Film Tourism (Not) in Taiwan: A Research Report on Film Tourism in Taiwan

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Abstract

This is a report of findings during author's six-month research conducted in Taiwan from December 2014, thanks to the generous support of the Taiwan Fellowship scheme. This report studies one specific aspect of the extended cultural products as a result of Taiwan film industry, namely film tourism. This research is to some extent a continuation of author's previous international project "How we became Middle-earth: the cultural implications of the *Lord of the Rings*". The project, which was launched in 2005 and concluded with the publication of a volume of essay collection in 2007 (same title as the project, Zollikofen: Walking Tree Publishers), attracted more than twenty international scholars as contributors. One of the key aspects of the project is the associated cultural tourism that the *Lord of the Ring* film trilogy brought to New Zealand the way New Zealand government and government agencies operated, the portrayal of New Zealand with its new and fictional identity "Middle-earth", and more importantly the cultural background and cultural implication of such portrayal well beyond simply a promotion of tourist destination. Considering the great similarity between Taiwan and New Zealand geographically and historically yet without overlooking key political and cultural differences, the findings of this research highlights the bountiful resources of film tourism that Taiwan possesses and some fundamental reasons for the lack of success in utilising these resources.

Introduction

The past century saw the industrial developments emerging into a new era that focused on discovering new markets and extending the boundaries of what can be packaged for sale, especially in the areas of cultural products. The cultural products, which relied on cultural beliefs and brand name effects, now constitute one of the core economic drives in the postmodern consumer society which spread into almost all developed countries and regions, and to a great extent the developing countries as well, in a globalised world at the turn of the 21st century. Among many cultural products, motion pictures and extended merchandises of film industries have taken a significant share. Thanks to the generous support of the Taiwan Fellowship scheme, author had the opportunity to spend six months in Taiwan from December 2014 to June 2015 to study on one specific aspect of the extended cultural products as a result of Taiwan film industry, namely film tourism. This report summarises key findings in author's study, which forms a significant part of a comprehensive research initiated by me on film and TV tourism in three Chinese speaking regions Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong. It also attempts to identify the resources that Taiwan has in this area and some key reasons for it is apparent lack of utilisation of these resources. The scope of this report focuses on how tourist operators and other local businesses actively use the cultural resources attached to film locations in promoting specific Taiwan tourist spots. Proactive utilisation of tourist spots associated with filming activities is not simply a mere verbal reference by tour guides or shop owners to those visitors already on the sites. Instead the tourist spots have to be such packaged not only with the title of a specific film or filmmaker, but also with the cultural contents within the film text as well as any other cultural implications about the filmmaking. Author Taiwan research is to some extent a continuation of author's previous international project "How we became Middle-earth: the cultural implications of the *Lord of the Rings*". The "Middle-earth" project, which was launched in 2005 and concluded with the publication of a volume of essay collection in 2007, attracted more than twenty international scholars as contributors. One of the key aspects of

the project is the associated cultural tourism that the *Lord of the Ring* film trilogy (Peter Jackson dir., 2001-2003)[1] brought to New Zealand the way New Zealand government and government agencies operated, the portrayal of New Zealand with its new and fictional identity "Middle-earth", and more importantly the cultural background and cultural implication of such portrayal well beyond simply a promotion of tourist destination. Considering the great similarity between Taiwan and New Zealand geographically and historically yet without overlooking key political and cultural differences, the findings of this research highlight the bountiful resources of film tourism that Taiwan possess and some fundamental reasons for the lack of success in utilising these resources.

