideological project of multiculturalism. The film features a young woman of apparently West-Indian descent who is not named explicitly and only features incidentally in one brief scene; and a British-African man called Keaty, one of the film’s key supporting characters.\(^{44}\) Keaty’s role has been expanded in the adaptation of the novel to the film. In the movie, Keaty is the first friendly face that Richard sees when he arrives on the island after the dangerous confrontation with the Thai farmers, and he also functions as a kind of counsellor-figure for Richard. Yet because he speaks English with a strong East-London accent, he is at the same time thoroughly assimilated into Western discourses. In a narrational voiceover, Richard acknowledges that Keaty has two central

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\(^{44}\) The young woman’s single speaking part occurs in a montage where all of the island residents are making their requests to Richard about what to bring back from the nearby island: whereas the other people request soap, tampons, batteries, etc., she is distinguished for requesting the exotic spice cinnamon.
loves, Christianity and cricket, both institutions that are also important parts of the British colonial imaginary. Keaty, therefore, is thoroughly interpellated into the Western backpacking community, and while his presence gestures towards a celebration of cross-cultural identity, I believe that this helps to obscure problematic elements of this narrative where the backpackers choose to keep the locals in ignorance over their activities.

The lack of cross-cultural exchange is also de-emphasised through the way that the central Western characters strongly identify with aspects of Thai identity. In other words, the backpackers seem to disavow their Western identity and become other through the long-established tradition of “going native,” yet at the expense of forging meaningful relationships with the local residents. Sal, the English leader, goes native in the most extreme way, taking on the style of the locals though practical fashion, wearing Thai fisherman pants and high-neck shirts, as well as a pastiche of other generic Eastern accoutrements such as Hindu face bindis and Chinese and Thai fisherman’s hats for shade. Her look is androgynous, and this is emphasised by the gender-ambiguity of her own name: for example, at one point she lies sideways on her bed raised above the others, closely resembling the giant Buddha that Richard walks past in Bangkok in the opening scene.\(^45\) Her ambiguous sexual identity adds to her power in a community where sex and language are so forcefully connected – by preserving some mystery, she emphasises her unwillingness to reveal secrets, which gives her an added control.\(^46\)

It is perhaps Sal who seems to be most integrated into the new community, or at least who disavows most vehemently her identity as Western tourist on holiday in Thailand. For example, when Richard and Sal visit Ko Pha-Ngan to purchase supplies, as if to consolidate her identification with Thai women and locals, Sal spends some time playing snooker with a local woman. This is one of the only moments in the film where a central Western character chooses to actively socialise with Thai residents, and the only time that a Thai woman is shown spending some leisure time, albeit still in service to Sal’s desire to

\(^{45}\) In the novel of *The Beach*, this connection is even more explicit, with Richard’s early impression of Sal being of “a Buddha [sitting] cross-legged at the foot of my bed, palms resting flat on ochre knees.” Garland, p.93.

\(^{46}\) The fact that Sal is constructed as having masculine attributes perhaps also reinforces long-standing Western patriarchal views about power and gender role – i.e. Sal needs to become in some way ‘part-man’ in order to hold power in the community - but developing this idea further here will take us from the topic at hand.
play.\textsuperscript{47} Indeed, the fact that the tourists are shown in the dominant position indicates that the attempt to take on local attributes is nothing more than a pantomime, and is more a way of exercising mastery and control over the local environment. That Sal takes on a pastiche of Asian signifiers in her dress also emphasises the lack of real contact that she has with Thai culture. Her act is akin to the real-life backpackers who visit Thailand and believe that they are “going native” in skimpy clothing, without any comprehension of the local attitudes toward dress and custom. Indeed, while Sal is ultimately portrayed as a negative and domineering character in the film, her pastiched look does not seem to be critiqued in the narrative – for the most part, it contributes to the construction of her integrity and humility in the initial utopian scenes at the beach.

Like Sal, Richard seeks to incorporate attributes of Asian identity, and similarly, it appears to be done to gain mastery and control over the self and others, as well as being influenced by Western Orientalist clichés about South-East Asia. As part of this attempt at mastery, Richard even steals the bandanna from one of the sleeping Thai farmers, the bandanna being a kind of prize, as well as a stereotypical signifier of Asian male identity.\textsuperscript{48} Similarly, when Richard escapes from the marijuana field with Étienne and Françoise, he pacifies the field’s trained detection monkey by squirting it squarely in the face with water from his drink bottle. It is a moment that directly references an earlier scene in the film, when, arriving in Thailand at the same time as Thai New Year celebrations, Richard notices the tradition where Bangkok locals playfully squirt one another with water pistols. Although the two situations are quite different – the first done in play, the second in fear – it is this observation of local custom that inspires Richard’s evasive action.

Richard’s attempts to “go native” and become like a Thai local are more apparent in the narrative when he is exiled into the jungle on the other side of the island with the farmers. While he is quite isolated and does not attempt to communicate with the men, he emulates their activities and notes that he has “found new players, even if they didn’t know it yet.” Again, as in the case of Sal playing snooker with a Thai woman, Richard is shown to be playing a game with the Thai men, where he is the instigator and wields the power – after all, they don’t even know it is a game. This connects the narrative to the older servility

\textsuperscript{47} The other time is when Richard goes with the Bangkok gang to drink snake’s blood, although he quickly leaves after performing his dare, his voiceover declaring: “never outstay your welcome.”

\textsuperscript{48} The word is derived from the Indian Sanskrit word \textit{Bandhana}.
narratives of natives on desert islands, in which the local becomes the Caliban-figure, placed in the passive position of helping out the coloniser.

Richard also calls the Thai men his “defenders.” “I was the only one with the overview of how it all fitted together,” he intones. “The island. Me. Them. The invaders. All connected. All playing the same game.” Identifying with the famers, in this game, the enemy – or as Richard calls them, the “invaders” – are the group of four young American backpackers who are trying to reach the beach, and the two men, Sammy and Zeph, who originally discovered the location due to his efforts. The hatred that he projects toward this new group manifests in the way he engineers their eventual execution – he leads the naïve tourists to the marijuana field watched by the Thai farmers, and without warning them of the danger, allows them to be killed. It is the death of the final girl that brings home to Richard the reality of the situation. Looking her in the face, he snarls at her in an imitation of the hissing of the nearby guard monkey. There has therefore been a profound change in Richard’s identity from the time he was on the receiving end of the monkey’s gaze. Instead of defeating the creature, he becomes it, in the process somehow losing his human identity. This suggests that while he imagined himself as the good guy in his computer-game fantasies, by being the attacking animal he had himself turned into the enemy. Through this process of becoming-animal, Richard realises the extent of his anti-humanism and simultaneously regains his humanity. It also drives home forcefully that, rather than having mastery over the rest of the island, he has become a kind of stooge or helper for both the farmers and for Sal, where he is now a complicit player in both of their markedly separate politics. It is at this moment that the possibility to live an ethical existence as a tourist is shown to be illusory – this is perhaps the most radical moment of the film’s politics, because it shows the true nature of the relationship between local and tourist, and dissolves the Orientalist facade.

Benedict Anderson famously proposed that national identity is imagined and is limited because “even the largest...[nation], encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind.” Perhaps, to a certain degree, this also relates to the way that

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49 Interestingly, these backpackers constitute a strange inversion of the refugee diaspora when the group evacuates from the island on a large homemade raft.

the Western tourist imagines him or herself as part of a more select group, by using the
traveller-tourist distinction. To Richard, the presence of other citizens from the United
States causes distress, because they remind him that he is really just a tourist, doing
exactly the same activities and causing the same levels of damage as anyone else. It is not
only Richard who maintains this distinction, the entire beach community works to uphold
this illusion. The backpackers place themselves into the “authentic” category of the
traveller, because of their self-subsistence, their minimal environmental impact and their
explicit contempt for the typical activities of mainstream hedonistic tourism. Yet consider
this passage from *The Tourist Gaze*, in which Urry uses the earlier work of Boorstin to
describe how tourism can be chiefly defined by its inauthenticity:

Isolated from the host environment and the local people, the mass tourist travels in
guided groups and finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly
enjoying the “pseudo-events” and disregarding the “real” world outside.51

As the beach is insulated from the outside or “real” world – which includes both the
consumers of Western tourism and also the native Thai population – there is of course,
ideologically and structurally little difference between the backpacker experience on the
beach from the equally self-enclosed environs of the typical tourist periphery. So, while
the contrived backpacker group is outwardly scornful of the inauthenticity of Western
tourism, in some ways it is as xenophobic and isolationist as the resorts of mass tourism.
For example, the intensity of desire for the Western world is demonstrated when the
backpackers line up to ask Richard to buy supplies from the nearby island, requests that
encompass such Western paraphernalia as batteries for Nintendo consoles and London
newspapers.

Richard is scornful of the backpackers in his Bangkok hostel watching an American movie
about Southeast Asia, Francis Ford Coppola’s Vietnam epic *Apocalypse Now* (1979),
which was famously shot on location in the Philippines rather than in Vietnam.52 The
scene that the tourists are watching is the warfare scene when Lieutenant Colonel Bill
Kilgore tells his men that their location will be “cleaned up and ready for us in a jiffy,
don’t you worry!” A moment later, the exploding bombs that devastate the palm trees of a

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51 Ibid., p.7.
beachfront highlight what being “cleaned up” truly means. Yet, when Richard is isolated in the jungle, he resorts to the self-same Vietnam war fantasies and clichés that the backpackers in Bangkok are watching, because his cultural experience of Southeast Asia has been largely mediated through Hollywood cinema and through other forms of Western mass entertainment such as computer games. As John Kleinan writes about the construction of Eastern landscape in Hollywood, it was really turned into a “locality devoid of dates and names with no real, definable beginning or end.” The guerrilla tactics of the Viet Cong in the Vietnam War are brought to mind by Richard’s time in the jungle, during his psychotic period he creates a simulacrum resembling a platform computer game and the Russian roulette game at the end is a clear nod to *The Deer Hunter*. It is as if Richard prefers the narrative-construction of a Hollywood interpretation of the East – with its quite limited stereotypes, according to Saïd – rather than attempting to forge new identities.

That Richard’s experience of Thailand is perpetually mediated through the Orientalist fantasies of Western mass entertainment is further underscored through his constant use of video games. Richard fervently plays Nintendo throughout his time on the beach, but he is only shown playing *Donkey Kong*, an interactive version of the King Kong narrative. *King Kong* has been read as a classic text of neo-colonial Orientalism and racial anxiety, and *Donkey Kong* may be said to follow some of the original text’s attributes. *Donkey Kong* features an eponymously named pet ape that goes on a rampage and steals the protagonist Mario’s girlfriend from him. Simultaneously, via the story of King Kong it refers to an unknown island in the Atlantic Ocean (Skull Island) filled with sinister and cannibalistic natives. The name “Kong” is connotative of an Asiatic word, in the sense of “Hong Kong”.

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55 In the Garland novel, the metaphors to Vietnam are even more explicit: “Jed and I were on a covert mission. We had binoculars, jungle, a quarry, a threat, the hidden presence of AK-47s and slanted eyes. The only missing element was a Doors soundtrack.” Garland, p.238.
When Richard is alone in the jungle, the realistic photography lapses into subjective fantasy and he is depicted as a video game character. Jumping with arms both swinging exaggeratedly, he becomes the aggressive Mario figure, the Western white man who must save the white woman. Again, this scene emphasises the ambiguous position of the Western tourists as they move about using the tropes of touristic Orientalism, taking on the subjectivity of the imagined East. Richard’s constant circulation between the Donkey Kong and Mario types indicates a kind of touristic schizophrenia or psychosis that is ultimately irresolvable. The animated, cartoon-like imagery is also an allusion to Richard’s over-simplistic understanding of the island politics at this time.

To continue the computer game metaphor, The Beach plays out a multi-levelled version of touristic Orientalism. The predominantly European backpacking community remain the aesthetic custodians of the exotic Thailand that is represented in the film. This indicates that the East-West relations of this film are fundamentally flawed from the outset. While the marijuana farmers live on the island, they are constructed to seem solely interested in cultivating their crops for profit, remaining in the interior jungle and not caring for the resort-like lagoon beach area. As trained aesthetes the backpackers are the figures who truly appreciate the landscape and the environment. While this blatant romanticism on the backpackers part might be deconstructed as naïve and antiquated cultural imperialism – the projection of a redundant superiority or cultural knowingness about what is beautiful – the sentimental conclusion of the film belies the subversiveness of the film’s critique of tourism. Undoubtedly, The Beach mobilises some of these historical Western ideas about an Oriental paradise as a way of critiquing contemporary touristic strategies. Yet, the backpacking community’s collective fantasy of living the simple life is ultimately colonialist, and hence a conservative fantasy of expropriation and control, and it is only reinforced by the naturalism of the film and the real-life political events that contributed to its production.57

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Touristic Orientalism, in the close reading that I have given above, is a more expansive ideology than what is allowed by the central characters of the film. Its power lies in the fact that it lies submerged, hidden, only to be confronted when they are ambushed by the Thai farmers and are suddenly forced to leave the island. While *The Beach* is ostensibly a critique of all forms of tourism and the expansion of Hollywood-based monoculture – the fantasies of the backpackers are proven to be wrong in the denouement – the long-established conventions of mainstream US filmmaking still maintain the dominance of the West. Some of these more obvious stylistics include: the omniscient male protagonist whose voice frames the actions of the film; the typical hetero-normative and Euro-centric romance between the lead characters; and the peripheral status that is relegated to the non-European parts. Certainly, the ending to the film dispells any of the revolutionary potential of the preceding parts. With the threat of the island culture diminished by time and space, at an internet café Richard nostalgically reflects on the beach with fondness, concluding in a voiceover:

I still believe in paradise. But now at least I know it’s not some place you can look for. Because it’s not where you go, it’s how you feel for a moment in your life when you’re a part of something. And if you find that moment, it lasts forever.

