In the Footsteps of the Fellowship

- Understanding the Expectations and Experiences of

Lord of the Rings Tourists on Guided Tours in New Zealand

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A.-K. Buchmann

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This study seeks to gain an insight into the experiences *Lord of the Rings* tourists have on guided tours in New Zealand and the role of the tour guide(s) in that experience. The study examines motivations, expectations, actual experience and its evaluation and the role of the tour leader and guides. By drawing primarily on the results of qualitative research that examined the experience of film tourists and other people involved in the film tourism industry over a span of three years, I identified underlying motivations involved in the production and consumption of film tourism.

The study found that pre-tour images of *Lord of the Rings* and its publicity surrounding the making of the films play a significant role in the formation of film tourists’ expectations. The emotional relationship towards the films and the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien had motivated film tourists to seek a meaningful and sincere experience. Furthermore, the film and its making as discussed on the DVDs, further publicised myths like the authenticity of the film production itself and the experience of great meaning for one’s personal life. Consequently, the study found that most film tourists put a high significance on the sincerity of the relationships within the tour community and with the tour leader and guide(s). The film location visit itself was experienced as highly rewarding but was significantly enhanced by the presence of the tour community (‘fellowship’), reenactments and the physical presence on site. This embodiment was crucial for the overall experience as it further authenticated the location visit but also the journey itself as a worthy and spiritual endeavour.
It was shown that the New Zealand image of ‘green’, ‘clean’ and ‘exotic otherness’ has been reinforced by multiple media portraits and matches many aspects of the Middle-earth image. All film tourists judged the use of New Zealand for the portrayal of Middle-earth as, ‘authentic’ even if they knew about J.R.R. Tolkien’s British background. Furthermore, they judged their film tourism experience as authentic even though the locations were used in a fictional setting. Thus the notions of object authenticity was explored and replaced with the concepts of existential authenticity and sincerity to shift the focus towards the active process of negotiation of authenticity in the tourism experience.

To understand tourists’ behaviour and motivation, notions of ‘spirituality’ and ‘pilgrimage’ were also employed. The study tourists undertook a meaningful and spiritually significant journey that was enhanced through the experience of embodiment and community which suggested parallels between the religious pilgrim and the secular film tourist. Both are on a meaningful journey to distant places and follow scripted guidelines while also creating their own experience. Embodiment played an important role. Furthermore, film tourists sought the community of other believers and were willing to ‘follow in the footsteps’ of film stars and crew when choosing which film locations and eateries to visit as they sought places that had attained an ‘aura’.

Keywords: film tourism; film-induced tourism; movie tourism; movie-induced tourism; Lord of the Rings; Tolkien; Whale Rider; pilgrimage; myths; authenticity; tourist experience; tour guide; New Zealand
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1. INTRODUCTION

Films have attracted tourists to some of the most stunning and most unlikely places over the last fifty years: *Casablanca* (1942) and *The Sound of Music* (1965) started the phenomenon of visiting film locations in Morocco and Salzburg, respectively. Later, *Star Wars* (1977, 1980, and 1983) would attract tourists to Tunisia\(^1\) and Norway, and an American cornfield became a well-known tourist spot after the release of *Field of Dreams* (1989). In some cases, films showcased cities like Vienna in *The Third Man* (1949), Savannah in *Midnight in The Garden of Evil* (1997) and Venice in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) while in other cases whole countries were highlighted as was the case with Kenya in *Out of Africa* (1985) and Thailand in *The Beach* (2000). There are organised themed tours that follow the footsteps of James Bond or the mysteries of *The Da Vinci Code* film. There are specialised film related guidebooks (e.g., *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations* (Reeves, 2001), *The Movie Traveller: A Film Fan's Travel Guide to the UK and Ireland* (Foster, 2000), *Movie Locations: A Guide to Britain and Ireland* (M. Adams, 2000) and *The Pocket Scottish Movie Book* (Pendreigh, 2002) and of course the *Lord of the Rings Location Guidebook* (Brodie, 2002, 2003, 2004). There are television shows and movie maps promoting film locations (e.g. Britain, the U.S.A. and Australia), and the Internet-based company Amazon even includes filming locations in its film reviews (Amazon.com, 2006).

What is ‘film’ and what is ‘film tourism’? This study refers to film as movie and television feature films that are in narrative format of typically more than 60 minutes length (American Film Institute, 2004; New Zealand Film Commission, 2006). I have at times included discussion of some tele-features and television shows of less length by way of illustration but the main focus falls on films that fit this definition. In this study, film tourists are understood as domestic or international tourists who visit a site or a location, that is or has been used for or is associated with filming; this comprehensive definition was deemed important so as to include established film tourism spots like cafes and production facilities. One of the most influential articles in the area defines film tourism as tourism where “people are seeking sights/sites seen on the silver screen” (Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998, p. 920); however, this definition

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\(^1\)It has been reported that Tunisia has become “a focal point for hundreds of thousands of Star Wars nuts who make the six-hour pilgrimage south from Tunisia’s tourist coast every year” (Brennan, 2005).
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focuses on movies, excludes locations of runaway productions where a film is not shot at the location that it portrays, and film-related facilities and associated eateries, etc.. In contrast, Beeton (2005) suggested a wider understanding of film tourism that includes movies, television, on- and off-site filming locations, and even film-related theme parks and studio tours. Still, I found no consentual definition in the relevant literature and that many authors, in fact, do not provide a definition at all; creating the need to formulate and clearly state a workable definition for this research.

In New Zealand, film tourism includes visits to locations such as:

- remaining former film sets (for example, The Rescue prison, Lord of the Rings’ Hobbiton and the Last Samurai village);
- actual settlements/urban landscapes (for example, Whale Rider and The Frighteners);
- the landscapes where the filming was set (for example, in the case of The Piano and Lord of the Rings)
- and film-related facilities like post-production buildings, film prop workshops, but also cinemas, eateries, and shops.

It could be assumed that, corresponding to the diversity of films and their themes, each film has a specific impact on the formation of expectations towards film location visits. Due to the very nature of film making, including the characteristic distortion of time and space and, the scope and power of modern digital enhancements, the geographical reality of locations usually differs from the fictional setting portrayed on the screen.

Figure 1.1 The challenge of film tourism: this setting became Lothlórien once the bridge was extended, artificial leaves were added to the vegetation, and the characters acted –though partially in front of blue-screens that allowed the insertion of further special effects
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The example depicted in Figure 1.1 shows how challenging film tourism can be, especially when all signs of filming have been removed. Film tourists are still drawn to film locations worldwide and due to the promising nature of the reach and spread of both cinema and television, film is increasingly seen as another marketing tool in destination marketing (Tooke & Baker, 1996).

In some cases regional film offices, whose prime focus is the facilitation of film production activity, began cooperating with tourism associations both to promote their regions as ‘film production friendly’ and to facilitate film tourism (Beeton, 2005). In New Zealand, Film New Zealand and the regional film offices (Film Auckland, Film Volcanic, Film Venture Taranaki, Film Wellington, Film South, Film Dunedin and Film Queenstown) differ in their degree of involvement with film tourism but all recognise that it does take place (for more information see http://www.filmnz.com). In any event, film tourism in New Zealand has been growing strongly over recent years (see section 2.2. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry). The Ministry of Tourism, which researches the activities and attractions that international tourists pursue in New Zealand, has added the category of ‘film location’ in their 2005 survey forms. A total of 65,630 tourists mentioned film location tourism, ranking it with, for example, the categories of albatross colony, art galleries, farm tours, horse trekking, waterfalls, and white-water rafting (Ministry of Tourism, 2006).

On a personal note, one of my first significant experiences with film tourism took place in Chicago, U.S.A., when I unintentionally stumbled upon landmarks that were eerily familiar to me despite the fact that I had never before travelled to Chicago. While standing on a bridge over the Chicago River, I was drawn into a conversation with a local and realised that many Chicago landmarks including the University of Illinois Hospital at 1720 W. Taylor Street had been used for exterior shots of the television drama series E.R. (1994-ongoing). I was both surprised and excited to recognise a place I had only seen before on a small screen. Sometime later I attended a function in the Roy Thomson Hall with its iconic dome in Toronto, Canada,

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2 Film New Zealand is New Zealand’s national film locations office “providing information, introductions and support to filmmakers, both internationally and nationally. For those wishing to film in New Zealand, Film New Zealand can supply everything you need to know about locations, facilities, crews, permits, immigration, taxation, transport and accommodation” (Film New Zealand, 2006).

3 Film South, for example, is even developing a website for film tourism (I Helen Ross, production advisor of Film South, 26.04.2006).
1. Introduction

and realised that scenes of *X-Men* (2000) had been filmed inside the structure. This time, I could see how camera angles had been manipulated to extend the film set for the screen portrayal.

As a result of these and other experiences, I developed an interest and curiosity in this phenomenon. Just how deep and ‘multi-faceted’ was this sense of familiarity with these places that I had only experienced in visual media beforehand? As I considered such questions I became aware of other examples of film tourism. These included journeys made by friends to *Star Wars* locations. This then raised broader questions for me about my upcoming ‘study abroad’ experience in Australia. After all, I had never been to that country and my knowledge of it heavily relied on mediated information. What would the real Australia be like compared to the images I had formed? These experiences raised questions about the nature of media and film tourism and its relation to wider ranging social processes.

The existence of film tourism has been reported and recorded for many years (though in small numbers) and yet little of the phenomenon is understood. For a long time, most accounts of tourism to film sets and locations were anecdotal or journalistic in character (Hansen, 2003; Keeble, 1999a, 1999b; Maccallum-Whitcomb, 2002). Even today there is limited quantitative data though there is an emerging body of academic literature on the topic. This study capitalizes on the numerous film locations in New Zealand and their increasing promotion following the worldwide interest in the *Lord of the Rings* films of 2001, 2002 and 2003. Both the manageable size of New Zealand, in terms of a research project, and the multiple film sites of potential interest to film tourists in the country combined with the increasing inflow of Lord of the Rings-related tourists promised a rich field of study.
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The focus of this study is on guided tours involving film tourists, who are defined as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been associated with the filming of movies and television feature films. The aim of this study is to provide a better understanding and conceptual framework for the film tourism experience. A complex mix of qualitative research methods, including interviews, observations, questionnaires and tour journals, was employed to answer the study’s research objectives:

1. To conceptualise the nature of experiences gained by film tourists in New Zealand
2. To examine the motivations and expectations of film tourists in New Zealand
3. To gain insights into the role of the tour guide(s) in visitors’ experiences of film-location tours

The first two objectives sought to address the current gap in research while the last objective acknowledges the presence of tour guide(s) on guided tours and their possible influence on the overall experience and was determined by evidence that tour guides have considerable affect on experience and also by the assumption that the guide is likely to be significant in this kind of tourism. The research process itself was an evolution of initial ideas and data gathering approaches that arose from continuously collecting and analysing data from within a Grounded Theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998; Van Peursem, 1998). This approach would ideally allow me to “move inductively upward from data to theoretical rendering” (Charmaz, 2002, p. 681). By looking at the experiences of film tourists, their
1. Introduction

motivations and expectations, and their relationship to the film and tour guide, it was hoped that connections to broader sociological issues could be revealed. In discussing such a framework, key terms such as ‘myth’, ‘simulacrum’, ‘authenticity’, ‘real’, and ‘hyperreal’ proved foundational for the analysis of this example of film tourism.

In a slightly unusual structuring for a thesis, certain literature will be introduced not only in the chapters that specifically review the literature but also later in the discussion of the findings, which reflects the actual research process that used the Grounded Theory approach.

Chapter Outline

The second chapter ‘Film Tourism: Experiences and Research Worldwide and in New Zealand’ will discuss in detail the phenomenon of film tourism, with a particular focus on the situation in New Zealand. Relevant literature on film tourism and the related field of literary tourism will then be presented. Most of the published research to date has concentrated on the impacts of film production on the location or community, rather than the tourist, a first insight into what have been suggested as possible motivations will be presented.

The third chapter - ‘Theoretical Framework: Film, Pilgrims and the Longing for Myths in Modernity’ - continues the discussion of possible motivations of film tourists in a framework involving the relevance of film, myths, spirituality and pilgrimage. Theses concepts have been used before in similar studies but the reason for their consideration here arose partly retrospectively after initial data analysis.

The fourth chapter - ‘Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods’ - introduces and discusses the multiple qualitative methods used in this study to investigate the motivations, expectations and the experiences of film tourists, while also exploring the contribution made by the tour guide(s) towards the film tourism experience. The qualitative methods included interviews, observations, questionnaires and journals and were used within a Grounded Theory approach. Two nationwide tours were fully and one nationwide tour was partially researched in this way; all had a Lord of the Rings focus. The nationwide scope was deliberately chosen to observe changes during the tour.
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The fifth chapter - ‘Research Findings and Discussion’ - details the main research findings and discusses them in the light of relevant literature. In doing so, the characteristics of the participants of the nationwide tours and their motivations and expectations of film tourists are discussed. This will reveal how the participants characterise and interpret New Zealand and its filming locations and the significance of the meaningfulness and spirituality of the journey and its travelling community. Finally, both the experience of tour guides and of other people involved in the tourism industry will be discussed.

The sixth chapter - ‘Discussion of Findings with Framework’ - will merge the previous discussion of the motivation, expectations and actual experience with the greater framework, arguing that many film tourists share characteristics with pilgrims. Both display a longing for both bodily and spiritually meaningful experiences. Furthermore, the power of myths and films will be discussed as well as the construction and meaning of ‘authenticity’ for the film tourism experience.

The seventh chapter - ‘Reflections on Research’ - reflects on my involvement in and influence on the field research and explains how I negotiated the multiple roles of researcher, tour leader and guide, escort, and fellow traveller. The section also shows how my understanding of the subject and my own role evolved over the study period.

The eighth chapter - ‘Final Thesis Summary and Recommendations’ - summarises the key findings of this study, while outlining future areas of research.

Abbreviations
Throughout the text, abbreviations will be used to link given quotes to their sources. For example, (I) stands for interview, (IG) for group interview, (Q) for questionnaire, which is further distinguished in pre- and post-tour questionnaires, (eQ) for email questionnaire, (TJ) for tour journal, (F) for field notes and (O) for observation. In some interview transcripts it was necessary to distinguish participant(s) and interviewee(s) (P) from the researcher (AB). Additionally, individual codes in the form of numbers are used to distinguish the exact sources.
1. Introduction

Please note: I will refer to *Lord of the Rings* throughout this study and not *The Lord of the Rings* to facilitate the readability of this common term.
2. FILM TOURISM: EXPERIENCES AND RESEARCH

WORLDWIDE AND IN NEW ZEALAND

“There has been a growing worldwide phenomenon that tourists visit a destination or attraction as a result of the place being featured or portrayed in the popular cultural forms of the media which are not directly concerned with tourism promotion or marketing, such as films, television dramas and novels” (Iwashita, 2003).

This chapter will provide an overview of the phenomenon of film tourism in New Zealand. Section 2.1. will introduce the New Zealand film tourism industry. The consequent sections will provide further examples of film tourism both worldwide and in New Zealand while also introducing the research on this rapidly developing branch of tourism. This will be followed by a summary of the current literature on film tourism and a discussion on the related fields of literary tourism and a discussion of the notions of ‘authenticity’ and ‘hyperreality’.

4 Note: Sources in electronic form do not require page number citation under university guidelines; however, I have included page numbers for documents that were printed in pdf-format.
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

More than 35 tour operators and agents offer over 50 film-related tours in New Zealand in a variety of half day and multiple day tours visiting a single or a range of locations. These tours utilise coaches, four wheel drive vehicles, aircraft and even horses and visit around 150 locations. While many tours focus solely on film locations (usually *Lord of the Rings* locations, though a few tours incorporate several films in one tour), other tours incorporate film locations in their standard (non-film) tour programme. Overall, I estimate that there are more than 225 film locations\(^5\) available for self-organised and organised tourism. Given this range of locations and the diverse industry of operators of various sizes and scope, it is difficult to gather accurate and comprehensive information about tours and activities being offered. Tourists themselves are reported to complain that “there is not enough information about what tours and activities are possible” (Buchmann, 2006a). Exact visitation numbers to film locations are impossible to verify without reliable data. Many locations, for example, draw both film and non-film tourists. Initially, I intended to interview visitors to establish the proportion of film tourists in the overall visitation number; however, the sheer number of locations and their visitors make it impossible to distinguish these two types of tourists adequately\(^6\). There are, however, several past and current focal points for film tourism in New Zealand that are introduced in this section.

New Zealand has produced feature films since 1914 (*Hinemoa*) and has been utilised by foreign filmmakers as a film production site for nearly the same length of time, starting in 1916 with *A Maori Maid’s Love* and *The Mutiny on the Bounty*. Even then there was a distinction between films that used New Zealand storylines and locations, and films that simply used New Zealand to portray another place. While some people, including New Zealand actor Sam Neill, have suggested an “uniquely strange and dark film industry” (Horrocks, 1999, p. 129)\(^7\) in New Zealand that would produce correspondingly ‘dark’ films, one also finds recurring examples of fantasy themed films including *Willow* and *Lord of the Rings*, and television series like *Hercules* and *Xena*. There are also fantasy elements in films like *Heavenly Creatures* where the

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\(^5\) This calculation represents the number of locations accessible to tourists and is based on the number of films that have been known to attract at least some attention (as identified through publications and interviews) and their estimated number of locations.

\(^6\) These challenges have been recognised by other film tourism researchers too (see section 2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research).
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

imaginative aspect of the girls’ lives was portrayed through fantastical sequences. Hundreds, if not thousands, of films have been made and, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s alone, 60 feature films were shot in New Zealand (Reid, 1986). This adds up to a significant history of film made in New Zealand (see also Shelton, 2005) as shown in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 A small excerpt of feature films shot in New Zealand for both small and big screen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Release date</th>
<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Hinemoa</td>
<td>movie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>A Maori Maid’s Love</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1916</td>
<td>The Mutiny on the Bounty</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Lovely Maoriland</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Phar Lap’s Son</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>Rewi’s Last Stand</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>Broken Barrier</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Don’t Let It Get You</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>To Love a Maori</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Sleeping Dogs</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Skin Deep</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Goodbye Pork Pie</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Race for the Yankee Zephyr</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>The Bounty</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Bad Taste</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The Navigator: A Mediaeval Odyssey</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The Rescue</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>Willow</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>The Rainbow Warrior Conspiracy</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>An Angel at My Table</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The Black Stallion</td>
<td>TV</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Braindead</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Shortland Street</td>
<td>TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The Piano</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Heavenly Creatures</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Once Were Warriors</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>Cinema of Unease: A Personal Journey by Sam Neill</td>
<td>docu</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Forgotten Silver</td>
<td>movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>Hercules: The Legendary Journeys</td>
<td>TV</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that such ‘dark’ connotation have also been suggested for music, literature and painting and sculptures (Hoare, 2006).
While there is some evidence of early film tourism at the beginning of the twentieth century when British tourists were attracted to the fantasy of a ‘Maoriland’, modern film tourism began with Jane Campion’s *The Piano* in 1993 when domestic and international tourists noticeably began visiting Karekare Beach; a flow of tourists that continues (View Auckland, 2005). There were films like *Heavenly Creatures* that do attract some visitation and many other films like *Willow, Once Were Warriors, The Frighteners* and *Vertical Limit* showcasing New Zealand locations that attract very little tourism interest. In the case of *Vertical Limit*, both Tourism New Zealand (2002) and the Department of Conservation\(^8\) had expected at least some interest as the film showcased the magnificent Southern Alps and had an adventurous storyline (I Harry Maher, Department of Conservation, 21.03.2005), but no significant interest arose.

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\(^{8}\) The Department of Conservation is the government agency responsible for conservation in New Zealand.
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry


\[\text{Figure 2.1 A Hindi cinema production takes place at Christchurch Botanical Gardens} \]

Most film sets are taken down after filming finishes so that just the landscape remains. However, New Zealand still has a few locations that host film set structures, for example:

- The Prison used in *The Rescue* in Queenstown

The prison set remained on private property in Queenstown after negotiations with Disney. The property has been offering farm tours and recently *Lord of the Rings* tours. It appears not much

\[^9\] It proved difficult to obtain details about the numbers of Hindi cinema productions and their locations though a newspaper mentioned in 2003 that “film director David Dhanraj and famous actor Govinda in town for filming ‘Kunwara’, the eight Indian feature film shot in Christchurch” (Rice, 2002). Similar to Switzerland (Keller, Backhaus, & Elsasser, 2002), a significant number of Indian film makers utilise New Zealand landscapes as a backdrop for the dream-like dance sequences that are so typical for Hindi cinema (see also Kabir, 2001). I also observed Indian film crews in such places as Christchurch Botanic Gardens, the streets of Wellington and Tongariro National Park. (See also Chisafis, 2002).

\[^10\] As stated before, literally hundreds of films have been made in New Zealand and left their impact in one way or the other. However, the films listed here present those films interviewees of this study talked most commonly about in connection with film tourism.
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

attention is given to the prison building by the tourists though the guides do explain its history as the van drives past. The set, however, is not maintained and is fenced off to the public.

Figure 2.2 One example of a structure left behind after filming: The Rescue Prison

- The Hobbiton Movie Set used in Lord of the Rings in Matamata
  This township is home to the Alexander family whose sheep farm had been used to recreate Hobbiton, a village in the Shire where the Hobbits live. Due to adverse weather, the destruction of the Hobbiton set was delayed and eventually prevented; the owners now run a highly successful tourism operation and offer up to seven tightly scripted tours a day.

Figure 2.3 Tour guides at Hobbiton Movie Set follow tight scripts

- The Last Samurai Village in Uruti Valley, Taranaki
  Similar to the Hobbiton set, various sequences were filmed on private property and a whole Samurai village was constructed. Most of the cottages, other structures and pathways remain and the landowner Redcliffes are now offering a similar experience to that provided at the Hobbiton Movie Set. Despite a professional set up with extensive signage, information material
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

and original movie props, the Samurai Village has yet to attract significant visitation numbers (I Sue Redcliffe, tour operator and guide, 11.11.2004). Yet the film starring Tom Cruise had been accompanied by considerable public interest from the beginning of production, with extensive coverage in news, newspapers and magazines. The main marketing now takes place in the Japanese market and an increase in visitation numbers is expected following the DVD release (I Dominic Moran, Film Office staff, 10.11.2004).

The township where *Whale Rider* was filmed in Whangara, East Coast

The settlement of Whangara, its beach and especially its carved marae were used as integral settings of the film *Whale Rider* and are in many ways factual settings as the local people consider themselves related to the ancestral whale rider Paikea. In addition, the *Whale Rider* author, Witi Ihimaera, lived there during his childhood. The filming itself fostered strong bonds between the involved locals and the film making crew, some of whom returned to live in the settlement. The waka (canoe) and whale statues used in the film have been placed on a field next to the marae. Due to the small size of the settlement there were privacy issues with tourists; access is now limited to the official *Whale Rider* tour that is arranged when there is sufficient demand.

Visitors who show respect for Maori custom are welcome at the marae (Maddocks, 2004).
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

Besides these examples, where sets have been built and (partially) remain, many other locations, mainly *Lord of the Rings* locations, throughout the country have been used as filming sites. Some of these are on private property; others can be found in publicly managed areas including protected areas. Among the most famous of such locations utilised for film tourism are:

- The *Lord of the Rings* Edoras tour in the Rangitata Valley, Canterbury
  Mount Sunday in the remote Rangitata Valley was used to portray the capital of Rohan, one of the main settings of the films. Even while the set was built, locals began visiting the set that was eventually taken down to the regret of many (Mark Gilbert, tour operator and guide, personal communication, 16.12.2004; I 10104 NW1). Nowadays the location is one of the most popular *Lord of the Rings* sites and experiences high visitation numbers according to locals (Mark Gilbert, tour operator and guide, personal communication, 16.12.2004) for both organised and unorganised tourism.

- The *Lord of the Rings* Pelennor Fields tour in Twizel
  A private property close to the small township of Twizel hosted the filming of the climactic Pelennor Fields battle in the *Return of the King*. While the actual filming was completed in a matter of days, the setting up took months and included the building of an access road that remains today. A local tour operator continues to offer half day tours.
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Figure 2.6 What remains... an access road constructed during filming of Lord of the Rings

- The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe in Flock Hill, Canterbury

This tour was set up to coincide with the film release in December 2005 and has seen a slow increase in visitor numbers since then. Though the set has been taken down, the one official tour operator now takes tourists into the iconic landscapes used in the film, while using costumes and props to increase the experience (O 26.04.2004).

In many of these latter cases the locations are completely unmarked and yet high visitor numbers could be observed (e.g., O 30.12.2004; F 31.12.2004; O 30.12.2005; O 31.12.2005), especially around Queenstown and Arrowtown but also in the Greater Wellington region. A few locations, such as Kaitoke Regional Park and the Whakapapa ski field in Tongariro National Park, have film-related signage to varying degrees.

Figure 2.7 The number of film location signs film locations is slowly increasing; signage in Kaitoke Regional Park (left) and in Tongariro National Park (right)
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

While many locations were already well known tourist spots before, for both domestic and international tourists, other locations showed a strong increase in visitor numbers after film releases, as in the case of Mount Owen and Edoras (both locations of *Lord of the Rings*). In the latter case “in the revised edition [of the Lord of the Rings Location Guidebook] Lord of the Rings fans worldwide will be drawn to its beauty and serenity thanks to Richard Taylor singling it out as his favourite location” (Studholme, 2005).

There are some amenities operating with film-related names (e.g. the Rivendell Lodge in Kimbell, the Rivendell Bed and Breakfast Homestay in Geraldine, the Hobbiton Hotel at Woodlyn Park and the Matamata Hotel Hobbiton Backpackers). However, these amenities are *Lord of the Rings*-related only in their name and (with the exception of Barliman’s in Wanaka) do not offer a film tourism experience. The success of such operations has not been investigated for this study.

![Figure 2.8 Examples of amenities with film-related naming and styling](image)

Finally, the city of Wellington has a special status due to its film industry facilities and branding as the creative capital of New Zealand. There are more than 80 locations of films like *The Frighteners*, *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* in the greater region.

There are production facilities including Weta Workshop\(^{11}\), Weta Digital and Park Road Post and the national museum Te Papa\(^{12}\), which twice hosted the *Lord Of The Rings Motion Picture*

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\(^{11}\) Weta Workshop was responsible for the design, production and on-set operation of the film props including armour and weaponry, prosthetics, and special make-up for the *Lord of the Rings* films.

\(^{12}\) Te Papa’s “key tasks are to preserve and present the taonga (treasures) of New Zealand’s peoples and to interpret the country’s heritage for national and international audiences” (Te Papa, 2006).
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

Trilogy - The Exhibition\textsuperscript{13}. There are also eateries and stores (sometimes well publicised) that were used frequently by actors and film crews.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{te_papa_exhibition}
\caption{Te Papa hosted the Lord Of The Rings Motion Picture Trilogy - The Exhibition}
\end{figure}

Thus, even though filming takes place all over New Zealand, and despite Auckland having more than four full-sized studios, it is Wellington that is most often connected with film tourism. This is no doubt principally due to the Lord of the Rings phenomenon and Peter Jackson’s production company being located there.