Film Tourism *Vs.* Cultural Tourism

While most leisure tourists are cultural tourists, cultural tourism refers to specific tours which highlight specific cultural experiences, usually packed by tourist operators or organisations promoting tourism. The cultural experiences, which can relate to historical, custom, fictional (literature, film, television dramas, etc.) or even industrial characteristic of a tourist destination, frequently stress a cultural nature, be it real-life or imagined reality, in the otherwise totally commercial operation. It is fair to say that most leisure tourists are cultural tourists they are actively seeking cultural experiences, especially exotic experiences when touring a country, a region or a location. As Jennifer Craik points out in her study, most tourists simply "want some degree of negotiated experiences which provide a tourist 'bubble' (a safe, controlled environment) out of which they

can selectively step to 'sample' predictable forms of experiences"[2]. The traditional cultural dance of indigenous Taiwanese staged daily in the Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village meets the demand of the majority of the tourists travelling to the island to sample the indigenous Taiwan. The cultural performances are staged and displaced from its origin, yet certain traces to the indigenous people and the island are still evident [1]. They are arguably simply out or their original cultural context now, whereas the original cultural context that gave birth to the culture has been long gone through colonisation and industrialisation of the Taiwan. The survival of them, be they culture or more accurately cultural artifices, almost solely depends on the interest of the tourists the tourists who are interested in sampling an exotic culture during their trip for couple of days out of their usual living environment, their reality. Unlike these cultural performances, which are easily believed to be true and authentic (to some extent at least, due to their link to certain ethnic realities), postmodern film tourism, based on fictional or even fantasied narrative texts, is what described by Lisa Wong as "post-tourism". In her chapter "Theme/Film Tourism: The Disappearing of Illusion into Integral Reality" published in 2007, Wong suggests that film tourism, in comparison to traditional cultural tourism, is "from negotiated reality to virtual reality"[3]. Whereas there are different tourist experiences relating to films, as discussed above, the film tourism derived from culture tourism is the tour of film locations which gained specific cultural significance because of the filmmaking. Such significance is less likely coming from simply including a specific location in the film, such as the Big Ben in London, the Empire State Building in New York, or Taipei 101, but from a strong fictional story that could only happen in a specific location or even more significantly that a location is "created" for a specific film narrative. In Wong's words, this is the "virtual reality" that a film has brought to a physical place, be it existing or purely constructed as a film set. When thinking of film tourism in Taiwan, regardless the level of its (in-)significance, people tend to cite examples such as Chiufen in Hou Hsiao-Hsien's *A City of Sadness* or Pingtung in Wei Te-Sheng's *Cape No. 7*. While the success of these films certainly attracts visitors to some Taiwan landmarks, whether or not they are already popular tourist spots prior to the filmmaking, the Taiwan film industry has not *created* any "landmarks" that eventually contribute Taiwan's revenue in tourism as author am going to elaborate in the next section.

"Landmarks" in Taiwan Film Developments

While film development in Taiwan has had its highs and lows, for many times top film awards were within the grab of Taiwan filmmakers. Less frequent but still worth noticing were a small number of films which could achieve their popular appeal by attracting a sizeable box office and were highly regarded for their aesthetic milestones by major film festivals and film critics. Examples are Hou Hsiao-hsien's early films such as *A Cute* Girl, A *Time to Live, a Time to Die*, and his more matured works such as *A City of Sadness*, *Puppet Master* and *Good Man and Good Woman*. More recent and arguably more successful both aesthetically and commercially are *Cape No. 7* by Wei Te-Sheng and *You Are the Apple in my Eye* by Giddens Ko. While establishing landmarks in Taiwan film development, these films also utilise many Taiwan landmarks of their contemporary [2]. However, none of them *created* any physical landmarks in Taiwan to last. To clarify how author define "to create physical landmarks" in this report, author mean purposely built sites such as Hobbiton in Mata Mata in New Zealand for the *Lord of the Rings* films (and later used also in the *Hobbits* films)[4][2]. In terms of generating additional tourist interests to the destination and contributing significantly additional revenue from tourism, Hobbiton makes good comparison to many other film locations utilising existing

sites. A very close comparison both in terms of geographical distance and year of film production is Mt Taranaki in New Zealand being the film location for *The Last Samurai* (Edward Zwick dir., 2003, the same year when the final episode of Jackson's *Lord of the Ring* trilogy was released). A Hollywood blockbuster film starring Tom Cruise and dubbing snow-capped New Zealand volcano (Mt Taranaki, previously with a rather colonial name Mt Edmond) as the even more world-famous Mont Fuji in Japan, the making of *The Last Samurai* certainly brought some international attention to New Zealand, in addition to a sizeable revenue to local business by hosting a large crew of Hollywood celebrities. However, there has been no statistical proof that the location the film was shot brought any significant tourists to the region. Indeed, we may suspect that more people might have been (mis-)lead to Mount Fuji which the New Zealand landmark is pretending to be in the film. Equally, we can expect that most tourists, if not all tourists visiting Rome choose to visit the ancient European city whether or not *Roman Holiday* (William Wyler dir., 1953) was filmed there (in fact, how many contemporary tourists to Rome know there was a film called *Roman Holiday*?).