In what has become a *bildungsroman*, the central protagonist is shown to have grown and learnt from his youthful experience at the beach, which suggests that the end somehow justifies the means; that it was necessary for Richard to be a tourist in Thailand in order to come of age. In this sense, there is little difference here from arguments made in the eighteenth century about the educational effects of travel – Richard is the traditional “grand tourist” *par excellence*. This conclusion is troubling when we speculate on the touristic effect of this film, which leads to some important questions. For one, if the Thai government advocates the film because of the future international tourism that it may consequently generate for Thailand, can such a representation with its intrinsic touristic Orientalism also influence the attitude of the real-life visiting tourists in Thailand? What effect could this have on the relationship between tourists and locals? This problem
suggests an interesting conjunction between sociology and film studies that warrants further study in the future.

Some cultural studies scholars reject the dominance of the West over the East, arguing instead for the relative autonomy of individual Eastern nations. One argument is that the negative effects of Orientalism can be somehow marshalled and transformed by a previously subjugated culture, leading to a new ideology that has been termed “self-Orientalism.” Postcolonial academic Brian Moeran has written about Japanism as a subdivision of Orientalism – which constitutes the institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery and doctrines of the West – and suggested that it also needs to be considered more carefully as a “wrapped discourse.” In other words, while Japanism may have begun as a colonial attitude from the West seeking to discursively define and exert power over peripheral geopolitical nations, it has since then become re-appropriated by native cultures and governments for control and for economic benefit. In Thailand, one can discern a similar intricacy in this representation of the East. For example, a number of Orientalist and exoticist tropes have been self-consciously reconfigured and employed by government agencies in Thailand in order to attract greater amounts of foreign expenditure and subsequent touristic exposure.

Taken this way, the economic success of The Beach has been interpreted by some commentators in Thailand as the event that has “set the ball rolling” for the creation of a national film commission, and the stimulus for sudden rise in foreign film investment that has occurred since 2001. The same journalist went so far to suggest that international film production in Thailand in 2004 is “[o]ne of the country’s most promising growth industries… in spite of some hiccups like the SARS scare and regional terrorism, Thailand managed to earn a record Bt 1.4 billion from international film crews last year.” This optimism has also been utilised by the Thai government. The administrative and

61 Ibid.
government-controlled Thai Film Office (TFO) formed in 2003, three years after *The Beach*, uses a Western-focussed form of touristic Orientalism to attract foreign investment from prospective filmmakers. The TFO is a subsidiary of the government’s Office of Tourism Development, which in turn is a part of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. A member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), the TFO has placed Thai tourism into a competitive global market of tourism-seeking Film Commissions. The TFO’s professional-looking webpage expressly promotes Thailand to prospective international film productions. The top of the page shows a flash animation of a director’s board clicking shut, on which is written “Director: Thailand”, which is placed next to the alternating text “A Taste of Location in Thailand/Thailand: A Film Friendly Destination.” Potential filmmakers are advised that “(i)t is highly recommended that you hire a local coordinator, who can help you with local permissions and contacting Thai authorities and local Thais concerned in your production.” This visual iconography suggests that the Thai location makes the film automatically a Thai production, despite its limited contribution to the representation of the film. Finally, while this site conforms to touristic Orientalist clichés about paradise, Thailand is also described as the “Gateway to Indochina.” Historically, of course, the appellation “Indochina” is laden with political meaning: taken from the French name for Vietnam, it is a term that has colonial and orientalist connotations, redolent of centuries of Western domination in Southeast Asia.

However, while the imagistic framework of touristic Orientalism offers immediate fiscal benefits to the Thai economy, on the other hand, these self-commodifying, and potentially disempowering representations of Thai identity help to bolster negative ideologies about

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62 The html address for the Thailand Film Office is: <www.thailandfilmoffice.org/>. Accessed 28 August 2006>

63 AFCI hosts tourism-generating events such as the “Locations” expo held annually in Santa Monica.

64 Practical information about film-making abounds on the TFO web page. There is a “frequently asked questions” section that shows prospective filmmakers how to submit film applications to the Office, how to obtain Thai working visas, and how to negotiate the restrictions set out by the government on offensive content. Finally, to highlight Thailand’s recent success in hosting off-shore cinematic productions, the TFO site also provides information about the forty seven international films that were were partly or entirely shot in Thailand from 2004-5, films mostly made through investment by the United States, China and assorted European nations.

65 Contrast this to the development of the Thai Film Foundation (TFF), a non-profit organisation formed in 1994. The TFF was formed to focus on the promotion and development of national, independent cinema. On their webpage, there is little to no focus on touristic development: it features news on upcoming cinema conferences and festivals. Also included are long articles about the formation of cinema in Thailand, and its online shop on the site sells canonical Thai films on DVD. Unlike the web page of the TFF, there is no reference to Thai national cinema on the TFO page. Yet this foundation does not attract support or funding from the government, and while it is able to raise awareness about the diverse offerings of the Thai film industry, it is unable to provide immediate support to develop a more complex filmmaking infrastructure.
Western mastery over the nation that become a source of cultural anxiety, as *The Beach* controversy indicated. Even the economic benefits of such dealings with Hollywood are disputable. Rather than the “win-win” situation that is supposed to be created for both developing nation and developed nation, any short-term fiscal gains are still incidental to the profits to be made by the investor, and then of course there are the previously discussed ecological and social problems that are caused by this system. This economic relationship is what Miller *et al* have called the “new international division of cultural labour” (NICL) in their text *Global Hollywood*. The NICL, they suggest, is an updated global version of the usual story of late capitalist domination. They suggest that the creation of the Thai Film Office in 2003 is a way for the Thai government “to encourage the NICL, along with changes in taxes levied on foreign actors and corporate income-tax ‘holidays.’” It illustrates a growing dependency of Thailand on developed nations, rather than a desire to construct a vital indigenous film culture. At the same time, an expanding market means competition between neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, the Philippines and Singapore, resulting in a further loss of bartering power. The competition will necessitate large tax incentives to be given to international film companies in order to secure a deal. For example, one article for *The Nation* reported that the French production *Sons of the Wind* chose to film in Thailand rather than in a neighbouring country with similarly inexpensive conditions, because permission was given for road traffic to be closed down for the production in central Bangkok.

In this chapter, I have primarily focussed on the type of representation that Thailand receives through the impact of touristic Orientalism in a case study of one very popular Hollywood film. While this form of representation is a powerful factor, it is certainly not an all-encompassing one. There is currently a new dynamism in the local film industry that counters the negative representations that might emerge from the global Hollywood dream machine. From the mid 1990s into the present, Thai cinema has experienced a new wave of popularity, both domestically and internationally. To indicate the massive turnaround of the industry’s fortune, film production has increased from ten films a year in

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69 A good introduction to the Thai film industry (in English) is provided in Glen Lewis, “The Thai Movie Revival and Thai National Identity”, *Continuum: A Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol 17, no.1, 2003, pp. 69-78.
the mid 1990s to fifty films in 2003, the same year that the Bangkok International Film Festival – in conjunction with the Thai Tourism Authority – commenced as an annual event. There are a number of high-profile production companies committed to producing local product, such as Cinemasia and Film Bangkok, and the recent formation of the GMM Tai Hub Co in 2005. Three large media companies aim to release ten new films a year.70

In Thailand, overseas investment in domestic film has more recently been acquired from Hong Kong, with some successful co-productions emerging such as Jan Dara (2001) and the Pang brother’s Gin Gwai (2002). Comedy and action films have proven to be successful genres at home: for example, Tony Jaa’s kickboxing films Ong Bak (2003) and Tom-Yum-Goong (2005), and the numerous Kathoey against-the-odds comedies set in Bangkok.71 Meanwhile, on the global festival circuits that seem to have become a standard feature of transnational metropolitan culture, avant-garde films by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Pen-ek Ratanaruang, Wisit Sasanatieng and Nonzee Nimibutr have reached a new prominence with international audiences.72 The Prime Minister of Thailand during this period, Thaksin Shinawatra, proclaimed the country as the new film-producing “Hollywood of Asia” – a hub for developed local film infrastructure and also an inexpensive base for overseas production – although it still remains to be seen to what extent government will contribute to ensure the right economic conditions for both.73

The simplistic Hollywood-mediated claim to “forget about Thailand” may be, in an era of globally organised tourism and sophisticated regional film production, strikingly misconceived. Indeed, harm might come from the sheer quantity of potential tourists who might consume such Orientalist representations. I am not suggesting here that all Hollywood productions are poorly scripted or uncritical of current global political conditions, and that a regional film culture such as Thailand’s represents a natural opposite or antidote to such structures. After all, the clearly evident transnational nature of film

72 Weerasethakul’s previous films include Mysterious Object at Noon (2000), Blissfully Yours (2002) and Tropical Malady (2004). The latter film won the prestigious Jury Prize at Cannes in 2004, which has been highly celebrated by the Thai media.
productions in smaller nations such as Thailand already makes redundant any such idea of a “pure” domestic industry with a resoundingly distinct local voice.

However, while nationally funded and scripted film ventures may not be more expressive of Thai experience, they are more likely to be couched in Thai cultural discourses, and to be placed in a negotiated relationship with the forms of touristic Orientalism as propagated by entertainment industries such as global Hollywood. Such globally marginalised representations might have the capacity to put check to the glossed-over East-West relations depicted in a Hollywood film like The Beach. Ultimately, they might contribute to broaden the discursive space for further debate about the effects of cinema, the use(s) of the tourism industry, the content of local production and the constructions of national and transnational identities.

It is noteworthy that eight years after the first release of The Beach, Danny Boyle directed another film that reignited media debates about the exploitation of Eastern cultures in cinema and Western tourism. Slumdog Millionaire (2008) was partly filmed in the slum regions of Mumbai, India and used local non-actors to play the roles of children and young adults. The story is a Dickensian fable set around a lower-caste man winning the Indian variant of the globally popular TV quiz show Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? The film was based upon the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize winning novel Q & A (2005) by British Indian writer Vikas Swarup, and adapted for film by Simon Beaufoy.74 Boyle’s later film was highly successful upon release, and in tandem with this popularity it achieved critical success, receiving eight Academy Awards (including Best Picture and Best Director) in 2009.

Whereas The Beach focussed on Western tourists, Slumdog Millionaire’s main protagonists are Indian locals, members of an impoverish underclass. Indeed, in Slumdog Millionaire the presence of Western tourism is relegated to the fringes of the central narrative. But nevertheless, tourism plays an important part to the film’s plot. In the instances tourists appear in the film, they are often American, and often gullible characters, making them easy prey for the ingenuity of the poor children. For example, the teenage version of the main character Jamal (Tanay Chheda), swindles Western tourists at that

74 Slumdog Millionaire was partly produced by the media company Celador, which also conceived and produced Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?
most iconic site of Indian tourism, the Taj Mahal, with his own crafty “tours” that are based simply upon his own creative imagination. Yet while this story of Indian ingenuity is optimistic and cheering, at its core lies a contradiction. For despite the film’s championing of the children’s efforts at “exploiting” the tourist’s naiveté, in reality such exploitation is meaningless given that Western tourists pay comparatively little money for such a service that would cost a lot more in their own country. According to the film’s social critique, the depiction of the practice of child blinding (so that the children will gain more sympathy as beggars) suggests that benevolent charity from tourists actually causes further harm and damage rather than help. In this case, their charity only perpetuates an industry of child slavery and abuse that exploits such tactics as blinding children.

Although set in a different context, Slumdog Millionaire raises similar questions that we have discussed in relation to The Beach. And like The Beach, Boyle does not really adequately respond to the problems we have already presented around the real effects of tourism on Eastern cultures. For the film’s qualification to critique the tourism ethos while arguably reproducing it through its own on-location exploitation, Boyle’s position remains under question. Like The Beach in Thailand, similar criticisms were directed at Boyle and his crew over the making of Slumdog Millionaire. In the UK, the most famous controversy to be reported surrounded the fate of the child non-actors, in particular, Azharuddin Mohammed Ismail (who played Salim) and Rubina Ali (who played Latika). These children were mainly selected because they lived in the actual Mumbai slums in the Garib Nager region depicted in the film. Even part of the film’s charm and success was attributed to the performances from these child non-actors. Although the filmmakers responded that trust funds had been arranged for the children, apparently they had not secured them adequate accommodation in the period following production, and hence they were compelled to return to the slums, even after being flown to the US to attend the 2009 Academy Awards. The role of the press has been questioned in this episode, for they misrepresented accounts of the production’s role in India, at least by one of the film’s actors, Amitabh Bachchan.

children for the purposes of selling a story, appealing to (Western) compassion. The controversy around the fate of the children was partially halted by the Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority who secured housing for the two children in question, after the recognition of the children at the Academy Awards.