Additionally, some film tourists seem to pursue celebrity tourism; a form of tourism that is undertaken by fans of the celebrities (e.g., actors like Naomi Watts and Jack Black) and not particularly concerned with any one film (I Andrew Cameron, restaurant owner, 28.10.2004; I Robynne Leahy, shop manager, 28.10.2004; I Chris Thompson, café manager, 18.10.2005). There are also related shopping activities (see, for example, IG 10005 NW2 P1 and P3).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{film_shopping}
\caption{Shopping for film-related merchandise and souvenirs is an on-going hunt}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, the Lord Of The Rings Motion Picture Trilogy - The Exhibition became the most successful exhibition ever held by a museum in New Zealand, attracting more than 100,000 visitors during its first run and more than 220,000 in its second run (Capital Times, 2006).
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

It is important to note that the *Lord of the Rings* phenomenon is probably an exceptional event that is unlikely to be repeated. The publicity around the *Lord of the Rings* phenomenon alone was outstanding: “for a country the size of New Zealand, the resources committed to leveraging the effect of the Lord of the Rings is unprecedented” (Beeton, 2005, p. 81). The *Lord of the Rings* phenomenon has been impressive on many levels. The Tourism New Zealand marketing general manager Ian Macfarlane described the *Lord of the Rings* as “a good showcase for New Zealand as scenery” (B&T, 2001). Foremost, the films attracted an unusually high level of support from the New Zealand Government that included declaring a minister for *Lord of the Rings* (the position was filled by Cabinet minister Pete Hodgson). At the same time there was some controversy about the tax break the films would eventually be given. The Minister of Finance Michael Cullen had criticised the extent of the tax break in public, which in turn drew a comment from director Peter Jackson who thought the numbers exaggerated (Anonymous, 2004). A similar debate surrounded the funding of the world premiere. But again, the Government and Wellington City Council eventually cleared the amount and went ahead with planning the celebration (Cardy, 2003). This cooperation culminated in the hosting of the world premiere of *Return of the King* in December 2003 that attracted 100,000 attendees. This was followed by special events for the Academy Awards 2004 where *Lord of the Rings* won 11 awards.

![Figure 2.11 Wellington hosted the world premiere of Return of the King](image)

Overall, the *Lord of the Rings* films were claimed to have given New Zealand a high profile in key tourism markets and a report by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) in 2002 traced a considerable image improvement for New Zealand within the worldwide movie industry and found further support for the overall enhancement of the ‘brand New
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

Zealand’ (Yeabsley & Duncan, 2002). However, in the early days of the making and promotion of the *Lord of the Rings* films, there was uncertainty about the outcome and how the films would affect the country and economy. While there was acknowledgement that the choice of New Zealand as the manifestation of the landscapes described by Tolkien was appropriate, the movies themselves showed a special effect-enhanced world. With this in mind, *Lord of the Rings* production designer Grant Major stated: “Well, you might recognise the Remarkables, but that’ll be about it… everything else about the film will be Middle-earth” (Herrick, 2001). Two years later the widely used slogan was “New Zealand is Middle-earth” (often cited comment by Elijah Wood in 2002). These sentiments were shared by Tourism New Zealand which extensively used *Lord of the Rings* in their 100% Pure campaign while Air New Zealand even labelled itself as the ‘Airline to Middle-earth’ and even decorated four of its planes with Lord of the Rings décor.

The *Lord of the Rings* Location Guidebook\(^\text{14}\) was published in 2002 and became an instant success (New Zealand Herald, 2003b). This guide book includes maps and location directions, GPS references and general touring information for 88 sets\(^\text{15}\) and facilitated the growth of both self-driven and organised tourism in relation to the film sites. Also, an atlas including *Lord of the Rings* filming locations, marked by the symbol of a golden ring, was produced (Hema Maps, 2006).

![Figure 2.12 GPS data and general information of various *Lord of the Rings* locations were publicised](image)

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\(^\text{14}\) Such location guidebooks have been produced for New Zealand locations before, though usually in form of brochures (see, for example, Grey District Council, 2004).
\(^\text{15}\) Thus the guide book features roughly half of the sets used in the *Lord of the Rings*. 
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

The *Lord of the Rings* books are themselves familiar to a readership ranging from children to adults and are “read in a very special way by many people” (Martin Barker, researcher, personal communication, 12.09.2005) as a research team mapping the book-film relationship and reception of the trilogy worldwide found: “It is read for its exciting story, of course, but more than that, it is read for the ethical tests that its main characters undergo… this is more important than either its literary qualities or any particular bits in the story” (Martin Barker, researcher, personal communication, 12.09.2005). All this may well ensure *Lord of the Rings* tourism for some years to come (compare to findings of Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998, as introduced in section 2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research).

And while the *Lord of the Rings* might dominate the film tourism industry, other films are following closely. For example, the regional experience with *The Last Samurai* is somewhat similar to the *Lord of the Rings* phenomenon; both film projects:

* showed a similar dedication of the film makers in the preparing and shooting of the film (Lally, 2003; Sibley, 2002);
* were understood as exceptionally significant projects by the local film offices (Venture Taranaki, 2004a; I Jean Johnston, Film Wellington manager, 18.01.2005);
* were monitored closely by the media (TheOneRing.net, 2006; Venture Taranaki, 2004a);
* were used for film location tourism (New Zealand Herald, 2003, 2003b; Tourism New Zealand, 2004); and
* were subjects to reports and claimed to be major success stories for their region and New Zealand (Venture Taranaki, 2004b; Yeabsley & Duncan, 2002).

Overall, further film tourism is believed to be likely as a consequence of the success of *Lord of the Rings* tourism (see, for example, I 10002 NW2; I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004; I Mark Fry, bookstore staff, 20.10.2004; I 10016). Also, a pictorial book similar to the *Lord of the Rings* location guide book has been released by the same author, and includes the filming location of more than thirty films (Brodie, 2006). This may further encourage the growth and diversification of film tourism in New Zealand.
2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry

This section has provided examples of film tourism that occurs in New Zealand. The question remains, however, as to just what is known about this specialised branch of tourism.
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

As stated before, film tourism is an often talked about phenomenon that has attracted significant popular and academic interest. However, the early academic research that began around 1994 is not substantial. Over the following sections I will introduce the published research findings and discuss their contribution towards an examination of the film tourism experience. In doing so, I will also refer to the findings of literary tourism research where it complements the more recent film tourism research.

In the first specialised book about film tourism, Beeton stated that its study is “complex, incorporating aspects of sociology and psychology as well as industry based sectors from filmmaking through to destination marketing, community development and strategic planning” (Beeton, 2005, p. 17). The author introduced academic research on the phenomenon and showed how production facilities (studios) and even film-related theme parks became destinations. While most of the book dealt with image, place promotion, community planning, Beeton also discussed possible motivations and experiences of film tourists, including the pilgrimage aspect in the film tourism experience. There is little primary research in this work although other authors have provided several case studies.

The academic interest started with Riley and Van Doren discussing the potential of film for tourism promotion and the ‘pulling’ potential of films. They also speculated about the motivations of film tourists and suggested motives of escape, pilgrimage and a quest for untainted environments (Riley & Van Doren, 1992)\textsuperscript{16}. Looking at a new branch of tourism, the authors proposed Dann’s push and pull-factor theory (1977) of motivation as a theoretical framework in which to examine film tourism. Macionis later used this framework to theoretically develop a continuum of film-induced tourism motivation and argued that the more specific the film tourist, the more important the self-actualisation motivation and general push factors would be while the importance of authenticity would decrease. However, other research, and indeed this study, has not specifically investigated this framework further.

\textsuperscript{16} The motives will be discussed in greater detail in section 3.2. The Rebirth of Pilgrimage?.

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2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

Most of the early academic research focused on empirical evidence for increased visitation and economic benefits. Tooke and Baker examined the effect of film on visitor numbers to featured locations. The authors showed that in the case of four United Kingdom television series, an increase in interest and visitor numbers to the featured locations did occur after their screening. Among their interesting findings is that, in one case, even a geographically inaccessible attraction (the main house of Cricket St. Thomas of *To The Manor Born*) was still a point of interest. The authors concluded that a screened location “has considerable value” (Tooke and Baker, 1996, p. 93) for tourism purposes and it would therefore be advisable to promote locations to film crews.

Riley, Baker and Van Doren (1998) further sought to examine film tourism and its data. The authors tried to define film-induced tourism by limiting their focus to big-screen movies that met the following criteria: the movie must have been a box office hit; it must be an icon able to be associated with an accessible destination; there must be available data, including pre-release data, on visitation numbers (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998). Their most important findings were that visitor numbers to a location increased for at least four years after the release of a movie, and that there are significant differences between public and private places, probably due to promotional budgets. The authors also mentioned life cycles and described how some locations had “missed the boat” (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998, p. 931) for tourism growth opportunities. The timing of publicity campaigns seemed to be an important factor in promoting film-induced tourism.

Similarly, Walker highlighted the benefits of using a film to promote a tourist destination and concluded that the medium reaches a large audience and can be used for both product placement and tourism promotion (Walker, 2001).

Busby and Klug (2001) also sought to study measurable numbers and interviewed 150 people about their awareness of and visits to film locations and the effectiveness of the British Tourism Authority’s movie map. The study found that “about 5 percent of respondents clearly stated that having watched the film *Notting Hill* induced them to visit the area” (Busby & Klug, 2001, p. 328). While this number might be low, the study also found that:

“27 per cent of respondents had previously visited a movie location. About 61 per cent of respondents stated that they actually knew of other television and film locations and a majority, 57.3 per cent of respondents, would consider travelling to television or film locations in the future” (Busby & Klug, 2001, p. 329).
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

The authors concluded that there is substantial need for further research into film tourism, and “especially into the psychological and behavioural aspects” (Busby & Klug, 2001, p. 329).

Other research into the economic effects of film tourism looked specifically at the (possible) impact of film tourism on rural areas and has recommended its implementation into destination management strategies (Croy & Walker, 2001, 2003). Though the empirical data show a significant impact on only few tourists, rural towns might still be able to capitalise on film images to strengthen their marketing campaigns in an increasingly competitive market. And indeed, Connell could show the impact of a television series on the local tourism industry of the Isle of Mull, Scotland, though this impact turned out to be spatially and temporally concentrated (Connell, 2005a, 2005b). A similar finding was reported for the film *Napoleon Dynamite*, which had initiated a highly successful festival in Preston, Idaho, in the first year but then ceased to attract significant interest later on (Dryden, 2006). Eventually Hudson and Ritchie introduced a strategic plan that detailed a variety of film tourism marketing opportunities (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). Interestingly, the authors found in a case study of the film *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* and the Greek island Cephalonia that the film initiated tourism independent of marketing and that films “can have a powerful influence on travel decisions” (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006a). Such studies highlight the focus on measurable numbers and economic impacts that has dominated interest in film tourism research.

However, some research looked deeper into the experience itself. Aden, Rahoi and Beck (1995) examined the narratives of visitors to the location of the film *Field of Dreams*. The authors discovered that film tourists formed temporary communities at the site and identified three major themes that were shared: real/unreal, as the location is a physical reality but also recognizable from the film; amusement/purpose, as visitors come for the amusement value, but also act purposefully through re-enacting certain scenes; and personal memories and community/isolation, when the “purpose of many visitors, generally speaking, appears to be one of simultaneously re-connecting with oneself and with others” (Aden, Rahoi, & Beck, 1995). The authors mentioned nostalgia as an important motive but did not emphasize this point. Overall they found that visitors came not only to see the site itself but also to seek the community of other visitors. Though this article has rarely been cited in the published literature on film tourism, it remains relevant for understanding the film tourism experience. This is
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

mainly because qualitative methods were used to investigate the variety of meanings a film location visit can have and, furthermore, to describe the variety in visitors’ behaviour while at the location.

Similarly, Couldry examined the social significance of visits to the set of the television series Coronation Street. He focused on the imaginative involvement of the tourists and his research revealed important elements of the experience. The author obtained insight into the aura of the set and its function as a ritual place where “two places and two worlds [are] organized in a symbolic hierarchy: the ‘ordinary world’ of viewers and the ‘media world’” (Couldry, 1998, p. 94). For some, the visit had similarities to a pilgrimage. This notion will be further discussed in section 6.2. A Modern Pilgrimage?. The author concluded that it is necessary in analysing such tourist locations “to go beyond the obvious cognitive dimension (their fictive status) and to consider them precisely as locations in which people have a complex imaginative involvement” (Couldry, 1998, p. 105). This connects to the notion of the ‘resubjectivization of space’ in which ‘locality’ is re-weighted with “the sense and affective charge of place” (Lash & Urry, 1994, p. 5). In the same way, even though film locations are fictive places, people nevertheless demonstrate a complex imaginative involvement with them.

Carl, Kindon and Smith (2007) looked specifically at the experience of tourists of Lord of the Rings film locations and their satisfaction, while also examining how the films have created iconic landscapes. The authors developed an experimental model to show if and how expectations are met and suggested that “the more perfect the representation of hyper reality in the [guided ] tours, the higher the satisfaction and thus the more enhanced the tourist experience” (Carl, Kindon, & Smith, 2007, p. 60). But a case study of a Manhattan film tour showed that visitors toured both the fictional and real space at the same time in a ‘restless movement’, thus allowing “an alternative way of configuring the relationship between actual and virtual worlds” (Torchin, 2003, p. 247). This suggested that a successful film tourism experience might be the very mixture of both hyperreality and reality, created while tourists negotiate the extremes of simulacra and authenticity. Either way, the authors rightly noted that film adaptations create “the initial frame through which tourists experience former film sites”
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

(Carl et al., 2007, p. 52). This seemed to confirm earlier research that suggested that film tourists experience landscapes in relation to their presentation in the film (Sterry, 1998)\textsuperscript{17}.

In a related study, Iwashita examined the phenomenon of film tourism by looking at media images and examining which British films influenced Japanese tourists’ perception of Britain. A sample of Japanese members of an online travel club were asked to fill out questionnaires and rate a pre-identified list of 36 films, 9 television productions and 19 authors, and some were also interviewed to investigate the decision-making process and the influence of media in more depth. The findings showed that “films and television programmes featuring the UK were the most important source of information in increasing interest in travel to the UK” (Iwashita, 2006, p. 66), with the film \textit{Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone}, the \textit{Sherlock Holmes}-television series, and Beatrix Potter’s Peter Rabbit stories\textsuperscript{18} being identified as most influential. The author also found that tourists base their understanding of the UK and ‘Britishness’ on media. Furthermore, “popular media such as films, television programmes and literature that are not concerned with tourism promotion had a greater power to increase interest in travel to the UK than tourism promotional materials” (Iwashita, 2006, p. 66).

Similarly, Gibson looked at the the role cinematic adaptations of English Literature have played in the construction and staging of a particular tourist myth of Englishness. The author also declared film adaptations can be as much tourist attractions as they are film narratives where “the audience virtually travels” (Gibson, 2006, p. 172). Overall, the author suggested that the nature of the tourism experience in contemporary society might change from an active and corporeal tourism to an immobile and virtual tourism; and the ‘cinematic-travel glance’ of the immobilised cinema goer might be well comparable to Urry’s tourist gaze. Mazierska and Walton, too, suggested a “similarity between experiencing journeys and places through the moving image” (Mazierska & Walton, 2006, p. 5), with both activities driven by the desires to explore and escape routine. The authors proposed that “a large proportion of tourism is stimulated by media representations … [and that] these tourists tend to look at the chosen objects in the way they remember them from films or television programmes”\textsuperscript{17} For a further discussion see also section 6.1.1. New Zealand Cinema, its Reception and Role in the Construction of Image and Identity.
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

(Mazierska & Walton, 2006, p. 8). However, the authors anticipated that the actual tourism experience would include more senses than the media experience, which was confirmed in my research findings.

In a specific case study of *Lord of the Rings* tourism to New Zealand, Tzanelli (2004) looked at the type of film tourism experiences that tourism operators promoted through brochures and online materials. Tzanelli found that authenticity played an important role in this tourism but suggested that such authenticity could only be staged due to its cinematic and thus fictional origin. Following Baudrillard’s line of thought, the films are “a fiction constructed upon fiction, reality [...] is replaced by a universe of images that appear to be real but never refer back to a ‘real’ world [thus being a] simulation of a nonexisting place” (Tzanelli, 2004, p. 28). The author consequently compared the example of how New Zealand’s landscapes became Middle-earth to the process of modern myth making. The author also predicted that the film may encourage an active and sensual experience, which stands in contrast to Gibson’s suggestion of an immobile film tourist.

Overall, research into film tourism is quite new and notable problems raised by most studies include problems with data collection and evaluation. The most critical point is that robust quantitative data on visitor numbers are not always available and often do not cover pre-release times; furthermore, often one cannot tell for sure if visitor interest is due to the movie itself, its promotion and press coverage or other promotional activities in the location (Tooke and Baker, 1996). As Beeton (2005) described, press coverage can be substantial. The Scottish Tourist Board, for example, undertook a study to quantify the volume and value of the publicity of the films *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy* and *The Bruce* and counted 213 articles and 37 broadcasts in 12 countries within a 14-month period. Tooke and Baker (1996) showed that the film’s release can result in a window of opportunity for the tourism industry if appropriate marketing actions are taken. Kim and Richardson (2003) tried to assess if and to what extent the viewing of selected films changed the cognitive and affective images of the featured city and any interest in visiting it. However, their empirical study could not confirm the suggestion that viewers’ perceptions of a depicted place are influenced by popular films. Instead the researchers could find “little

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18 For more background on the influence of literature on travel decisions see the following section 2.3. Review of
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

empirical investigation of the effect of movies on place image and destination choices” (Kim & Richardson, 2003). The authors concluded that there is a considerable gap between beliefs held about film tourism and empirical evidence, which Beeton believed still exists (Beeton, 2006). It is true that even after the successful start of the Lord of the Rings tourism Tourism New Zealand asked whether “the spate of high-profile films really bring[s] more visitors to New Zealand?” (Tourism New Zealand, 2002) given that the film Vertical Limit had no measurable impact. Thus the research into the direct connection of film and tourism is on-going.

Besides these works, various social and ecological impact studies have been done. Preston (2000) examined the links between film and place promotion and found that some places had to change to accommodate film tourists. An interesting case study of this process was the township of Roslyn, Washington, where the television series Northern Exposure had been filmed. After initially welcoming the filming and its fee paying and employment, problems began to arise. Film makers, locals and tourists were annoyed about the lack of accommodation and parking space. Some locals began to feel like ‘prisoners’ in their own town (Preston, 2000, p.18), and demanded control back over their lives. They were annoyed when “people come up here looking for a town that does not exist and are only interested in the parts of Roslyn that have been painted over for television [those tourists] are not the kind of people I’m interested in attracting to my town” (Ellie Belew as cited by Fleagle, 1993, p. 19, as cited by Preston, 2000, p. 114-5). The tourists themselves also seemed disappointed when confronted with the reality of Roslyn instead of having stepped into Cicely, the fictional town of the series (Preston, 2000): in this case study the dissatisfaction with the gap between film and reality influenced the overall satisfaction of the film tourism experience. However, this study will show a different outcome of the experience (see section 5.5. The Participant’s Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience).

Mordue (2001) analysed the changes in a community after film tourism began in a qualitative study that chose an ethnographic approach including personal observations, individual depth interviews with key informants, focus group interviews and interviews with tourists. The author examined how local residents of the rural village of Goathland in the North Yorkshire Moors Literary Tourism Research.
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

National Park experienced the impact caused by the increasing numbers of film tourists seeking the fictional village of the popular *Heartbeat* television series. The author found that the differing cultures of residents and tourists presented the biggest challenge, when stakeholders fought over the authenticity of Goathland. This is probably why several attempts to find simple management solutions to problems like traffic congestion and visitation numbers proved unsuccessful. Instead, significant changes in lifestyle took place when some “residents changed the way they use the internal space of their homes to avoid the intrusion [of the tourist gaze]” (Mordue, 2001, p. 246). Furthermore, the author had found that the consumption of the local environment changed to incorporate themes of the “production and consumption of Englishness, heritage, the rural idyll, country lifestyles, and nostalgia” (Mordue, 1999).\(^{19}\)

In a related study, Sydney-Smith looked at how British crime films influenced certain touristic myths about Britain, especially about the contrast between the north and south of England and found that identities were created and strengthened through characters but also landscapes. The author concluded that a consumption of place is suggested with a ‘view’ that is an entirely constructed one though it strived to be seen as ‘authentic’ and “it is the place, which becomes imbued with the characteristics of the media production rather than vice versa” (Sydney-Smith, 2006, p. 91). But what is real and what is authentic?

Social impact studies relating to film and, more widely, tourism show a complex reality, where conflicting motivations and expectations are revealed, and the cultures of film tourists and culture can clash (Mordue, 2001). Though many film-makers try to assure the co-operation of locals through consultation, employment or general community involvement (Preston, 2000), social conflict involving concepts of ownership and sense of place do happen. When filming occurs, the authenticity comes to be “determined by the fantasy of the narrative” (Preston, 2000, p. 136), and locals can feel left out. More obviously, filming can cause a general loss of privacy and be seen as an “unnecessary intrusion and interruption” (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998, p. 32) of daily life, especially in non-urban areas (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998; Tooke and Baker, 1996). Possible negative images and the consequent need for

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\(^{19}\) A similar process could be observed in Beatrix Potter-inspired tourism (see section 2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research); and both these examples are mirrored in the findings of this study (see section 6.1. Film, Images and Myths).
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

‘demarketing’ that might prove difficult have also been discussed in the literature (Beeton, 2001a). Preston (2000) agrees that some films (e.g., *Small Faces*, *Trainspotting*, *The Piano* and *Once Were Warriors*) might portray their respective regions in a negative light. However, positive images can create significant impacts, as demonstrated by the reactions to the movie *A River Runs Through It*, when visitors not only flocked to Livingston, Montana (Keeble, 1999), but there was also an increase in requests for property and business licences in the area. Either way, it has been observed that the effects can be temporary (Preston, 2000) and concentrated on a few locations (Connell, 2005a) and companies (Connell, 2005b). In analysing the impact of a television series it could be shown that in that case the type of visitors had changed, who acted more intrusively too (Beeton, 2001b). Such social impact studies showed that both the filming process and the finished product can have significant impacts on local communities, and furthermore that the tourist’s consumption of the landscape might change.

Ecological impacts have been researched far less often, and again differ in focus. Traffic problems are quite common through increased impact from visitation (Tooke and Baker, 1996; Preston, 2000; Mordue, 2001). The introduction of exotic species was the cause of extended criticism during the filming of *The Beach* in Thailand (Shoaib, 2001). In contrast to this, most of the filming of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was praised as “Environmentally Friendly Filming” (New Zealand Tourism Online, 2003), being done with great ecological awareness and a complete restoration to the pre-filming condition was attempted at each location. Even in this case, there was controversy. The Federated Mountain Clubs bulletin carried an article about the need for the Department of Conservation to review its concessions and explicitly referred to the filming of the *Lord of the Rings* films and the negative social impact and possible environmental damage it had caused (Birks & Scheltus, 2000; Johnson, 2003).

Worldwide, there are few ecological impact studies of film and film tourism.

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20 The Federated Mountain Clubs is a New Zealand association of over 100 mountain clubs that seeks to enhance safety for people in the outdoors and to promote preservation and sound management of the backcountry.
As previously noted, most studies of film tourism have concentrated on economic aspects, probably because of an assumed ease of measuring these aspects and because tourism is often primarily seen as an economic generator. The studies usually found benefits of the filming itself (e.g., Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998; Tooke and Baker, 1996), though this could change once filming stopped (Preston, 2000). Sometimes, a sharp increase in tourism activities could be observed once a film was released (Aden, Rahoi, & Beck, 1995; Tooke and Baker, 1996; Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998; Couldry, 1998; Busby & Klug, 2001; Connell, 2005a, 2005b). There are, however, critical voices which, for example, have questioned whether film tourism is as successful as media reports suggest (Beeton, 2005, 2006). Economic impacts appear to depend on the specific film, its location, timing and success. This coincides with the fact that even major Hollywood Studios find it difficult to predict which film will be a success: “the crucial factor is just this: nobody knows what makes a hit or when it will happen” (De Vany, 2004, p. 28) and even films that were expected to be blockbusters have been known to fail at the box office (Bart, 1999). Furthermore, in some cases, film tourism developed independent of box office success or marketing activities (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006a).

The previous section provided an insight into the major research studies regarding film tourism and showed that, despite a high public and academic interest, not many qualitative studies into the film tourism experience have been done. Overall, most of the published research to date has concentrated on the impacts of film production on a location or community, rather than the tourist. This has been echoed in other tourism literature in which the tourist perspectives are less understood (McIntosh & Prentice, 1999). Apart from a twelve-year-old field study (Aden, Rahoi and Beck, 1995) and Couldry’s (1998) study, neither research on film-induced tourism in
2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research

general nor impact studies have taken an in-depth look at the tourist experience itself. Instead, there has been a strong focus on measurable aspects like visitor numbers and economic benefits. While some further examples of film tourism literature will be introduced in the discussion of the findings, for now the related field of literary tourism can provide further insight into the experiential aspect of film tourism.
2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research

As with film locations, the locations featured in a book or associated with it or its author have attracted tourists over the years and at times in significant numbers. Such forms of literary tourism include visits to the actual location of the author (e.g., Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Dylan Thomas), the locations of the story (e.g., Beatrix Potter, A. A. Milne) and fictional places like Shangri-La and Erewhon (more about these places below). This tourism is similar to film-induced tourism as here, too, “tourists visit ‘places’ and, in the case of ‘literary tourists’ it is the landscape of the writer that they visit, pass through, and seek to recover, and in a sense, come to inhabit themselves, to own, and to value” (Weir, 2001). Other researchers referred to literary tourism in their investigation into film tourism, too, as this form of tourism had influenced place images prior to the development of film (Kim & Richardson, 2003), and was used in destination marketing (Beeton, 2005).21

Literary tourism still presents “an under-researched area” (K. A. Smith, 2003, p. 84). The published literature has given most attention to tourists’ perspectives of the experiences of places associated with writers and authors.

A notable study into the literary tourism experience was that by Squire (published in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996) into the experiences of Beatrix Potter-inspired visitors to the English Lake District. A focus on the tourists and their experience delivered new insights into the tourism experience. In this example, the author showed how the fictional worlds of Potter’s books (among them the Peter Rabbit tales) were based on a geographically identifiable countryside that became a destination for literary tourism22. Squire analysed how different tourists experienced their visit and found that childhood memories and value judgements of childhood and family life played an important part in the overall experience, especially for women, with only some visitors coming primarily because of the book connection (Squire, 1994b). The physical visit to a geographical location led to the definition and communication of “particular attitudes and values” (Squire, 1994b, p. 196). The study showed how individual tourists

21 Ousby (1990) wrote specifically about how English Literature influenced the taste and tourism of English people, as did Gibson (2006).
2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research

experience more than just a geographical place. They found themselves emotionally and intellectually deeply involved with the setting. It is this involvement and the meanings that arise in this involvement, the author concluded, that provide the richest account of the experience (Squire, 1992, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1996a).

In similar vein, Payne examined the contemporary role of imaginative literature for the North American tourist industry and found that writings about life on the prairie contributed to tourists’ anticipation and expectations. As with Squire (1994b), Payne found that impressions of landscape were coloured by emotions and nostalgia, and that anthropomorphic elements and gender issues played important parts within the context (Payne, 1999). This confirmed Squire’s findings in demonstrating once more the importance and significant influence of individual beliefs and values on the overall tourist experience.