A closer example to Taiwan, both geographically and culturally, is the Repulse Bay Hotel in Ann Hui's film *Love in a Fallen City*. The original hotel was demolished in 1982 before the film was made, in order to allow a block of upmarket high-rise residential buildings to be built on the scenic waterfront site on south shore of Hong Kong Island. The construction was withheld when Hong Kong property market slumped due to the uncertainty of the colony's future in the mist of Sino-British negotiation. Whereas Hui's "restoration" of the hotel site the front entrance and the balcony restaurant above the entrance with temporary materials for filming purpose only was not a total creation (or simply an adaptation from a fictional tale, such as in the case of Hobbiton), it nonetheless did literally involve (re-)building a landmark (though not deliberately) for future tourism beyond the film. The temporary building was later recognised for its "cultural value", and strengthened and operated by the private investor of the luxury residential block plan eventuated later in 1989 when Hong Kong housing market went hot again. The preserved "heritage hotel remains" became a popular destination for visitors to Hong Kong as well as for the local's nostalgic sentiment. It is thus a physical landmark that the film left to Hong Kong and Hong Kong tourism. When compared to these examples, Taiwan film industry has not left any of these kinds of "landmarks" on the Island, which could have the potential to significantly contribute to the tourist industry. Without such "landmarks", little or no physical trace of the film industry has been left on the physical scenery of the Island [3]. Therefore, any film tourism that Taiwan can successfully score is not based on the success of filmic creation of location per se, but to the extent based on the filmic utilisation of existing creations by others, be it natural, cultural or architectural.

Universal *Vs.* Unique Models of Film Tourism

Generally speaking, we can divide tourism related to utilising filmmaking and film texts into three types. First is the utilisation of film locations where have been tourist spots. The filmmaking that took place on these spots allows the tourist operators to easily add a few more lines to their guide scripts. Second are tourist destinations set in film studios, or theme parks. Whereas the former usually doubles its function for both filmmaking and tourism, the latter usually focuses on duplicating fantasy worlds in films or television productions. Third and perhaps the most interesting is what author coined as the "New Zealand Lord of the Rings Model", which consists of both natural and purposely built locations on otherwise non-typical tourist destinations.