Whether Boyle’s two films succeed as a valuable critique or not of film tourism or more specifically, the film tourist gaze, remains to be seen. There is a lingering ambiguity over the implications of the use of location, the interaction with other cultures, and their own relationship to constructing the imaginary of Western tourism. For in some cases, instead of making us aware of the problem of poverty in these countries, such films can potentially induce desires of travel for the purposes of exploiting such poverty, either in the economic sense or cheap travel locations, or for travel spectacle. Even if tourism helps the economies of countries like Thailand and India, there are pervading issues over the motives and attitudes that tourists bring with them when they visit such places. In an article in *Time*, local Indians voiced such concerns, claiming the film presented “poverty porn” and “slum voyeurism.” A manager from New-Dehi, Juspreet Dua said, “[w]hat they’ve shown is not reality. There’s a lot of exaggeration and harping on well-worn clichés about India.”

One article for *USA Today* notes that recent popular films have been able to excite a level of touristic interest in developing third-world nations, and even sites of disaster in developed countries like the USA:

Mumbai is one of several destinations to offer “poorism” options. In New Delhi, the non-profit Salaam Baalak Trust, spearheaded by *Salaam Bombay!* filmmaker Mira Nair leads tours focusing on children living in and near the city's train station. Other forays take visitors to slums in Rio, Nairobi and Johannesburg. In New Orleans, companies offered post-Katrina tours that included the hard-hit Ninth Ward.

Since Bob Geldof used images of extreme famine in Ethiopia as part of the *Live Aid* campaign to an unprecedented effect, the bare image of the impoverished has become paradoxically an increasingly acceptable representation that has transferred to film.

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Touristic Orientalism can then be seen to effectively broaden its territory, from framing the exotic to the devastatingly poor. The Western tourist is not simply a consumer directed towards indulging in cultural exotica, or the romantic adventure of “going native”, but could even possibly be led to experience poverty in its bare form. In the era of the film tourist gaze, debates surrounding the ideological uses of cinema and mass tourism have not lost their timeliness in the national and transnational political spheres, and now emerge within an increasingly contested international arena.
Chapter Five

Shooting Tourists: Brand Australia, Australian Cinema and the Film Tourist Gaze

[H]er articles are gonna put us on the map. Yes, the map! That means overseas press coverage. We can have thousands of American tourists here! What, they haven’t got anything like this over there, have they?
- Crocodile Dundee

Australian cinema is a vehicle for Australian culture in both a programmatic and a mundane sense. Australian culture is simultaneously a political, social and cultural programme of diverse agents and elites and it has a mundane identity formation and inescapable cultural level in its own right. Australian cinema inevitably shapes this culture in both senses and is in turn shaped by it. It intersects with and articulates various social and national identities.
- Tom O’Regan, Australian National Cinema.

In this analysis of the film tourist gaze, I analyse the impact of the sustained national marketing strategy of Tourism Australia - called “Brand Australia” - on recent Australian feature film productions, focussing specifically on two films by director Greg Maclean, Wolf Creek (2005) and Rogue (2007), and Baz Luhrmann’s epic romance Australia (2008). Rather than providing a survey of films released since the introduction of Brand Australia in the mid 1990s, these three films have been selected because they are each well-known Australian “outback” movies that have been the topic of intensive media debates about their respective touristic impacts. Each film selected for this case study engages with stereotypical representations of Australian identity and the Australian character, established by the success of the feature film Crocodile Dundee in 1986, at the time of writing still the highest selling box office film in Australian history.

Rogue and Australia are both set in the Northern Territory - although each production was also filmed in other Australian states - and both partly funded and subsidised as tourism

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3 Co-incidentally, each film in this case study features a performance by actor John Jarrett, although this point is inconsequential to my argument.
initiatives in conjunction with national and state tourism commissions. *Australia* was even developed as a touristic promotional strategy by Tourism Australia, a factor that has seen it the subject of passionate media debates as to whether it offers a simplified, over-touristic representation of the country at the expense of a more edifying cinematic experience, whatever that might be.  

Wolf Creek and Rogue might both be considered “anti-touristic” narratives, but as this chapter indicates, each film has served to inspire a youth-oriented form of adventure tourism to the country, which has served to increase tourism rather than to discourage it.

The three films in this case study support a diverse range of socio-political readings of Australian attitudes to international tourism. What becomes evident in this analysis is that there is a long-standing and complex relationship between successful Australian feature films and nationally helmed and internationally directed tourism branding campaigns. Many of these films seem to be constructed by the film tourist gaze. The emergence of the Australian tourism industry has been nearly simultaneous with the steady growth of the Australian film industry since the 1970s, from deliberate governmental policies toward the enhancement of national filmmaking and the arts. More recently, the development of Brand Australia emerged from the immediate success of *Crocodile Dundee* in the late 1980s and therefore the iconography that has appeared from the various tourism campaigns has continued to be informed by a specific film-inspired phenomenon to construct national marketing campaigns. Subsequently, these later campaigns have helped to forge and construct newer national identities, which then feed back into the film industry.

Mark Ryan articulates that Australian cinema has been considered to be a small national cinema that thus far has been best known for its “uniquely Australian ‘ocker’ comedies and quirky offbeat dramas characterised by distinct representations of Australian culture, society and national identity.” However, the use of the Australian landscape to highlight or critique notions of “Australianness” is another major influence that deserves investigation in regards to tourism, particularly in the wake of debates surrounding Luhrmann’s

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Australia. Furthermore, Australian films often need to rely upon “public finance administered by government funding agencies”, which often brings a further obligation to conform to the perceived “tenets of cultural policy.” Since the 1970s, the nation’s high profile films have frequently proved their “Australianness” by showcasing unique landscapes. This has as a result, privileged genre forms such as the period historical drama (for example Picnic At Hanging Rock (1975), Breaker Morant (1980)) to bring forth Australian narratives. Since the introduction by Tourism Australia (TA) of Brand Australia as a marketing strategy in the mid 1990s, there has been a sizeable shift in the ways in which funding bodies place value in films considered to be “Australian”. As the emergence of literature on “film tourism” indicates, there has also been a global shift in the understandings of the uses to which cinema might be put to market key national landmarks and icons.

In this chapter – continuing an analysis of the film tourist gaze in all of its permutations - I am concerned with the ideological and cultural impacts of these national tourism campaigns on Australian cinema, and vice versa. My approach here is to undertake a semiotic and textual analysis of Tourism Australia’s key marketing campaigns – chiefly, through analysis of the filmed commercials and since the introduction of the Internet, the accompanying web page <www.australia.com>. In this chapter I examine competing representations of tourism, tourists and national identity that are contained both within the films and the ways in which these might be reflected in recent mainstream Australian tourism campaigns. In particular, I shall assess the dominant touristic iconography of Tourism Australia, focussing particularly on the creation of Brand Australia and its influence on national representation from the 1980s, and the ways that Australian films might fit into this brand-image. I also examine the interconnectedness between some high profile Australian feature films and the campaigns, many of which have been supported by local incentives with the intention for broad international promotion for economic stimulation to a local region. Finally, I will discuss the changing perceptions toward showing off landscape as a marker of “Australianness”. The emphasis of promotional landscape as a value at a cultural policy level might have negative and positive impacts on Australian cinema. On one hand, it might result in funding allocated to films that prove

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themselves to be sufficiently “promotional” of Australian space or landscape. On the other hand, changing perceptions at a cultural policy level toward landscape films may now include previously neglected genres of Australian cinema that still highlight or show off the Australian landscape (such as the horror or thriller genres). Therefore, such a form of promotion may allow for new filmmakers and fresh viewpoints to be cultivated and taken seriously as a legitimate art form. Secondarily, such shifts may result in further publicity and economic success for such films, which could help to stimulate the film production output for such neglected genres.

**The Crocodile Dundee Phenomenon**

![Poster for Crocodile Dundee.](image)

Paul Hogan’s high profile media career began on television in the 1970s. The success of television comedy series *The Paul Hogan Show*, which screened on the Channel 7 from 1973-79 and later on Network 10 from 1979 until 1984, provided a regular time-slot for the eponymously named comedian to establish a well-known character grounded in clichéd ideas about the Aussie “bloke” or “larrikin”. His alter ego also known as “Hoges” was a blue-collar character drawn upon his real life experiences working as a rigger on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Hogan’s small screen fame coincided with the Australian Tourism Commission’s (ATC) recognition in the early 1980s of the employment opportunities that tourism could bring into the nation and particularly to struggling regional and outback communities. The ATC, which was heavily funded by the Hawke Labor government, intensified its tourism marketing campaigns abroad and looked to the United States as the market with the greatest potential for international tourism growth.
In Australia and the United States, Paul Hogan became the small screen star of a series of filmed advertisements for the ATC that is informally known as the “shrimp on the barbie” campaign. This campaign ran from 1983 to 1986 at a cost to the Australian government of $22 million, and in 1990 at a cost of $4 million. Hogan reportedly performed in the advertisements for the ATC entirely for free. As a sign of its effectiveness, at the end of the first year of the campaign, overseas enquiries about Australia increased by 20,000.

After the Australian government granted additional funding, the campaign was strengthened and in three years attracted one million enquiries. Arrivals of tourists from the United States rose steadily from 1.4 million in 1983, to 1.6 million in 1984, 1.92 million in 1985 and 2.5 million in 1986. By 1989, there were over three million arrivals from the United States to Australia.

While the “shrimp on the barbie” campaign targeted a North American audience, it was also screened for an Australian audience. The reasons for this local screening are twofold: the first is helping domestic tourism and the second is training a local audience in acceptable behaviours toward incoming tourists. Sinclair and Younane point out in their study of government communication within Australia that the campaign suggested “the friendly and informal hospitality which the [US] should expect to find, and [Australia] should offer”. Also, using the research of Jill Barnes, Sinclair and Younane provide a specific example of how one particular television commercial from this campaign targeted an Australian audience, in which Hogan actually asked, “Australians ‘not to make a liar out of him’ and to ‘flash their pearly whites and to say hello to a visitor’ because tourism meant jobs.” Donald and Gammack suggest that the success of the campaign was also partly due to the consistency between Hogan’s character and the nation’s long-established

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9 The Australian tells the story of how additional funding was approved. The minister took Paul Hogan to the Cabinet meeting. When invited to the room, Hogan addressed the Cabinet members in the following words, “Listen, you blokes, give Brownie the money he wants. We can sell Australia, he and I. You can’t sit round the woolsheds waiting forever for cardigans to come back into fashion again’… the money was approved.” See Johri, Pradeep Kumar (ed), Encyclopaedia of Tourism in 21st Century, New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2005, p.291.
persona of “a fun and relaxed place, with rugged nature and honest, sincere people.” Furthermore, since the typical Australian on the street also acted in a similar fashion, the brand was reinforced by the seeming honesty of the proposition.

In effect, *Crocodile Dundee* achieved its major success by tapping into the ground spring of “Aussie” interest generated by the international tourism campaign [See Figure 1]. The film narrative was conceived by Hogan and the producer John Cornell, who created their own film production company called Rimfire Films. *Crocodile Dundee* is a high concept “fish out of water” comedy-romance with a simple two act narrative, featuring a character who seems an extension of the “shrimp on the barbie” Hogan. In the first part of the film, Mick Dundee runs a tourism company called “Never Never Tours Safari” with an older male partner called Walter Reilly. When a famous American journalist Sue Charlton (played by Linda Kozlowski, who also became Hogan’s real life wife) hears about Dundee’s miraculous escape from a crocodile, she travels to the Northern Territory to take his safari. During this holiday – in which they visit many scenic locations in Kakadu National Park – she is rescued by Dundee from her own near fatal crocodile attack. After this rescue she is further attracted to him, and invites him to accompany her home to New York City where she will finish writing her article about the “nature man.”

In the second part of the film, Dundee swaps places with Sue and becomes the tourist in an unknown land – leaving Australia and flying by jet for the first time, seemingly confused in this cultural mixing pot by “civilised” urban conveniences such as hotel bidets and foreign language restaurant menus. In this second act, the film’s narrative gently probes issues about American race relations, showing Mick as a modern-day noble savage addressing black Americans – who are often shown in servile or working class positions in this film – as socially equal to the richer (white) classes that he meets. When Sue’s other love interest Richard proposes to her, Mick shows his wounded feelings and decides to go “walkabout” in the United States. Given that the genre of the film is a romantic comedy, a typical sentimental ending follows – as Sue realizes her love for Dundee, she chases after him and the two unite memorably in a crowded New York subway station with Dundee navigating the bustling crowd like a sheepdog. It is a significant image that represents the

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Australian as someone who can overcome a foreign landscape through clever ingenuity and good instincts.

The Australian premiere for *Crocodile Dundee* took place on the 26th April 1986, and due to a strong initial response at the Australian box office, Hogan and Cornell anticipated a positive response from a North American audience. To this end, they took the film to Los Angeles for market research first rather than visiting film studios directly. According to Stephen Crofts, one US “National Research's test screenings supplied evidence that ‘audiences loved the humour, the hero and the outback photography’, and gave Hogan a rating considerably above stars of the order of Robert Redford.”

Hogan and Cornell were then able to secure the interest of Paramount as distributor in the United States. Paramount cut out five minutes of the film from the original Australian version in the belief that it would help the film appeal to a more international market.

Paramount appeared to be cognisant of the power of the ATC’s tourism campaign and used it directly to enhance publicity for the film, as Crofts indicates:

> Publicity prior to the 26 September 1986 New York premiere of the film took two forms. First was Hogan's informal campaign via TV ads in eight key cities for the Australian Tourist Commission: “Put another shrimp on the barbie”. These made his face, if not his name, widely known. There followed the Paramount campaign.