Herbert (2001) examined literary tourism to the ‘real places’ of the British houses of famous writers Jane Austen and Dylan Thomas. While doing so, the researcher tried to determine the quality of the sites of Chawton and Laugharne, respectively, and looked at the prior knowledge of the tourists, reasons for their visit and their social class. Overall, Herbert agrees with Squire’s findings that “literary places serve as vehicles for different forms of pleasure” (Herbert, 2001). Individual motives varied and it was not always clear what the tourists wanted out of the visit. While the presence of literary pilgrims is noted, the author stresses that “those who visit such places out of curiosity and general interest rather than a single-minded sense of dedication outnumber them” (Herbert, 2001)23. Overall, authenticity was not the major concern, with affective qualities of the place being far more important. Altogether, the reasons for visiting ranged from interest in the writer’s life and work, the recollection of childhood memories and visiting a place embedded with special meaning. It could be shown that the places have a special meaning for the tourists and that the interaction with the individual exceptionality of these places provides the main experience.

22 Iwashita (2006) showed that Japanese people, too, could develop emotional bonds to particular English children’s literature like the Beatrix Potter-stories in their childhood, and that these stories created a desire to travel to the UK, probably due to the subconscious familiarity with ‘Britishness’ and the country.
2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research

The author concluded:

“The most significant fact may be the diversity of the visitor experience. Many people may arrive with ill-defined reasons, but the actual visit invokes and awakens a range of reactions that can include a sense of nostalgia or of longing for the particular kind of world they associate with the writer. Generalizations are valid but each visitor has some individual form of chemistry with the place, its presentation, and its associated characters and events, real-life or fictional” (Herbert, 2001).

Pocock, in contrast, examined the influences the fiction author Catherine Cookson had on the image of the British town South Tyneside and found that the fictional tales influenced tourists’ perception of the geographic destination. Furthermore, the pre-visit expectations of the tourists were met and the experience rated as authentic. The author thus confirmed the power of books to “forge expectations and bolster the urge for travel” (Pocock, 1992, p. 243), even when there is no ‘real destination’.

In many cases books have created powerful icons and inspired films. For example, James Hilton wrote *Lost Horizon* (1933), describing the mythical Himalayan country of Shangri-La. The tale described a place of inter-ethnic and religious harmony set in a landscape of snowy mountains, forests, crystal water and clean air. Four years later Frank Capra filmed the hugely successful book and interpreted it as a metaphor for lost innocence and the end of paradise. It could be said that both book and film encouraged the Western fascination with the Himalayan region and Buddhist philosophy. It is telling, however, that this ‘lost paradise’ was created by a European modern tale and its audience, and was located in the then newly-opened Himalayan region. However, Hutt showed how the location of the mythical Shangri-La was later moved to other Himalayan regions after its original placement, Tibet, become too accessible to the world (Hutt, 1996). Still, the name is now widely used and China even renamed its Zhongdian region Shangri-La in order to attract further tourism (Kolås, 2004). Such tourism to mythical places seems to occur because some tourists actively want to believe in mythical elements (Selwyn, 1996), a notion that will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

New Zealand has its own Shangri-La: in 1872 Butler published *Erewhon or Over The Range*, a book that described the discovery of a Utopian state in the Southern Alps of New Zealand

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23 Smith later examined the motivations of volunteers at a sample of British literary heritage attractions and could confirm that there is a small but existent “niche segment of highly motivated ‘literary pilgrims’” (Smith, 2003, p. 83).
2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research

(Buchmann, 2006b). The book was commonly read as a satire on the attitudes, beliefs and values of Victorian society and proved successful both in Britain and New Zealand. Its description of the mountainous environment was a vivid recall of the landscape surrounding Butler’s own sheep station, Mesopotamia, in the Upper Rangitata Valley, Canterbury, where he lived for four years: “The vivid narrative in ‘Erewhon’ is accurate” (J. Jones, 1959, p. 129) in its description of the landscape. Similar to Lost Horizon and Shangri-La, Erewhon combined both realistic and fantastic elements. Again, the mythical quality of its story was provided by the lonesome but fascinating wilderness and the vision of a highly developed society hidden in the mountainous back country. Erewhon became part of New Zealand’s heritage and tourists have been visiting the setting of the Erewhon story for over 130 years (J. Jones, 1959; Maling, 1960). Visits by artists resulted in several drawings and sketches of Mesopotamia (J. Jones, 1959) and a first photograph of the Mesopotamia buildings was made as early as 1861 (Maling, 1960, p. 30). The Weekly Press reported in 1917 that Butler’s old homestead “has fallen a little in disrepair” (as cited in Maling, 1960, p. 32). Some effort was made to repair and maintain the hut but a decade later its fate was sealed when it was decided that “the old place was unsafe for the numerous visitors, who came from near and far to view or take away any small part of the old Cottage as a souvenir” (as cited in Maling, 1960, p. 33). The hut was destroyed. In 1950 a plaque was made to indicate the former place of the homestead (Maling, 1960, p. 33), indicating that Jones (1959) might have been right when he predicted that Butler would be remembered, at least by locals. The site is now associated with certain values, historical events and feelings (see also Morgan & Pritchard, 1998; Squire, 1994b) -and a myth (see also section 3.1. The Meaning of Film and the Role of Myths in Modern Times).

There are many cases where literary and film tourism meet. A famous example is the Nottingham Castle where reader and movie-goers mingle in their search for Robin Hood, or even Errol Flynn and Kevin Costner. Another entertaining example involved the film The Bridges of Madison County (1995). After the film release hundreds of subscribers requested copies of the May 1966 edition of National Geographic that allegedly contained the photos of Madison County bridges – but all that ever existed was the fake cover produced for the film. Furthermore, people insisted on speaking to the fictional Robert Kincaid, the main character of the book and film who supposedly worked for the National Geographic Society. Callers reacted strongly when they were told that person did not exist (Bryan, 1997). Examples like this show
2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research

that film making is an increasingly sophisticated process and that reality and fiction can sometimes merge in the minds of people. Indeed, it was phenomena such as this that led Baudrillard to become concerned with the way media can reflect not only reality but also its own reflections (Baudrillard, 1983). The term hyperreality was used by Baudrillard, Eco, Rojek and others to describe a state where people cannot distinguish fake and reality any more (for a further discussion of this concept see section 6.1.3. The Role of Authenticity).

The previous sections showed that both films and books can create powerful images and icons and generate tourism as a consequence. In literary tourism, real and fictional places mixed in cases where writers used real places that they enhanced with further imaginative elements. Qualitative research revealed the highly personal meaning of literary visitor’s readings into the real places but also the more fictional aspects of these sites; thus highlighting the mythical aspects that are often involved in the motivation for such tourism. While these aspects will be discussed in more detail, the following section will look further into research on the motivation of film tourists.
2.4. The Motivations of Film Tourists

Research into tourism, recreation and leisure studies has examined why people come to certain places, what they want to experience and how they benefit from that experience (Cohen, 1996; MacCannell, 1976). As previously mentioned, no in-depth research into the motivations or experience of film tourists has been done, besides a study on the latter by Aden, Rahoi and Beck in 1992 (published 1995) and Couldry’s work (1998). However, further research into film tourism can build on a number of accepted models and theories from general tourism research from the 1970s on (e.g., Dann, 1977, 1981; N. H. H. Graburn, 1989; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Lee & Crompton, 1992; MacCannell, 1976; Pearce, 1982a, 1982b; Plog, 1974; Urry, 1995; Vukonic, 1996; Wang, 1999). Since then, tourism has been examined from a range of disciplines. Of these, especially sociological and psychological research on tourism offers insights into the variety of motives tourists display, as do reflections on the ancient traditions of pilgrimage.

2.4.1. The Research Into the Motivations of the Tourist

Why do people travel in the first place? It is commonly believed that there are many reasons to travel (Pearce, 1993; Urry, 1995) where “people went on pleasure vacation to satisfy a variety of different motives” (Crompton, 1979, p. 423) and that motivations are “discretionary... dynamic, socially influenced and evolving” (Pearce, 1993, p. 117). Tourists might travel for pleasure and sightseeing; for status reasons or escapism (Dann, 1981); or simply to visit relatives or friends. Van den Berghe summarised that looking at tourists in Mexico “perhaps the most interesting conclusion from the sample of 175 tourists is the extraordinary variety of their travel styles and motivations” (Van den Berghe, 1994, p. 17). Crompton (1979) suggested a variety of push- and pull-factors, including that people are driven to travel to restore the balance in their lives. Urry (1995) also suggested that tourists are in search of new or different experiences (often romanticised) from those normally encountered in everyday life. Or as Vukonic put it, it is “possible that in annual holiday modern people distance themselves as far as possible in time and space from daily life which is dominated by work” (Vukonic, 1996, p. 17), which is at least partly unsatisfying. If an individual cannot satisfy important personal needs at their workspace, they will endeavor to satisfy them in another sphere of life. Thus leisure is compensation and a tool to restore equilibrium between life-routine and excitement.
2.4.1. The Research Into the Motivations of the Tourist

(Cohen, 1979) and tourism represents an active movement towards recreational opportunities (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987).

As one of the most influential researchers into tourism motivation, Plog (1974) developed a typology of tourist personalities, ranging from psychocentric tourists who are self-inhibited and non-adventurous to allocentric tourists who are confident and seek adventure, experience and authenticity. The theory assumed these personalities are ‘stable’ patterns of action that do not change much. For this reason, the model cannot deal with conflicting desires and needs; still, Plog’s model can be “highly effective in suggesting where they [the tourists] would ideally like to visit” (Litvin, 2006)\(^{24}\).

Most theorists seemed concerned with categorizing and predicting tourist motivation. Gnoth in turn highlighted the emotional aspects of the tourism experience and the role of “the tourist’s felt needs and value system” (Gnoth, 1997, p. 299). He drew attention to the idea that the “diversity of possible combinations of motives, values, and situations explain the array of differences in tourists’ motivations and perceptions” (Gnoth, 1997, p. 299) and that the satisfaction of these inner-directed needs and values would be a crucial element of the overall tourism experience.

MacCannell also explored tourist motivation and suggested that individuals feel displaced in modernity; and that “for moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles” (MacCannell, 1976, p. 3). Consequently, people seek other ways of life through travelling and thus are concerned with authentic experiences\(^{25}\). Such experiences, however, cannot be found as tourism offers only ‘staged authenticity’ as the events portrayed would be artificial with no real communication or interaction between performer and watcher. This would leave the tourist unsatisfied and wanting; consequently, they would continue their search and chase the next experience. This model could be used to explain why some people acquire a ‘travel bug’ and travel so regularly.

However, Cohen (1979) criticised the notion that all modern people experience feelings of

\(^{24}\) Plog also introduced the destination product lifecycle theory that describes the development of a destination from its discovery and growth to its maturity and eventual decline (Plog, 1974).

\(^{25}\) Such experiences, however, cannot be found as tourism offers only ‘staged authenticity’ as the events portrayed would be artificial with no real communication or interaction between performer and watcher. This would leave the tourist unsatisfied and wanting; consequently, they would continue their search and chase the next experience. This model could be used to explain why some people acquire a ‘travel bug’ and travel so regularly.

However, Cohen (1979) criticised the notion that all modern people experience feelings of
2.4.1. The Research Into the Motivations of the Tourist

alienation and also the notion that, consequently, all tourists would seek authenticity, pointing out that some might simply be pursuing recreation. At the same time Cohen suggested that some tourists like drifters and explorers might in fact seek authenticity (Cohen, 1996). Either way, MacCannell’s (1976) suggestion that tourists search for authenticity and meaning, while often sharply criticized, introduced the suggestion of a (probably active and meaningful) search and furthermore suggested a closeness to pilgrimage. Both of these points will be returned to in later sections.

Dann distinguished push- and pull-factor and argued for the prevalence of push-factors like anomie and ego-enhancement as the motivation to travel as the escape motive had “no empirical evidence” (Dann, 1977). However, Iso-Ahola proposed a theory of recreational travel that comprises two dimensions of human motivation: escape from routine and seeking internal/interpersonal rewards (Iso-Ahola, 1982). The tourism experience was both a travel away from something and towards something. Pearce and Moscardo (1985) introduced the travel career model based on Maslow’s theory of hierarchical needs (hierarchical yet dynamic needs that are goal related and expressed in attitudes) (Maslow, 1954) detailing five hierarchical levels of need like relaxation, self-esteem and development and eventually fulfilment that would signify various levels of the hierarchical travel career (Pearce & Moscardo, 1985). A tourism experience would be satisfying if the tourist’s travel career stage is met. However, the model continues to be criticised as it is not clear on which level a tourist starts and if people necessarily progress through the ladder. Ryan, for example, found that some of the examined backpackers “corresponded to more than one type of experience across their ‘backpacking biography’ or even during a single trip” (Ryan, 1998). Uriely, Yonay and Simchai (2001) also found that motivations might change across time on even a single trip after studying backpackers. Consequently they warned against “the implicit inclination to couple together indistinguishably external practices and internal meanings and to assume that tourists who behave similarly also share the same motivations and meanings” (Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2001). Still, Pearce continued to defend the travel career model (Pearce, 1993; Pearce & Lee, 2005) and its core idea “that people’s motivation changes with their travel experience. From this approach, people may be said to have a travel career, that is: a pattern of travel motives that

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25 An in-depth discussion of the term and significance of ‘authenticity’ will take place in section 6.1. Film, Images
2.4.1. The Research Into the Motivations of the Tourist

change according to their life span and/or accumulated travel experiences” (Pearce & Lee, 2005, p. 227). Thus the theory can be used to highlight the multiple and changing motives in the tourism experience.

Than there is the case of the most ancient form of travel, the religious and spiritual travels of pilgrims. This phenomenon will be further discussed in section 3. Theoretical Framework: Film, Pilgrims and the Longing for Myths in Modernity.

2.4.2. The Research Into the Motivations of the Film Tourist
Besides these sociological and psychological accounts of the motivations of tourists, more specific motivations regarding film tourists have been suggested. Riley and Van Doren suggested the motivation of escape, pilgrimage and a quest for untainted environments as motivations for film tourists (Riley and Van Doren, 1992). Tooke and Baker claimed that media exposes us all to sights that we ultimately want to experience ourselves: media consumption sparks a “desire to see and experience” (Tooke and Baker, 1996, p. 88) for ourselves what has been shown. Related, Riley, Baker and Van Doren believed that a film creates icons: “a movie’s symbolic content, a single event, a favourite performer, a location’s physical features, or a theme can represent all that is popular and compelling about a movie” (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998, p. 924). Those icons could be visually concrete or of a thematic nature; and one film could have more than one icon. Tourists travel to film locations where they seek icons they had noticed while watching the film. They might seek natural scenery or some other environmental attraction (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998; see also Tooke and Baker, 1996) or be attracted by a film’s theme (Tooke and Baker, 1996), as presented in storylines, exciting sequences, or human relationships (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998). Or tourists might simply visit film locations to heighten their status (see, for example, Kontogeorgopoulou, 2003). Overall, a mixture of push and pull-factors might be responsible (Macionis, 2004). And in a recent article Beeton suggested that the contemporary celebrity culture and even more significantly, myths might have a significant influence on the growth of film tourism (Beeton, 2006).

and Myths: The Role of Authenticity.
2.4.2. The Research Into the Motivations of the Film Tourist

‘Sensational sights’ tourism is not new (Rojek, 1997). For example, so-called dark tourism (tourism to sites of destruction and catastrophes) has happened for centuries (N. Smith & Croy, 2002). People have followed the alleged footsteps of Jesus on the Via Dolorosa and visited the graves of prophets. Tomb tourism has been promoted over the years and once formed part of the typical Parisian guided tour (Selwyn, 1996). Besides “Haunted Castles” (R. Jones, 1993), the London Dungeon and Madam Tussaud’s, much darker objects and sights have drawn the attention of tourists. Catastrophe tourism and Shoah/Holocaust-tourism is one of the most extreme forms of dark tourism (Lennon & Foley, 2000). In all these cases, myths seem to play an important role (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003; see also Selwyn, 1996) in transforming the geographical location into an important sight.

This is where the role of image in preparing places to be experienced emerges most strongly. Images are important for destination branding and promotion. Decisions regarding tourism are usually based on travel stimuli like guide books or films that depict a certain image of the destination (Kim & Richardson, 2003). An image is formed by a combination of beliefs, impressions, ideas and perceptions that people hold of objects, behaviours, and events; “the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others” (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). As such, an image is co-constructed between consumer and provider (image provider, perception and interpretation) and thus highly personal and complex. Images are provided by a range of media, including print, television and screen. Such images are important for the decision-making process and consequently tourism marketing as they act as ‘entrance points’ to enworlded landscapes “that present tourists with a route through which worlds are created” (Scarles, 2004, p. 44). Film is a very powerful medium that operates both on the visual and emotional level and consequently delivers strong images (Morgan & Pritchard, 2000) that can differentiate one place from another. As very effective audiovisual media, film can provide substantial information but also, in this imagistic way, contribute to the creation of myths.

The previous sections discussed the relevance of image as a facilitator of film tourism. If this is what precedes the experience itself, what is the actual experience like? The outcomes of a holiday experience are difficult to measure (Mackay, 1981; McIntosh, 1997) as the tourist experience is made up of many elements (Uriely, Yonay and Simachai 2001). The tourism experience can successfully generate “a myriad of cultural meanings” (Craik in Rojek & Urry,
2.4.2. The Research Into the Motivations of the Film Tourist

1997, p. 117) and meet or even exceed expectations (Moran, 1999; Toxwards, 1999). But different users have different problems (Devlin, 1976; Manning, 1986) and disappointment is always a possibility (Shackley, 2001). Then again, individual tourists may be flexible: Quan and Wong saw the tourist experience as made up of both peak tourist experiences of major attractions and supporting consumer experiences like food and accommodation (Quan & Wang, 2004). The two dimensions support and reinforce each other and thus make up the overall experience. What is interesting is that these experiences are interchangeable under certain conditions. Many researchers argued that the overall tourism experience seeks to satisfy a range of personal needs including entertainment, escape, and the search for meaning (Pearce, 1982b; Rojek, 1993; Yiannakis, Leivadi, & Apostolopoulos, 1991). McIntosh argued for a strong focus on the experience itself as it is the central consumption good for most tourist attractions (McIntosh, 1998; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999), while Bowen added that “the emotional element in tourism has not been fully appreciated” (Bowen, 2001). This resonates with Gnoth’s (1997) suggestion to pay more attention to the emotional aspects involved in tourism. And as the studies of literary and film tourism indicate, emotions do indeed play an important part in the overall tourism experience, which thus has to offer much more than just service provision (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). Also, a focus on the agentive and embodied elements advances our understanding of the tourism experience as “touch, smell and other senses are part of the tourist’s competence of making sense“ (Crouch, Aronsson, & Wahlström, 2001, p. 259). The elements of successful film tourism experiences will be discussed in section 5.5. The Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience.

The significance of ‘authenticity’ within the (film) tourism experience is a debated subject. The following section gives an overview into the most relevant discussions of the terms authenticity and sincerity in tourism and especially film tourism.
2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity

MacCannell (1976) believed that the search for authenticity would be an important motivator for tourists while Cohen argued for a limited usability of this term as tourism motivation would range from the quest for meaning and authenticity to the simple “desire for more pleasure” (Cohen, 1972). Either way, the notion of authenticity continues to be debated (May, 1996). Bruner (1994) pointed out that the term authenticity is a social construction with multiple meanings and that consequently authenticity is experienced subjectively. Further, Urry (1995) had claimed that the modern tourist would be aware of this. Li (2000) remarked that authenticity should not be seen as absolute and instead be understood as constantly changing, and there is therefore no objective authenticity (Bruner, 1994; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). While some authors emphasised the “importance of discrepant subjective approaches to authenticity” (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003, p. 171), Bruner concluded that the very concept is redundant (Bruner, 1994). Similarly, Reisinger and Steiner argued that scholars should both the term and concept of object authenticity “in any research that discusses the genuineness of objects and activities, because the different concepts, values, and perspectives on the authenticity of objects and activities are numerous, contradictory, and irreconcilable” (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006b) and recommended the use of the term existential authenticity instead (see later this section). Belhassen and Caton replied that such an open concept could “be seen as highly functional, rather than counterproductive, since they serve as flashpoints around which scholars working from different perspectives can congregate, debate, deliberate, and influence one another, thereby allowing new and more informed understandings to emerge“ (Belhassen & Caton, 2006). Furthermore, the common use of authenticity in the travel industry would show its relevance to tourists and should thus be relevant for scholars too. However, Reisinger and Steiner once more pointed out that both concept and terminology should be abandoned as “solidarity, unity, and consensus were lacking“ (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006) and that thus the discourse would not be scientific.

And yet, while some authors have tended to dismiss the notion of objective authenticity, and consequently suggested abandonment of the concept, other authors have sought to broaden how it is understood. Selwyn (1996) suggested that all tourism is about the invention and reinvention
2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity

of traditions: “it is about the production and consumption of myths and staged authenticities” (Selwyn, 1996, p. 28), within which the experience of the tourist could still be authentic. Wang (1999) developed the concept of ‘existential authenticity’, an alternative source for authentic experiences, to complement the concepts of ‘objective’ and ‘constructed’ authenticity:

“Existential authenticity, unlike [the] object-related version, can often have nothing to do with the issue of whether toured objects are real. In search of [a] tourist experience which is existentially authentic, tourists are preoccupied with an existential state of Being activated by certain tourist activities” (Wang, 1999).

Such an existential authenticity explains tourist experiences more accurate and might be especially useful in explaining the film tourism experience. In a related case study, Kim and Jamal (2007) examined the experience of participants of the Texas Renaissance Festival with participant observation and in in-depth interviews. The authors found that:

“The notion of existential authenticity is central to understanding the experience of regular, repeat festival-goers who take their participation seriously. This committed action is a means of attaining heightened bodily feelings, expressing, regaining, or reconstructing a sense of desired self, and developing authentic intersubjective relationships” (Kim & Jamal, 2007).

The study showed that the “ritualistic participation in this medieval themed festival may be understood as a quest for authentic self and human relationships via a socially constructed alternative reality” (Kim & Jamal, 2007) and that highly committed tourists can gain ‘self’ authenticity even at a commercial tourism event.

It has already been shown how the image of both New Zealand and the Lord of the Rings phenomenon seek to present themselves and are consequently perceived as ‘authentic’. It has also been shown that it is the authenticity of relationships that matter to film tourists, both within the community of fellow travellers and in interaction with their tour leader and guides. This is where the term ‘sincerity’ might be of use. Its notion “is significantly different from that of authenticity in that it occurs in the zone of contact among participating groups or individuals, rather than appearing as an internal quality of a thing, self, or Other” (Taylor, 2001). Sincerity takes place when there are genuine encounters between tourists and guides; “rather than seeing value as the emanation of an ‘authentic object’, the moment of interaction may become the site in which value is generated” (Taylor, 2001). Thus the use of the term sincerity:

“offers the basis for a shift in moral perspective: away from that which would locate touristic value in the successful re-production of ‘objective truths’—authenticities—and towards a view of tourism as embodying communicative events involving values important both to the social actors involved, and in themselves” (Taylor, 2001).
2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity

This shift from objectification towards negotiation can deepen our understanding of the perception of authenticity in the tourism experience.

This short discussion of the terms authenticity, existential authenticity and sincerity showed how our understanding of these terms can be enhanced and thus the film tourism experience better understood; a discussion that will be continued in later sections. The following section introduces the concept of hyperreality and simulacra and shows why objective authenticity may be an obsolete term for both within the modern film production and the film tourism industry.

This chapter introduced the reader to the phenomenon of film tourism in New Zealand. In this, the existing locations and attractions were described that take place in a diverse industry with hardly any regulations or quality standards specifically for film tourism. Both general tourism and film tourism research with its most relevant findings were introduced, as the various discussions of image and motivation and the role of authenticity and sincerity. This includes possible spiritual dimensions, mythical aspects and pilgrimage motives. These notions will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections while the tourism guide literature will be introduced at a later point (see section 6.3. The Role of the Tour Guide).
3. Theoretical Framework: Film, Pilgrims and the Longing for Myths in Modernity

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FILM, PILGRIMS AND THE LONGING FOR MYTHS IN MODERNITY

In this chapter I introduce the theoretical framework for interpreting the analysis of my data. This framework is constructed from common tourism theories set in the context of the debate about the relevance of spirituality as a metaphor for tourism and the occurrence of pilgrimage in modern times to the phenomenon of film tourism. But first, the meaning of both film and myths in modern times will be discussed.
3.1. The Meaning of Film and the Role of Myths in Modern Times

It is often claimed that film has a significant impact on how people perceive the world (Aitken & Zonn, 1993; MacCannell, 1976; Meyrowitz, 1985; Urry, 1995). The movie *Field of Dreams*, for example, turned a remote cornfield in Iowa into a well-known tourist spot (Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998; Aden, Rahoi and Beck 1995). Other movies such as *Sound of Music*, *Crocodile Dundee* and *Braveheart* have influenced the image of whole countries (Austria, Australia and Scotland, respectively) (Graml, 2004; Scene Stealer Pry. Ltd., 2003). Other films have created new worlds: for many people the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy primarily feature the mythical Middle-earth and not the actual setting of New Zealand. This may have been partly because many media outlets did not mention the true location in their reviews of the first film (Hegarty, 2003). Whatever the case, “the physical environmental side of the film can relate to the story line in varying degrees, from being a passive backdrop to the action like an old western right through to being an integral part of the storyline” (Beeton, 2005, p. 23). As Escher and Zimmermann differentiated, the functions of landscape in film are many, e.g.: as setting, guarantor for credibility and authenticity, metaphor or symbol, myth, actor, location, and destination for film tourism (Escher & Zimmermann, 2001).

Each featured location may also have been changed to some degree for its screen appearance. Thus in assessing individual perspectives and experiences of film locations, the potential gap between expectation and reality will be a crucial element. Film tourists may be disappointed when confronting the real landscape after experiencing the fictional setting. Tourist sights are often anti-climactic experiences (Rojek, 1997), and this may be even more significant for film tourism where imagination and reality may differ greatly. A famous example of the need for landmarks is the bench featured prominently in the film *Forrest Gump* (1994) that had to be re-installed after filming in Savannah, Georgia as many people complained that they could not find the bench on which the main film character sat. As shown, the unavoidable gap between fiction and reality can be a potential source for disappointment yet, in one sense at least, this is surprising as one might say that film watching is characterized by a state of ‘make believe’ (Preston, 2000; Walton, 1990). However, Preston (2000) distinguishes two types of visitors:
3.1. The Meaning of Film and the Role of Myths in Modern Times

those interested in the film making process and those longing to see the setting itself, noting that the latter tourists are those most often disappointed when they find reality to differ from expectation and access to sites being restricted. However, the mingling of myths and reality is typical for both the film and the tourism industries. It has even been argued that the tourism industry generally feeds the interest in and longing for myths (Selwyn, 1996). The industry uses mythical images for the promotion of destinations. In doing so, it emphasises selected attributes, which can result in their mythologization (Selwyn, 1996, p. 3). Consequently, a paradise, a traditional type of tourist community can be “established beyond the frontiers of existing society” (MacCannell, 1976, p. 183). This clearly happened with the mystical destinations of Shangri-La and Erewhon.

There are many examples of the promotion of places that involve myths. A local New Zealand council published (in cooperation with Film South) spreadsheets with instructions on how to find the film location of Edoras of the *Lord of the Rings* films and also mentioned Butler’s Erewhon book and its possible location in the same publication (Michelle Hals, manager of local tourism organisation, personal communication, 17.03.2005). Similarly, Florida, U.S.A., is described as a part-real and part-mythical place:

“If Key West seems part fiction and part reality, well, just remember that Ernest Hemmingway once lived here. Just about everything or everybody comes with some type of story attached, be it myth, fact or just good ol’ legend. Any lifestyle [...] and any person [...] – are all accepted on equal terms” (Anonymous, 2006).