It is the filmmaking and film texts that enhance, if not provide from nothing, the meaning of these locations. In the following paragraphs of this section, author will elaborate and compare these three types of film tourism. Many films were shot at existing tourist destinations, some already famous before the films were made there and others that became significantly more famous than before as a result of being film locations. The Big Ben in London perhaps no longer deserves any more words relating to film appearance from a tour guide, since it simply appears in too many films, mainly used as location indicator (or what the filmmakers call as for establishing shot, telling the audience that the following scene takes place in London). Same can be said to the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building in New York. A number of famous spots in Rome have been featured in films, many Hollywood productions. However, arguably none of these films has been mentioned more frequently to visitors to Rome by local tour guide than *Roman Holiday*, the 1953 Hollywood movie stars Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn, since the film was released. Less known to the Western world is Jiuzhai in Sichuan Province . When *The Journey to the West* was first made into television drama in Mainland China in 1986, Jiuzhai was one of the key locations. Many Chinese audiences made the connection between the television drama and the tourist destination much later, when the remote Tibetan tribal area gradually became more ready for tourists from the outside world at the turn of the 21st century. In fact, Jiuzhai's reputation was further boosted by Zhang Yimou's 2002 film *Hero*. Also known primarily among Chinese audiences is Lushan (Mountain Lu), in *Love in Lushan Mountain*, the 1980 film also had a sequel thirty years later in 2010 with the same female actor Zhang Yu being both the director and playing the female lead. Similarly, Yuanshan Hotel in Taipei was used by Ang Lee in his 1994 film *Eat, Drink, Men, Women* and Edward Yang in his 2000 film *A One and a Two*. There are many more similar examples, yet all the films in the above examples, from the West, Mainland China and Taiwan, made using existing tourist sites, benefited from not only the ready scenic spots, but also frequently the ready fame with these spots for the films' publicity. The films in general add very little cultural values to the tourist spot, except some proud mentioning of these film titles when the local tour guides introduce these places to their customers. The Notre Dame in Paris has been a rather interesting case. Ever since Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* was published in 1831, the cathedral in Paris where the plot is set has borne an extra layer of "history" from the fictional text. The text was then extended and updated repeatedly from 1905, when the first of at least ten films adapted from Hugo's novel to date was filmed, even though not every single one was necessarily shot on location [4]. With at least five television dramas, and more than two dozen stage adaptations ranging from music, musicals to ballet, the Paris cathedral's impression to its visitors, even before their arrival of the site, is a Middle Age tower with a hunchback who secretly admires a beautiful woman. It is for this reason, despite being categorised as utilising an existing tourist spot, the case bears some similarity with that author categorised as New Zealand Lord of the Rings Model. The fundamental difference, though, lies between an accidental literary creation as in Hugo's Notre Dame text, and a government driven promotion campaign which combines searching for postcolonial identity, developments of local film industry and increasing inbound international tourists as in the New Zealand case, as author will further elaborate below.

The second type of film tourism is by nature a fantasy world generated by films texts. Open to public, a real film studio, be it with long term fame as those in Hollywood or rather young studio like Hengdian Studio in Zhengjiang Province , which proclaims itself as the Hollywood in the East) and Wuxi Studio of China Central Television (CCTV), which bears layers of filmic (and television drama) texts when exposed in front of its visitors. Unlike Notre Dame, which was built centuries ago for religious reasons before Hugo's narrative conveniently borrowed the site, and arguably colonised the site with his characters and stories, these film (and television) studios were built for filmic texts and welcomed imposed narratives to it. Due to the loads of narratives added to these studios, the historical and cultural themes of their cultural significance are blurred and less important. Instead, affiliation to a strong filmic text, such as an Oscar winning moving picture, or a particular film star can be the key interest for many visitors of these studios. Belonging to another kind of fantasised film worlds that are even keener to invite the audiences to visit are film-related theme parks. No other theme parks, film related or not, are more famous than Disneyland Parks around the world one in the United States, one in Europe and *three* in East Asia (including the Shanghai Park scheduled for opening in spring 2016), and a sixth one with slightly different theme, Disney California Adventure Park. Similar theme parks include Warner Bros. Movie World in Gold Coast, Australia and on a much smaller scale, Wuhan Wanda Movie Park, established by a giant Chinese company. With stories (though many adapted from well-known fairy tales) from Disneyland or other popular titles of films, these parks offer not only a revisit of the stories and the filming of the stories, but also create a theatre-like experience in which the audience/visitors can take part (to some extent) in the making of these film fantasies, if not contributing to the fantasies themselves. Because of the particular nature of these parks which are indeed live fantasized worlds, they function, as argued by postmodern theorist Jean Baudrillard, as a proof and reminder to people in the postmodern consumer societies full of abstract signs, that the space beyond the park boundary is still real [5]. The otherwise audiences of these fantasies staged day in day out in these parks, are actually duped as "touring visitors" while in reality many of them do travel from far away in order to visit these parks. The last of the three category of film tourism, not only being the most interesting for its level of cultural creativity, but also arguably the one that could be most relevant to Taiwan, is what author have named the New Zealand Lord of the Rings Model. Aimed at attracting the Hollywood film industry on the one hand, and promoting New Zealand as tourist destination on the other, New Zealand government proactively marketed the Pacific island country as filming location by offering significant tax rebate from the end of the 20th century. The films in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy were the first major Hollywood blockbuster productions to benefit from the new tax policies [5]. However, it was hard to expect Hollywood made films from New Zealand on regular basis; New Zealand did not necessarily have enough locations nor human resources to meet any large demand from the filmmaking kingdom. New Zealand's plan was not just for short term. Teaming up the tourist industry and Air New Zealand, New Zealand government fully utilised the opportunity and accelerated inbound tourists to New Zealand to a record high in the first half of the first decade in the new millennium. Being a country of just over 4 million people, New Zealand government took the advantage of its size being small and politicians being flexible. In the height of *The Lord of the Rings* films and New Zealand tourism promotions, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who also doubled as the country's Minister of Arts and Culture, personally attended important international film receptions and promote New Zealand as a filmmaking work yard as well as tourist destination which gained new national identity and culture through filmmaking [6]. The success of New Zealand in promoting film tourism through the making of *The Lord of the Rings* films is not unrepeatable [5]. With geographical similarity and postcolonial commonality, Taiwan ought to have almost all the key factors of New Zealand's success, despite having a relatively