While this move was undertaken by Paramount to help the film’s box office, the success of the film then fed back into the tourism campaign that now featured an internationally recognised movie star. Its global box office success has made it Australia’s premier example of film tourism. As Sue Beeton notes, *Crocodile Dundee* deserves to be remembered as the first movie “that consciously and simultaneously encouraged tourism to Australia.”

*Crocodile Dundee* still remains the most well known example of film tourism in Australia, especially in the way that it created a strong brand image around the romance of Dundee and the wildness of the landscape and its creatures. *Crocodile Dundee* undoubtedly increased the number of tourists to the Northern Territory in the 1980s and

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15 Ibid.

16 Crofts, “Re-Imaging Australia: *Crocodile Dundee* overseas.”

1990s and made tours to Kakadu National Park attractive for American visitors. After the film, tourism increased across the entire nation. In 1987 the tourism rate rose more quickly across Australia than in any other developed nation around the world, which has been at least partially attributed to the success of the film.\textsuperscript{18}

In the 1980s, “Crocodile Dundee” related representations were utilised extensively by the Australian Tourist Commission and arguably still exercise a tremendous power within contemporary national tourism advertising.\textsuperscript{19} Directly related to the success of the film in the Northern Territory was the creation of a new industry centred on the figure of the crocodile as an icon of the region. Graeme Turner notices that after \textit{Crocodile Dundee} there was a distinct modification of attitudes toward the crocodile in Australian society. Before the film, the creature was still viewed repellent and anti-touristic. Suddenly in the late 1980s there was an emergence of gaudy toys and souvenirs, crocodile-shaped hotels and reptile farms that have transformed the lethal creature into “an indispensible part of any northern tropics tourist venture.”\textsuperscript{20} Meanwhile, the shots of Kakadu National Park were exotic for an overseas audience and also for a domestic population mostly based on the south-eastern Australian seaboard. \textit{Crocodile Dundee} helped to make the northern part of Australia an attractive destination for domestic tourism too.

While Dundee “gave” Australia an image, as mentioned earlier it was drawn from a clichéd, long-lived literary and cultural tradition regarding the Australian male. Benedict Anderson in his seminal text \textit{Imagined Communities} suggests that the nation is “always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,” and in Australia this has been famously enacted through a hyper-masculine myth.\textsuperscript{21} While a number of texts have attempted to identify these traits of “Australianness”, the earliest significant analysis was the 1958 text by Russel Ward \textit{The Bush Legend}, a seminal analysis on contemporary Australian identity that sought to analyse the figure of the “larrakine” that was used in literature and by the media for describing what is perceived to be an essential aspect of the Australian national

\textsuperscript{18} O’Regan, Tom. “‘Fair Dinkum Fillums’: The \textit{Crocodile Dundee} Phenomenon.” In Jacka, Elizabeth and Susan Dermody (eds), \textit{The Imaginary Industry: Australian Film in the Late ’80s}. Sydney: Australian Film Television and Radio School and Media Information, 1988. pp.155-75. p.172.


character. Ward saw the larrikin to be one of the central myths of Australian culture and suggested that the stereotype was formed during a surge of nationalist feeling in the 1880s and 1890s.\textsuperscript{22} Despite the fact that the majority of the Australia population lives on the Eastern seaboard, the bush legend is a rural, “outback” myth and describes a:

… practical man, rough and ready in his manners and quick to decry any appearance of affectation in others… He swears hard and consistently… and drinks deeply on occasion. Though he is 'the world's best confidence man', he is usually taciturn rather than talkative, one who endures stoically rather than one who acts busily. He is a 'hard case', sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally… He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority, especially when those qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen. Yet he is very hospitable… \textsuperscript{23}

This \textit{mythos} of the larrikin or “bloke” has been a resilient cultural representation of both the rural and urban Australian male, reappearing as rural stockmen, bushrangers, soldiers at Gallipoli, even surf lifesavers. More recently, the idea has been extended to include females, indigenous peoples and immigrants. However, it was only in the 1980s that this stereotype was translated and turned into a profit-generating global tourist icon through the conduit of Mick Dundee.

John Brown, the Minister for Sport and Tourism in the 1980s, suggested in an interview on Radio National that Paul “Crocodile Dundee” Hogan’s influence on international tourism has been incalculable:

I mean, what he did by improving our image, or giving us an image - we basically didn't have one before that, we were seen as a zoo, you know, interesting marsupials and no people - and giving the world that view of Australia as a welcoming happy place and the Australian individuals as being laid back, irreverent and very happy - you couldn’t estimate what that meant.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid}. p.2.
More recently, the late Steve Irwin, through his television show *The Crocodile Hunter* and feature films *Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course* (2001), drew upon the Dundee legend as a potent source for building his own successful international wildlife-loving empire and successful brand-identity in the 1990s and 2000s. Not only did Irwin reproduce the Dundee connotations of “Australianness” such as friendliness and enthusiasm, but his American wife Terri – the high profile supportive partner and equal wildlife lover on *The Crocodile Hunter* – seemed to follow in the mold of the Linda Kozlowski-Sue Charlton archetype. Steve Irwin’s unfortunate death from a stingray attack while filming a documentary on the “Ocean’s Deadliest” creatures in 2006 has not yet affected the man’s ability to attract interest in the Australian environment, and the wildlife park in Queensland that he owned called Australia Zoo continues to draw visitors using his image. Understandably, while alive, Irwin was a strong ambassador for Australian tourism, working particularly for the “G’Day LA” campaigns in 2005 and 2006.  

25 Terri and Steve’s young daughter Bindi (who was famously named after a crocodile) now continues the family showbiz tradition, starring in her own television series *Bindi the Jungle Girl*, a show that has also resulted in the release of Bindi CDs, DVDs, books, toys and even her own clothing line.  

**Brand Australia**

By the early to mid 1990s, a problem began to emerge for the ATC – while the “shrimp on the barbie” campaign had proven to be a powerful advertising force for Australia, shifting attitudes toward cultural identity called for a brand new marketing approach that reflected more of the nation’s cultural achievements. The idea was for a “campaign which explicitly sought to move beyond the ‘shrimp on the barbie’ image and other conventional signifiers such as ‘reef, roo and rock.”  

26 Back in the early 1990s, Australia did not feature with high frequency on the world arena, and so winning the bid for the 2000 Olympic Games

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27 Sinclair, John and Stephanie Younane, “Government advertising as public communication”, p.209.
provided a high profile event that could be harnessed to the development of a strong new brand image.28

Australia’s decision to focus on brand marketing for overseas visitors, featuring experiences that create awareness and desire for the destination of Australia as a whole, reflects a crucial change in national destination marketing. With this development, particular locations were no longer foregrounded. Tourism Australia now left the regional focus tourism to the state tourism organisations (STOs) and provincial operators, who now “have the responsibility of converting the awareness created by the ATC into visits.”29

Research has identified that the key target audience for Australia was a young age group between eighteen and forty-four, particularly those between eighteen and thirty-five.30 This demographic was more likely to consider travelling to Australia in the present rather than looking to it as a “once in a lifetime” destination. According to the research, this demographic is looking for “adventure, exhilaration, freedom and personal discovery”. 31 These campaigns also targeted specific types of traveller such as backpackers – particularly in Europe (a main source), the United States and increasingly such Asian countries as Korea and Japan.32 Brand Australia, which was launched in 1996, began to use campaigns that would successfully reflect these identified attributes delineated by research in the area and promote these types of travelling experiences.

Signalling a growing awareness in the use of media texts to inspire travel, in the late 1990s Tourism Australia began to examine and integrate multimedia as part of diverse marketing strategies. One important development was the use of a consumer Web site, located at the address www.australia.com, which was designed to be a “vehicle to reach a large number of consumers around the globe.”33 Another development was to tie-in “Australian” movies with flexible campaigns at target markets. For example, promotional campaigns were quickly devised and released to coincide with the release of the film Finding Nemo that ran

31 Ibid., p.291.
32 “Initiatives enhancing innovation in tourism” inandgrowhhintourism128
in the film’s key markets, including the United States, Japan and China.” The lessons gained from the *Crocodile Dundee* experience appear to have been learnt well by the national tourism office.

International interest in Australia peaked with Olympic Games in 2000, and soon after dropped off as the result of international travelling deterrents such as global terrorism and SARS. The meaning of Brand Australia needed further modification and renewal from its heyday in the late 1990s. In 2004, Tourism Australia launched the $360 million marketing campaign “Australia. A different light.” It was a multi-faceted operation instigated after a minor slump in international tourism caused by the effects of SARS and the threat of terrorism after the World Trade Center attacks and the Bali bombing. The overall aim of the “Different Light” campaign was to sell the nation as an experience and not just a destination, and to emphasise the putatively unique qualities of the country, from the people to even the quality of the sunlight. The advertising campaign included a series of television commercials that focussed on a number of Australian cultural and artistic figures, including the pop singer Delta Goodrem, the poet Les Murray, and ex-cricketer and Channel 9 commentator Richie Benaud (See Figure 2). In the “Different Light” campaign Tourism Australia hoped to broaden the image of the country, “to highlight aspects of the culture, particularly food and wine and the arts, not previously well-known to overseas visitors.”

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35 Donald and Gammack. *Tourism and the Branded City*, p.49.
Figure 2. The “Australia: A Different Light” campaign of 2004 moved away from “ocker” representations of Australian society, focusing on Australian sporting and cultural figures such as Richie Benaud (pictured). The outback still played a significant role in this campaign.

As a polemical phrase, “Australia: A Different Light” appears to favour the northern part of the continent with its stronger sunlight – the Northern Territory, West Australia, Queensland – more than southern states such as Victoria and Tasmania. The phrase “Australia: A Different Light” is also implicitly connected to cinema: it is common for film-makers and critics writing about Australian national cinema to refer to the unique qualities posed by the strength of the sunlight and the landscape, crucial knowledge for cinematographers filming on location. Tom O’Regan writes that “Australian cinema has developed a distinctive virtue of having to shoot in a different light and in a different topography than the Anglo-European.”

While this notable difference in luminosity can be read as a way for the Australian film industry to attempt to distinguish itself on a world market from competing national cinemas, one can see also that the “Different Light” tourism campaign drew upon its international film reputation in order to connect notions of Australian identity and experience with its renowned cultural production. It was during this campaign that the first film that we shall analyse, Wolf Creek, was produced and released.

**Wolf Creek (2005)**

![Poster for the Australian horror film Wolf Creek.](image)

Figure 3. Poster for the Australian horror film Wolf Creek.

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Not everyone fits into the Brand Australia vision of a safe wilderness populated by bland suburbanites and folksy crocodile hunters. The country’s reputation as a safe location, the easy option for those who want southern heat without the attendant risks, is in danger of being transformed into something quite different.  

In 2005, the Australian horror genre film Wolf Creek – the first feature for Greg McLean – became one of the surprise international film success stories of Australian cinema in the first decade of the new millennium. First screened at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2005, Wolf Creek was picked up for international distribution by the Weinstein-owned Miramax/Dimension Films for $US 3.5 million, and was released through Dimension Films in the United States on December 25, 2005. The film was loosely based on “actual events” – in particular, two high-profile true crime stories that have haunted the popular cultural imaginary of Australian society; firstly, the Ivan Milat backpacker murders from the early 1990s; and secondly, the violent abduction and murder of British tourist Peter Falconio in the Northern Territory in 1996, a case that was resolved after release of the film when Bradley John Murdoch was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in Darwin on December 13th, 2005.

Through its brutally graphic use of violence, Wolf Creek was placed by some film critics into a sub-genre of horror that emphasises realistic-looking torture and documentary-like storytelling techniques. Wolf Creek was compared to James Wan and Leigh Whannell’s Saw sequence (2004-06) and Eli Roth’s Hostel (2005), which in turn were inspired by a new wave of Japanese and Korean psychological horror films such as Ôdishon (1999) by Takashi Miike and Oldboy (2003) by Park Chan Wook. At the same time, the film fits into an established tradition of the “Australian gothic”, which has been a present theme in European-Australian literature since the nineteenth century. In The Oxford Literary History of Australia, Delys Bird writes that the trend within colonial literature toward

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gothic-toned narratives was entirely in keeping with the oftentimes-violent experience of settler life, with “its potential for brutal oppression and corruption.”

On celluloid as well as in literature, these gothic themes have continued to be re-examined and reinvented for popular Australian culture, some memorable and well-known examples since the revival of Australian cinema in the 1970s including Peter Weir’s *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974), *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), Richard Franklin’s *Road Games* (1981), and George Miller’s futuristic road movie *Mad Max* (1979). What these Australian gothic films seem to emphasise above all are the corrupting dangers of the alien outback landscape. The cultural anxiety of travelling through the forbidding and encompassing outback is dramatised in many of these films, and this anxiety crucially includes encounters with the people who have chosen to inhabit such liminal zones. The preoccupation with this theme perhaps explains why the road movie should be considered one of the privileged cinematic forms to express the “Australian gothic.”