Interestingly, this narrative also demonstrates playfulness in connecting myth and reality. In general, local folklore and mythical stories are often used to emphasise the uniqueness of the destination. The tourist information webpage of the Black Forest region, Germany, spoke about a geographical location where encounters with literary figures are imaginable (Schwarzwald Tourismus, 2006). The district of Lincolnshire, UK, listed ‘Myths and Legends’ as a tourist attraction on their homepage to underline the uniqueness of their region (Lincolnshire Tourism, 2006) and so did Derbyshire, UK: “some [stories] are true, and some are just plain tall, but they are all guaranteed to grip the imagination. Here are just a few of the characters, customs and events which have boggled minds and set hearts beating a little faster down through the years”

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26 Riley and Van Doren (1992) and Riley (1994) showed the significant impact *Crocodile Dundee* (1981) had on visitation numbers and Beeton (2005) argues that *Crocodile Dundee* could be considered to be the first movie that consciously encouraged tourism to Australia.
3.1. The Meaning of Film and the Role of Myths in Modern Times

(Derbyshire County Council, 2006). These are only some examples of the use of myths in the marketing of destinations.

The tourism experience has been described as an experience of contrast between the familiar and ordinary and the faraway and extraordinary (Urry, 1990). As part of this longing for an exotic other, to be contrasted with the ‘everyday’ world, spiritual and mythical elements are often the cornerstones on which many forms of tourism are based. There are several academic works that examine the complex relationship between myths and reality. Hutt (1996) and Klieger (1992) both examined the myth of *Shangri-La*. In researching such recent myths, the authors comment on the aura of authenticity that myths seem to present. These are believed and not questioned, even if people often know better. Klieger (1992) noted that the continuing demystification of the modern world did not seem to “significantly disrupt the continuation of the Shangri-La paradigm in the West” (Klieger, 1992). This resilience is based on an important feature of myths: they have an inherent authoritative character, “not by proving itself but by presenting itself” (New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2003). This explains why myths are difficult to question: they create a certain reality and present themselves “as an authoritative, factual account, no matter how much the narrated events are at variance with natural law or ordinary experience” (New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2003). This feature of authority is also significant in the process of the making of heritage (McCrone, Morris, & Kiely, 1995) and the invention of traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). In all cases, myths are suitable to describe and explain reality, or to justify certain customs because of their inherent authority. As a consequence, emotions and irrationality win over logic and rationality in the telling of a story: the myth thus remains powerful even when confronted by reality. This is why we still witness the creation of new myths like the one of Edoras, one of the most popular filming locations of *Lord of the Rings* (see section 5.3.1. Film Tour Profile).
3.1. The Meaning of Film and the Role of Myths in Modern Times

As discussed in previous paragraphs, myths exist in great variety and have been used for many different reasons –including for the formation of favourable tourism images. Lévi-Strauss extended the understanding of myths by looking at their function and found that myths provide a model capable of overcoming contradictions: of life and death, for example (Lévi-Strauss, 1963). Selwyn concluded: “myths are treated as stories which may serve the intellectual and emotional function of taking up the personal and social conundra of living in such a way that these appear ‘resolved’ at an intellectual and emotional level” (Selwyn, 1996, p. 3). Myths help humans to understand reality, while distracting from it by drawing attention to surreal features.

In the form of stories myths have been part of the human experience for thousands of years. They were (and are) often connected with travels. The earliest known story, the Epic of Gilgamesh, recalls the mythical travels of the Sumerian king Gilgamesh. The more recent myths of El Dorado and Shangri-La work on a similar level– they are all expressions of real longings and mythical visions. In this, myths are important for the study of tourism because they often cause and accompany travels. And mythical longings find their expression even in modern times:

“we may presume that just as the myths of ancient Greece and the Middle East express their cultures, contemporary fiction and film will represent our beliefs, aspirations, and values […] Films and novels continue to provide, just as the stories of ancient Greece did for their children, a pattern for living” (Ferrell, 2000).

![Figure 3.1 The popularity of the Edoras film location: the hilltop marker reads ‘Frodo Lives’](image_url)
3.1. The Meaning of Film and the Role of Myths in Modern Times

How, exactly, does the work on tourism and myth connect to work on comparative mythology? Comparative mythology seeks to understand how myths (and religion) evolve over time and how they relate to each other. Campbell examined and compared myths from various cultures and ages and concluded that myths have a practical role (like the teaching of social roles) but also addressed deeper psychological concerns (Campbell, 1949). In this, the author followed Freud’s and Jung’s theories of the conscious and unconscious longings humans harbour; and that even modern humans engage in the search for a mythological structure to better understand life. Either way, one could argue that people (and tourists) are always looking for new myths, which they may find in literature or film. While there are no doubt many ways in which moderns can attempt the creation and re-creation of myths the question arises as to whether, in film tourism as perhaps in film itself, there is an exploration of such possibilities.

The following section continues this discussion of the deeper processes that may underpin film tourism and seeks to establish whether tourists, in general, simply seek to enjoy themselves through their travels or if there are deeper psychological needs involved.
3.2. The Rebirth of Pilgrimage?

This section considers whether tourists, and in particular film tourists, might be pilgrims, based on the observation that the more dedicated film tourists, in particular, are looking for meaning, a sense of community, a connectedness to characters and actors and physical experience. Thus the concept of pilgrimage and its similarities to tourism will be discussed.

Like myths, pilgrimages are another ancient phenomenon re-emerging: whether traditional and religious or modern and secular, pilgrimages have experienced a resurgence around the world (Digance, 2003). A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place (Turner, 1973) and, as such, a feature of many religions and cultures (V. Reynolds & Tanner, 1995). A “pilgrimage is a ritual structure in human experience” (Coleman & Elsner, 1995, p. 220) that is (often a long) journey or search of moral significance to a sacred site. As Vukonic put it, people have always relied on hopes which religion has provided and “visits to holy places for the sake of ‘purification, redemption, fulfillment of vows, healing or something else’ are called pilgrimages” (Vukonic, 1996, pp. 117). Such pilgrimages have long been seen as a special form of tourism (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). The notion that tourists are similar to pilgrims has been a feature of several approaches to understand tourists and tourism (Cohen, 1992; Davidson & Spearritt, 2000; M. Graburn, 1977; N. H. H. Graburn, 1989; Lickorish & Jensen, 1997; Wickens, 2002). The debate how much of a pilgrim a tourist is (Valene L. Smith & Brent, 2001) and to what extent the phenomenon of pilgrimage and the phenomenon of tourism differ (Vukonic, 1996) is on-going.

Pilgrims and tourists have often been likened as: both “require the same fundamentals of leisure, income, and sanction; they also share the same infrastructure” (Jackowski & Smith, 1992, p. 14). Cohen (1979) proposed five typologies of tourists in which the ‘existential’ tourist type appears similar to a traditional pilgrim as both are connected and obligated to the chosen centre. Graburn (1989) also spoke of a ‘pilgrim-like’ tourist who would seek to add meaning to their life, and later argues that even the modern secularised tourist would travel in a symbolically religious setting. Their pseudo-religious journey would be pilgrimage-like in its experience as a special period of time; however, he also believed that the experience would only be partial as the tourist would remain uncommitted to the pilgrim centre and its community. Earlier, MacCannell argued that “tourism absorbs some of the social functions of religion in the modern
3.2. The Rebirth of Pilgrimage?

world” (MacCannell, 1976, p. 589). He described the motivation of both pilgrimage and tourism as “quests for authentic experiences” (MacCannell, 1976, p. 593) though a tourist would only ever experience ‘staged authenticities’ because staged performances would not allow meaningful communication and interaction between performer and guest.

In this vein, it has been suggested that Walt Disney World could be seen as a pilgrimage site (Wasko, 2001). The author elaborated how this pilgrimage is limited due to the controlled nature of the park experience, but that essentially Disney would ratify current values and thus allow the pilgrim to reaffirm “faith in capitalist scriptures of progress through technology, control through managerial hierarchy and consumerism” (Wasko, 2001). This is a good example of how both the ancient and modern pilgrims ultimately travel within the prevailing belief system, and seeking reaffirmation rather than the challenge of their beliefs, a notion that will be further discussed in section 6.2. A Modern Pilgrimage?

There have been further suggestions that tourism might be considered as a form of pilgrimage. Examples include Ousby’s “Literary Shrines and Literary Pilgrims: the Writer as Tourist Attractions” (Ousby, 1990), while Connor summarized how the organized literary pilgrim has a variety of resources and guide books to hand with titles such as Fitzgerald’s “Charles Lamb: His Friends, His Haunts, and His Books”, Wolf’s “Literary Shrines: The Haunts of Some Famous American Authors” and Bacon’s “Literary Pilgrimages in New England to the Homes of Famous Makers of American Literature and Among their Haunts and the Scenes of Their Writings” (see Connor, 2003). Given the similarities between aspects of film tourism and literary tourism, the extent of the applicability of the notions of ‘myth’ and ‘pilgrimage’ to these poses an interesting question. Several authors have suggested that film tourists, too, could be likened to pilgrims (Riley, 1992; Couldry, 1998; Moran, 1999; Beeton, 2005), a notion that will be critically discussed in section 6.2. A Modern Pilgrimage.

This chapter has described the importance of images in tourism marketing and the subsequent creation of myths that is common in modern marketing. Pilgrimage motives may turn out to be

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27 It should be noted that Squire (1994) and Herbert (2001) found that ‘only’ some tourists can be described as pilgrim-like.
3.2. The Rebirth of Pilgrimage?

an indispensable metaphor to understand film tourism. Before this hypothesis is tested, the applied research methodology and research findings will be introduced and discussed.
4. Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods

4. METHODOLOGY: A MIX OF QUALITATIVE METHODS

This chapter will introduce and discuss the methods used to investigate the motivations, expectations and the experiences of film tourists, while also exploring the contribution made by the tour guide(s) towards the film tourism experience. I used a mix of qualitative methods, including interviews, observations, questionnaires and journals in order to answer the research objectives, which are to conceptualise the nature of experiences gained by film tourists in New Zealand; to examine the motivations and expectations of film tourists in New Zealand; and to gain insights into the role of the tour guide(s) in visitors’ experiences of film-location tours.

In regards to the number of film tourists researched, I had to decide between a large scale survey and small scale case studies and decided for the latter to make better use of resources and to gather qualitative data (Gillham, 2000). As shown previously, varied film tourism does happen in New Zealand with *Lord of the Rings*, *Whale Rider*, *The Last Samurai* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* currently attracting the greatest tourism interest. This study favours depth over breadth (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 1996) and concentrates on the case study of two nationwide tours of 15 days length each (NW1 and NW2). Both tours centre on the *Lord of the Rings* as there are no other film tours of the duration of several days based on another film. The field study of those tours allows for in-depth examination of selected features regarding the expectations and experiences of the film tourists “over a duration of time” (Neuman, 1997). Additionally, a third nationwide *Lord of the Rings* tour (NW3) was supplied with three tour journals and observed on three occasions; this tour was conducted by another company but was very similar to the main tours in its itinerary and thus chosen to supply additional data. The study also includes observations of a further five half-day and two full-day tours and events featuring actual film locations of *Lord of the Rings*, while also interviewing key informants involved with *Whale Rider*, *The Last Samurai* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* tourism. Additionally, I spoke to individuals about tourism following TV series like *Shortland Street*, *Hercules* and *Xena*, and movies like *Willow*, *Once Were Warriors*, *The Piano*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *The Frighteners*, *Vertical Limit*, *Scarfie*, *River Queen*, and others. These smaller case studies were surveyed through literature, newspaper and magazine research with additional face to face, telephone and email interviews. Altogether, this study involves speaking
4. Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods

to film tourists, tourism operators and guides, visitor centres, government officials and store owners about their film tourism expectations and experiences.

In more detail, I used interviews, observations, questionnaires and journals (see the following sections for a detailed discussion of the individual methods)\(^{28}\). I also emailed questionnaires after the tour ended and was granted an insight into the tour company’s evaluation sheets. Since each individual method has its own methodological weaknesses and strengths, the use of a mix of qualitative methods was considered important. Triangulation, where several different research methods are used “to test the same findings” (Babbie, 2001, p. 113), increases the reliability and validity of the research findings (Schloss & Smith, 1999) (for a further discussion of reliability and validity see section 3.5. Analysis). The two main case studies are examined with an integrated methods approach using interviews (face to face, group and email), questionnaires (pre- and post tour and post tour through email), observation (direct participant) and tour journals, which were used at various stages of the tour (see Table 4.1):

| Table 4.1 Coordination and timing of methods used on the nationwide tour(s) NW1 and NW2 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Day1 of tour | 1st half of tour | 2nd half of tour | end of tour | after tour |
| Observation | Observation | Observation | Observation | Observation |
| Question. Participants | Interview Participants | Interview Participants | Question. Participants | Question. Participants |
| | Journals | Journals | Journals | Journals |

Surprisingly, all approached potential participants agreed to participate in the research: nearly everyone filled out the pre- and post-tour questionnaires; I found sufficient writers for the journals and only one participant declined to be interviewed over the two tours. Overall, the atmosphere on the two main tours was relaxed to the point where some participants congratulated me on devising such a wonderful holiday for myself only to admit later that I in fact was working. The quickly developing group bonds provided a level of trust that assisted

\(^{28}\) Additionally, I also used photography as another source of data; however, my picture taking was not systematic but largely opportunistic.
4. Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods

me greatly in my data collection. The qualitative methods provided complex data about the individual tourist experience (Blaxter et al., 1996; McIntosh, 1998).

The disadvantage of choosing qualitative methods was that they were “highly demanding, laborious methods of data collection” (Loftland & Lofland, 1995, p. 21). Additionally, this research takes place during actual tours and thus in a setting that was not established for the purpose of conducting research (Sarantakos, 1998; Singleton & Straits, 1999). This means that the research programme had to be adjusted to ever-changing circumstances. Overall, I used a pragmatic research approach to explore the various aspects of the film tourism experience. Analysis of the gathered data started as soon as possible to allow a theory to emerge from the research data.

The process was principally based in Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998; Van Peursem, 1998). Introduced in the 1960s, Grounded Theory is seen as a corrective to “an overemphasis in current sociology on the verification of theory, and a resultant de-emphasis on the prior step of discovering what concepts and hypotheses are relevant for the area that one wishes to research” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 1). It encourages the researcher to look at the data and discover patterns:

“A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Instead of “pursuing verification Glaser and Strauss recommend a sustained focus on the process of discovering and elaborating complex, interesting theory” (Emerson, 1988, pp. 95). This use of grounded theory gives a flexibility that allows the generation of “a theory from the constant comparing of unfolding observations” (Babbie, 2004, p. 291; see also Schloss & Smith, 1999). Such an approach seemed appropriate as I begun my research without any specific theory in mind but hoped to formulate one eventually. I was further inspired by two other case studies set in New Zealand: one examined the complex systems perspective on communities and tourism (Horn, 2003) and the other structured backpacker tours (Moran, 1999). Both authors immersed themselves into the community under examination and both decided to use Grounded Theory to allow an evolution of theory through the data.
4. Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods

The next section describes how I entered the field. Then the chosen methods and the approach to analysis will be discussed in greater detail.
4.1. Entering the Field

4.1. Entering the Field

I completed a comprehensive review of literature and then embarked upon the field research. It proved difficult to obtain printed materials, as requests by telephone did not result in the sending of promotional material due to non-availability of such materials or postal issues when material was sent but not received. And the Internet features unreliable information. This meant that personal telephone calls and visits became an important method of establishing background facts and contexts. To establish a sample, I searched for all active tourism operators in the field of film tourism using brochures, the Internet and information given by information centres, other tourism operators and otherwise involved people through the snowball method (Horn, 2003; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). At one time in April 2004 there were more than 35 tourism operators who had incorporated film tourism into their business. However, contacts through telephone and email quickly revealed that some of those were not running the tours themselves but were acting as agents for another well-known operator, while other tours could not be located for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, fewer tourism operators than expected offered tours longer than three days and of those who did, not all were keen to participate in the study, citing too low profit margins to subsidise the researcher’s participation. In the end, two multiple day tours emerged as suitable and the only limiting factor was that both operators were unable to sponsor my participation. Eventually one of the tour operators agreed to allow me on a tour free of charge in exchange for basic help on the tour (NW1). This included duties such as checking the tour group in and out of hotels and ensuring that appointment times were kept.

These duties unexpectedly extended to full guiding services when the original guide fell sick the night before the tour. This meant that I ended up being responsible for the entire tour. Due to the success of the tour, I was asked to return the following year to act as an officially employed guide (a salary was given for the second tour) (NW2). The research was allowed once more, on the understanding that the participants would need to give their consent again. The other operator eventually allowed me to meet one of the other nationwide tours on three separate occasions and I was also allowed to give out tour journals (NW3).

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\(29\) I will reflect upon my involvement in the research in section 7. Reflections on Research.
4.1. Entering the Field

Both nationwide tours (NW1 and 2) quickly established a routine. In my function as escort I was responsible for organizing the hotel check-ins, setting and supervising departure times, the coordination travel routes and sights with the driver and arrangements for additional activities, etc... At the same time I acted as the travel guide, which involved preparing and delivering in-depth commentaries about the physical and social features of New Zealand and the movies and books of J.R.R. Tolkien. While we used local tour guides on four occasions, I had to guide all other days. My previous work experience and hobbies delivered a sound background for this job. I had previously worked as a heritage and natural history guide, and had become interested in Tolkien and the Tolkien Society in the 1990s. I was partly involved in the making and marketing of the Lord of the Rings movies through my friendships with people who were working in the film industry and its related industries.

At the beginning of each tour, I would introduce myself and the driver who was responsible for the maintenance of the coach and some of the general commentary. I would outline the itinerary, accommodation details, location highlights and general rules of traveling together. Then I explained my research intentions and the purpose and scope of the study, which would involve various methods such as observation and interviews (see Table 4.1 for the coordination and timing of the various methods used). I assured the potential participants of the confidentiality of any data collected. I asked for any questions the participants might have and their objections or consent for this research. I then distributed the pre-tour questionnaires which included questions about the demographics and previous film tourism experience of the participant and their expectations for this tour. I gave out tour journals to those who volunteered. I used participant observation with an emphasis on maintaining a relaxed and low profile key role. Later during the first tour I carried out individual interviews which I changed to group interviews on the second tour to encourage a discussion among participants in order to allow further ideas to be developed and voiced at the group level. This, however, resulted in two different ‘data’ sets between the two tours: while individual interviews allowed a greater insight into the individual experience, personal biography and emotions, group interviews tended to focus on more general themes of the tour and shared experiences and emotions. Still, the transcription of four group interviews had its advantages over the previous 15 individual participant’s interviews. I also emailed a post-tour questionnaire after the tours had finished.
4.1. Entering the Field

The next sections introduce the individual methods in more detail, and then discuss their methodological strengths as well as weaknesses and consequently their advantages and disadvantages.
4.2. Interviews

This study used face to face, group and email interviews extensively because they allow the research process to be adapted to the individual; probe for answers; clarify statements; and explore new aspects and points of view (Babbie, 2004). I carried out face to face, group and email interviews as appropriate (Shuy, 2002) with tour participants, tour guides and selected other people involved in film tourism (see Appendix C: Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Operator/Involved People and Appendix E: Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Participants).

The main study examined 34 participants during two nationwide *Lord of the Rings* tours NW1 and NW2 through the use of interviews, journals, questionnaires and observation. All eligible (over 16 years old) participants (34) were approached and asked for an interview. These were conducted in a range of different settings including while traveling on bus, during lunch breaks and in the evening. The initial idea to follow a procedure of stratification to assure the representativeness of selected characteristics like gender and nationality (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000; Schloss & Smith, 1999) - variables which may have an effect on tourist behaviour (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995) - did not make sense on such a small sample (16 and 23 participants) and was abandoned. I interviewed 14 tour participants (overall 16 participants but one under 16 years of age and one who declined) individually during the first tour and 19 participants (overall 23 participants but four under 16) in group interviews of four, four and three participants respectively during the second tour. Because of the necessity to establish a rapport with the tour participants (Moran 1999), I initiated interviews mostly in the second half of the tour. All interviews on the two nationwide tours were conducted in person (Miller, 1991), while I also used telephone interviews (Gillham, 2000; Shuy, 2002) and email interviews to communicate with people who were otherwise involved with film tourism outside the tours to broaden the research base.

In order to obtain meaningful data, I chose the phenomenological approach and asked participants to explain the meaning of their experience (Li, 2000). I also used the laddering-technique to discover underlying values in given statements (T. Reynolds & Gutman, 1998). I was aware that participants may not spontaneously speak about the “whole picture” (Gillham,
4.2. Interviews

2000). Most interviews were in-depth and semi-structured to assure relevant areas would be covered during the conversation (Miller, 1991; Sarantakos, 1998) and to enable me to understand the meanings, motives, actions and reflections in the context of the everyday life of the interviewee (Cohen, 1996) (see Appendix E: Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Participants). At the same time I used a Grounded Theory approach, which requires the researcher to avoid superimposing “concepts, concerns, and discourse upon the subject’s reality” (Charmaz, 2002, p. 681) too quickly as this would force the data into preconceived categories. Thus I emphasised open-ended questions to allow an exploration of the participant’s responses. Furthermore, I specifically tapped into the individual experience.

I arrived at each interview with a list of questions that I considered important, and found that though I had certain themes and start questions, each interview soon took its own course. I emphasised open-ended questions to allow an exploration of the participant’s responses and specifically tapped into the individual experience (Charmaz, 2002). The semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded while I also took detailed notes to remain focused during the interview and lessen the possibility of data loss through technical malfunctions (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). I acted as an active listener and offered probes when appropriate, for example: through reflecting the answer back to the interviewee or asking them to explain statements further (Charmaz, 2002; Gillham, 2000). The interviews were conducted in English though I clarified selected statements in Spanish and German with tourists from the Netherlands, Germany and Mexico when communication problems arose30.

In contrast, the interviews with local tour guides about their personal and professional experiences took place opportunistically. I also interviewed each driver at the end of each of the South Island and North Island legs to gain a further insight into the interactions and dynamics on board.

An interview took anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours depending on the stamina and interest of the respondents though most took around one hour. I closed the interviews by summarizing what had been covered and often at this point the interviewee would add a

30 I am proficient in English, German and Spanish and would speak in any of these languages if requested.
4.2. Interviews

comment or new information (Gillham, 2000). Afterwards I would write down a few notes about the setting or any interesting remarks or comments made to me after the official interview had finished (Whyte, 1984) or even non-verbal signals like facial expression, eye contact, head and general body gestures (Gillham, 2000) that stood out.

I also chose interviewees opportunistically based on their involvement within the film-location tourism industry using snowball sampling (Horn, 2003; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). I focused on people who I believed to be knowledgeable about a range of topics in a number of ‘expert’ interviews (Flick, 1995; Gillham, 2000) to grasp the scope of the phenomenon of film tourism. In doing so, I considered certain categories for selecting interviewees; besides the already mentioned film tourists I interviewed local tourism operators, workers in tourism, general business people like the owner(s) and staff of eateries and shops, council staff, Department of Conservation staff and journalists to cover different aspects of the phenomenon (some interviewees fitted more than one category). These people were interviewed when encountered during or between tours and the focus was on gaining further insight into the character of film-location tours. Altogether, I spoke to ten local temporary tour operators/guides and to other people involved in film tourism: four representatives of tourism offices, two council and four Department of Conservation members, spokespeople for Te Papa and the Embassy Cinema, six food venues staff, four store managers, two Weta employees, two film extras, a newspaper writer and others spontaneously encountered in Lord of the Rings tourism (and partially in King Kong and Peter Jackson tourism).

For The Last Samurai tourism, I spoke to three tourism operators, two representatives of a film office, one mayor, one photographer and otherwise involved people who I encountered once I was in the field (more specifically, during visits to the locations and library). For Whale Rider tourism, I spoke to the one official tourism operator, two representatives of the tourism office and otherwise involved people who I met spontaneously during visits to the locations and stores. For The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe tourism, I spoke to the one official tourism operator. I also spoke to two film office representatives about other branches of film tourism (e.g. following TV series like Shortland Street, Hercules and Xena and older movies like Willow, Once Were Warriors, Heavenly Creatures, The Frighteners and Vertical Limit that appear to attract less interest than the recent Without a Paddle and River Queen films.)
4.2. Interviews

The interview recordings were transcribed as soon as possible and mostly with an assistant as I injured my wrist and had to completely immobilize it for three months. The final in-depth analysis of all interviews was done with the help of the qualitative analysis computer program NVivo (see section 4.6. Analysis).
4.3. Questionnaires

I decided to use questionnaires to collect some general data as efficiently as possible (Babbie, 2004). The questionnaires were semi-structured with some open-ended questions (De Vaus, 1995). The possibility of very diverse answers (Abrahamson, 1983) was accepted as the emphasis was on discovering the range of possible answers. I used questionnaires for the main study at the beginning, at the end and after the tour to “generate information in a systematic fashion” (Hall & Hall, 1996, p. 97) (see Table 4.1: Coordination and timing of the methods used on the nationwide tour(s) NW1 and NW2). The method was less time consuming than interviewing and helped to gain an understanding of the composition of the tour group, and answered research questions regarding the backgrounds, motivations and expectations and previous experience of film tourism among the participants (see Appendix G: Pre-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants).

The questionnaire was introduced on the first day on tour and participants were asked to complete the forms in their own time, individually and anonymously. This procedure was repeated for the second questionnaire (see Appendix H: Post-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants) at the end of the tour although in that case the researcher was present to heighten the return rate (Hall & Hall, 1996). Also, structured post-tour questionnaires (see Appendix I: email Post-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants) were sent out to the participants of both tours 12 months after the first tour and two months after the second, respectively. Overall, 15 tour participants (16 participants less one under 16) from the first tour and 19 participants (23 participants less four under 16) of the second tour were invited to participate. All questionnaires were sent to all eligible participants. The return rate was as shown in Table 4.2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of participants returning questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-NW1</td>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-NW1</td>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email Post-NW1</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-NW2</td>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-NW2</td>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email Post-NW2</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. Questionnaires

Analysis of the questionnaires began immediately in order to refine the interview questions and provide a focus for on-site observations. The post-tour questionnaire confirmed and served as a revalidation check on the data previously collected and inquired into the experience and its perceived benefits. Also, despite a slow return rate, the email questionnaire provided some further insights about the experiences. The memory of scenic images and reflections about personal lives, friendship and the overall meaning of the journey were the most common themes in the emailed responses (see section 5.5. The Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience). Additionally, I also observed a full day tour and asked all four present participants to fill out a pre- and post-tour questionnaire.

The final in-depth analysis of all questionnaires was done with the help of the qualitative analysis computer program NVivo (see section 4.6. Analysis).
4.4. Observations

This study used observation because this method can potentially extend the researcher’s perspective in field research (Babbie, 2004). The advantage of observations is that they approach reality in its natural structure and study “events as they evolve” (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 219). An inductive approach helped the observations to become more selective with the experiences gained (Abrahamson, 1983).

The initial observation schedule of the main study focused on tour routines, activities and participants’ interactions among each other and with the tour guide as these variables might have had an influence on the participants’ perception of the trip (Quiroga, 1990). I chose the front seat to be available for escort and guiding duties while also being able to observe and take notes. The participants became used to my presence and a bond of trust became visible in the matters I was approached with. It was an additional challenge that I did not only act as a researcher but as a participant (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000; Singleton & Straits, 1999). This situation required a balance of observation as researcher and participation (Blaxter et al., 1996) as tour escort and guide.