higher but still very manageable population (23,434,000 vs New Zealand's 4,509,700 in 2014). However, Taiwan governments in recent years, be they Kuomintang (KMT) or Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), have been very much distracted by political issues, and have not been very keen on promoting Taiwan's films and film tourism. New Zealand's success in promoting the country as Middle-earth, thus a tourist destination for a world familiar with the tale in the films, and a wide readership who have wished to be able to witness Tolken's literary world in real life, was to a great extent due to country's own cultural (re-)identification at the turn of the 21st century. Being a British colony by treaty (instead of a result of war) for about a century and a half, New Zealand had been primarily identifying itself as part of the Empire, the heartland of which was at the exact opposite side of the globe, especially by fighting as part of the British Royal Army in the Bore War, two World Wars and the Korean War. However, the post-WWII economic development, especially the rise of Four Dragons in Asia[7] and the decline in demand for New Zealand primary produces in the United Kingdom and Europe, forced New Zealand to join its nearest neighbour Australia to reconsider its political and cultural identities according to its new business partners and its geographical location, both leading to a close connection to Asia and Southeast Asia. State leaders of Australia and New Zealand at different times and occasions made proclamations on behalf of their countries to align themselves as "Asian countries". On the other hand, the cultural heritage between the two British colonies and the rest of Asia was significantly different, and that cannot always be easily bridged by regional trades and globalisation. The alignment with Asia is contingent for economic benefits, yet a new postcolonial cultural identity different from being a British subject in convention or an "imagined Asian community" hardly convincingly to anyone (to play on Benedict Anderson's famous term)[8] was to be established at the turn of the 21st century.

Middle-earth, central but being the centre for nowhere, seemingly suited the colony's pursuit for the historical moment very well. Claiming it belonged to neither any major powers (Britain or Europe) nor any geographical regions, New Zealand borrowed the fantasised "nation" in Tolken's literary creation for its (re-)created and very (re-)creative "new" identity. The irony has remained, as Middle-earth after all is an imagined community created by a British scholar, who himself was very much British/Europe-concerned, if not Anglo-centric/Eurocentric. Thus, the brand new identity for New Zealand indeed isn't at all new. Nonetheless, Tolken's tale and Middle-earth does not only allow New Zealand (re-)generating its identity, but also helps the rest of the world to know and notice the postcolonial country better. Serving its own people's search for postcolonial identity, promoting a new New Zealand to the rest of the world and increasing dramatically its exportation in tourism, New Zealand had to be recognised for being very ingenious in creating this special category of culture/film tourism, which author named as the Lord of the Rings Model. With similar colonial history and even more similar island geographical natures due to sitting on the same fault line at each end of the Pacific Ocean, one cannot help but ask whether or not the New Zealand Lord of the Rings Model can be duplicated in Taiwan.