*Wolf Creek*, like *Mad Max* or *Road Games*, can be identified as a horror road movie. It is about two British female backpackers (Liz and Kristy) who meet up with a Sydney man (Ben) in Broome and agree to go on a road-trip through central Australia, finishing in Cairns. The first destination on their trip is the Wolf Creek National Park in outback Western Australia, the location of an ancient meteor site. After their car has broken down in the car park of the reserve, the three allow the outwardly friendly Mick Taylor – a middle-aged local kangaroo shooter - to tow them to his place “back-a-ways,” for car repair. Drugged, bound and separated at his camp, they awaken to discover that Mick is a sadistic killer, and each person makes a desperate attempt to get away. Against the “final girl” horror paradigm that has served such US teenage exploitation flicks as *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* (1980) and *Nightmare of Elm Street* (1984), the two females, Kristy and Liz meet their own particularly gruesome deaths at the hands of Mick. It is Ben, then, who is the “final girl”, as he is rescued by European tourists, and nearly dies of exposure in the process of his escape. Because Ben cannot relocate the camp with police, Mick remains unapprehended at the end of the film: the last shot shows a silhouette of the

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outback man melting into the wilderness, his contrapuntal pose echoing the iconic image of Mad Max as it appeared in *The Road Warrior* (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figures 4 and 5. Final image of rifle-clad Mick Taylor (left) imitating the famous pose of another iconic Australian outback vigilante “Mad Max” (right) in *The Road Warrior* (1981).

Those familiar with the Milat and Murdoch histories will easily recognise similarities between the real life cases and the film. For example, one of the most shocking and savage torture scenes in the film, when Mick makes Liz a “head on a stick” by severing her spinal cord, is a reference to one of the more sensational revelations to come out of the Milat trial. Spatially, however – both intra and extradiegetically – the film uses elements from the Murdoch case. The starting point of the film, Broome, is where Murdoch originally lived, and although the events in the film are set in Western Australia, the filming locations were outback locations around Port Augusta, South Australia – the same place where Murdoch was arrested for the rape and robbery of two female tourists and soon after for the murder of Falconio. Then, scenes showing the roadside bravado of Mick Taylor echo the boldness of the Falconio attack. Finally, Ben’s inability to locate the murder site – and hence any real evidence to account for the disappearance of the girls – echoes the plight of Falconio’s girlfriend Joanne Lees, who was negatively and sensationally

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42 As Greg Maclean has stated, “that whole sequence is taken from the Milat case. When I read that I couldn’t believe it. That’s what he did to some of his victims, and that’s probably some of the worst stuff I’ve heard my whole life. That’s very real which is even more disturbing.”

43 *Murder in the Outback: The Joanne Lees Story* (2007) directed by Tony Tilse was a later TV-movie made on the Murdoch true crime case for Channel 10.
portrayed by large sections of the Australian media and who until more hard evidence was found “came to experience the double horror of being viewed as a potential murderess.”

Utilising a documentary-like aesthetic that makes the film resemble a crime re-creation TV show, *Wolf Creek* skilfully mixes its narrative with factual information to suggest that its events are plausible. One early example is an inter-title at the beginning of the film mentioning that 30,000 people are reported missing in Australia every year, that ninety percent turn up again within two weeks, and that “some are never seen again.” Not specifying the exact number of people who disappear permanently or providing a regional breakdown of these disappearances, this menacing introduction implies that some three thousand people a year might perish in an outback hole at the hands of a madman like Mick. The presence of the tourist as naïve victim in many of Australia’s most notorious crimes in recent decades - from the disappearance of Azaria Chamberlain at an Uluru campsite in 1980 to the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania in 1996 – lends extra legitimacy to the film’s narrative. Indeed, such was the perceived authenticity of the narrative of *Wolf Creek*, that the defence team for Murdoch was able to postpone the release of the film in the Northern Territory until after Murdoch’s trial was resolved. This postponement suggests the import bestowed to a national film that manipulates key historical representations of national identity. Therefore, in Australia, the popular representation of the tourist in both true crime stories and in a highly popular horror film on outback travel, has unique implications when we come to think about the effects on any film tourism that might be created.

Indeed, turning more specifically to the subject of film tourism, the other mass media reaction to this reality effect at the time of the film’s release was the increased concern for the negative impact that the film could potentially have on real life outback travel and international interest in Australia. For example, this following comment from an American online reviewer of the film epitomises the main view at the time from film critics toward the film’s effect upon Australian travel:

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The Australian tourism board must loathe *Wolf Creek*. The slash-and-gore thriller, which is now on DVD in both R-rated and unrated versions, offers a vision of the outback in which naïve tourists are prey for a crafty, bloodthirsty, but nevertheless picaresque native. “Come to Australia; end up on a meat hook,” just does not have a welcoming ring to it.\(^{46}\)

This kind of outlook suggests a firm belief that negative film narratives will result in anti-tourism. In the previous chapter, I analysed *The Beach*, which although painting a negative and dangerous vision of tourist experience in Thailand (featuring a shark attack, and militant attacks among other events), was nonetheless a tourism attractor for the film’s iconic location at Maya Beach on Phi Phi Le Island. Similarly, in chapter three’s analysis of *Jaws* and *Psycho*, we can see that films with “dangerous” storylines can result in positive tourism attractors, of course in this chapter with a physical relocation from the films real life settings and to the safety of a studio tour. What is interesting to take note of in these case studies, is that there has been a discernible shift in a public understanding of film tourism’s power to create positive publicity for a destination location. In this chapter in the examples I discuss, one can see a new awareness of the ability of a film to promote destination, and the new changed perception is that no matter how negative the film representation, the result is still resoundingly positive for attendant tourism. In Australia, *Wolf Creek* has been seminal in bringing about discussions of the effect of cinema on Australian tourism, particularly as the horror film was released directly after the success of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy in neighbouring New Zealand.

Like many Australian-made films, *Wolf Creek* was produced with state and national governmental funding and support, which in this case came from the Film Finance Corporation (FFC) and the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC). Of course, in *Wolf Creek*, it is also clear to see that Mick Taylor’s character is a direct descendant of the conventional outback man epitomised by Mick Dundee of *Crocodile Dundee* fame. Taylor, played by John Jarratt, who like Paul Hogan is a popular and “blokey” television personality, is a friendly, hospitable and affable man at first, and entertains Kristy, Liz and Ben with stories of his carefree hunting days. A burly, middle-aged man in a stockman’s hat and a plaid shirt, Mick appears practical-minded as he provides a solution for the

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broken-down car, yet swears heavily and speaks roughly, and presents himself as anti-intellectual and anti-religious.

It is as if this character deliberately deviates from the norm set by *Crocodile Dundee*. When the backpackers first meet Mick, they make two explicit references to *Crocodile Dundee*: firstly, Kristy says “he’s hilarious, he’s like one of those guys from the outback Australia shows, he’s like Crocodile Dundee or something.” Soon after, at the camp, Ben says to Mick: “You get to cruise around the bush saying cool stuff like ‘that’s not a knife, this is a knife,’” – the most quoted phrase from *Crocodile Dundee* - a comment which appears to either offend or baffle the bushman, who stares back at Ben intensely. It is because Mick Taylor seems to conform to such a safe representation of Australian identity that his sudden change to sadistic murderer seems all the more shocking. As his name suggests, Taylor is almost literally Mick Dundee radically “tailored” – instead of being an ambassador for tourism, he is out to cripple the industry, one person at a time. When Mick appropriates Dundee’s line as he shows his large hunting knife to Liz – “like your little mate said before…” - he demonstrates not only his cruelty but also his media literacy of the Paul Hogan image.

Returning to *Wolf Creek*, the narrative of the film refers to earlier victims, predominantly urban middle-class families on road-trips. Mick’s collection of cars and his keepsakes such as Swiss army knives, photographs and video cameras indicates the longevity of Mick’s murderous tourist-culling campaign. Video evidence discovered by Liz reveals that Mick’s *modus operandi* is particularly to target naïve tourists indoctrinated by tales of friendliness from the men of the outback: as one earlier victim suggests on home video, “country people are friendly” to pacify his concerned wife. The similarity of the statements given by

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47 This is not the first Australian film to humorously quote from the well-known Paul Hogan/tourism connection. In Philipe Mora’s *The Howling III: The Marsupials* (1998), one Australian character asks the American visitor “want me to put another shrimp on the barbie?”

48 In real life, there is yet another antecedent to the Mick Dundee story, with a closer resemblance to the *Wolf Creek* storyline. In 1977, a young man called Rod Ansell became lost in the Fitzmaurice River, and survived alone in the wilderness for a number of months. A documentary and a book were published about Ansell’s exploits, and soon after he was shortly caught up in an unlikely chat show circuit. Paul Hogan was supposedly inspired to create the character of Dundee after watching footage of Ansell’s appearance on *Parkinson* – the bushman travelled to Sydney for the first time to be filmed for the show, and on TV he spoke of his bemusement with the ‘luxuries’ of the big smoke. Despite the obvious connection to Ansell’s own story, Rod was never allowed to connect himself with the trademarked *Crocodile Dundee* fiction, and attempts that he made to claim royalties from the film were dismissed. In 1998, Ansell was killed by police after he started shooting at a house and killed a police officer. A compassionate book about Rod was published by his ex-wife Joanne Van Os called *Outback Heart* (2005).
Mick to the earlier tourists, part of the horror realised by Liz, in the same way that a tourist promoter tends to repeat “authentic” adventures, Mick uses standard lines and gimmicks such as “nothing like rain water from the Top End”.

Mick is not the only threatening hyper-masculine outback figure in the film. When Liz, Kristy and Ben arrive at Emu Springs, a group of local men – distinguished by their flannelette tops and blue singlets – sit in the bar making sexual insinuations about the two girls. Intimidating Ben, one of the men says to him “me and my mates are gonna see if your girlfriends are going to be interested in a little bit of gang bang”. This scene is a regular trope in Australian cinema about the brusque-ness of the Australian outback male. Other examples of Australian films with this trope include the seminal *Wake in Fright* (1970) the *Mad Max* cycle and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994).

Another subversion of the *Crocodile Dundee* story is Mick Taylor’s hatred of international visitors. While Mick Dundee travels to Manhattan and adapts to the city and its people, in contrast Mick Taylor views international visitors as expendable, subhuman vermin. When he is still feigning friendliness to the tourists, he says of his profession as kangaroo shooter: “I’m doing people a service, taking out a few roos. They’re everywhere out here now… like tourists.” This xenophobic attitude crudely evokes some of the isolationist polices of conservative and nationalist political parties, especially Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party in the late 1990s. In other ways, Mick is also shown to be conservative, particularly in his attitude toward homosexuals (“poofs” a colloquialism that had lost favour in the 1980s), indicating Mick is out of touch, and his stubborn allegiance to a traditional masculinity of the bush legend. The high-profile release of *Wolf Creek* means that this dark story offered a range of critiques of the larrikin and served to challenge pre-existing Australian tourism campaigns in the lead-up of the film’s release.

The character of Mick Taylor functions as an ambiguous figure in the national touristic imaginary – in some ways he is an evil *doppelgänger* to the larrikin Mick Dundee stereotype, yet at the same time, he might just represent the ongoing survival of the larrikin *mythos*. This kind of paradox can be considered as precisely the kind of cultural appropriation that Tourism Australia depends upon in order to preserve the symbolic value of the Australian brand. The relationship between a cultural production such as *Wolf Creek* and real life tourism is a complex one. Another issue is the effect of prolonged
spectatorship and the pleasures involved in horror film spectatorship: if *Wolf Creek* shocked audiences upon its first screening, it will not take long for the social and political relevance of the film to dissipate and for Mick to become another legendary and safe pop cultural icon, after which time the larrikin figure will shift again.

Ultimately, while *Wolf Creek* depicted horrific and brutal events, it is clear that a horror film set in what is considered one of the safest destinations in the world, would be unlikely to frighten potential visitors from visiting it. Indeed, results indicate that backpacker travel increased in the year following *Wolf Creek*. Some even found comfort within the film’s narrative. As John Jarratt put it in an interview about the film at the time of its DVD release, alluding to the inefficiency of the United States government to help in the immediate wake of Hurricane Katrina, “more horrific than this *Wolf Creek* is what I’ve been seeing in New Orleans lately, what they’ve been doing to people in broad daylight… and then, the world’s full of all this stuff…” If the globe was imagined to contain frightening and un-nameable “stuff,” then it seems that such a narrative might even help to provide some comfort through its focus on a concrete and clearly-cut classic figure of a psycho-murderer, rather than a network of terrorists, incurable diseases, and so on and so forth. Ultimately, *Wolf Creek* offered global audiences a dark vision in 2005, but it was one that seemed to resist the even darker uncertainty provided by the worldwide political landscape at the time. It is perhaps unsurprising that in the following year, Tourism Australia released a new campaign that drew heavily upon these old-fashioned markers of Australian “ocker” identity.
Where the bloody hell are ya?

Figure 6. The return of the larrikin: photograph from the homepage for www.australia.com (Accessed November 2006). From the “Where the Bloody Hell Are You?” campaign.

Wolf Creek certainly echoes some of the features of both older and recent Australian tourism campaigns. For example, the range of colourful and “authentic” characters that the three meet in the Australian interior contrasts with the representation of the self-absorbed tourists in their mock-“Ibiza” clubbing culture in Broome. The image of sunrise and sunset that is shown many times in Wolf Creek, adds tension to the film by being a temporal reminder of the horrors in waiting and is also a recurring visual motif of the “Different Light” campaign.