I was only too aware of the danger of becoming too close to the participants (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Indeed, as a consequence of the shared experience and a lot of time spent traveling on the coach together, I was considered part of the group. The question about the depth of involvement of the researcher reveals a trade-off between the two extreme positions, and the involvement of the researcher also varied over time depending on circumstances (Schloss & Smith, 1999). Besides the two nationwide tours, I also observed a further five half-day and two full-day tours and furthermore events featuring actual film locations of *Lord of the Rings* where I acted solely as a participant of around 200 participants. Still, the question of to what extent the observation affected the behaviour of the observed people and resulted in modified behaviour (Babbie, 2004) presented a significant challenge. Also, I might have unconsciously ignored certain observations. This problem is endemic to the qualitative approach taken in this study and can only ever be minimised rather than completely eliminated.
4.4. Observations

In these respects, a certain degree of objectivity can be achieved through training and experience (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). For example, I ensured that I took extensive field notes in all sort of forms: “jotted, mental and expanded” (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). These were “a running description of events, people, things heard and overheard, conversation among people, conversation with people” (Lofland and Lofland, 1995, p. 93). The taking of these field notes during the observation, or shortly afterwards, heightened the objectivity of the observation. I also recorded my own impressions and feelings - since they might have been shared by others - which acted as a further check on bias (Hall & Hall, 1996). The notes were separated into categories, such as empirical observations (‘what did I see happen’) that included notes about the ‘when?’ and ‘where?’ of the situation - who is present - what is happening (Hall & Hall, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and interpretation (‘what I think happened’). Despite the advice to only transcribe “as much as is needed” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 30), I decided to record as much as possible as significance would often only emerge in hindsight. Consequently, many notes proved redundant later (Gillham, 2000). As a routine, the transcription and initial analysis were done as soon as possible to allow the summarizing and possible early recognition of patterns. Following this Grounded Theory approach, I could see concepts emerging and consequently focused on these (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Because of the considerable involvement of the researcher herself in this study, the gained insider understanding retrieved through observation was considerable, and delivered valid results (Schloss & Smith, 1999). Observations proved to be an important method: for example when a difference emerged between intended and practised behaviour (Abrahamson, 1983). While the visit to the location itself was often declared as the most important element, participants in fact sometimes chose to stay on the coach instead of examining the location closer. In such cases, observations enhanced the emerging understanding of the situation (Schloss & Smith, 1999) and revealed a new perspective on things (Babbie, 2004). In time, the observations revealed practices of tour group bonding and how participants became increasingly interested in getting to know each other. At the same time, similarities and differences in attitudes, experiences and reaction to film locations became visible.
4.5. Tour Journals

4.5. Tour Journals

In addition to interviews, questionnaires and observations, this study made use of journals. These are basically diaries that are written by the participants as observational logs (Hall & Hall, 1996). Because these journals offer an insight into individual thoughts, they add to and supplement the researcher’s observations (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

I introduced this research method at the welcome dinner for three nationwide tours, the two tours of the main study and an additional tour conducted by another tour company. I then asked for volunteers and opportunistically selected four, five and three participants, respectively. Each journal came with a short introduction and suggested themes to be addressed when writing (see Appendix L: Guidance Questions for Tour Journals of Tour Participants). Daily writings, no matter how short, were strongly recommended because the recording of events even in short form can considerably improve the memory of said events (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000). While the extent of entries varied, most tour journals offered interesting insights. In fact, all but one (from NW3) tour journals were returned and of those returned, only one (from NW2) proved unsatisfying for analysis due to its brevity. The final content analysis of the journal entries was done by using the analysis program NVivo (see section 4.6. Analysis).
4.6. Analysis

This study used qualitative methods to research complex settings and the consequent use of a systematic research program facilitated the analysis. Yet, the analysis of qualitative data is indeed a demanding task (Moore, 2000) in comparison to quantitative data, which is often easier to analyse as it allows statistical analysis methods (Valiela, 2001). In trying to make sense of the data collected, a lot of work was necessary (Lewins, 1992). The chosen general approach was inductive, moving “from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events” (Babbie, 2004, p. 25). The analysis of the data I collected was grounded in that data to allow the emergence of a contextual theory. This, once again, follows the Grounded Theory approach, an analysis in which theory is induced from the research data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998; Van Peursem, 1998). As written before, all interviews, questionnaires, observations, tour journals and field notes were transcribed as soon as possible after each event and an initial analysis began at once. The main reason was that it allowed me to alter both the implementation of the methods and the range and type of data I collected while still in the field. At the same time, I had to check the accuracy of the transcription of the interviews, questionnaires and field notes. A further in-depth analysis was done with the support of a computer program called QSR NVivo (Version 2.0.161), which was developed to facilitate the analysis of qualitative research projects. An NVivo project aids with the collection of data, analysis and results of a study and contains ‘documents’ and ‘nodes’. The data to be analysed is imported in the form of documents saved in rich text format. Once imported, all documents can be edited, searched and coded, meaning one creates references from the documents to the nodes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Nodes are used for this categorising of individual pieces of data (coding) and identify key themes; and they can be organized into hierarchies or simply used for organizing easy access. Using this computer program helped greatly in organising, analysing and connecting the 232 documents that represented the interviews, questionnaires, observations, tour journals and field notes made during this research. Once the documents were imported into the NVivo program, I read them again and begun to create nodes that indicated themes. As I read more documents, I refined these nodes and slowly begun to develop an idea of the ‘bigger picture’: a contextual theory begun to emerge. At this point I repeated the literature research and widened it to include
4.6. Analysis

aspects of meaningfulness and spirituality; a process that is mirrored in the structure of the thesis.

Limitations. Or: Questions Regarding Reliability, Validity and Objectivity

Qualitative research can be very effective for studying attitudes and behavior and is flexible enough to adapt to different field situations. However, qualitative research cannot deliver “statistical descriptions of a large population” (Babbie, 2004, p. 298). This study is limited to the examination of organized tours focusing on Lord of the Rings locations, and therefore investigates only a small part of the current range of film-location tourism. The small sample size was “a compromise between cost, accuracy, and ensuring sufficient numbers for meaningful subgroup analysis” (De Vaus, 1995, p. 73). While every effort was made to contact a wide range of people, this was potentially limited by my ability to communicate and interact with these people. Factors like social desirability (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000) and group pressure may influence information given by participants. As I was only fluent in English, Spanish and German, communication problems may have obstructed the accurate assessment of experiences of a considerable portion of Asian tourists among the current film tourists.

I have already reflected on my personal involvement in this research, discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used and how both validity and reliability of qualitative methods can be increased (see previous sections). Reliability indicates if and how a particular research method will show the same result over time (Babbie, 2004); it indicates the consistency of measurement (Schloss & Smith, 1999). Validity refers to the extent to which measurements are appropriate to the research question (Babbie, 2004) and “measures the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure” (Schloss & Smith, 1999, p. 93). Both reliability and validity of the interviews could be increased through a multi-method approach (Gillham, 2000), for example, when contrasting the intended actions as indicated in the interview and the actual actions as observed. I was aware that the specific method of data collection might also influence the data itself; for example, social desirability was assumed to be a greater issue in interviews than anonymous questionnaires. As a further challenge, the relationship between beliefs, opinion, knowledge and actual behavior is not a straightforward one (Gillham, 2000). Nevertheless, the reliability of observation could be enhanced through the
Taking of field notes (Schloss & Smith, 1999). Questionnaires, especially those with open
questions are often left blank (Gillham, 2000) or are answered superficially but first-hand
observations, interviews and journals can limit the problem of superficiality (Masberg &
Silverman, 1996). The validity of the findings can increase if interruptions in the research
environment are minimized and triangulation is used (Schloss & Smith, 1999), as was the case
in this study. In a few instances using triangulation meant that data collected by one method
appeared to conflict with data obtained using another method. It was because of such
conflicting findings that I decided to include the source of a statement. A good example is the
visit to the Mordor/Mount Ruapehu location where I observed that some participants decided to
stay on the coach instead of weathering the adverse conditions outside though they had
previously stated in questionnaires and interviews how important the physical presence on a
location was. Thus in this case the findings seemed to contradict each other. However, I found
that such contradictions did not so much question the usefulness of triangulation but further
enhanced my understanding of a complex situation. In this case I learnt that while embodiment
and direct physical presence was important to the overall experience so were concerns about
comfort and safety, and that perceived risks may prevent participants from physical
participation in an activity. Further, allowing the contradiction to ‘stand’ in this case meant that
the complex relationship between motives and conscious reasons is made more explicit.
Another example was feelings of loneliness reported in the tour journals while questionnaires
and interviews emphasised the community spirit. Again, I understood the tour journal
comments as a more in-depth description of the overall experience and how individuals felt as
part of the community but also as individuals with conflicting emotions. Thus using different
methods and sources widened my understanding of the overall experience considerably.

This research was influenced by the personal biography of the researcher (Tolich & Davidson,
1999). No research data speak for themselves, as data “require selection and interpretation”
(Gillham, 2000). This interpretation is done by human beings and “objectivity is not possible”
(Sarantakos, 1998, p. 44). Thus a reflection on my own role and learning is appropriate. I found
it very important to keep a research diary (Hall & Hall, 1996) and to reflect upon my own
actions and thoughts. One can only interpret other peoples’ knowledge in terms of one’s own
experience and I needed to discover new perspectives. In many regards, this research forced me
to become extremely mindful of my environment and I had to learn new ways of interpreting
4.6. Analysis

the world (Langer, 1989). The constant questioning of my own assumptions was often tiring and sometimes inspiring. I also had to perfect certain skills. It took “confidence to be a listener, to decentre from oneself and focus on the person being interviewed” (Gillham, 2000, p. 3) at times. At other times I observed what I had experienced myself. It was exhilarating when other tour guides could confirm my interpretations.

I soon began to build specific knowledge about the evolution of film tourism and of the people involved in it. Though the sample ‘shrunk’ to only one suitable tour company and its multiple day tours, and I ended up being the tour guide, the data collection proved successful. The methods used in the field research could be used to generate and cross validate data by being adapted to the changeable physical and social settings encountered during the research. For a further discussion into my presence in and interaction with the research setting and the reliability and validity of this research see section 7. Reflections on Research.
4.7. Ethics

4.7. Ethics

Qualitative field research asks for special ethical considerations as the research examines the behaviour of people (Babbie, 2004). Questions about ambiguities, trust and involvement in the fieldwork and ethics (Emerson, 1988) need to be addressed.

In this study, the researcher acted in an open manner by letting everyone involved know her role. Also, the focus of the study itself was on the tours, not the individual. I ensured confidentiality to each participant and that they could withdraw their participation up until the time when the data analysis process would begin. In order to respect the privacy and confidentiality of tour participants who might not wish to be included in the research, I offered not to take notes of their individual role or behaviour during observed situations. As it turned out, all participants gave their verbal permission. This study was done in accordance with the protocols of the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee, and all research was approved by the Committee.
5. Research Findings and Discussion

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections detail the research findings and discuss them in the light of relevant literature, while a further in-depth discussion in connection with the framework will take place in the next chapter (6. Discussion of Findings with Framework). Though the relevant literature has been introduced already (see sections 2.2. Review of Film Tourism Research and 2.3. Review of Literary Tourism Research), further literature will be introduced as appropriate for the discussions of research findings. This approach mirrors the Grounded Theory approach of the study and with it the fact that certain themes became significant only as research progressed.

The first section introduces the demographics/characteristics of the participants of the nationwide tour (section 5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist). Following this, the motivations and expectations of film tourists will be discussed and the significant influence of pre-tour images (in the form of the *Lord of the Rings* films, the ‘making ofs’ that were included on the DVDs and further cast and crew interviews) will be presented (section 5.2. Motivations and Expectations of Film Tourism). The next section will examine how participants experienced their tour, from the first meeting of the tour group to the actual film location visits (section 5.3. The Film Tourism Experience). In doing so, spiritual and pilgrimage-related elements of the film tour will be revealed. Finally, the role of the tour guide(s) on the overall film tourism experience will be explored (section 5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience) and it will be argued that it is ultimately the interaction between participants and guide(s) that creates a satisfactory film tourism experience. The argument for the spiritual meaningfulness and pilgrimage-like character of film tourism that emerged throughout the journey and its evaluation (section 5.5. The Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience) will be further commented upon in discussion of the data from the tourism industry and other involved people (section 5.6. And the Bigger Picture... the Experience of Film Tourism-Related Industries).
5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist

"It probably would be pretty hard to categorise the sort of person that comes on the tour" (I 10079).

This section introduces the participants of the nationwide tours and shows the great diversity among film tourists. This study found that film tourists were not easy to categorize – neither by age nor occupation nor self-description. Also, most participants did not see themselves as ‘fans’, ‘fanatics’ or ‘geeks’ of the film(s).

Participants of both nationwide tours were asked to complete a pre-tour questionnaire (see Appendix G: Pre-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants). The results indicated that young and older travellers were strongly represented in the film tourism sector. Fifteen out of 15 tour participants (overall 16 participants but one under 16) on the first and 18 out of 19 participants (overall 23 participants but four under 16) on the second tour answered this question and revealed a range of ages with a strong representation of 21 to 30 year olds and 51 to 60 year olds (see Figure 5.1):

The age span distribution might be a result of New Zealand’s status as a long-haul destination that requires both disposable income and disposable time.

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31 Unfortunately, I did not further investigate possible influences of gender or ethnic group as this would have involved extensive analysis in itself. It is clear, however, that “tourist behaviour partly emerges out of dispositions that evolve around class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality” (Edensor, 2001, p. 60).

32 Unfortunately this data cannot be readily compared to the age span of all international visitors arriving in New Zealand as different age classes were used by the Ministry of Tourism (see Ministry of Tourism, 2006). However,
5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist

their own, others travelled with family members or friends (the role of community will be discussed in more details in later sections).

The participants were also asked for their country of residence and, if differing, country of origin. The majority of participants came from Western and English-speaking markets: countries like Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America were well presented (see Figure 5.2.):

These countries represent markets where the tour company has actively marketed film tours. The increase in participation numbers from the United States of America between the two tours might be explained by the increase of marketing in that particular market before the second tour (Bruce Bernasconi, tour operator, personal communication, 29.12.2005). More than six of 16 and respectively three of 23 participants mentioned they were born in a different country than their current country of residence: on the first tour Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America were mentioned and on the second tour Malaysia and United Kingdom. On both tours English was the standard language, with only two participants using another language (Spanish) among themselves and with the guide.

The sample of this study revealed a variety of occupations including students, teacher, artists, actress, receptionist, librarian, book keeper, human resources manager, public servant and

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as my sample is not representative for film tourism in general, such a comparison of data is not crucial for this study.
5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist

retired. On the second tour participants described themselves as homemaker, artist/actress/housewife, journalist, video game designer/writer (published), sales assistant, sword dealer, painter, secretary, administrative assistant, sports outreach development ministry employee, nursery worker, elderly care assistant, registered nurse, nursery hand (qualified environmental scientist), wards person in aged care facility, research analyst for banking industry, manager/implementation and retired.

The preceding sections show the diversity of the tour participants (though most seem well-educated) and how difficult it is to establish categories. In order to better understand the participants, I looked into how they described themselves (see also section 5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and other Motivators). Throughout the study, narratives and observations indicated that most film tourists did not see themselves as film or celebrity fanatics or geeks: “as much as I enjoy the films and am really enjoying this tour, I do not think I am as obsessive as some of the others on this tour” (TJ 03 NW3) while others confirm they are “not a fanatic” (Q 027 preNW1). Another participant wrote: “I do not come to New Zealand just to tour the movie sites, nor would I consider myself to be a person who would ever do a movie site tour” (TJ 01 NW3). Some participants, however, described themselves as “very imaginative” (I 10061 NW1) and as having “a very active imagination” (I 10055 NW1) and all declared an interest in Middle-earth, the characters, the stars, the making of the film and New Zealand itself. Around 15 participants had a significant book or merchandise collection at home and thus showed both an emotional and financial commitment. A few participants had organised Lord of the Rings-inspired events, for example a wedding, or even had their homes partially modelled to create a Middle-earth feel. Yet speakers of any of the fictional Elvish languages were quite rare, of whom only three were encountered over the study period of three years; this does not support the myths of the ‘common’ Elvish speaking fans, as sometimes reported by media and tour operators. However, I could observe how misconceptions favoured the spread of myths when I overheard a participant reciting selected Elvish phrases from the film being described as a fluent speaker. But Tolkien’s 12 fictional Elvish languages are complex linguistic constructs with grammar and syntax and require dedicated studying reaching beyond the sheer repetition of selected phrases used in the film(s). However, tour operators at times found themselves at awe while witnessing their participants:
5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist

“Quite extreme behaviour at times… forty to fifty, somewhere in that sort of number, dressed in capes with plastic swords in their belts. And that… that was an incredible thing too. They just swarmed over the [Lord of the Rings] exhibition and just… drank it in like some religious experience… It was something to behold” (I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004).

Consequently I would argue that while there are fanatics on film tours, most participants are far more moderate. Of course, it must be noted that the distinction in ‘fanatic’ and ‘moderate’ is highly subjective though. It is also interesting how the fan level increased during the tour, with one participant declaring she was about to become one of “the real fans” (IG 10003 NW2 P1) during the tour and again confirming: “I’m going to be quite a big fan when I get home” (IG 10003 NW2 P1), while another reflected: “I’ve never really thought of myself as a fan, as it were, really. I never expected to be so taken up with the whole thing” (I 10056 NW1).

Figure 5.3 A rare case of a participant sporting a Lord of the Rings tattoo

Interviews suggested that Lord of the Rings film tourists can be distinguished into roughly three groups according to their attitude towards film tourism:

• casual film tourists who just happen to participate, presence not necessarily related to the film, e.g.: participants who looked for general New Zealand tours and decided on this tour because of its traveling dates

• general film tourists who are not specifically drawn, but will participate; e.g.: accompanying relatives

• specific film tourists (‘pilgrims’) who are active film location seekers, e.g., dedicated film and/or book fan who expressly chose a film tour

These are only rough distinctions and the exact classification of film tourists in percentages in these classes has not been attempted. In any case, it is not unusual to find all three types of film
5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist

tourists on the same tour (see also section 5.6. And the Bigger Picture... the Experience of Film Tourism-related Industries). A famous example is the Salzburg tour of *Sound of Music* where, too, just over half of the participants on a tour cited the movie as the reason to join the tour (Im et al., 1999, as cited by Beeton, 2005, p. 27). The film tourist is not easy to categorize as a film tourism operator confirms:

“It probably would be pretty hard to categorise the sort of person that comes on the tour because there have been all sorts of different people from the real Tolkien fanatics who immediately get out their cameras and start photographing everyone, everything to just normal people that would love to come and see New Zealand and to some sweet older people that have come along and just want to hear about me and my kids and what have you. It’s just a whole cross-section of all sorts of different people. But they’re all, obviously, they’ve come a long way to enjoy the tour and they… so they, they’re all enthusiastic” (I 10079).

The preceding section demonstrated that film tourists are diverse and come from all walks of life, with only a subgroup of the film tourists classified as ‘fanatics’. This is not to diminish the connection all participants had to the film(s) and novel; merely it shows that the typical film tourist might be a far more ‘standard’ tourist than many expect them to be. While guided *Lord of the Rings* tours represent a form of niche or special-interest tourism (compare to Buchmann, 2006b; Weiler & Hall, 1992), film tourism may not merely address ‘fanatics’. Still, the media and even tour operators do appear to emphasise the spreading of ‘myths’ in relation to film tourists – even if they should know better\(^\text{33}\). Further, it is possible that the spread of film tourist myths in the media puts pressure on participants who wonder whether they would fit into the community of film tourists. Inadvertently, this may discourage many potential participants from joining film tours. Indeed, many participants seemed concerned about the anticipated level of knowledge of other participants on the tour (see also section 5.5. The Participant’s Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience).

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\(^{33}\) My suspicion was confirmed when on several occasions I heard fantastic tales of events in which I, unknown to the tour operator, had been part of. Later, these events (e.g., the ‘Walk to Rivendell’ event, the Folklore Festival before the *Return of the King* world premiere, the party of TheOneRing.net, etc.) were given a near-mythical character by dramatic story-telling and overexaggeration of what really happened.
5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist

The next section introduces the motivations and expectations participants had in greater detail and particularly discusses emerging themes related to what I have termed ‘spiritual’ and ‘pilgrimage’ motives within film tourism.
5.2. Motivations and Expectations of Film Tourists

5.2. Motivations and Expectations of Film Tourists

“I love watching the ‘making of’ the movies and especially with this movie [Lord of the Rings]; it was almost like the mantra. They just said, over and over again, what an amazing experience it was, the bonds that were formed between them. And it was in every single magazine and all over the ‘making ofs’ it. So that definitely influenced me and my expectations and what I wanted to see” (I 10052 NW1).

This section gives insight into the motivations and expectations of film tourists. The participants of the nationwide tours NW1 and NW2 talked about their attitudes and hopes concerning the tour in a pre-tour questionnaire and later face to face interviews (for a tour description see section 5.3.1. Film Tour Profile). I especially inquired into their knowledge of the films and novel and their meaning and what influenced their decision to come on this tour. Additional pre-tour questionnaires and spontaneous interviews were also undertaken during half- and full-day tours of other tour companies. It will be shown that most film tourists have varied expectations that include visiting film locations, experiencing New Zealand and making friends. It could be found that most participants have been exposed to strong pre-tour images (in the form of the novel, films, ‘making of’ documentaries and general media) and that their expectations are partially modelled on these images.

5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

“I’m 54 years old and I have never… even though I thought I would like to go overseas, I’ve never really done anything about it until I saw those movies, and those movies see I get all emotional they just made me want to get up and go and see…“ (I 10065 NW1).

As the discussion of the research findings will show, the meaning attributed to the novel and film contribute significantly to the wish to pursue film tourism. Thus this section will give an insight into the meaning and familiarity of the Lord of the Rings films and the novel while also exploring the moral elements of the story and the participants’ reactions to these. It will also be shown how positively the interviewees speak about Peter Jackson’s interpretation of the Lord of the Rings story and what a Middle-earth ‘aura’ constitutes for the participants.

This research seeks to understand participants’ relationship with the films - and Tolkien’s books - to establish if the film tourists were as fanatical as they may commonly be assumed to be. For this, participants were asked how familiar they were with the Lord of the Rings films, the Lord of the Rings novel and other related works by J.R.R. Tolkien. The results showed that participants had seen the trilogy on average five times (first tour) and six times (second tour)
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

respectively\(^{34}\), though many respondents had seen any one of the individual films more often than others. The differences in average viewings might be due to the fact that one year lay between the tours. Further, two of the 16 and five of the 23 participants of the first and second tours, respectively, had seen the trilogy over 30 times. “I watched the DVDs many, many, many, many times. And yeah, this is definitely my favourite movie of all times, Lord of the Rings” (I 10076 NW1): this statement was repeated in many variations. Yet, there were also participants who had not seen all the films at that point: “I’ve seen the first one once, and now I’ve seen part of the second one on the bus” (I 10064 NW1)\(^{35}\). Some of these participants were surprised when they were told that there were other participants who had not seen the films either, probably assuming others to be more knowledgeable:

“AB: Do you think that all the people on the tour have seen the movies?
P: As far as I’m aware they’ve seen some, if not all. Not all?
AB: Do you know… are you aware that one or two haven’t seen the movies, actually?
P: No, I’m not actually. I have spoken with a number of people, and those that I have spoken to have said that they’ve seen at least one. At least one, so I’m thinking, in general terms, I assume then, that they’ve all seen them, but no, I wasn’t aware. Apart from myself!
AB: Yeah. No, you’re not the only one.
P: OK. Now that surprises me” (I 10058 NW1).

In interviews, participants often distinguished the cinema versions and the so-called ‘extended versions’ of the films in which substantial material (up to 40 more minutes of feature film scenes) were incorporated to allow further plot and character developments. All participants stated they preferred the extended versions though some found them tiring to watch. Also, the DVDs contain bonus material such as behind-the-scenes segments and documentaries. These ‘making ofs’ proved very popular and will be discussed further in later sections.

\(^{34}\) Interestingly, the average viewing on the full day tour was lower, probably indicating less committed participants, though the sampling of day tours was unfortunately too restricted to allow further comments. At the same time, the average viewing of the journal writing participants on the NW3 tour was significantly higher (up to 100+). This is probably because this company advertises strongly on a well-known fan webpage, which seems to attract a significant number of self-declared Lord of the Rings ‘fanatics’.

\(^{35}\) This phenomenon is also experienced by for example another day tour operator who says that “at a real rough guess off the top of my head, I’d say probably 20 percent haven’t seen the movie… probably… yeah, 20 percent haven’t seen the movie at all and then, you know, maybe another ten percent have maybe only seen one” (Mark Gilbert, tour operator and guide, personal communication, 16.12.2004). It seems tourists participating in film location tours have not necessarily seen the films very often – or in fact, at all.
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

Are film tourists only interested in the films themselves or, in the myths of Middle-earth too? Participants were asked how familiar they were with the novel *Lord of the Rings*\(^{36}\), on which the films are based, and other books by J.R.R. Tolkien. This question was considered important as the author had significant literary success long before any films were made. Tolkien was a philologist and teacher of Anglo-Saxon language (1925 to 1945) and of English language and literature (1945 to 1959) and was intrigued by the lack of contemporary mythical tales. In 1938, Tolkien gave a lecture about mythopoeia, the art of myth creation, and “fairy-stories” (Carpenter, 1977, p. 253), and argued that such stories were not simply escapism but important for adults. Consequently Tolkien set out to create such stories: his greatest work, *Lord of the Rings*, describes a mythical Middle-earth and its inhabitants by using fragments of Norse and Icelandic myths. Due in part to the use of broken text that suggests further symbolism and meanings, the myth of Middle-earth intrigued critics and readers alike. The book was even ranked as the most prized publication in the BBC’s The Big Read survey that had attracted 750,000 votes (BBC, 2003), though it should be noted that the survey took place after the release of the first two *Lord of the Rings* films.

For this research, participants were asked to rate their familiarity with the *Lord of the Rings* book as ‘very familiar’, ‘familiar’, ‘a little familiar’ or ‘unfamiliar’ and as a second question were asked how many times they had read the book. The combination of both questions revealed that some participants felt, for example, a little familiar with the book though they had never read it while others rated themselves as unfamiliar though they had read the book once! Thus only the combination of both answers produced valid data. The research shows that less than half the group had read the book more than 3 times while overall six participants had not read the book at all (yet): “I’ve never read the books either, which I’m quite ashamed of being on a *Lord of the Rings* tour, but I don’t actually like reading, so I’m more of a film buff” (I 10056 NW1). A further five had read the book only partially in the past, and gave up due to lack of time or motivation.

\(^{36}\) J.R.R. Tolkien wrote the *Lord of the Rings* story as one novel, which was eventually published in three volumes and only later in a single volume. Thus I refer to the novel *Lord of the Rings* and not, as common nowadays, to the book ‘trilogy’.
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

Asked about their familiarity with further books by J.R.R. Tolkien, most participants answered that they were unfamiliar. Those who were familiar or a little familiar had read The Hobbit and/or The Silmarillion and those very familiar also knew The History of Middle-earth series, Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth, The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and Other Verses from the Red Book and other works like Farmer Giles of Ham, Roverandom, The Father Christmas Letters, etc.