Taiwan Film Tour Resources Unutilised and the Key Limitations

During author's stay in Taiwan for the research, author toured around the island, visiting both conventional tourist spots that some film shooting took place in recent years, or specific spots known as locations of some major film productions whether or not they were operated as popular tourist spots. The findings of author's research are primarily based on author's observation when visiting these relevant location spots. The information to which author paid special attention included publicity literature prepared by tourist promoting organisations (government agencies and local operators), verbal reference and recommendation by local tourist operators (hotel staff, transportation operator, shopkeepers, etc.), and physical presentation (clear signage, special graphic, model or display regarding to the film shot on location, etc.). Author's knowledge on contemporary Taiwan cinema as being an expert on Chinese language cinemas allowed me to identify a number of locations used for some significant Taiwan films made in recent years, such as Chiufen in Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A City of Sadness* and Pingtung in Wei Te-Sheng's *Cape No. 7*. Author's Taiwan colleagues also pointed out some locations that play less significant roles in films (i.e. those likely to be overlooked by general audiences), for example Wu-Shan-Tou Reservoir in Wei Te-Sheng's *Kano*. The Reservoir was indeed designed and supervised for construction by Hatta Yoichi, a historical character in the film. Author also visited the famous tree on the Brown's Road in Chishang, Taitung, where Takeshi Kaneshiro is having a cup of tea in a 2014 video commercial for EVA Air. Author's journey was rather a great fun for film historians and experts especially in terms of discovering where these locations were hiding in most cases; the charm of these films and their making, many internationally well-known, was presented at the minimum or none to other travellers. The conventional tourist operators pay little or no attention to film tours; let alone systematic promotion of Taiwan (or a specific spot in Taiwan) as a film tour destination. Throughout author's twelve weeks of tour visiting almost every corner of Taiwan, there was only one location which was recommended to me by local tourist operators without any prompt (yes, a single location recommended by more than one operator) for its association with the filming (though it was not filming a motion picture as we will see below). The location was Brown's Road in Chishang, and strictly speaking it was not really a film location but an individual site with primarily a single tree used by a video commercial. Interesting enough, the relatively well-known Brown's Road lies in a large piece of rice paddy in Chishang, and is the name a local road adopted after being featured in a series of video commercials for Mr. Brown Coffee (Taiwan). Since 2014, the fame of this location in fact was boosted by the popular film star Takeshi Kaneshiro who featured in the video, with little or no specific connection to the specific product promoted in the commercial, or to the narrative within the commercial. Well, you cannot even find a cup of decent coffee on this road across paddy fields! This was the closest case to New Zealand the Lord of the Rings model film tourism author found in Taiwan during author's research, yet the case was still primarily based on advertising video-making. It was not strategically planned for tourist industry's benefit either. The content of the video commercial is merely for merchandise promotion rather than for cultural identity establishment. In the case of referring film locations through conventional tourist operation, the location and the referred film are simply the ice on the cake of sightseeing. These locations bear no more cultural or historical values than other conventional tours spots. Such operation is certainly worth considering in promotion strategy for conventional tourism, yet this is not the interest of this research which focuses on the cultural value and cultural implication in the operation of promoting a tourist destination through film tourism. Disneyland and Universal Studio type of film tours can certainly be within the scope of film tourism researches in a Cultural Studies framework. However, due to its population, flow and origin of its inbound tourists and especially existing film theme parks in the region (Disneyland Parks in Hong Kong in operation and in Shanghai soon open, both within ninety minutes by air travel), it appears that Taiwan