However, Mick is so evil in this film that one is tempted to argue that the tourists are punished for placing trust and belief in the clichéd idea of the friendly “bloke”. In this more socio-political reading of the film, Mick is a malignant “return of the repressed” of the older touristic representations, threatening the mores of a society that is desperately trying to re-brand itself as locus of culture and sophistication. One could extend this reading and suggest that Mick is allegorical of the horrors of patriarchal white Australian history marginalising indigenous cultures, females and other voices of alterity. In this
sense, the larrikin might be considered an extension of the forbidding outback, from which expanse traditionally arises “the beast” or the “crazed man.” 49 Mick’s misogynistic treatment of Liz and Kristy adds grist to this argument, one is certainly more inclined to feel sympathy and hence identify with these younger characters rather than with the subjectivity of the sadistic white male. 50

Despite this more radical reading, however, it could also be argued that Mick Taylor’s anti-touristic stance was ultimately absorbed by Tourism Australia to re-assert older brand values. Coincidentally enough, there was indeed shortly afterwards a re-emergence of the “ocker” in the Tourism Australia campaign of early 2006, carefully timed to appear before the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in March. It was part of a fresh New York advertising agency M&C Saatchi $180 million campaign targeting the US, Britain, Europe and Asia entitled “where the bloody hell are ya?” In the main television commercial made for this campaign, a number of friendly clichéd figures invite the viewer to partake in typical Australian customs. A farmer in an outback pub says, “we’ve poured you a beer”, a boy at a beach pool claims, “we’ve got the sharks out of the pool”, while an Aboriginal figure suggests that “we’ve been rehearsing for more than 40,000 years”. Finally, swimwear model Laura Bingle, standing on an isolated beach (in a bikini, of course), says rather cheekily, “so, where the bloody hell are you?” The campaign generated a lot of free publicity due to the ways in which the words “bloody” and “hell” were censored across the world. 51 In Britain, the Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre initially ran the commercial with the word “bloody” taken out – although the advertisement was eventually run uncut (See Figure 6).

It is worth emphasising how dramatic this shift was from selling the country as a hub for artistic and cultural achievement, back to the traditional markers of Paul Hogan era was in 2006. As Sally Young suggests, in this new campaign Tourism Australia reverted “with a vengeance to the conventional signifiers and ocker vernacular of the 1980s: familiar images of pub, outback, beach, and kangaroos”, yet this representation of Australian

50 Clover, Carol. Men, Women, and Chainsaws, p.???
51 This phrase ‘bloody hell’ is of British origin – an expletive referring to the wounds of Jesus Christ - is one of the most well-known of ‘ocker’ Australian colloquialisms.
identity was ironically the work of a globally focussed American advertising company. It is apparent how similar the colloquial style of this newer advertisement matches Mick’s harsh accent and language. For example, his first line when he appears as friendly savior to the trapped backpackers is “what the bloody hell are you mob doing out here?” Considering that the group will soon exist in the confines of a “bloody hell” – and Ben is crucified by Mick, to draw out the Christian etymology of the expletive – taking this phrase at its literal meaning suggests that Mick is actually being excruciatingly honest about the immediate future. Despite the previous attempts made by Tourism Australia to modify the international perception of the country, it appears that the larrikin stereotype has reappeared at this moment as a useful shaper of international touristic desire in the era of the film tourist gaze.

Mick’s psychosis could be read in two quite different ways, each with different outcomes for the potential effect that they might have on the touristic consciousness. Firstly, because he deviates so radically from the bush legend mythos, he can be considered its antithesis. Secondly, however, Mick might add a renewed sense of authenticity to the brand image. It could be that the sense of danger that is associated with Mick is an important part of this illusion of reality. By becoming a world-wide superstar, the original Mick Dundee had symbolically sold out his bush ethos to the United States: in contrast, by maiming tourists and defying what he is supposed to represent, Mick Taylor manages to retain a certain level of credibility and authenticity, and he has the glamour of danger which has been identified as an important aspect of the touristic imaginary.

Indeed, in his article “Tourists, terrorists, death and value,” Phipps argues that the “threat of death and danger is something that tourism relishes so as to retain its imaginative power as a space for reconnection with the ‘real’ which remains so elusive…” To an extent, this dialectical relationship between danger and tourism is indicated in the way that war zone countries often become popular travel locations as soon as they are safe again. Interestingly, at the promotional material offered by Brand Australia is currently selling the nation as a dynamic location with attendant risks, the “Where the bloody hell are you?” campaign makes references to the country’s wildness and its wild animals, such as sharks.

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52 Sinclair, John and Stephanie Younane, “Government advertising as public communication”, p. 226.
Such marketing strategies help to attract a particular niche group of travellers identified as in search for more adventurous, independent experiences than those provided by traditional mass tourism: backpackers, a group that had already been identified in the research conducted for Brand Australia as a key market for future Australian campaigns. The backpacker is of course typified by each of the young travellers in Wolf Creek, particularly as the predominant backpacker group in Australia is constituted from the UK, *a la* Kristy and Liz. The link between danger and the touristic imaginary is becoming better known, leading to more nuanced understandings from tourist operators and commissions that “negative” horror films might after all inspire fantasies of travel of their own. In Greg Maclean’s follow-up film we find a direct example of a horror film used by a state government as a marketing plus in the hopes to promote resultant travel and interest toward a particular region.

**Rogue (2007)**

![Figure 7. Poster for Rogue](image)

In his follow-up feature film *Rogue*, Greg Maclean’s budget expanded from $1.8 million for *Wolf Creek* to $25 million for a new “creature feature” horror film set in the estuarine waterways of the Northern Territory.\(^\text{54}\) *Rogue* continues the director’s initial preoccupation with horror in remote Australian locations, utilising an international horror genre that was popularised by the success of Steven Spielberg’s breakthrough blockbuster film *Jaws* (1973). In Australian cinema, the most well known example of the “creature feature” film is Russel Mulcahy’s *Razorback* (1984) about a massive wild boar at loose in the outback,

while lesser-known, is *Dark Age* (1987), which was an earlier yet forgotten film about a rogue crocodile. This latter film was never released at the Australian box office although it is now going through a revival of interest due to the high profile interest of Hollywood director Quentin Tarantino (who has collected a print of the film) and the “Ozploitation” phenomenon of 2008 onwards.\(^{55}\)

*Rogue*'s tagline - “Welcome to the TerrorTory” - both sets the Northern Australian scene while also alluding to its thriller genre. The first half hour of the film follows a leisurely tourist boat tour in the Northern Territory, run by a young local woman called Kate (played by high profile Australian actress Radha Mitchell). The main protagonist of the film is an American travel journalist on assignment (played by Michael Vartan). When the boat is briefly accosted by Keith and Neil, a couple of aggressive “ocker” locals with a previous relationship with Kate, the tourists use their wits to drive the guys away. The thriller narrative only kicks off when one character notices a distress flare close by. Kate takes the boat off its normal course to help out, despite the misgivings from the passengers. When they arrive at an overturned vessel, their own watercraft is also suddenly broken by a forceful crocodile (not shown at this point) and the group is stranded on an island rapidly shrinking from a rising tide. The return of Keith and Neil on their speedboat provides sudden hope for the stranded passengers, yet all is ruined when the two are pitched into the river by the crocodile and are forced to swim ashore. Neil survives and becomes a temporary hero by swimming across the river to set up a rope for escape from the island. However, he is taken soon after as he stands next to the river, and the tourists’ attempt to leave the river is frustrated when the ropes break.

Later that night, Pete thinks of a second plan to help the group to escape. Baiting the crocodile with an anchor with Keith’s fish catch, the crocodile is shortly captured and the tourists can escape across the river. At this point, Kate is taken by the crocodile while she is swimming across the river. Kate’s dog disappears into the bush and Pete pursues him. Falling into the crocodile’s lair, he finds that Kate is badly injured but still alive. Fighting the crocodile one-on-one, Pete finally kills the animal by impaling it through the head with a sharpened log. To bring a note of comedy back into the film, when Kate is loaded onto a

helicopter in the closing moments, she asks Pete, “what did you think of the tour?” The final shot of the film shows a photo and article about Pete - “tourist defeats Killer Croc”- indicating that the American is recognised by the surrounding community as a new Dundee-like figure and hence a local hero.

As in Wolf Creek, we see that the stereotypical larrikin “blokes” reappear, although in this film they fare reasonably better. Kate herself might be considered a larrikin female in this film, as she is relaxed and confident in her wildlife guide role. Neil and Keith epitomise the “larrikin” archetype. Before the horror story sets in they tell the tourists that “we’re the wildlife” and even implore the group to take photographs of them (“G.day, tourists! come on mate, let’s just fuck off!”). Noticing that Pete is American, they name him “John fuckin Wayne.” They appear to be hostile to the group of tourists, and direct their attention to Kate, who ignores them. When Pete outwits their jokes, Neil and Keith decide that “he’s a poofter, mate.” Because of their confidence as the locals tough guys of the area, the duo misrecognise the threat in the river network that they assumedly know so well, and this mistake ends up proving fatal for both characters. Indeed, it is the wary or paranoid tourists who prove to be most resourceful and successful in overcoming the crocodile.

Perhaps even more so than Wolf Creek, Rogue appears to be in conversation with Crocodile Dundee, from the manifest reptilian obsession down to the focus on Northern Territory tourism operators and American reporters who are the main characters in both films. Even the title of the film “rogue” is a close rhyme with “Hoges”, Paul Hogan’s nickname still used affectionately by the Australian public since his stint on network television. This is a film that uses literacy of Crocodile Dundee as a shorthand for understanding the violence of the characters' predicament. For example, in Rogue there is no description of how crocodiles kill their prey, but a “death roll” would be understood by film audiences through films such as Crocodile Dundee, in which Hogan memorably describes the action to Linda Kozlowski thus:

See, a croc will grab ya, take you down to the bottom of the water, roll you over and over and over ’til you stop kicking, then he’ll take you away to his meat safe somewhere…
Like *Wolf Creek*, *Rogue* is based on real life stories, in this case about crocodiles in the Northern Territory. In the film’s DVD extras, Maclean suggests that the story was partly inspired by tales of “Sweetheart”, a 5.1 metre crocodile that was captured in 1979 and now on permanent display at the Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. Another more recent inspiration for the film was an attack in which a twenty-two year old man was killed, and two of his friends were terrorised overnight, trapped in trees with the crocodile watching close ready to attack if they tried to escape. Significantly, this latter event also inspired another crocodile-based horror movie that was released in the same year, *Black Water* (2007). This latter film was released in the same year by emerging horror filmmakers David Nerlich and Andrew Traucki. While it was set in the Northern Territory, budget constraints meant that the film was actually filmed close to Sydney bar the shots of crocodiles that they put back into the main film. The film follows a similar storyline to *Rogue*, except that the main characters are trapped in trees instead of on an island. As in *Rogue*, the central protagonist ultimately kills the crocodile in a one-on-one showdown after arriving unwittingly at its “meat safe”.

Graeme Turner suggests in his article on *Crocodile Dundee* that it is now a case that “where once the crocodiles preyed on the tourist, the tourist now preys on them.” Should a film like *Rogue* be considered another anti-touristic narrative, in which the crocodile (signifying natural Australia) is again fighting back against the incursion and ecological destruction that is coupled with mass tourism? Contrasting with the negative opinion given to *Wolf Creek* as tourism generator, the interest that emerged at the release of *Rogue* indicates a changed perception toward the ability of a horror movie to sell an Australian landscape to overseas visitors. For example, on Tourism NT’s consumer web page, there is a feature on the films that have inspired travel to the Northern Territory – called 'Movie Terrortory' - focussing on films ranging from *Crocodile Dundee* to *Ten Canoes*. For *Rogue*, the web page suggests hopefully that “not even a horror story about a group of

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56 Information on Sweetheart can be accessed from the following web page: <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/museums/sweetheart/index.html>
58 Another contemporary film of the same ilk *Dying Breed* (Dir. Jody Dwyer:2008) also makes the most of the tourist horror storyline. The film is set in the remote Tasmanian west coast, drawing upon legends of convict cannibalism and inbred jokes.
tourists stranded on a tidal island and being stalked by a man-eating crocodile can take away from the beauty and allure of the Territory’s water ways.” It notes the filming locations at Kakadu and Katherine Gorge (excluding information that a large part of the film was also produced in Victoria), and suggests that crocodiles will be seen, although at the Gorge “they will mostly find the more benign, freshwater variety.” The segment concludes positively that “with a little commonsense, you are unlikely to experience the horror of the film”.

As evidence for the tourism generating potential interest from an anti-tourism narrative, one tourism and marketing consultant has suggested that in the Northern Territory, any kind of violent episode, no matter how macabre, usually results in a subsequent increase of visitor numbers. “Whenever we have a bad accident or somebody gets taken by a croc, it seems that the interest goes up,” she said. Whatever this might mean for a film about a crazed crocodile, the suggestion is that bad publicity still results in good possibility. Certainly, the film operates as a spectacular showcase for highlights of the Northern Territory. In the special features for the DVD release of Rogue, the filmmakers frequently refer to the beauty of the Australian landscape that they were able to lens. Maclean suggests he “sort of blended a horror film, a hero story, and [his] love of Australia into one big very old fashioned horror film.” The cinematographer Will Gibson mentions that “we really felt honored to be there”, and that the landscape is “so timeless, so unspoiled, so untouched…it’s beautiful, but it’s also unknown.” The team also emphasised how inaccessible some of the views are, noting that “to be able to film in that part of the world is a great privilege.” In their determination to bring the viewer “unknown” parts of Australia, on the DVD extras they also seem to act as advocates of armchair tourism.