Many participants turned to the book(s) after they had seen the films: “I had not read the books until I saw the movie, and I saw Fellowship and then I went home and I bought the books and since then I’ve probably read the books three times, maybe I’m on the fourth time now. I get to the end and then I start again go back again and read it again” (I 10065 NW1). Another participant confirms: “my interest really came with the first movie and I got really hooked and it was after that that I went and I started reading the books… then I wanted to go right back to the beginning and I started with the Silmarillion… I felt my interest has really, really grown” (IG10003 NW2 C). Other participants had a long-time connection going back into the 1970s. In fact, the narratives of these times offered deep insights into how significant the influence of J.R.R. Tolkien’s work had been for many participants:

“It is not just the movie, but the book that draws me. The film is just the crowning jewel in a magnificent crown, the fulfilment of a dream that has spanned all of my adult life. I first read the Hobbit and Lord of the Rings about 35 years ago and fell in love with this saga. It encompasses all of human mythology and strikes some ancient archetypical chord. I read the book aloud to my wife three times over a period of three years; the last time was in 1976-1977 when she was pregnant with my daughter who now tours with me. Sometimes we would discuss the book and try to imagine the book translated into film. Who would we cast? Where would it be filmed? The book was set aside for 25 years only to be ‘discovered’ again with the release of Middle-earth” (TJ 01 NW3).

It is also interesting that most participants expected this relationship to last:

“It think it will always be there because I just love reading the books so much that, coming back to it, I read the books, then I read others things, then I come back to it, and it’s sort of like coming home. And every time, perhaps it’s my age, I think I may be forgetting little bits, so it’s sort of... I just enjoy so much every time I read it and I look forward coming back, to the end of the day when I can get into bed or sit down on a chair and read. I hope I’ll always feel that way about it because it’s just the most wonderful story. Certainly the films will always be there and if anything else comes out about the making of the films, I’ll be buying it” (I 10062 NW1).

These narratives indicate that the level of dedication towards the films and books often cannot be expressed quantitatively. After all, the modest number of film viewings does not really
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

match with the repeated viewings that would be possible and expected by a ‘fan’\textsuperscript{37}. Furthermore, many participants were only a little familiar with the novel \textit{Lord of the Rings} itself and further works by J.R.R. Tolkien; and again, a higher average of reading could be expected by fans. However, a quantitative analysis of the familiarity does not show how familiar with and involved in participants felt about the films and novel and, more importantly, the meaning of these to them.

When the participants were asked if, and in what ways, the films and novel were meaningful to them, a variety of meanings was revealed. For the film tourists the novel and films were seen as strongly connected and the message(s) of both the author and director:

\begin{quote}
“Tolkien’s message that sometimes good can triumph over evil is a comforting one. Peter Jackson’s success in turning his personal dream into something that had never been done before (making a movie trilogy in one go) is inspiring. He has shown that ‘Kiwis can do’ and has done a great good for his country” (Q 026 preNW1).
\end{quote}

Most participants felt an outstanding emotional connection: “my friends and I and having seen the film and loved \textit{Lord of the Rings} so much” (I 10062 NW1) and “I’ve always loved the movies” (I 10053 NW1). One participants commented that “no movie has ever had an affect on me like \textit{Lord of the Rings} did” (I 10065 NW1). Participants related in more practical ways too, for example: one participant was “an extra in the films, so that kind of makes it extra special” (I 10066 NW1). A participant on a day tour in Wellington commented: “Because I’ve been in the performing arts basically my whole life and I was really impressed with what Peter Jackson’s able to do with the story line and I just wanted to see more of the behind-the-scenes stuff and the details of making of the trilogy” (I 10095). Overall, most participants saw the book as “a deep teaching and great story that Jackson transmits in a magnificent way to the world” (Q 062 preNW2) and agreed that the “movies held fairly close to the books, so they gave me a similar experience” (Q 071 preNW2). The more low key statement “they are just movies and books … they were done very well and I loved seeing them and reading them” (Q 075 preNW2) was a rare exception as most participants used stronger and more emotional terms. For many the reading of the book and also the viewing itself was somewhat of a ritual:

\textsuperscript{37} Even though many people might not watch a movie more than once, the researcher has worked for art house cinemas and film conventions and has met many science fiction and fantasy fans who have seen their favourite film literally hundreds of times (see, for example, the postings of Star Wars fans on http://starwarsforum.net; http://boards.theforce.net; http://www.projektstarwars.de/forum).
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

“I have to know that I have hours to set aside to sit down and if I think I don’t have enough time then I
don’t put it on because I want to get really involved in the story and the emotion. I like to do that, and I
like it when I have somebody who feels the same sit with me and watch it” (I 10062 NW1).

Many participants stated they would “connect deeply with the characters” (Q 064 preNW2) and
one even said: “they are my life” (Q 078 preNW2). Of course, the films derive their storylines
and characters from the novel, which most participants liked in their own right:

“I enjoyed the writing. I liked the way he put his phrases together and the language that he used and the
descriptions that he went into, and I found that that gave me as much enjoyment as the actual story itself.
And sometimes when you get into a story, you forget the language, but I found that I didn’t with that
and… I found that it added to it, to my enjoyment of it” (IG 10003 NW2 P3).

For some, the stories were “a place I lose myself [in] to relax and dream” (Q 028 preNW1). The
reading of the novel was individual, for example: some people preferred to skip certain parts in
the novel: very much like some participants skipped certain film scenes. However, it was the
multiple storylines that many participants related to. They sought “to believe like Frodo,
Gandalf, we can do things to change the world for good” (Q 080 preNW2). Many participants
agreed that novel and films offered “inspirations and ideas that speaks for all times” (Q 080
preNW2):

“It’s just this wonderful story of such courage, and it’s just like these ordinary, little people who have no
special skills, or whatever, and they take off on this enormous journey to save everybody, to save their
little township, to save their friends, fully expecting to not make it. But they keep going and keep going,
even though they think that maybe they’ll be captured, maybe they’ll be killed, they just keep going and
never turn back. And just the very thought of that makes me... against all odds, and against such amazing
evil, these little people just keep going and others are willing to just give up everything to support those
people. Just very emotional” (I 10062 NW1).

Overall, it was very common for participants to look for meaning and guidance in the stories:

“AB: Probably starting with the question, what does Middle-earth mean to you?
P3: To me it doesn’t necessarily allude to a place, you know its just as much an age, you know of the
time... you know, heroes stood up when all seemed hopeless, when darkness seemed to be prevailing.
AB: So for you, you’re meaning it’s more like a life lesson, so to speak.
P3: Mmm hmmm” (IG 10006 NW2 P3).

Another participant confirmed: “They’ve reminded [me] of things/activities and people that
I’ve not kept up with. They’ve reminded me of the importance of having a few, true friends and
of always having hope and not giving in to despair” (Q 035 preNW1). This meaningful and
individual reading of the storylines also connected the fantastic realm with the real world in a
unique way:
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

“I thoroughly enjoy both the books and the movies they are ‘take me outside my normal life and into a fantasy world’, but they don’t seem like pure fantasy, more like ancient history; it’s almost like studying ancient civilisations at uni” (Q 025 preNW1)\textsuperscript{38} and

“The books and movies are fantastic as they are timeless. I was first introduced to the books as a child by my British mother and ever since I’ve been hooked on them. The fantasy aspects are great with so much attention to pre-history of cultures but most of all the human aspects of pure friendship, courage, hope etc” (Q 065 preNW2).

So while some participants saw the novel and films as “entertaining and great pieces of work” (Q 033 preNW1), most participants saw them in a far more emotional way and as having wide reaching consequences for their own lives:

“Orlando’s character, Legolas, has always been my favourite. Even though I consider myself a Hobbit, I identify with Legolas’s ‘aloneness’. He is very spiritual and into nature which is so much like me. Since the movies came out and I saw them I’ve found myself. I found my soul, I found out who I am” (TJ 02 NW3) and

“They transport me into another world, providing me with a wide new set of ideals and emotions. They have also provided me with a future (spanning many years I’m sure) of learning the intricacies of a many-faceted world i.e. a long-term, serious hobby” (Q 032 preNW1).

The novel and films were “a way to experience other places, situations, time periods… a way to explore the human condition and my own experiences” (Q 034 preNW1). The stories “are close to reality to me. And a religion and history on their own” (Q 061 preNW2). The qualities associated with Middle-earth were: “the broad range of people and places and scenery and how different it is from one site to the other. I find the whole history of it fascinating” (I 10055 NW1). And as shown there was a strong element of seeking for an alternative way of life:

Middle-earth “is the perfect place to live… You are surrounded by a diverse culture. There’s Elves, there’s Dwarfs, there’s Hobbits, Shire folk. I mean, of course, you’ve got the Mordorians, the evil people, but overall it would be such an exciting place to live in I think” (I 10054 NW1). Statements like these indicated the longing to experience the mythical Middle-earth for real. This seemed to be an important motivator to come to New Zealand: to seek the existence of mythical qualities in the physical world. This ‘paradox’ will be discussed in great detail in connection with such terms as simulacra and hyperreal in the next chapter (sections 6.1.2. The Tourists Encounter New Zealand… Or is it Middle-earth? and 6.1.3. The Role of Authenticity).

\textsuperscript{38} Tolkien, of course, constructed Middle-earth specifically for this effect to make the myth particularly strong. Thus this statement of a reader’s individual interpretation might not be that unique after all.
5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and Other Motivators

It has to be noted that some participants already wanted to come to New Zealand before the films were made and/or released:

“AB: You said you wanted to come to New Zealand for how long?
P2: Probably three years.
AB: And what made you change your mind and come now?
P2: various influences…yeah [son’s name], he said he wanted to go.
AB: So… what was your main…what… what made you come here?
P1: I mean, first of all, Lord of the Rings was filmed here. And second of all, just the diversity of wildlife that you have here. I mean… I think the kakapo is the best thing in the world personally, but… yeah… very New Zealand-ish and…just the different variety of wildlife than you find anywhere on earth, really” (IG 10005 NW2 P1 and P2)

and

“P4: I said, ‘Oh, Lord of the Rings, that would kill two birds with one stone’.
AB: Oh so that was a combination of both?
P4: Oh yeah. If Lord of the Rings was filmed in the US I wouldn’t go… I wouldn’t go. I mean, I would, but I wouldn’t book a tour. Yeah… but New Zealand, it was a perfect time to see New Zealand” (IG 10005 NW2 P4).

Overall, it seems Lord of the Rings was the additional lure of that eventually made the difference in the decision to visit:

“I guess then again I haven’t really thought about going to other film locations. This is the first one I really thought of because I really got into the movie and I really loved the actual scenery, whereas in most other movies it’s more about the story. Although, in the movie, stuff is about the story, but there’s a lot of scenery that’s so beautiful that you wish you were there” (I 10054 NW1).

Lastly, for some it was the connection of New Zealand and Middle-earth that made the long-haul journey seem less daunting:

“Well, I had no idea what to expect about New Zealand except that it would be beautiful so I just thought ‘that’s a great excuse. It gives me a goal and I see these locations that I know in some way. Already I’m familiar with them because of my love of the films, so it makes it seem less foreign, I guess, or not foreign in a bad way but just less overwhelming, I guess, because I know, I think, ‘oh, I’ve seen that, I know what it is’, so having an itinerary of things that I’m familiar with in some slight way makes it seem less daunting I guess” (I 10059 NW1).

This section has shown that most participants had seen the films repeatedly and also knew the novel to some extent. What stood out is the emotional connection and meaningfulness that many participants found in the Lord of the Rings stories. For some, it was the films that acted as the final motivator to visit New Zealand. The next section will show how the participants became aware of film tourism and decided on a tour of film locations in New Zealand.
5.2.2. Awareness of Film Tourism and the Tour Decision Making Process

After the meaning of the book and film was established, participants were asked how they became aware of the possibility to go on a film location tour. Some had purchased Brodie’s guide book. Consequently, these participants “found out that you could visit locations from the guide book we thought ‘oh we’d probably like to go and see that’” (I 10061 NW1). A few others saw travel shows or read articles showing the film locations. Most participants then decided they “didn’t want the hassle of having to drive myself around. I just wanted to basically be taken from place to place, not having to think about that” (I 10057 NW1). This confirms that structured tours are an advantage for tourists who want their itinerary, accommodation or recreation activities organised (Schmidt, 1979) and probably who also would feel safe(r) in an organised group. Having only a limited holiday time and usually no previous experience of New Zealand (or driving on the left side of the road, for that matter), a guided tour appeared convenient as it organises relevant locations, activities and even provides a community\(^39\).

Additionally participants hoped they would get more out of a guided tour:

> “But, one of the other reasons I’m using a tour guide is that…even if somebody did say OK, these are all the sites that you have to go and see and this is how you drive up there, I’m not really very self-motivated in that way to actually go and do that. I’d probably, like, get to the hotel and go, uh, that was a hard drive today. I’m just going to take it easy” (I 10052 NW1).

Also, the wish for community played a significant role for most participants while other participants learned to appreciate the community while being on tour:

> “When I came here, my priorities were to see as many Lord of the Rings sites as I could and to talk to other Lord of the Rings fans because they’re sort of, a bit like family, in a way we’ve all got something in common that we all like, yeah, so I think that’s important” (I 10065 NW1).

However, after the participants had become aware of the possibility of film tourism and became interested in a guided tour, most could not find any relevant information about this particular niche/special-interest tourism:

> “I just expected that there would be something there, so I was just amazed when I went into the travel agents and they didn’t give me a book and say ‘look at all the tours you can visit all the sites for the Lord of the Rings’” (I 10062 NW1).

Some participants were advised by their travel agencies to take general New Zealand tours instead:

> “And when I went to a travel agent they said ‘Oh no, we don’t have any specific tours, but we have tours and they do go to areas where the film was made’, and I thought ‘What’s this?’ I thought they’d all be

\(^{39}\) For more insight into the expectations towards the guided tour see section 5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience.
5.2.2. Awareness of Film Tourism and the Tour Decision Making Process

doing it, and I just happened to look it up looking up a travel site thinking ‘I might do a self-drive tour’ (I 10062 NW1)

This is where many participants turned to the Internet for more information on guided film tourism options. However, these individual searches were often disappointing:

“It was The Two Towers that made me really want to come to New Zealand, or come and see the movie sites and I surfed the Internet and I went into the New Zealand Tourism, and I couldn’t find anything about a specific tour. All I could find was maps and information on driving yourself from one town to another and then going on small tours” (I 10065 NW1).

However, eventually the participants found the websites of the few operators of multiple-day tours, usually by using the search engine Google, establishing email contact and finally booking the surveyed tour(s). Most booked the tour by themselves though four participants received the tour as a gift. It is interesting that most participants did no particular preparation for the tour. While some saw the films again prior to leaving for their trip to refresh their memory of the scenery, others consciously decided against this so as not to ‘spoil’ the upcoming experience. A few participants had bought Brodie’s guide book and then decided to join a guided tour; having judged it would be too difficult to self-drive. This is also the experience of VIN offices throughout New Zealand when arranging the booking of day tours (e.g., I Paul McLaughlin 28.10. 2004).

This section showed that participants learned about film tourism through the media, and that it took some effort –usually involving personally searching the Internet- to find an appropriate guided tour. The next section will give an insight into the expectations that participants had formed.

5.2.3. Expectations of Film Tourism
This section considers participants’ varied expectations which include organisational aspects regarding the tour and more Lord of the Rings-related aspects. Further insight into reasons for choosing a film-related tour is given.

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40 Throughout the tour, most participants commented upon a changed attitude towards the pre-tour viewings, and declared that the viewing would have probably been of advantage for enhancing their location experience (see section 5.5. The Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience).
5.2.3. Expectations of Film Tourism

What did participants expect from the guided tour? Many said they were not sure:

“I really didn’t know what to expect. Before we left, we were both feeling quite nervous about being in a group of people that we didn’t know and in a new country... I really didn’t have a clue what quite to expect. I knew there’d probably be a lot of travel sort of sitting on the coach and travelling and I expected there to be a guide with us that would be able to point out places and have a good base knowledge about New Zealand as well as Lord of the Rings. I think that’s probably what I, deep down, expected, but other than that, I really didn’t know” (I 10056 NW1).

Others had a more detailed picture of the kind of tour they expected: “to see everything without getting lost” (Q 075 preNW2) and to avoid stress: “an organised tour would reduce a lot of stress and allow myself to sit back and enjoy the country with no need to book and rebook hotels/taxis/backpackers and find my way around a new country” (Q 065 preNW2) and “it’s nice to not have to worry about details such as driving directions, logistics etc.” (Q 076 preNW2). In sum, participants had a ‘list’ of hoped-for outcomes:

“To see as many Lord of the Rings sites as possible and to learn more about the movies and the making of them. To stay in comfortable accommodation, have good food and not to have to organise anything. I also expect to leave with a greater awareness and knowledge of New Zealand” (Q 025 preNW1).

Participants wished “to see the beautiful New Zealand scenery, especially those scenes from Lord of the Rings” (Q 060 preNW2). And while one participant said “seeing the landscape is most important. I love the movies, but I’m not a Lord of the Rings fanatic” (Q 027 preNW1), most participants were far more specific in their wish “to see sites where the Lord of the Rings was made and to actually stand on some of those sites” (Q 038 preNW1). Surprisingly, a number of participants were not aware that no Lord of the Rings sets had been left except one (or, that other film sets have been left, like the set of The Last Samurai). Besides visiting sites, “being with a group of people with a common interest and sharing the experience of seeing the movie sites” (Q 025 preNW1) was considered important by most: “my expectations are very open have fun, enjoy the scenery, soak up the locations and be surrounded by other ‘Hobbit’ lovers for a while” (Q 030 preNW1). They wanted “to share the experience” (Q 025 preNW1 and Q 080 preNW2). Participants wanted “to see many of the ‘Rings’ filming locations with people who share my love of the films” (Q 037 preNW1). They expected “to see a lot of beautiful scenery and Lord of the Rings filming sites. I also expect good fellowship with my travellers” (Q 076 preNW2). Most participants spoke of the opportunity “to possibly make a few friends” (Q 024 preNW1), to form “new friendships” (Q 033 preNW1) that might even last beyond the holiday: “making new friends that I can chat to in the future” (Q 032 preNW1). Some participants mentioned that they felt quite isolated at home. One participant even
organised an advertisement in a bid to attract fellow local fans at home, but this did not attract any interest (I 10100and10101). Connecting to others was important to many, with one participant stating “I anticipate an adventure, seeing some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world from the movie. I also expect to see/do things people who haven’t done the tour haven’t done, to have a closer experience with the film” (Q 028 preNW1) and another one expecting to “meet other hard-core Lord of the Rings fans… visit the various locations where the films were filmed, chances to buy memorabilia, basically provide as many ways to release my geekdom as possible” (Q 078 preNW2).

Many participants travelled with family members, be it a spouse, child or grandchild and saw the tour as an opportunity to connect with these family members “at a different level” (Q 077 preNW2 and Q 089 postNW2). The possibility to share a common experience was seen as important:

“AB: What else is important for you during this tour?
P: Oh…I guess to enjoy it. I’d like my son to enjoy it too, and to experience some of the things that I have. I mean, I guess the books, as I said were a big part of my growing up, so just sort of try and share some of that with him” (I 10048and10050 NW1).

Similar to this, the most common motivator on the surveyed half day tours was the wish to see the film location itself (Q 02 HF), the scenic beauty (Q 01 HF) and remote regions of New Zealand while having “a good time” (Q 04 HF) with the family.

Others wanted “to see and feel parts of Middle-earth. To experience the people and culture of New Zealand” (Q 028 preNW1) and even “an once-in-a-lifetime experience travelling around the real Middle-earth” (Q 065 preNW2). One participant wanted “to be totally captivated by the surroundings and beautiful landscape just as if I were on the journey [of the fellowship] myself” (Q 067 preNW2). Again, most participants mentioned both achievable goals and more fantastic wishes. In most cases, a merging of both Middle-earth and New Zealand was desired and in some minds seemed already achieved.

It should be noted that the question about motivations and expectations was not easy to answer for many participants and resulted in some very complex answers:

“I do not come to New Zealand just to tour the movie sites, nor would I consider myself to be a person who would ever do a movie site tour. Then why do I travel over 6,000 miles and spend about $8,000 to $9,000 US on this trip?
I was stunned by the excellence of the film on many levels. Basically the film(s) were able to usually convey the book as I had imagined it so many years ago. It is so faithful to the book, yet it is able to
5.2.3. Expectations of Film Tourism

(successfully) deviate from it to hold together as a movie. What is more, the landscape, the locations where it was filmed was how I had imagined Middle-earth to be and what was once my own personal imagination based upon print became an attainable reality. I do not visit just because the film was “cool”. I am not going on this tour because I want to see where Lord of the Rings was filmed or because New Zealand is a beautiful country. I [am] among this tour because it allows me to make a solid connection between what I had seen and experienced in my minds “eye” when I read Lord of the Rings, with what I literally saw with my eyes in the film, with the reality of the movie locations.

The film Lord of the Rings links the imagination and mental imagery of the book with the reality of New Zealand and by going on the tour of the movie locations; I tour the book, or at least, its locations. Someone who has minimal experience with the book, but overloads on the movie will not be able to understand or experience this connection. Reading requires an active imagination, passively watching a movie requires no imagination at all. I am taking this tour of New Zealand because I get to tour a real place and tour my imagination at the same time. That is worth the price to me and of course to share these experiences with my daughter who understands all that I have so far written about” (TJ 01 NW3).

This quotation touches several motifs, including the wish to share an important experience with a relative. Perhaps more importantly, the statement also shows the perceived importance and will of the participants to confront the imagined Middle-earth with the reality of New Zealand. In this, the participant sought to anchor his own fantasy into an existing place to further experience the book (and film): “what was once my own personal imagination based upon print became an attainable reality” (TJ 01 NW3). This also rang true for other participants too who seemed eager to test the connection between imagination and geographical places by physically travelling to the film location(s). It is also true that participant’s expectations changed over time, usually becoming more specific (for example, see IG 10006 NW2 P3 and P4).

In summary, expectations towards the film tour indicate a mixture of common tourists (like tour organisation and guide expertise) and also participants are more fantastic Lord of the Rings elements (like the wish to experience community and Middle-earth). The next short section seeks to explain the connection that the participants see between Middle-earth and New Zealand and once again explores the significance of pre-tour images.

5.2.4. The New Zealand-connection of Lord of the Rings

This section will show how New Zealand and Lord of the Rings became connected in the minds of film tourists.

As previously mentioned, most participants saw a strong connection between the novel, the films and New Zealand, whose scenery was strongly featured in the films and was made an
5.2.4. The New Zealand-connection of Lord of the Rings

important and re-occurring element of its storylines. This is noteworthy as it was not before
director Peter Jackson that Lord of the Rings and New Zealand were thought to complement
each other. It should be noted that all surveyed film tourists perceived the New Zealand
location(s) of the American-German produced Lord of the Rings films as a fair presentation of
the Middle-earth described in the British novel. This might indicate a pre-selection because
people who were unhappy with the choice of New Zealand as the films’ setting would probably
not have travelled to New Zealand locations. However, for all participants, the novel, films and
New Zealand itself were merged into a powerful connection: “I just loved the scenery so much,
and I loved the movies and actually be there, and know that those things were filmed there, it
just makes me really emotional” (I 10065 NW1). Many participants mentioned how well the
films and country matched:

“Because of the way Peter Jackson used the landscape. I mean he really creates a sense of beauty, of the
New Zealand landscape. And even when he’s using it as something like, creating the Elven forest at
Rivendell, it’s still the New Zealand landscape… very recognisable… a real feeling of New Zealand” (I
10063 NW1)

and

“Jackson left an important legacy which could be explored more but only you, the government, laws can
do anything. You should be thinking not only in the fans of Lord of the Rings but also in common people
who take this tour as a good excuse to know New Zealand” (Q 097 postNW1).

This sentiment was shared by many involved with the film tourism industry. One interviewee
commented:

“it’s almost like Lord of the Rings and Whale Rider add to the scenery of the country. So that would…
that would stimulate general tourism. You know, people say ‘I’ve always… that’s an incredible country,
I’ve always wanted to go. Let’s go’” (I Ross Shearer, Te Papa staff, 20.10.2004).

Most participants connected the novel, films and country and one participant judged: “they are
classics. The movies will be my favourite for eternity. The books are great too. Without the
books, the movies wouldn’t exist and I wouldn’t be in New Zealand right now” (Q 076
preNW2). After all, it is because of this connection that participants decided to travel in the first
place:

“because… I want to see the places. I want to see where they were. There is something very interesting
about seeing where something actually happened. I mean, in some ways that’s what tourism is all about.
You go to see where things actually happened. Otherwise you just sit home in your house and read books.
Most tourism is about going to see where things have happened. At least, the kind of tourism that I enjoy”
(I 10063 NW1).
5.2.4. The New Zealand-connection of Lord of the Rings

As shown, despite knowing that Tolkien had developed Middle-earth in Europe, many participants emotionally perceived the New Zealand setting as authentic and worth visiting. This notion will be further explored in section 6.1. Film, Images and Myths. It seems that most participants became interested in visiting New Zealand after seeing the films or ‘making ofs’.

The ‘making ofs’ included in the DVDs seemed to have made a major contribution to participants’ motivation. They were well liked: “I like watching DVDs and I love seeing how the movie was made, of course” (I 10076 NW1) and “I’ve seen all the extras and everything at the end of the movies” (I 10053 NW1). Consequently they also formed the participants’ picture of New Zealand and confirmed for many that New Zealand indeed is “absolutely beautiful and green, and has very diverse number of ecosystems and climates and environments and they’re all gorgeous” (I 10059 NW1). Another participant confirmed how interesting the ‘making ofs’ were: “I found them very interesting because it kind of describes New Zealand as an almost magical place and it just motivated me to want to see it even more” (I 10054 NW1). This statement is in sharp contrast to the suggestion that media has an aura-reducing effect (Rojek, 1993). The significance of the ‘making ofs’ was further confirmed in statements like:

“They [the ‘making ofs’] really are important... they really are important. I don’t know as important as the movie but I watch them at home, all the way through, not quite as much as I watch the movies but I’m always going back to them, and I’m always looking but yeah, they’re really important” (IG 10003 NW2 P4)

and

“I love watching the ‘making of’ the movies and especially with this movie, it was almost like the mantra. They just said, over and over again, what an amazing experience it was the bonds that were formed between them and it was in every single magazine and all over the ‘makings of’ it. So that definitely influenced me and my expectations and what I wanted to see” (I 10052 NW1).

Indeed, it proved interesting to sample how the cast members recalled and communicated their memories of the filming and the country, with ‘adventure’, ‘fulfilment’ and ‘friendships’ being common themes (see, for example, the documentary by Pellerin, 2002). Tourism is a product that cannot be sampled before consumption and as such requires each (potential) tourist to judge its quality based on the available information. Consequently, any images will leave an impact. In this case, most participants expected not just a good tour organisation, community and tour experience but furthermore sought a closer relationship with the myths of Middle-

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41 Similar, a newspaper article cites how the “behind-the-scenes features introduced him [the interviewed tourist] to filming locations” and gave the interviewee a feeling of what to expect (Yoshino, 2006).

42 Furthermore, such an image can in turn also “color local politics, flavor discussions of identity and channel local actions” (K. M. Adams, 2004, p. 117), as Adams found out while exploring the emergent construction of touristic imagery on the small Eastern Indonesian island Alor.
5.2.4. The New Zealand-connection of Lord of the Rings

earth, which extended to a meaningful journey and fellowship bonds. Also, many participants hoped that other participants would share their understanding and love of the stories.