does not have the demand for another film-themed fun park to be built on the island. Thus, the most practical choice of film related tour model is apparently the New Zealand Lord of the Rings model as we witnessed at the beginning of the century in New Zealand which is still benefiting the Pacific country after fifteen years. In terms of overall cultural and historical experiences, there are many similarities between Taiwan and New Zealand. Both has rich histories of indigenous peoples, relatively recent occupied histories by colonial powers, and even shorter yet more recent histories with overwhelming inflow migration after the Second World War and with the political reality of self-ruling. In the case of New Zealand, geographical distance and rapid development in Asian states toward the end of the 20th century meant the traditional tie it had with the British Kingdom was economically shaken, politically questioned and culturally weakened (to some extent thanks to American culture in the name of globalisation especially for this latter feature). For adopting a fashionable identity in a globalised world in a postcolonial (and post-colonial) era, New Zealand successfully used Middle-earth as a metaphor for nation. Despite a Hollywood production adapted from a post-WWII English writer, *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy directed by Peter Jackson a Kiwi director (yes, nicknaming themselves as Kiwis after the unique birds only found in the country is another sign of seeking for an independent cultural identity by New Zealanders) indeed fulfilled the New Zealand peoples' search for the country's new identity. While Taiwan undoubtedly has a primary cultural link in terms of traditions with Mainland China, the economic interdependence between the two sides of the strait has also developed significantly since the turn of the century (and some argue that Taiwan depends more on Mainland than Mainland on Taiwan), yet the fifty years of Japanese occupation from 1896 to 1945 left both visible and invisible traces in the island's politics, economy and culture. While almost all people are seeking for their new identities in today's globalised world, people in Taiwan are arguably some of the keenest, partly because of its current embarrassing international status. In this way, Taiwan is in a socio-cultural condition very similar to New Zealand. It is a hotbed for innovative cultural identities. However, it does not necessarily have some other crucial resources for the emergence of any innovative cultural identities, due to a matter of time and timing on the one hand, and on the other, a political outfit the island state has inherited.

To become a film tourist destination, there has to be a filmmaker (or filmmakers) who is capable of making Taiwan popular (yes popular, as film tourism is a popular phenomenon, not an elite cultural activity) for audiences, especially those beyond the island. The locally brewed filmmaker is important, because only when a local director working creatively on the local locations can the local people identify themselves with both the filmmaker and the location when imagining a new cultural identity. In the case of New Zealand, these filmmakers included Jane Campion (with *The Piano*, 1993), Peter Jackson, and Andrew Adamson (*The Chronicles of Narnia* series since 2005). In Taiwan it could be Ang Lee who has already achieved reputation in mainstream global cinema through films such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. However, Lee did not make these films in Taiwan and this is not to say that film tourism would necessarily be successful if he did. Filmed in Taiwan at locations which very much reflect Taiwan socio-economic developments are films like Wei Te-Sheng's *Cape No. 7* and Giddens Ko's *You Are the Apple in my Eye*. They also have high Taiwan contents the contents very much imbedded in an East Asian culture, be it more Chinese, more Japanese or a blend of both. Neither were created by a crew teaming with Hollywood practitioners and backed with Hollywood investments, which are among the key elements of global success such as Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings*

series or Ang Lee's *Crunching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Being a rather sad reality considered by many filmmakers in local industries, the Hollywood does monopolise the majority of popular entertaining screens throughout the world. Therefore, Hollywood's involvement is crucial to almost all international block blaster films and international popularity of a film (or films) is what successful film tourism fundamentally relies on. The right filmmakers and the contribution of significant Hollywood involvements can all simply be matters of time and timing. To some extent, despite the scale of coverage for its cultural embedment, opportunities that arise from films like *Cape Number 7* and *You Are the Apple in my Eye* should have at least been able to help Taiwan to market its film tourism among Asian countries, especially Japan and Mainland China. However, there are two crucial elements still missing, each hindered by the administrative and political systems, and by the postcolonial dilemma of the island respectively. Thanks to the end of the state of emergency in the late 1980s and a Western style democratic system introduced thorough out its national and local level elections in the 1990s, Taiwan has been celebrating for its achievements in the political democracy. The newly democratised representative political system, however, is a double-edged sword. A strong populism approach by politicians at all levels means the island is lacking a wish among both the politicians and the bureaucracy serving the political system to implement any long term strategic developments, yet a successful cultural tourist industry requires collaborative efforts among all major political forces and long term strategic planning as we have seen in the New Zealand model. The current political and administrative systems in Taiwan are not the only major obstacles in developing a film tourist industry on the island. Perhaps a far more significant barrier is the politicised interpretations by various groups in Taiwan and by Mainland China, should any cultural identities, no matter how fictional or fable natured they are, be generated. In other words, at this specific historical moment, Taiwan is not quite free to imagine, generate and promote a unique cultural identity, which can be generally appreciated by all major segments among its population and politically acceptable by other stakeholders in the neighbourhood, even if such identity is apolitical by nature. However, as seen in the success of the New Zealand model, the generation of new and innovative cultural identities requires convincing linkage between the film contents and the country's tradition. Therefore, it seems fair to say that, under the current circumstances, a successful film tourist industry following the New Zealand model is unlikely to exist in Taiwan [6].