Rogue did not result in the high box office numbers that the Northern Territory tourism commission would have been hoping for. While Wolf Creek earnt over six million dollars in the Australian box office alone, Rogue earnt $1,791,176 at the Australian box office, and at the end of 2008 is ranked number 100 on the list of top Australian films in

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Australia, disappearing off this list after March 2010.\(^6^3\) After the poor box office return in Australia, *Rogue* was not released theatrically overseas, and was instead released on Dimension’s DVD distribution chain. As Mark Ryan has acknowledged in his dissertation on horror cinema, this does not mean that the film necessarily was a financial disaster, as alternative distribution via the video market often provides good returns for horror films.\(^6^4\) Nonetheless, another film was being set up to be the ultimate tourism-attracting film for overseas tourists: a romantic drama called *Australia*, and connected from the beginning with Tourism Australia.

**Australia (2008)**

![Figure 8. Promotional poster for Australia.](image)

Oh dear, oh dear. The Australians are investing a huge amount of expectation, and many millions of promotional dollars, in an epic movie intended to reinvigorate tourism and a sense of national pride. You know the kind of thing. Great raw, soaring landscapes, wild brumbies, rough blokes, mystical Aborigines, a gorgeous sheila, fair bit of Foster's. Sort of *Crocodile Dundee* with gravitas, or *Picnic at Hanging Rock* with sex - and therefore, in most people's eyes, a potential hit.\(^6^5\) The final film that I analyse in this chapter is Baz Luhrmann’s *Australia*, produced by 20\(^{th}\) Century Fox, which in 2010 is ranked as the second highest box office release film in

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\(^{6^4}\) Ryan, Mark, *Dark New World*, p.165.

\(^{6^5}\) Reid, Melanie. “Nicole Kidman drifts around like a lost porcelain doll.” *Times Online*. November 20\(^{th}\), 2008. Accessed at:<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/melanie_reid/article5191828.ece>
Australia after *Crocodile Dundee*. Luhrmann’s previous film *Moulin Rouge* was filmed in Sydney at Fox Studios but was set in a nineteenth century Paris. *Australia* was Luhrmann’s first film to deal with “Australian themes” and feature a local setting since his debut feature on ballroom dancing *Strictly Ballroom* (1992). Not only was *Australia* extravagantly budgeted for an Australian film, but it features two of the country’s most well known actors, Nicole Kidman - who had also starred in *Moulin Rouge* - and Hugh Jackman. Both are Australian brand identities in Hollywood in their own right. The production was offered healthy tax breaks by the government: while it cost approximately $130 million to make the film, tax rebates from the Council helped to cut the 20th Century Fox investment to $78 million.

The film’s action commences just before World War II, in the year 1939. Lady Sarah Ashley travels from England to Darwin to convince her husband to sell their cattle property “Faraway Downs” in the Northern Territory. Her husband is murdered by the property manager Neil Fletcher (David Wenham), who frames the death on an aboriginal elder known by European Australians as “King George” (played by David Gulpilil). Nullah, King George’s grandson, is the illegitimate child of Fletcher and lives with his mother at the Faraway Downs homestead. With Nullah’s help, Sarah sees through Fletcher’s deceptions and fires him, and suddenly needs to run all of her cattle up to Darwin herself in order to sell them to the government. Despite Fletcher’s scheming, the group reaches Darwin (although a good friend is killed along the way) and after the arduous journey Sarah falls in love with the Drover.

The three return to the homestead and for a while live normally and happily. However, discord reappears when Nullah disappears just before departure for his “walkabout” with King George. While the Drover believes that Nullah is safe, Sarah is convinced that he has been kidnapped, and goes to Darwin to find him. In truth, Nullah had been captured by the police (on the instigation of Fletcher) and taken to a missionary school for stolen Aboriginal children on an island off Darwin. His arrival unluckily proves simultaneous to the historic bombing of Darwin by the Japanese in 1942. After the bombing, the Drover

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believes Sarah to be killed and seeks Nullah at the missionary island. Reunited, the group decides to leave the devastation of Darwin for the safety of Faraway Downs. King George escapes from prison during the attacks, and saves Nullah’s life by killing Fletcher with a spear – Fletcher was in the act of shooting the young boy.

At the end of the film, the group returns to Faraway Downs, and Nullah leaves for “walkabout” with King George like he had always planned to do. Despite Sarah’s reluctance for the young boy to take what she considers to be an arduous journey, she accepts King George’s wisdom and hence admits to the limitations of her own white Australian presumptions about child safety and welfare. In the final inter-titles the film asserts allegiance with contemporary political stances toward the stolen generations and indigenous reconciliation, and acknowledges the February 2008 formal apology proffered by Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on behalf of the Australian nation.68

The year 1939 when the film’s story commences, is the same year that two important intertexts, Gone with the Wind and The Wizard of Oz were first released. The film’s narrative borrows from the genre best epitomised by Gone With the Wind, while The Wizard of Oz “Over the rainbow” is transformed into an indigenous song of hope and longing by Nullah, who is transfixed when he hears it sung by Lady Ashley after the death of his mother.

The narrative contains many contemporary references to Australian popular culture and deliberate historical anachronisms, which makes the film operate similarly to Moulin Rouge’s deconstructed history of nineteenth century Paris. For example, as an in-joke about the modern Australian tourism industry, Lady Sarah says sourly at the beginning that the Drover’s set-up is “all very outback adventure isn’t it?” when such an expression refers to an era of mass tourism not yet existent in the late 1930s.69 Soon after, when Sarah first sees a group of kangaroos hopping alongside their vehicle, she is overwhelmed at this national symbol and puts forward sentimental phrases such as “look at them jumping!” and “beautiful, beautiful!” When a kangaroo is shot by one of the Drover’s aboriginal team

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/events/apology/text.htm>

during her romantic swoon, she looks horrified as it is shown slung unceremoniously above her head on top of the Drover’s vehicle. This joke at the expense of Tourism Australia’s trademarked symbol for Australia ends up becoming another way of highlighting the numerous uses to which the animal is put, from children’s souvenir toy to international delicacy (for example, at shops at Sydney international airport one can buy kangaroo meat products, such as kangaroo jerky). This scene also visually rhymes with a scene in *Crocodile Dundee*, when Dundee attacks some roo shooters by feigning to be a kangaroo himself and “fighting back” with a rifle.

As an outsider, the local Territorians do not expect Sarah to become accustomed to the hot local conditions. Fletcher notes that “a delicate English rose withers in the outback” and is confident that it will not take much to scare her back to England. Sarah’s scathing attitude toward her husband’s pursuits in Australia insinuates that he has been sleeping with Aboriginal women in what she imagines to be an exotic kind of sex tourism. She misrecognises the Drover’s mention of Aboriginal women as “easy to get along with, if you try” as an indicator of this chauvinism, and announces pompously that “you and my husband share an interest”. According to the voiceover narration of Nullah, Sarah “looked but she no see”. Sarah’s new understanding means she is able to overcome her anxiety that the Drover (and her husband) used Aboriginal women as sexual objects. At this point, Sarah ceases to be a screwball comedienne and takes on the role of the romantic heroine. The tone of the film changes completely. Travelling through the landscape, Nullah notes that “now, she got her eyes open for the very first time.” As in *Crocodile Dundee* and *Rogue*, the tourist is depicted as boorish and ignorant of the nuances of landscape and local culture, yet there is also an ability to learn from mistakes and transcend this original identity. In fact, all three of these films demonstrate that it is possible for foreigners to become “Australian” through mastery of local knowledge and customs, which is certainly similar to the “shrimp on the barbie” campaign's key concept that it is possible to emulate “Australianness” through a friendly greeting.

**Australia: The Tourism Campaign**

*Australia* is a good candidate for a national tourism flagship campaign – it is a Hollywood-esque historical melodrama by the nation’s most internationally-recognised and commercially successful filmmaker, starring Australian Hollywood movie stars. The
Managing Director of Tourism Australia, Geoff Buckley, notes that “we knew that this huge film would create a wave of publicity that would put the country in the spotlight around the globe… and we found that the film’s story had a remarkable resonance for what we do marketing the country as a travel destination.”

It is also clear in this campaign that Tourism Australia has been closely following marketing strategies established by New Zealand for the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, as well as reading the literature that has been produced on film tourism. *Australia* the film also attracted the local investment of state tourism agencies for their own purposes: between June 2008 and the scheduled release date in November 2008, Tourism Western Australia spent one million dollars on a campaign to coincide with the release of *Australia*, targeting markets in the United States, Japan, Europe and South Korea.

In the narrative of *Australia*, the key romantic moments of the film are tied in with hyper-touristic imagery of the Australian landscape, and these moments are later recycled in the development of the Tourism Australia campaign. For example, the Drover and Lady Sarah first consummate their relationship at the commencement of the wet season in Darwin. The storms arrive at the end of a lot of tension, and cause the locals in Darwin to dance on the streets and celebrate with beer and cheers. As the main characters immediately travel home to the now lush, green Faraway Downs, the footage used after their sexual consummation is perhaps the most tourist-oriented images in the entire film. The camera lingers, probes and penetrates the northern landscape as an extension of the couple’s similarly fecund sexual awakening. It is interesting to note that in *Crocodile Dundee*, the images after their first kiss, focus on the beauty of the landscape, including a pink sunset.

Tourism Australia developed two television commercials with the assistance of Baz Luhrmann, featuring locations that also featured in the film. The *Billabong* and *Boab* commercials were both produced by Luhrmann, but unlike *Australia* they are set in the contemporary world. *Billabong* follows the story of an American woman shown weary of life in a dismal and dark city. Her boyfriend wants to “take a break” from their relationship, suggesting that she has no time for him as a key reason, and meanwhile her workload remains heavy and overwhelming. While she is sleeping, an Aborignal boy

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71 Tourism Western Australia featured *Australia* on their marketing web page. Accessed at: <http://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Australia_the_Movie/Pages/About_Australia_the_movie.aspx>
(Brandon Walters) appears, whispering in her ear “sometimes we have to get lost to find ourselves. Sometimes we can go walkabout”. After a brief communion – the boy holds hands, and drops magical sand into her hand – a quick dissolve suddenly shows the woman and her boyfriend diving and swimming together in a in Northern Australia. Her boyfriend murmurs to her, “I’m glad you’re back”. The advertisement concludes with the inter-text “she arrived as Ms. K Mathieson, Executive VP of Sales. She departed as Kate.” Finally, the catchphrase appears on the screen “Welcome to Australia. Come Walkabout.”

Luhrmann’s other advertisement Boab follows a similar narrative, except that in this case the protagonist is an overworked Japanese man, who after an encounter with the Aboriginal boy is then shown frolicking with his girlfriend at sunset under a beautiful Boab tree. The branches are slung with miniature lanterns. In Australia, after the Drover and Sarah first consummate their relationship and return to Faraway Downs with Nullah, a montage scene shows the trio celebrating Christmas dinner at the same tree at dusk, which is also slung with the same lanterns. The “billabong” of the first advert was also used in a love scene with Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman.

The tie-ins with the film were also apparent on the www.australia.com webpage. On the home page, there were two central references to Australia the film [See Figure 9]. The first was a large flash image from Boab that shows the hetero-normative couple seated on the large branch of the boab tree at sunset. The second image was the “Come Walkabout planner” (on the top left hand corner of the page), which both employs a phrase directly drawn from Nullah’s pidgin idiolect and visually uses a retro-styled map of the continent (the same as the 1940s “news reel” maps used in the film). Another image from the Australia web page is captioned “Lose Yourself in the movie/Find yourself in Australia”, and shows an empty red bulldust road running into distant mountains and blue sky [See Figure 11]. Bereft of human life, this empty image is connotative of values such as discovery, freedom and adventure. Here, it is as if the spectator is invited to be the central protagonist in a movie of his or her own making, while the striking eucalyptus tree on the left and the faint indigenous painting superimposed on the sky signals Australia. Despite the significant role given to the “larrikin” in the film, we find in the campaign that all reference to this figure has vanished. The frequent mention and association of Baz Luhrmann’s name as a reference to this latest campaign provides a subtle yet effective link to the film.
In the film, the Drover (Hugh Jackman) remains the epitome of the larrikin caricature, as epitomised by his sense of humour, his fighting nature, his hyper-masculine posing, and his use of clichéd Australian expressions such as “too bloody right” and “crikey!” Like Mick Dundee, his attitude toward indigenous Australians is egalitarian and inclusive. The Darwin citizens suggest that as “as far as this town is concerned, [he is] black”. Again, like Dundee, he practices a form of social performativity that enables him to transcend cultural boundaries, including those of race, nationality and class. Like Dundee, the Drover conceives of an enlightened Australia without the barriers caused by bigotry and prejudice. For example, when his best friend is not allowed to drink at the Darwin pub because of his indigenous identity, the Drover demands that “just because it is…doesn’t mean it should be.” Yet Luhrmann avoids this aspect of the film in the commercials for the tourism campaign.