Overall, the previous sections have shown that besides general expectations towards a guided tour, further *Lord of the Rings*-connected expectations regarding community, adventure and myths were present, partially based on the strong pre-tour images of the ‘making ofs’ and cast and crew interviews. These expectations are connected to the emotional relationship and the meaningfulness that many participants found in the *Lord of the Rings*. The next section will provide insight into the actual film tourism experience.
5.3. The Film Tourism Experience

“I thought, ‘Yes, this is, indeed, Middle-earth’” (I 10058 NW1).

The following section will introduce the nationwide tours NW1 and NW2 in more detail and will show how participants experienced their tour, from the first group meeting to the actual film location visits. First, the structure, routine and dynamic of the tours will be introduced and it will be shown how the participants related to each other and formed a community. Then the location visits and the participants’ experience of space, *Lord of the Rings*-related themes and spirituality will be discussed, before the next section 5.4. focuses on the influence of the guide in the film tourism experience.

5.3.1. Film Tour Profile

Each of the nationwide tours (NW1 and NW2) was 15 days long and covered both islands, visiting cities from Queenstown to Auckland, and around 80 locations and settings that were featured in more than 100 film scenes. The tours were guided by the tour leader (the researcher) and on three occasions by local tour guides. Each tour began with a greeting and introduction of the tour leader and the tour itinerary. A further introduction followed on the first day on the coach when the driver was welcomed and the research explained in greater detail. The actual journey began with a city tour and finished in the next city and hotel. During these first hours on the road the participants were encouraged to introduce themselves to the group and soon engaged in independent conversations among themselves. This behaviour is not necessarily common for tourist groups, as one coach driver commented: “other tour groups have very little interest except sitting [in] the bus looking out the window, and sleeping. Where this group has got one thing in common… they’re all here for one reason and… show a lot of interest in what’s going on around them” (I 10007 NW2). While the journey continued, the participants also became familiar with the tour routine that most coach tours share:

“AB: What’s a typical day?
P: Um… having to drag myself out of bed… hopefully going down to breakfast which is always interesting because we sit with different people and have interesting discussions sometimes. This morning we were talking about racial prejudices in South Africa… then packing up, getting on the bus and there are often some interesting discussions there, too, and plus, various ‘tour-guidey’ aspects… um… visiting

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43 For more details see also section 5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience.
44 Overall, tourism industry employees would often comment on how extraordinary active and interactive this group was.
5.3.1. Film Tour Profile

places and yeah... getting into the hotel, unpacking briefly, dinner. Sometimes we sit around and play cards or talk or stuff and that’s always good, and... yeah” (I 10055 NW1).

The participants got used to being on a coach, which included traveling for several hours (though there were multiple small stops, usually at scenic spots, shops and food outlets) and a change of accommodation on most days. Thus the coach quickly became a home on the road; a place the participants felt comfortable, where they interacted with fellow travellers and spent their time between location visits:

“P1: I actually found the traveling much easier than I thought. I was dreading all the traveling and I find it’s been really easy.
AB: What makes it easier to bear?
P1: Again, the people you’re traveling with and again, with the tour guides... basically New Zealand’s such a beautiful country anyway. But I think it is the people you travel with. We have all become friends” (IG 10003 NW2 P1).

And at times the travelling itself became an adventure:

“Long drive over some impressive winding narrow mountain roads. What is most impressive is how our bus would pass a semi- (truck and trailer) truck full of sheep going in the opposite direction. I could never have imagined this at home. Kiwi mountain drivers are most impressive and talented” (TJ 01 NW3).

At the same time, travelling by coach allowed the participants to get to know each other. Many were initially nervous. Over time, however, the participants developed a community, including subgroups, and individually negotiated their wish for both relaxation and involvement. Most participants quickly relaxed: “ALL of us (20) are in the same position...” (TJ 10 NW1) of being thrown into this group. However, feelings of loneliness and isolation could affect participants at times:

“I’m kind of an isolated person and, yeah, I’m a split personality I think. I have to force myself to join in and be with people and some of the times I feel that I’m just sitting there saying nothing and... I’m quite happy with it, but sometimes people think, ‘Oh, she’s stuck up, or she’s not joining in’. I do have that... you could say it’s a bit of a personality glitch” (I 10066 NW1).

Over the course of the tour some participants experienced ups and downs: “I felt there was interaction among the whole group today (not that we were becoming 2 groups as in yesterday). I felt that I was accepted by everyone” (TJ 11 NW1). Another participant recalled:

“Well, for me, and I think because I’m on my own, after we got to Nelson I didn’t feel so much part of the group. There wasn’t so much talk and banter amongst the group and I sort of felt a little bit, sort of, cut out. So I don’t really know about the others and their experiences and I don’t know really if it’s changed them because I don’t really know them all that well, because I’m a little bit shy and I’m not really good with pushing in and mixing in with others, so that’s just me. I mean, the others may well have interacted a lot more, but I really couldn’t comment on that, I don’t know” (I 10065 NW1).
5.3.1. Film Tour Profile

What is interesting is that the same participants clarified that, this was partly due to the seating arrangement on the coach and they felt uncomfortable changing mid-tour (I 10065 NW1).

Tucker (2005) explored the self-performances of tourists on guided sightseeing tours in New Zealand and described similar tour routines. The author also found that for the younger participants the social experiences were more important than sightseeing; a statement that will be contrasted with my own findings in the following sections. However, the author rightly pointed out that “even within the apparent rigidity of the package tour context, the spaces of tourism are spaces where people and places are in process, since the tourist always brings multiple narratives to ascribe meaning to their tour experience” (Tucker, 2005, p. 280).

The preceding section has given an insight into the daily tour routine(s) and the atmosphere and interaction on board. The following sections will show how the actual film location visits were anticipated and the extent to which pre-tour images shaped these expectations.

5.3.2. The Anticipation of the Film Location

As the first film location was approached on the third (NW1) and respectively second (NW2) day, the excitement built up, expressed in excited conversations. At this stage, most participants talked about the film locations they anticipated most: a question they were also asked in the pre-tour questionnaire. Many participants said they were looking forward to all the sites (Q 025 preNW1, 032 preNW1, 033 preNW1 and 038 preNW1). For other participants, there were clear favourites like Hobbiton/Matamata and Edoras/Mount Sunday, followed by Ford of Bruinen/Arrowtown, The Pillars of the Kings/Kawarau River and Mordor/Mount Ruapehu.

![Figure 5.4 The volcanic landscape of Mount Ruapehu was used to portray Mordor](image)
5.3.2. The Anticipation of the Film Location

There were some differences between the locations: some locations like Ford of Bruinen/Arrowtown and The Pillars of the Kings/Kawarau River corresponded to one film scene; other locations like Hobbiton/Matamata and Mordor/Mount Ruapehu hosted multiple film scenes. In addition, some film scenes featured one location while others, for example the Rohan landscape, were created using multiple locations\(^{45}\). This ‘fragmentation’ of film settings amongst several actual sites caused amazement and at times disappointment, and a few examples will be discussed later in this section.

Many participants looked especially forward to the locations of the major film settings:

“They’re looking forward to everything but the major sites, the major centres that the story revolves around, you know, Edoras, going and seeing Minas Tirith, you know just those sites over there, those major centres, that’s what I’m really looking forward to. It’s very interesting to see the other stuff along the way. It’s almost like a bonus, in a way” (I 10052 NW1),

Some participants also mentioned more obscure locations like Lothlórien and the Wizard’s Vale (I 10054 NW1).

Furthermore interesting is the influence of cast and crew comments most participants were. One participant wanted to see “Pelennor Field with the incredible mountain ranges behind” (Q 067 preNW2); another participant wrote, “I remember hearing Karl Urban speak very fondly about Twizel so was really excited to see it” (TJ 18 NW2). This showed different motivations to see the same location: desire to experience the scenery and curiosity why an actor liked the location. Besides actual filming locations, additional places associated with the filming process or the cast and crew themselves were mentioned, for example: certain eateries: “And then on to

\(^{45}\) Additionally, digital technology was used extensively, further creating a cinematic version of Middle-earth that
5.3.2. The Anticipation of the Film Location

the Chocolate Fish Café. I have been looking forward to this. Why did they like it so much? And it is a fun place to be at, sitting in all the different seats so close to the beach” (TJ 16 NW2) and “I am really pleased we finished the day in the Chocolate Fish Café. The actors speak so fondly of it” (TJ 18 NW2). Again, this raises the question of how reality and fantasy merge (for an in-depth discussion see 6. Discussion of Findings with Framework).

Figure 5.6 Besides actual filming locations, eateries can also attract film tourism

Overall, most participants saw Wellington as the home of Lord of the Rings, as most of the interior shooting, pre- and post-production had taken place there. Consequently, one participant wished to see “all of Lord of the Rings sites, but if I could only choose one, it would be the site in Wellington (because there are so many there)” (Q 025 preNW1; see also TJ 16 NW1). Only some participants mentioned Weta Workshop though this might have been due to the knowledge that a visit was not planned and would be difficult because Weta Workshop is an operating facility. When I inquired about levels of interest in going to Weta Workshop, the response was enormous. Thus one can assume that there are further places film tourists would like to see though they do not expect to see them.

Figure 5.7 Another film tourism location: Camperdown Studios and Weta Workshop

bears little resemblance to the geographical settings where the original filming took place.
Talking about the anticipated locations revealed different attitudes within the group, mostly seen as enriching: “It makes me appreciate that everybody gets different things out of the story. Everybody’s got a different favourite character, everybody’s got a different favourite location and it’s good to see that people take things out differently” (I 10061 NW1). One reason for preferring a location was the connection to a meaningful storyline in the film setting: “Oh, I really, really want to see Hobbiton… I love that part of the movie and everything, so that’s what I’m looking forward to” (I 10053 NW1). And as every reading of the film was individual, so was the preference for a certain location:

“Asome of the locations where the Hobbits first had their encounter with the Black Rider when Frodo said ‘Get off the Road’, I’m looking forward to seeing that as well because that was one of the things that affected me most because I’ve never read the books, I didn’t know what to expect from the films and when I saw the first one, I was just scared out of my wits all the way through it. And that was the first time a Black Rider was seen in the film or one of the first times up close and I was watching these worms coming out of the ground and it really stuck in my mind, that scene, so I’ll be really interested to see that” (I 10056 NW1).

However, Edoras, the Rohan capital that was a central element in the second and third film was the clear favourite. The Mount Sunday hill that was home to Edoras, in a river delta surrounded by mountain ranges is spectacular in any case (see picture 01 and 02):

![Figure 5.8 The spectacular high-country setting of Edoras](image)

In addition to this scenic beauty, the mythical qualities of the Edoras/Mount Sunday environment were heavily promoted in the ‘making ofs’ and interviews. The influence of cast and crew proved significant: “I feel more relaxed and incredibly excited we’re going to see Edoras. This is the highlight of my trip. It is such a magical location I guess because of how it was made and for the cast/etc it was a real place...” (TJ 10 NW1) and “it’s sort of like a Holy Grail, isn’t it, for *Lord of the Rings* fans” (IG 10008 NW2 P1). Many participants loved Edoras at first sight: “I loved Edoras from when I first saw it in the trailer” (TJ 18 NW2).
5.3.2. The Anticipation of the Film Location

In summary, Edoras was anticipated as a very special location due to its geographical setting and through the comments of cast and crew; the feedback of former film tourists; and its emphasis in guide books. Once again, the confrontation between image and reality and the personal experience of that confrontation were especially important: “I wanted to see it in person. It looked so beautiful to me I almost couldn’t believe it was a real place” (Q 037 preNW1).

The same was true for Hobbiton, a setting which was seen as special even by those involved in the filming process:

“Obviously, the beauty… the Shire where that was filmed… I mean… to look at that, that’s absolutely beautiful. It’s like a fairy tale and people would think, ‘Yeah, I’d love to live in a place like that,’ so... because that’s what it’s all about. It’s selling dreams, isn’t it? And, and then it’s just like the Bollywood movies, that’s why people go along because those movies are like fairy tales to them and people can actually feel themselves being in those situations, or wishing they were in those situations…” (I Jean Johnston, Film Wellington manager, 18.01.2005).
5.3.2. The Anticipation of the Film Location

In comments like these another aspect stood out: the mythical qualities of stories and films and the power these have over people. For many, certain locations evoked longing for a mythical place:

“But my very big highlight that I came here to see was Hobbiton because I thought it was so beautiful and that’s exactly the kind of place I want to live - with just green grass and rolling hills and stuff like that. And also because that pieces of the set are still remaining I thought that would be very nice to see as well. So, that’s the big one” (I 10059 NW1).

Such feelings of identification were mentioned throughout the tour and seemed to indicate a longing for a more mythical world:

“AB: What does Edoras mean to you?
P: I just really strongly identify with the whole thing in terms of the race the Rohirrim. I suppose it’s because of all the sort of groupings or whatever within Lord of the Rings, in terms of human groupings within Middle-earth, I see them as the group that most closely mirrors European/Saxon/Vikings/whatever and, with a family name like mine, which is 900 and whatever years old and has been in print since 1030 whatever, there was really ever going to be one group that I would identify with” (I 10057 NW1).

Many narratives showed that most participants had individually meaningful and at times highly emotional relationships with the novel and film(s). As the tour began and participants became accustomed to its routine, discussions of anticipated locations gave further insight into hopes and expectations. The following section describes what took place during the actual location visits.

5.3.3. The Location Visit

“It was exciting. It was quite nice… I’ve never done anything like it before in my life, and the other people kind of made me use my own imagination and spontaneity, like running down the hill pretending we were fighting with swords and things like that. I mean, imagine a 60-year old going and doing that kind of thing. I thoroughly enjoyed it and all the locations, you can imagine, when you told us what was happening, then we could imagine that in the film and the tour guide book showed us the pictures, you
5.3.3. The Location Visit

showed us what pages the photos were on, then you said, ‘Right, this is what happened here’ whether it’s in the woods or whether it was in the hill in Queenstown or wherever” (I 10066 NW1).

The following sections will show what happened on location visits and how the participants experienced the visit. Their experience is divided into several aspects: the participants’ experience of space; meaningfulness and spirituality; embodiment; and community.

Being on location was certainly the most anticipated highlight of each tour. At the same time, many participants were quite anxious about how the encounter with reality would stand up to their experience of the films. Further, just as each participant had a slightly different approach to the films, they consequently experienced different feelings on location. As one participant put it: “I’m sure we’re all getting very different things out of different places” (I 10055 NW1). Accordingly, participants struggled with terms when asked to describe their location experience: “just excitement and it’s just exciting to know that you are in the same spot that this huge movie was filmed at… I can’t really explain it very well” (I 10053 NW1). Other words commonly used were: surprise, fascination, awe, remembrance, emotions, overwhelmed, peace, magic/spiritual, exhilaration, energy. Participants reported being in awe of the aesthetic beauty of the location; they experienced curiosity, and feelings of accomplishment, contentment and even gratitude. Others felt like hunters (for the exact spot, signs, props...) or felt they were on a mission. Some participants felt connected to their ‘inner actor’ or reported that they finally understood the filming process: “a little bit about how these places must have been built in Middle-earth, given the way things are here… it just… helps me picture things better” (I 10055 NW1). Others realised their longing for an alternative world and fellowship was a strong element of their location experience.

The following sections describe the various ‘aspects’ or ‘themes’ of location visits, ranging from the experience of space and adventure, to community and even spirituality.

5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space
This section will show how participants experienced and particularly how they recognised the location. The experience was influenced by pre-tour images of the film locations and New Zealand in general. The significance of the use of digital enhancements in the films; the
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

consequent ‘de-fragmentation’ of geographical space; and the importance of finding the exact spot are discussed. The section concludes with an insight into the reading of landscape where real and mythical elements were often merged in the minds of participants.

Visiting the locations meant that the re-created film image of Middle-earth was confronted by the geographical reality in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the first days, many participants reported doubt when they experienced a location for the first time: “it feels kind of surreal” (I 10061 NW1). Despite their knowledge of the ‘making ofs’, many participants were astonished at the locations and New Zealand in general:

“I guess it was quite surreal because when we landed in Christchurch, we flew over the Southern Alps, and as we flew over the Southern Alps it was gorgeous daytime, and sunlight, really bright and blue skies, white mountains and stuff and it just didn't feel real. It felt like ‘oh my goodness, I can’t believe it, we’re flying over where the beginning of the second film opens, over the White Mountains’ and stuff. And to be actually there, even now in the second week we’ve been to some of the amazing locations, but just as the first locations that we visited, just didn’t feel… ‘my goodness we’re here’… it feels kind of surreal” (I 10057 NW1).

And yet, despite seeing the ‘making ofs’ and learning about the film making and its locations, many participants were subsequently surprised to find themselves in New Zealand: “when watching the movies, I was taken with the beauty of the scenery. I thought no place could be that beautiful. I felt that I had to see it in person but never thought I would” (TJ 02 NW3). But what did the participants recognise when visiting a location?

The Recognition of a Sight

Film tourism faces a variety of challenges, including the fact that filming itself and post-production can considerably change an original setting (see also section 5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience). In particular, time and space are compressed and digital enhancements can de-fragment a landscape. Even so, participants correctly, sometimes instantly, identified many locations (O 31.12.2005). As it turned out, the memory of the films was an important prerequisite to positively identifying a geographical location:

“These locations, because we are fans of the movies, I think everyone’s fans of the movies and then you have a certain percentage that are fans of the movies and the books but, since we are all fans of the movies we have these images etched into our brains when we see them, we can pretty much play them back, I’m sure, in our sleep if we just close our eyes, so we’re almost wanting to see something from that, because we’ve… we had such an attachment to the movie, wanting to see that same attachment come alive here as well” (IG 10004 NW2 P3).
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

Comments by other participants confirmed that it was common to remember film scenes at their corresponding location, for example the sight of The Pillars of the Kings at Kawarau River was seen as a strong emotional moment in the film:

“… and even I knew it was going to look totally different… even there, I was just sort of walking by myself. I closed my eyes and got into my head space a bit and as soon as I did that I could get a little bit of the emotion” (I 10052 NW1).

Another key scene happened in Arrowtown: “… one of my favourites, the Ford of Bruinen, as well, that’s really beautiful and I can actually imagine the riders in the water and Arwen coming down on the horse” (IG 10003 NW2 P2). Another participant recalled similarly:

“I can see the characters and I can see them there… The bit for me that really, really got it, wasn’t Edoras actually, it was when we went with the [company name] and they stopped at that spot and they said, ‘This is where Arwen came down on the horse’ in that waterway?… And I could stand there and I could see that the horsemen…the Ringwraiths or whatever… I could see them, and I could look up the stream and I could see that… you know? So, yeah… so I can see… I can see everything in the scenery” (IG 10003 NW2 P4).

The location Edoras/Mount Sunday was one of the most eagerly anticipated locations and its visit was rewarding for all. One participant commented: “Edoras is exactly how I imagined it. It’s very open and you get to the top and you’ve got the mountain view and you can’t see things like that and so it is exactly how I imagined it…” (IG 10003 NW2 P2). In evaluating the location experience(s), it stood out repeatedly how strongly present the many pre-tour images were for many participants:

“Tolkien gives such amazing descriptions, it’s really easy for your mind to create a picture, and Edoras was the one place in the book that I thought was described better than anything… was the one place that through the writing I really felt that I was there… I could be there; I could see it in my mind. And so, when the movies came out and, especially seeing the ‘making-of’ and, as it’s described in the book as ‘a hall on top of a hill in front of a snow-capped mountain’ they found a location which was… and they built a hall on top of a hill in front of a snow-capped mountain, and the fact that they built the thing on top of
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

this hill, and it was a real place, it wasn’t a computer generated-shed on top of a computer-generated hill, in front of a photograph of a mountain, it was a real place. I just felt that I was there in that part of the book. I really felt that Tolkien must have seen Mt Sunday when he was writing about it… because that location was built for Edoras; it was meant to be there. So, I had to see it” (I 10061 NW1)

and

“Mount Sunday stood in for Edoras and the scenery spectacular. Once we reached the brown mountains with the snow capped Southern Alps behind, we were in Middle-earth. The illusion was complete with the sound track from *Lord of the Rings* playing. I half-expected to see Rohan Riders appear, or Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas running along the hills” (TJ 17 NW1)

and

“I already felt satisfied and thrilled with what we’d seen and done on previous days. But to get to Edoras was a wonderful surprise. I loved it. Not only was the valley an incredible natural and beautiful sight but I could remember the Rohan or riders streaming out of the gates and across the valley. I’ve seen the films so many times the valley floor and surrounding hills were very familiar. I could see the buildings on Edoras and the people Legolas looking down the valley at night. I would have liked to walk across the streams and stand on Edoras -. My only fear is when I get home it won’t seem real. I have to come back one day and see Edoras again” (TJ 12 NW1).

Mount Sunday as the location of Edoras was impressive and even iconic for the participants.

Only one other location evoked similar strong feelings: Hobbiton/Matamata. As one participant wrote in the tour journal:

“The afternoon was spent in Matamata, or better known as Hobbiton. This was what I was waiting for as I love Hobbits. Hobbiton is gorgeous and it was a beautiful sunny day. The guide we had was very informative and gave a great insight into how the filming was done. For me it was like a wonderful playground. I could not resist sitting under the Party Tree, the steps of Bag End and the doorway and peering through the window” (TJ 8 NW2).

Still, there were other landscapes that were as easily recognized:

“Amazing landscape possibly favourite of the tour so far. The whole landscape suggests Mordor and *Lord of the Rings*. It was like stepping out of the pages of the book. No wonder Peter Jackson filmed there” (TJ 18 NW1).

This was in contrast to how, at other times, the Middle-earth connection was perceived strongly:

“I mean when we saw it I looked at it actually more as oh, this is like an interesting place rather than actually as Lord of the Rings book site… whereas some of the other I have been, as in Deer Park Heights I was really like ‘Oh, this is a Lord of the Rings film site, how cool is this?!’” (I 10052 NW1).

However, besides such easily recognizable film locations, some of the locations were more difficult to recognise and thus required visitors to be more of a “fanatic” (IG 10005 NW2 P2) to appreciate it, as one participant put it. Another participant remarked:

“Some places you have to use your imagination a little bit more, but other places [are] instantly recognisable. That bit of water, for example, with The Remarkables in the background, I mean that’s just… you can’t get more recognisable than that I reckon. Some spots have to be pointed out a little bit more. But definitely, like Ithilien, like, I’ve looked at Ithilien now in the book and I’ve looked at it in, you know, the photos I’ve taken, and I still can’t see it. I still can’t see ‘ah wow, geeze’, that is where they lay,
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

‘oh wow’, that’s where the Oliphaunts were coming through. I just can’t really see it. Maybe it’s because it’s been altered a fair bit in the movie. Maybe that’s why. Maybe some spots mean more than others because maybe the ones that are really recognisable are the ones that really stood out in the movie the ones that Peter Jackson used to really showcase New Zealand” (I 10052 NW1).

In some cases, digital enhancements and ‘composition shots’/’layering shots’ had significantly altered a landscape, making it difficult for many participants to orientate themselves. However, exposure to the ‘making ofs’ also meant that many had expected these alterations:

“AB: Did you expect that there were so many [layering shots] involved?
P: That… yes, because I’d watched a lot of the interviews on the behind-the-scenes of the Lord of the Rings, before coming out to New Zealand, so that much, yeah, it was expected” (I 10095 NW1).

One participant consequently described the location experience as:

“interesting. It’s interesting to be able to watch something on camera and then come there and even though it differs in some ways because it differs in some ways because it’s not as layered, it’s in its natural state, you can still tell that it’s the same place and there’s something about that that’s a very unique experience” (I 10095).

The extent to which composition shots were used for the films (in the case of the Ford of Bruinen scene four locations were merged) brought disappointment to a few participants who were not able to see some aspects present in the film, because those aspects were at some other site. “I didn’t know there were so much composition shots, so wherever we went it was like, ‘This isn’t exactly how you see it in the film’, and that was kind of disappointing in a way, because you can’t actually see it” (I 10076 NW1). The Ford of Bruinen location in Arrowtown inspired similar comment:

“I did not realise that the Ford of Bruinen was two places. The bottom of the scene was shot at the point in the river we visited today but the top half of the shot was pasted in from another location. Knowing in advance that many ‘locations’ were really created out of several different places would be helpful to help keep expectations realistic” (TJ 13 NW1).  

46 Similarly, a newspaper article reported the experience of Lord of the Rings tourists: “We found local places thanks to the guidebook and local knowledge, but my nieces were very disappointed that there were not direct
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Interestingly, other participants were satisfied with the same location: “Fords of Bruinen - wow, this was great to be standing in the actual place, fabulous” (TJ 10 NW1). Other locations were less controversial, for example Deer Park Heights in Queenstown, home to many Rohan scenes. As one participant said, the visit to that location:

“… was a real highlight. So many locations. It was so nice to be able to look at and touch and stand on actual locations from the film that were so recognisable even if they had been altered in the film a bit, or had editing done to them. These were places so clearly recognisable as having been in the movie, and I think this was very important” (TJ 13 NW1).

And another participant discovered a positive chance for learning:

“Obviously some of the locations were composed together to create one scene, so different locations made one scene, which was kind of interesting because you’d say, oh that part is from there, and the other part is from there and there’s a mountain that’s not supposed to be there. But I found it just interesting because I would say ‘uh’ and you go to other places and you go, oh, this is the same place, but it was different geographics” (I 10054 NW1).

It should also be noted that regardless of the recognition process, a location visit could still be disappointing:

“… a lot of the places are really wonderful… you can be on site and see exactly where they did this and it’s pretty cool. But, places like Hobbiton, that wasn’t surprising at all. It was kind of dull, even for me and that was one of the places I was most excited to go, but it was exactly what I thought it would be like. It wasn’t anything more magical” (I 10076 NW1).

![Figure 5.14 Mixed reactions to the most famous Lord of the Rings location: Hobbiton](image)

signs and more visible evidence that particular scenes were shot there” (Wallace, 2003, as cited by Johnson, 2003). This supports Preston’s (2000) suggestion that film tourists might be prone to disappointment as the difference
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

The previous section has shown that memory of the films was an important prerequisite to enable the positive identification of a geographical location. But how important was it for the participant to find the ‘exact spot’ where the filming took place?

The Significance of Finding the ‘Exact Spot’

I asked the participants how important it had been to stand on the ‘exact spot’ of land where the filming took place. The answers varied. Many participants said “it was very important to stand in the exact spot” (eQ 24 NW2), “was very, very important” (eQ 01 NW1). Many gave reasons, such as “it gave me a sense of being a part of ‘something’ great” (eQ 03 NW1) and “if you love Lord of the Rings as much as I do it is a real honour to stand in the exact spot. It gives you a sense of pride and satisfaction” (eQ 22 NW2). Such statements show the perceived ‘aura’ of the filming locations (see section 2.3. Review of Film Tourism Research and 6.2.1. Film Tourism and Pilgrimage). Others used the positions for recalling scenes: “by being able to stand on the exact spot, I could picture the characters in my mind and see them out of the corner of my eye” (eQ 27 NW2). It was “very necessary to stand on the exact spots - I can still visualise all the places, and I get out my photos and dream of visiting New Zealand again” (eQ 20 NW2).

Some mentioned the importance of taking pictures of the exact spot:

“… much fun. The re-enactments were fun to do, especially when we were in the exact spot. And I think that Mount Sunday/Edoras wouldn’t have been that impressive if you just had watched it from the road. It still would have been fun, because you recognise the mountain, but being on top and even seeing Helms Deep in the distance made it more special. But in the most pictures, you aren’t even on the exact spot; you have taken a picture of the exact spot” (eQ 23 NW2).