Conclusion

Film tourism has become an active part of cultural tourism in the 21st century. Successful and viable film tourist industries can be categorised into three major forms existing scenic spots featured in films, theme parks reflect filmmaking and film culture, and scenic spots which have emerged as a result of filmmaking on location. Taiwan has had a number of existing scenic spots featured in films. Like most of the existing scenic spots associated with films, the film related charm of these spots has diminished rather quickly through time. To delay this decline of interest requires coordination between tourist promoting agencies and tourist operators, though no effective strategy seems to be in place and these tourist resources are expiring even sooner than their counterparts in some rather successful countries like New Zealand, South Korea and Mainland China. Theme parks based on filmmaking and film fantasies have been built around Taiwan in Asia (Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai), leaving Taiwan even less likely to have its own park in the near future. Theme parks, however, has not been a major concern of film tourism study with a specific region as its focus, for these parks are overwhelmingly presenting the Hollywood/

Disney culturea culture which does not necessarily have much or any connection to *the local*. Whether or not a major film theme park in Taiwan is sustainable is purely a business decision. An addition of a film theme park will not noticeably change the cultural outfit or significantly alter the socio-ethnic identity of Taiwan. In terms of long term tourist business and cultural creatives, it is the New Zealand Lord of the Ring Model suggested in this report that seems effective and serves a nation well when it seeks a postcolonial cultural identity that suits the 21st century globalised world and the taste of contemporary tourists. Unfortunately, the party politics in Taiwan means a long term business plan based on cultural strategy is beyond reach under the current circumstances. The ambiguous national identity and sensitive regional stability also prohibit both the government and individual artists vocally pursue a unique and memorable identity for the Island, since any cultural identity cannot escape politicisation in the end. It is for this reason, despite many similarities between Taiwan and New Zealand in terms of geography, colonial history and so on, that it is not quite possible for Taiwan to copy the success of film tourism in New Zealand based on (re-)generation of cultural identity.

Notes:

[1]The three Lord of the Rings films directed by the New Zealand filmmaker Peter Jackson are primarily filmed at various locations and Weta Studio, Wellington in New Zealand, despite being a production of the Hollywood based New Line Cinema. The three films are: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001); The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (2002); and The Lord of the Ring: The Return of the King (2003).

[2]Jennifer Craik (1997), "The Culture of Tourism" in Chris Rojek and John Urry eds., Touring Culture: Transformations of Travel and Theory, London: Routledge, p. 115.

[3]Lisa Wong (2007), "Theme/Film Tourism: The /Disappearing of Illusion into Integral Reality" in Adam Lam and Nataliya Oryshchuk eds., How We Became Middle Earth: A Collection of Essays on The Lords of the Rings, Zollikofen: Walking Tree Publishers, p. 89.

[4]Following Tolken's description in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbits novels, the imagined rural Hobbits habitation in Tolken's fantasies—Hobbiton—was built by Peter Jackson's crew on a private farm in Mata Mata for the filming. The filming site, under licences from the filming agreement, turned into a popular tourist destination and became a significant stop of the so-call "Lord of the Rings Tour" in New Zealand. More information about the tourist sport can be found on its official http://www.hobbitontours.com/ (accessed on 29 Oct 2015).

[5]Jean Baudrillard (1996), "Disneyworld Company", trans by Francois Debrix, http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=158 (accessed on 16 Nov 2015).

[6]For example, Helen Clark (2003), "Speech at Film Reception in Seoul" 26 July, http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech-film-reception-seoul (accessed on 17 Nov 2015).

[7]The four counties/regions in Southeast Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore—which achieve significant economic success by 1970s/1980s are commonly regarded as the Four Dragons in the area.

[8]In discussing nationalism in modern and contemporary capitalist context, Benedict Anderson argued in his famous 1983 book Imagined Communities that nation is only "an imagined political community". See Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1991), Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (Revised and extended. ed.), London: Verso (above quotation from pp. 6-7).

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