The connotations of the indigenous Australian “walkabout” add a sense of spiritualism to the notion of travel or journey exploited by the campaign. The idea here is that visitors from foreign cities go to the outback and are transformed. Here, it is the exotic indigenous child who appears as a long-lived colonial trope of Western tourism. As Katrin Althans notes about the appearance of the indigenous child in Australian tourism marketing, it seems that only certain aspects of Aboriginal culture are currently considered sellable, and have hence “entered Australian cultural productions and are *en vogue* as signifiers of Australia abroad.” Fittingly, the slogan to “go walkabout” is also a referent to a previous Australian film that actually featured one of the main actors from *Australia*. Nicholas Roeg’s film *Walkabout* (1970) introduced David Gulpilil to international audiences in his first acting role. Gulpilil played a similar character to Brandon. That David plays King George, who leads Nullah in the next walkabout, suggests that there is a continuum between the films, and a happy ending for the first (Gulpilil’s character kills himself in *Walkabout*). Interestingly, in *Crocodile Dundee* the small northern town where Mick is based is called “Walkabout Creek”, his aboriginal friends go on walkabouts and at the end of the film he nearly goes on his own walkabout in the United States until the intervention from his love interest. In these cases, we can see that “walkabout” is a familiar concept that apparently can be divested of its indigenous origins - in both *Crocodile Dundee* and *Australia* anyone (even of non-indigenous origin) can go “walkabout.”
Figure 10. “Come walkabout”. Featuring Brandon Walters, a main actor from Australia, The white “Larrikin” that appeared in the 2006 campaign has now been replaced by an indigenous approximate, a boyish but timeless spirit who infuses the newer campaign with connotations of mysticism and high romance. The use of Luhrmann’s name here also works to connect the campaign with cinema.

Luhrmann’s television commercials as well as the main photography on the web page depict Australia as a place for quiet retreat and revival from the vicissitudes of contemporary global urban life. Again, Australia appears to be used as a “safe” destination within the context of global tourism. The advertisements seem geared a target market of professional hetero-normative couples or solo travellers rather than to families. In some ways, this connects to the narrative of Australia through the transformation of Sarah (Kidman) as she adapts to the Australia after a more refined and class-oriented existence in England. However, the humorous tone that is set by the film, does not seem to transform into the tourism campaign. Similarly, the long-winded, almost baroque narrative does not match the streamlined simplicity of the commercials. Finally, the “Australia” of the film represents anything but a place for a quiet retreat – it is a film filmed with the sound of explosions, car motors, fires, shootings, cattle stampedes, Prattling dialogue, etc. The latest campaign is a return to the subdued and sophisticated iconography of the “Different Light” campaign of 2004. Yet, Luhrmann’s film is vastly different from this kind of representation, and draws lovingly upon representations of larrikin identity that chime more closely to the Dundee legend.
When *Australia* was released at the box office in 2008, the positive reviews of the film tended to emphasise the cinematography of the landscape as a highlight, regardless of poor storytelling or craftsmanship. For example, Claire Sutherland, writing for the *Herald Sun*, suggested that the film features some of “the most beautiful photography ever seen in an Australian film, from the Bungle Bungles in the Kimberley to the Northern Territory in the midst of the wet season.”

*Australia*-linked tourist experiences have been created to extend outside of the real filming locations of the film. For example, to tie-in with the release of the film in Melbourne, the interior of the Faraway Downs set was exhibited at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image for *Setting the Scene: Film Design from Metropolis to Australia*, partly curated by the film’s art director Karen Murphy. At the time of writing, the economic and cultural effects of *Australia* on the national tourism industry are yet to be fully known. A recent survey conducted by Tourism Australia suggests that four billion people globally would have read press articles or else watched television items that mentioned Australia as tourist destination, which it has judged to be a success for the industry.

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Tourism Australia has estimated the coverage provided by the film is equal to $A500 million in unpaid publicity for the nation’s landscapes. Yet simultaneous to the film’s release has been a severe global economic downturn, which will undoubtedly have profound consequences on the Australian tourism industry, no matter how inspiring a film-vision might prove on an international audience. Because the advertisements need to put forth a vision of what is essential to constructions of “Australianness”, most of the tourism campaigns attract controversy and negative judgements, and I do not use recent articles here as indicators of true success or failure. However, I would suggest that the film’s narrative-image does not connect fully to the ideology that is behind the latest tourism campaign, and I would conclude that any film that is used as a conduit for national promotion in the future should be mindful of the connection that needs to be made between the two.

It seems that marketing campaigns for Australia have been marked by ambivalence in the first decade of the 2000s: on one hand there is the need to capture both the traditional sense of the country as “ocker”, whilst also the desire to emphasise the country as sophisticated, creative melting pot. Successive tourism campaigns have oscillated between the two central meanings, which have the potential to weaken the constructed meaning of Brand Australia until such meanings can successfully converge.

The success of *Wolf Creek* and *Rogue* as highly regarded Australian films signals that Australian cultural policy might be shifting to include previously neglected genre films. As Mark Ryan points out in his study of horror in Australian cinema, historically this genre has been neglected by funding bodies, not to mention esteem from the national film industry:

…cultural policy’s narrowness “shuts out” genres such as horror from funding environments and mainstream film culture – so much so that horror films have barely been recognised as an Australian filmmaking tradition…cultural policy has

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75 Lee, “*Australia delivers publicity windfall*”.  
largely written off horror and other genres as debased production without cultural
resonance and an affront to “quality” Australian cinema.\textsuperscript{77}

More recently, horror films are able to attract funding through national funding bodies. The insertion of a particular kind of spatial imaginary onto cinematic or literary narrative has profound implications on the ideological messages that might be contained in the text’s content, as some critics have suggested.\textsuperscript{78} Given this cultural context, one could say that the “landscape film” of the Australian cinematic tradition takes on an interesting new permutation with the influence of film tourism as one of the economically beneficial offshoots of cinematic production. As film tourism continues to be used as a buzz term for economic stature of Australia, the monitoring of this film tourist gaze as it continues to develop and cluster around Australian film commissions is as vital and necessary as ever.

And then there is also the tourism industry itself. In April 2010, Tourism Australia introduced a new marketing campaign that took over from the “Come walkabout” campaign of Lurhmann’s \textit{Australia}. The new slogan is “Nothing Like Australia”, which is a similar expression to \textit{The Wizard of Oz}’s catchphrase “there’s no place like home” (and as mentioned earlier, “Oz” is a time-honoured pun for “Australia” and was also used in Lurhmann’s film). The newest campaign aims to harness the power of the social networking revolution caused by web sites such as Facebook and Twitter, inviting the Australian public to participate directly with the campaign, by sending through their own photographs and videos of iconic Australian places and people to be posted on the “Nothing Like Australia” home page.\textsuperscript{79} Arguably, this move might represent a new era of travel marketing, circumventing the traditional and clichéd photography and copywriting of professionals. At the same time, the amateur photographs selected for the webpage are tourism snapshots and hence conform to the constraints of the genre: i.e. they highlight the destination in the background, feature bodies framed against these famous sites. They are images that function as visual souvenirs for the users.

This latest campaign seems an extension of Tourism Australia’s experiments with media cultures through ventures such as the \textit{Australia} promotion. In the latest campaign, user

\textsuperscript{77} Ryan, Mark, \textit{Dark New World}, p.186.
\textsuperscript{79} Accessed at: \url{http://nothinglikeaustralia.com} April 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2010.
images are another way of suggesting a “uniqueness” or “reality” to the image in opposition to conventional, generic tourism photography. Likewise, footage from *Australia* differentiates itself from such conventions. It is connected to a feature film, therefore is art and an altogether unique commodity. While cinema draws upon imagery from “real life” (destinations that can be visited on outback tours), visitors in the newest campaign can take their own photography and insert themselves into the picture and a new narrative of Australian identity. Therefore, this new campaign is undoubtedly part of a continuing project that sees Tourism Australia highlighting the nation as an absolutely unique destination for overseas visitors. Given the importance given to recent Australian cinema in the touristic representation of Australia, it is likely that cinema shall continue to wield an influence over this and future campaigns.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have introduced the concept of the film tourist gaze as a key term for debates concerning the ideological representation of touring and travel in the cinema. The film tourist gaze offers a new way of reading five different location sites and texts that are also established film tourist locations; Vertigo’s San Francisco; Universal’s studio tour of the 1960s; the Universal Studios theme park; The Beach’s Thailand; and Wolf Creek, Rogue and Australia’s Northern Australia. I defined the film tourist gaze by its ability to function as an extension of the cinematic lens; it represents a new way of understanding cinema, as the first stage of an experience that can be understood in reality. I identified the configuration of the film tourist gaze through a detailed analysis of pre-existing scholarship on travel and cinema, surveying the evolution of the gaze from the early era of tourism in the nineteenth century, through the birth of high concept cinema in Hollywood in the 1960s and 1970s, to the tourist-generating Hollywood films of the twenty-first century. In each case study, I argued that the film tourist gaze can help to shape touristic desire through the management of filmed spaces. Bringing together the findings of film spectator scholarship with John Urry’s detailed analysis of contemporary tourism cultures, I presented the film tourist gaze as a theory to make sense of the ideological meanings of film sites.

Examining the film Vertigo, I showed the connections that lie between film narrative, memory and place, in this instance through an examination of the spectacular urban sites of San Francisco. The armchair tourism that is intrinsic to this Alfred Hitchcock narrative is here subverted, becoming a more sinister revisiting of what are ordinarily considered “safe” tourist locations. This first chapter of the thesis examines the power of the film tourist gaze as an indicator of the complex range of issues that can attach to one filmed site and how a classic text can find new life through new forms of spectatorship and tourism.

In the second chapter I have studied the establishment of the studio tour in Hollywood and the ways in which large studios have adapted these sites to reflect film tourist expectations and maximised studio profits. Drawing on the power of Los Angeles as the centre of the American film industry I revealed how Universal marshalled the complex forces at work to produce what is now a heritage site, a tourist microcosm of a major city. I demonstrated
how the public fascination with filmed spaces resulted in this proliferation of studio film tourism in the 1960s, which created the emergent trend that has become contemporary mass film tourism. I also indicated the importance that studio film tourism played in the expansion of studios becoming multi-entertainment sites.

After an examination of the emergence of Hollywood theme park film tourism, I turn to its contemporary incarnation. In chapter three, I examined in detail, the content of contemporary Universal Studios Hollywood by analysing the themed experiences within the location, focussing on attractions built around the blockbusters *Psycho*, *Jaws* and *Back to the Future*. Nowadays, theme parks offer a more streamlined approach to film marketing, and in my analysis of the contemporary Universal Studios Hollywood I showed how blockbuster cinema has positioned the spectator as an armchair tourist on a “rollercoaster ride”, travelling the ups and downs of a perilous environment, both via the movie narrative and secondly via the narrative of the theme park experience. Harnessing the emotional experiences of fear and exhilaration, the theme park offers its own wild yet controlled forms of travel that would be too horrifying were they to be experienced in “real life.” In this case study of Universal Studios, “dangerous” and “out-of-this-world” travel, represented through the theme park ride, suggests for Hollywood film studios a utilisable force, one that can be used to draw out the film’s key themes and, of course, to extend for maximum profits.

Both fascinating and troubling, the film tourist gaze as a new form of film spectatorship is bound to the problems that have been identified with mass tourism, especially those relating to ecological preservation and the sustainability of fragile local communities. While film and television watching is sometimes linked dubiously to real life impacts, it seems that in the case of film tourism, the direct impact of cinema viewing/spectatorship can be legitimately argued to have a real world consequence, such as dire results on the environment of the setting in question.¹ My research on *The Beach* demonstrated that despite a narrative that claimed to be against mass tourism, it was nonetheless trapped within its own self-fulfilling prophecy as a film text and tourism site. Indeed, the real-life locations and settings in Thailand were put under direct ecological threat by the film

production itself, and later by the sheer numbers of people who wanted to see the beautiful locations that they had seen in this particular movie. I concluded that the narrative of the film serves as a kind of cloaking mechanism, which can alleviate the guilt of a film tourist through a more political narrative.

I also presented a new perspective on the issue of film tourism and national cinemas, one that sought to investigate and understand these films as complex conduits for national tourism policies and concepts. I examined a range of Australian movies sustained by the powerful image of the nation as a seemingly threatening malefactor. Many of these films were apparent anti-touristic narratives – particularly, Greg McLean’s two recent films Wolf Creek and Rogue, yet both still draw upon the same iconography and themes of recent major Australian tourism campaigns. National cinemas, I contended, might be more susceptible to the influence of film tourism strategies due to the structure of national tourism campaigns, particularly smaller nations that rely on the tourism industry for major economic sustainability such as Australia and New Zealand. What is cautionary with the case of the popularity of film tourism is that such imperatives to create tourism to a particular region or country may result in policy shifts on the part of national funding bodies, particularly if they share links with the tourism sector. Further research is needed to be undertaken on individual countries and careful analysis of current filmmaking policies and opportunities, to examine whether tourism ideologies might be impacting upon the narratives of cinema itself.

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, the film tourist gaze offers new insights into depictions of travel and touring in cinema and indicates the perseverance of ideology in contemporary Hollywood cinema. Perhaps more importantly, the film tourist gaze draws our attention to cinema’s ability to create real life travel, which by harnessing the emergence of the film tourist gaze, inaugurates a shifting of the boundaries of what cinema is considered to mean, and the way that it is currently situated in film studies.
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<http://www.1worldcommunication.org/boycottthebeach.htm>

Universal Studios Hollywood:
<http://www.universalstudioshollywood.com/>

Miscellaneous:
New York Location Tours <http://www.sreentours.com/>
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The Earth Explorer: Film Locations
<http://explorer.altopix.com/maps/1/258/Film_locations/?order=date>

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<http://www.gearthhacks.com/dlcat42/TV-show,-movie-locations.htm>

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James Bond Film Locations Blog <http://www.jamesbondisland.com>

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