Such pictures would serve as a souvenir and proof of one’s achievement but might also express the wish to eradicate uncertainty about the reality of the location itself.

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between fictional and real places may be too great to reconcile; however, as the discussion of research findings shows, there was little further evidence that this is widely applicable.

47 This question was asked in the post-tour questionnaire that I had E-mailed to all NW1 and NW2 participants.
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It is clear that the participants were of divided opinion about the significance of finding the exact spot. At the start of the tour many participants commented to the effect that “to actually be on the site and being able to recognise it, that was really important” (I 10065 NW1) and “it’s a matter of just standing in the place where the action happened. You stand there; you can kind of feel the vibrations or something. It really happened there. It just makes it so much more real” (IG 10004 NW2 P1). Some participants only realised their desire to find the exact spot after their first location visits:

“I don’t think I’d realised how important until we got to our first site in Arrowtown, at the Ford of Bruinen, and we were only in half the spot, like where Arwen’s feet were, but not her head and I felt a bit cheated then. But when I got to other sites and I could see them there and remember them in the movie, it was really important. That was really good. It would have been no good driving past and saying, ‘Over there this happened’ or ‘Over there, that happened’. That would have been a complete and utter failure for me, but to actually be on the site and being able to recognise it, that was really important” (I 10065 NW1).

However, many participants also stressed that a more general experience of a location was acceptable too:

“I didn’t come with expectations of standing on the spot and it didn’t upset me unduly when it didn’t happen (for example, I didn’t find it devastating that we couldn't eat under the Party Tree.) However being close enough to see how some effects were created was excellent, e.g. seeing the matagouri bush the hobbits hid under in the dead marshes which was just off the Glenorchy roads and finding out that the marshes are somewhere near Te Anau was most amusing” (eQ 04 NW1).

Others supported this more ‘liberal’ approach: “standing on the exact spot was not as important as I thought it would be. Just being in the area sufficed” (eQ 25 NW2) and: “I don't think it was
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all that important for me to stand on the exact spot. Just to have been there and to have seen the location was enough” (eQ 26 NW2).

As the previous paragraphs have shown, the participants had varying feelings towards the importance of finding the exact spot; for some dedicated fans it mattered a lot while others were more relaxed. The next section about signage will shed further light onto the importance of identifying a site and the exact spot.

The Importance of Signage

This discussion reveals both a longing for both signposted and also ‘unspoilt’ locations. Most of the Lord of the Rings locations are unmarked, with signage to be found at fewer than half a dozen locations (see section 2.1. The New Zealand Film Tourism Industry). This makes it difficult for film tourists to confirm a location. Yet, even when participants at times were unable to picture the film scene in a location, most reported that the absence of sign markers and with it the possibility of a positive identification of the correct setting would not hinder their experience:

“Some of the places, like when we went to Edoras yesterday, I do think, oh, it would be so great if it was still there. But, for me personally, it’s more about the natural beauty of New Zealand and I can just see it and think, oh, it’s so beautiful, even though the Lord of the Rings stuff isn’t there anymore. I can still really appreciate the beauty of it, so, it’s a kind of a shame but I think it’s a good thing that they put it back to the natural form that it was beforehand. It shows that they really respect the land and respect the beauty of New Zealand” (I 10056 NW1).

Most could enjoy a location even with all sets and other sign markers gone:

“It doesn’t take away from the amazement of the fact that it was Lord of the Rings set. It doesn’t take away from that because you know, you’re there where they were, and you’re there where this hall was and where they filmed and where people have been, and I just can’t wait to go back and watch the films and go, ‘oh, we’ve been there, we’ve been there’… it’s just going to be absolutely brilliant” (I 10056 NW1).

However, the participants’ attitude towards signage was ambivalent. One participant describes such ambivalence:

“It’s not a disappointment but I do always have this feeling, you know, this longing, that you wish it could be that way, but you know, I don’t go so far as to be disappointed because obviously I realise that it all happened four years ago and it’s not going to be there” (I 10052 NW1).

During the visit to Edoras it was revealed that many participants emotionally longed for sign markers (e.g., set remains). At the same time, most struggled with this longing intellectually:

“In one sense it didn’t matter to me that the Golden Hall was no longer on Mount Sunday. Because in close-up shots, OK, that could have been done in the studio, in terms of being inside the building, that’s fine, but it’s like that whole setting for Edoras, where you’re in the bottom of that valley and the
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mountains are all round you... and, if I hadn't already looked at the ‘making of’ and looked at things like the guide books for New Zealand, that would have been one setting where I’d have thought they did an awful lot of computer imaging and whatever, because there’s no way a place like that could exist in reality... and it does” (I 10057 NW1).

In one group discussion it emerged that participants were reluctant to have sets retained as they were concerned at the prospect of higher visitor numbers and consequently deterioration in the quality of the site: “I would hate to go to a site and see trample marks everywhere, dead vegetation and… it would just spoil it” (IG 10008 NW2 P1). Many participants were concerned with such impacts caused by other tourists:

“P2: Because they ruin it. That’s like the natural set and if they go in and ruin it… lose the magic of what it looks like, you know.
P1: Even if the fans are ruining it for everyone else, so…
AB: But why would it be ruined? Because… because of the imprints that make you see that other people go there?
P2: Well you’ve destroyed the very thing you love…
P1: No, no… but it’s annoying…
P2: I mean if the grounds are gorgeous, if the trees are gorgeous and they go in and they trample the grass and they cut down the trees, it’s like, what’s the point of being here? Because they just ruined the… you know, the natural set.
P1: It’s like they haven’t thought through properly. It’s like, ‘We want to see if the location’s beautiful, although it’s in the films’ but you haven’t thought it through to keep it in pristine condition. You just all, you know, barge in there and take your photos and leave and you don’t, you know, don’t know what’s going to happen afterwards, whether half the plants are going to die out or not” (IG 10008 NW2 P1 and P2).

These feelings are common in tourism: travellers are aware of their longing for unspoilt sites and the impact each tourist activity has. Film tourists seem to show most concern about seeing signs of other tourists at a site while other forms of degradation (e.g., erosion) are often not perceived as strongly. Similar observations have been made in the general recreation literature, where the presence or absence of perceived human activity seems to have the biggest influence on the experience (Graefe & Vaske, 1987).

The longing for ‘unspoilt’ locations and the wish for signage was both present. Some found an unusual compromise when they began to include the (opened) guide book into their photographs, as proof that the right spot has been found; e.g.:

“I went with the idea I wouldn’t be able to recognise anything, it would be something like the guide saying: ‘now we are here’ and I would you, yes sure, if you say so. But I was amazed how easy it was to recognise everything, you didn’t need the pictures. But I found it really fun that everywhere we went somebody had the guidebook with them and you could even more easy see that it was true, because you already had the idea that you were there, but to get it confirmed is also very nice” (Q 023 post NW2).

Furthermore, some began taking pictures of sites that were not featured in the _Lord of the Rings_ films but in the guide book. Thus, the guide book and its pictures would act as a sign or marker when the participant(s) could not recall the corresponding film images.
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Now that it has been shown how participants recognised a site and found ways of dealing with the lack of signage, it will be demonstrated how real and fantastical elements merged in the film tourism experience.

**Landscape Readings: New Zealand and Middle-earth Merge**

This section seeks to understand why and in what ways New Zealand and Middle-earth merged in the mind of so many participants.

It is commonly accepted that New Zealand has beautiful and varied scenery, which was extensively commented upon: “everything we saw was not something you see everyday - not for us - the lakes and the mountains and rivers…” (IG 10005 NW2 P4). Accordingly, many locations were also seen as outstandingly beautiful. Thus the “natural beauty” (I 10056 NW1) of the country became an enjoyment in itself. It was interesting that at some locations the scenery even overshadowed the *Lord of the Rings* connection. This was the case, for example, at Rivendell/Kaitoke: “…the beauty of the actual area that they chose” (I 10086) stood out for most participants, independent of its use in the films (O 05.01.2006). The setting of Edoras that was described as “Amazing, Magnificent, Majestic, Beautiful” (TJ 02 NW3) and was again one of those locations where the scenery alone was perceived as impressive even without its film connection:

“One of the things I found interesting was that [participant’s name] who has actually not seen all the movies, found, say, Edoras to be a very effective place, just because of the beauty of the landscape. That was a place that I really liked, too. Seeing it with my eyes, the place where Mount Sunday was” (I 10063 NW1).

Not only film locations impress participants, but New Zealand’s general landscape:

“…mysterious, I guess, and very beautiful. Overly stunning – just ridiculously stunning scenery that…every corner, every way you look, there’s something amazing to look at. The hills and the mountains are crowned with these mists that seem to cling around the top that look very mysterious – like something out of a fairytale book. So everything you looked at…just reminds you of stories you’d read…like the Chronicles of Narnia and especially the Tolkien books… well-steeped in mystery, in magic where wizards and dragons and that kind of thing are – and that’s what it looked like to me” (I 10061 NW1).

The descriptions clearly projected extraordinary and fantastic elements on New Zealand. It was not just the scenery but the merging of geography; image and imagination while present at location that created these spiritual qualities, as in the case of Ithilien (see section 5.3.3. The Spirituality of Film Tourism). The participants wanted to immerse themselves in this mythical
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world and the New Zealand landscape provided the ‘screen’ for this: “it’s almost like we tune out reality and become engrossed in the magic. In some ways it’s rather sad having to come back to the reality” (IG 10008 NW2 P3). Clearly, most participants wanted to encounter and experience the mythical Middle-earth but were also aware of the geographical reality of New Zealand. Many participants tried to anchor Middle-earth in New Zealand:

“To me, New Zealand is Middle-earth. I don’t think it matters where you go or where you look I can see things from the Lord of the Rings in most scenery, in most areas… I find it hard to see a difference like, townships aside yeah but to me, Middle-earth… And when we were going up with that [local company], [the local tour guide] turned around and we were going up and she said, ‘This is Middle-earth’ and I thought, ‘Yes, she’s right’. This is New Zealand” (IG 10003 NW2 P4)

and

“I think they could almost rename New Zealand Middle-earth. It suits. It’s just… to me it fits very much with what I’d imagined or visualised in my head when I read the books. A lot of it is very, very good, yeah” (I 10048and10050 NW1).

Some participants referred to the type of landscapes New Zealand offers to explain the ease with which both merged:

“Well, what I really love about Middle-earth, the way it was written, it is like sort of out of history and you recognise bits that you recognise from history like The Shire would be like Old England, the countryside, or the community. The Rohan relates to Vikings and Gondor, very medieval, and as you read the story you recognise it. And what I love about New Zealand is it has all the landscapes that are featured in the story. It has the lakes, the rivers, the mountains, the farmland, it has everything there you see in the films” (IG 10003 NW2 P2)

and

“When I saw the movie I could see that New Zealand was the ideal spot for it to be filmed because, in my imagination, that was the same country and I really enjoy that, and I think that, having seen the film and then going back and reading the book again, I enjoyed it more because I was visualising the film and the scenes of New Zealand so… yes” (IG 10003 NW2 P3)

and

“The countryside, the mountains, the tussocks, all the… all the places, you know the Pelennor Fields all… that was all flat but you could see it everywhere you go, so yes, all the… all the country areas, all the mountains, all of it. I… I just… I’m not making myself clear am I? It’s just that it doesn’t matter where you go, you can see Middle-earth” (IG 10003 NW2 P4).

Overall, the dreamlike journey was supported as mythical elements and stories seemed to merge flawlessly with the geographical reality of New Zealand:

“AB: We are driving through a gorge right now and you just mentioned that it wasn’t used in a movie, but it still could be Middle-earth. What do you mean? P: How do I explain? It’s just so untouched I guess. And a lot of it just conjures up little pockets of it, you could almost see soldiers from the different armies coming over the hills or down on the river. I mean, I found virtually the whole length of this river, right back to Queenstown, I wouldn’t have been surprised to have seen the Hobbit and everyone come around the corner in their little boat. It’s just perfect really” (I 10048and10050 NW1)

and

“Everything looks familiar. There are places that are miles and miles from where the movie was shot where you can say ‘I know that. I can see Legolas and Gimli running right over this hill, and that’s
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exactly like something I saw in the movie. Even if it wasn’t filmed right there you can see it” (I 10058 NW1).

Real geography and fantasy repeatedly merged. It is telling that both actor and film character often merged into one person, the same happened to and also the geographical names. Even though correct New Zealand names, both Māori and/or Pakeha, were used continuously during the tour, they could not always be remembered while the fictional names could: “Mount Doom (I forget its real name) looks wonderful” (TJ 16 NW1). In an interesting twist, one tour guide explained that one participant once called the Remarkables the ‘Extendables’ as it had been explained that the real mountains were digitally extended for the cinematic Shadows of Doom. For most it was exactly the connection between both scenery and film that made the visit of a selected location so special:

“P: It was fantastic… just coming over the hills and just seeing it there and… than getting out and a bit closer, and it was just so beautiful and isolated and… yeah. It was very cool.
AB: What does it mean, it was so isolated?
P: Because it was so far from everything and once we’re outside the bus you could easily pretend that you’re in the middle of nowhere, that there was no civilisation anywhere that you really were on Middle-earth.
AB: So, one quality of Middle-earth is this remoteness?
P: Yeah. I really like the untamed land and the isolatedness” (I 10055 NW1).

This comment also shows how the participant perceived and valued the character of the countryside. Some locations stood out remarkably, such as Edoras, which captivated both a New Zealand resident and even the driver who had never seen the films at the time of the visit:

“Going up to Mount Edoras, going up to Mount Sunday, into that part of the country because I had never been there, and the drive in on the gravel road, it’s really when it comes around and it all spreads out in front of you, I think that would have been the greatest thing for me.
Can you describe the feeling you had when you turned, and saw?
It was overwhelming. It was absolutely one of the most stunning places I had ever seen and it’s just so wonderful to think that that’s here in New Zealand” (I 10063 NW1)

and

“I had a wonderful experience the day we went into Clearwater and beyond [towards Edoras]. That was a wonderful experience… Truly, when we came out of the… the area, which was filmed… When I first viewed… when I first saw that view, honestly, I was taken by it and for the time… period of time we spent as we drew closer to the area and…when you went for a walk with your group, it was more the time we returned from that, when we were making our way out of that area, when we left all the dust and gravel behind, we sailed through the beautiful green fields on both left and right hand side, and I sensed that everyone was still in a fix, sort of thing and…as we were travelling through the fields, I thought, ‘Yes, this is, indeed, Middle-earth’ and even when we saw the sheep I felt that… it was the first realisation of something special and… even as I saw the sheep and the cattle grazing in the fields as were sailing through the fields, that… to me the spell was unbroken. It was a wonderful experience going in to that… to view that area. And I must say, even without… I can only guess, that that scene, that particular location, I can only guess, in the movie, it has to be one of the defining places of this… these epic movies” (I 10058 NW1).
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

Personally, I remember that I was deeply moved by my first visit to the location. My field notes read: “It is the next day and I have not stopped thinking about Edoras. I do not know exactly why. I kept thinking about it even before I went to sleep. I was emotionally stirred but in what ways? It seems they simply keep going back there in my head - quite interesting as it was different from what I expected. Somehow it was more like home (golden tussock, clear spring river)” (F 17.12.2004). And every time I returned I felt again moved by the sight. This was also reported by another tour guide who had been to the location more than 200 times.

Many participants looked especially forward to the prospect of exploring Hobbiton, wishing to immerse themselves in the location in their own time:

“I think it’s just the whole description that Tolkien had of this place and of the sort of people that they were….and I think to go where they did the filming, because in the movie it really was portrayed very well. Just to stand there a little and, sort of, be there for a little while would be really lovely” (I 10048and10050 NW1).

The same participants further admitted a longing to immerse themselves deeper into Middle-earth: “It just sounded like a lovely place to live. Maybe that’s going back to when I read the books and it’s just the whole thing… It would have been nice to have been a hobbit, I think, except for the hairy feet” (I 10048and10050 NW1).

![Figure 5.16 Many pictured themselves in the Lord of the Rings setting](image)

It was interesting that many participants daydreamed about Middle-earth and not so much of the *Lord of the Rings* films, per se, or of their making:

“AB: It’s very interesting: you speak about you feeling like you really experienced Middle-earth…. you don’t see yourself surround… on set in front of cameras, surrounded by many people?  
P: No, no. It feels like Middle-earth” (I 10055 NW1)
5.3.3.1. The Experience of Space

and “I find that the landscape is bringing Tolkien to life for me even though we are no longer looking at specific locations” (TJ 17 NW1).

In sharing their perception of the New Zealand landscape, many participants merged real and fantastical elements, going as far as imposing mythical *Lord of the Rings* images even onto locations not featured in the film (e.g., I 10059 NW1):

> “Well, today I went out and on this track that goes to the waterfall and tramped through, like alpine, small brush, but then it went down, dipped down into this fort that had the lichen and the moss on the trees and I’m like, ‘That’s Fangorn’, you know what I’m saying? […] I don’t want to see the forest, I want to see this little bit looks like it’s Middle-earth, you know what I’m saying? So, although it’s not a film site, it still takes you there” (IG 10004 NW2 P4).

This shows that the film tourists were both touring a geographical region and their imaginations at the same time. The significance of space and identifiable sites will be further discussed in section 6.2.1.1. The Phenomenon of Pilgrimage Sites.

The following sections will look at how participants sought meaning and spirituality, and how friendship and fellowship, adventure and embodiment added to the film tourism experience.

5.3.3.2. The Experience of Meaningfulness and Spirituality

This section will explore examples of meaningfulness and the meaning of ‘Middle-earth’, and the mythical and magical/spiritual feelings that many participants reported.

The reason that such feelings are connected with film tourism may depend upon the story itself and how the films are marketed. The previous sections have shown the link between pre-tour images and the meaningfulness participants are looking for. The meaningfulness relates not
only the *Lord of the Rings* films but also, and perhaps even more significantly, to the ‘making ofs’ and further cast and crew interviews. It was also shown how films actively seek to create myths and how audiences react emotionally to these mythical elements (see section 5.3.2. The Location Visit). As a consequence, the narratives of most participants revealed hopes for adventure, friendship and spirituality/magic/mysticism. For many the destination of New Zealand seemed to cater perfectly to these longings. Even before coming to New Zealand, many perceived the country as “almost magical” (I 10054 NW1). One participant recalled reading an essay by Peter Jackson in which the director admitted seeing Tolkien’s Middle-earth in New Zealand for the first time while travelling on a train: “… and that just sent a chill down my spine and it just made me so emotional. It just touched me somewhere... I can’t explain it” (I 10054 NW1). As the journey began and participants were travelling through a range of scenery, many commented on the spiritual, magical and mythical feelings that they experienced and that they saw mirrored in the qualities of the landscape. Many participants were lost for words when trying to describe their film tourism experience but some mentioned “a sort of Middle-earth feeling” (IG 10005 NW2 P1) or described their experience as “magical” (IG 10008 NW2 P2). This was especially true for many locations including Edoras and Hobbiton, which were perceived as being of outstanding beauty and spiritual quality. Most locations would attract similar feelings. One participant described her experience as spiritual:

“AB: Did you feel this magical aura at other places?
P: Yeah. I don’t like to say magical, but I guess I’ll say spiritual instead, because I don’t like the word magical. Yeah, I felt that most of the way… mostly.
AB: Can you give one example?
P: Places like Ithilien, I really liked, and Mordor was great and seeing Mount Ruapehu” (I 10076 NW1).

It was not just the scenery but the merging of location, image and imagination that created these spiritual qualities:

“It was Ithilien and just walking those paths and seeing where the actors and so on had their caravans, and just walking up through the woods, lying with Frodo and Sam - that was just magical, that was just wonderful. Actually experiencing what the land felt like under my feet and visualising it as I’ve seen it on the screen was just a magical feeling excellent” (I 10062 NW1).

Many participants sought that close and magical connection with the location. Being physically present was special:

“Sort of like a little bit of magic really. It’s sort of step out of the ordinary daily life and sort of just be there and imagine what’s happening…whatever was going on in the particular movie scene where you are. Just sort of almost live it… It’s special. I guess it’s a little bit like the Secret Garden…like you open a little door and then you’re in somewhere else. You’re in a different space. But I guess there’s no door
5.3.3.2. The Experience of Meaningfulness and Spirituality

Here. You walk into an area and I guess inside your head you go into your own special space” (I 10048 and 10050 NW1).

Even travelling past fields and mountains invited day dreaming for many (I 10055 NW1; IG 10008 NW2 P2 and P3). When participants were asked to describe what made their experience spiritual, magical or mythical, many spoke about New Zealand’s scenery and how its mountains, lakes, waterfalls and forests simply had “a sort of Middle-earth feeling” (IG 10005 NW2 P1). Even the knowledge of ‘behind the scenes’ information did not take away from the magic of Middle-earth (I 10086). As another participant confirmed:

“P: Well, it’s great to stand at the same spot, especially when one of the interesting things is, that I’ve found on this tour, that things that, to me, look like places I knew, when I got there I found that he [Peter Jackson] had taken pieces from here and pieces from there and put them together. And that’s really fascinating. I mean, I find the technical aspects of the movie-making that you’re talking about to be really interesting.
AB: It doesn’t take away from the magic of Middle-earth?
P: No. Oh no. It actually adds…it adds something to it. It’s almost the same kind of thing if you go to Greece, you go and you look at places where people built, say, temples, and you talk about why they put it there, and it often relates to the landscape and so on. This is another use of landscape a mythological…almost adding to the mythology of New Zealand, with the movies” (I 10063 NW1).

Even the veteran driver of nearly ten years unexpectedly began to share these ‘spiritual’ elements: “With the people, with the location… the whole atmosphere. It was mystical. Magic, I thought” (I 10058 NW1). However, the driver had experienced similar feelings outside film tourism:

“I experience this on a number of occasions. There are some truly beautiful places that I go to on… a great number of times, have been a great number of times and… not always, but on a number of occasions these places, I feel that magic again, as I have on that particular occasion” (I 10058 NW1).

Overall, it seems that the location visit was ultimately meaningful not only through the association with the film: “a huge film was just filmed in this location here that connects sort of significance to it” (IG 0005 NW2 P1) but also further intangible elements. Also, I could encounter such spiritual and mythical elements in other forms of film tourism.

Essay: Spirituality in Whale Rider Tourism

While travelling New Zealand, I encountered a similar situation in the case of Whale Rider tourism. Again, the images of New Zealand used in promoting the country as a whole and the images used in the Whale Rider film are similar and include coastal scenery, a rural Maori
5.3.3.2. The Experience of Meaningfulness and Spirituality

community and of course the part real and part mythical story of the *Whale Rider*. Now film tourists come with a range of expectations:

“Everyone’s looking for something different. It’s hard just to categorise people into one specific area that they’re looking for. Some people just want to go out and see the film set and say, ‘Oh yes, I stood here where Keisha stood and I touched the whales, and I looked at the waka, and I walked along the beach’. Others are really wanting to go out and learn more about the story, more about how the story actually fits into real Maori culture, whether it’s the type of story that could possibly happen in real life. And others just want to learn more about Maori culture in itself” (I i-Site Gisborne staff member, 30.03.2005).

Later I asked the cultural advisor of the film and now official tour operator what the film tourists would come for, now that the filming is done:

“To be... to see the place, I guess, you know, why do they come? To see the place. To be involved in... to just be part of it... now others, because my tour’s not quite for just looking at the set, I mean that wouldn’t be sustaining enough for anybody, ‘Now this is where they did this, this is where they did that’ but when I take them to the house and talk about our history and our culture, and what we do for them in the front with our... our visitors, and what we do with our funerals, and the various ancestors around, the majority have said what... this has completed rounded off the tour” (I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005).

And again, some film tourists found it hard to describe their motivation and experience:

“Well, one from Luton, which is in London, just out of London that’s where my daughter used to stay - he got out of the van up there and he says, breathed and said, ‘I’m glad I’m breathing the air of the *Whale Rider*’, he said, ‘I decided to come here for my birthday, now I’m here. Well, you’ve got no idea how... how that is.’” (I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005).

Later during the interview the operator mentioned the spiritual connection tourists and people in general made with the film and its storyline: “They felt, I mean the Navajo Indians, I met the Eskimos and the South African blacks that I met, the Negroes and so on and so forth, I met all over the place said, ‘Hone, you touched a chord in our hearts. We used to be like this’ (I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005). The film *Whale Rider* was seen by many as a reminder of the strength and challenges indigenous communities face all over the world and resulted in many pilgrimages to the Gisborne film location. At one point, a delegation of visitors from Hawaii was so moved they performed a ceremony to seal their bond with the local Maori community (I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005). Clearly, the spiritual aspects are as important in *Whale Rider* tourism as they are in *Lord of the Rings* tourism. And in both cases tourists reflected an idealistic image. One *Lord of the Rings* film tourist said: “*Whale Rider*, of course, was New Zealand. *Whale Rider* was really New Zealand” (I 10063 NW1). Yet, the fact that film tourists might have a simplistic image of what they are looking for should not trivialise their longing for spiritual and mythical elements and their willingness to actively go on a search for such elements. At the same time, these findings lead once more to
5.3.3.2. The Experience of Meaningfulness and Spirituality

the question whether and how strongly the themes of the individual film influence the experience the film tourists seek.

The previous section discussed the intangible aspects of the film tourism experience, like the meaningfulness and spiritual aspects of the Lord of the Rings story and the journey. While doing so, the significance of physical presence was also mentioned several times. These findings were contrasted with the similar experience of Whale Rider tourism. The next section will discuss the importance of such embodiment in greater detail.

5.3.3.3. The Experience of Embodiment

Many statements revealed that the physical presence on the film location was crucial for the overall experience: “for me to be able to walk onto those fields is magical because I keep turning around looking for Gandalf or Frodo or somebody. And yet at the same time I’m able to bend down and touch the grass” (IG 10008 NW2 P3). This statement also highlighted the importance of being physically on location where reality and film could finally encounter each other – and at times be merged:

“Actually experiencing what the land felt like under my feet and visualising it as I’ve seen it on the screen was just a magical feeling… Otherwise you are sort of looking at it as you’re looking at it on the screen, or looking at it on the video you’re sort of detached from it. And it’s not until you’re right on that spot and you can feel the air around you and feel the grass under your feet and walk up hills that was really important walking up the hills, down hills and through the vegetation, then I felt as though I was really experiencing it” (I 10062 NW1).

The physical presence helped make the experience meaningful: “I wanted, like, more of an experience, like a physical where you can feel and hear and touch things, it’s much different than snapping a photo” (I 10076 NW1). Consequently, participants happily reported: “This has been such a fantastic day. I feel the whole trip would have been worthwhile for this day alone. The area we went to in Glenorchy was beautiful. I loved standing on the spongy leaf litter underneath beautiful beech trees” (TJ 12 NW1).
5.3.3.3. The Experience of Embodiment

The same participant further confirmed the importance of being physically exposed to the elements: “Ithilien was an amazing experience. To leave the bus and walk down into Ithilien was a real thrill. I loved climbing up through the beech forest to see another film site” (TJ 12 NW1). Another participant agreed: “Well, I’m an outdoors person, I just love scenery, I mean, I get… turned on, you might say, by just looking at the hills and the trees. And I lay down on the grass” (I 10066 NW1). Many participants took up every opportunity to experience the locations in an embodied way: “Sitting and walking amongst the tussock grass on Lindis Pass was so much better that just looking at it from the bus” (TJ 12 NW1).

As another participant noted: “I don’t see a lot of point in seeing it from the distance because you might as well just buy the book and say ‘oh look’… I mean, you could say I physically stood on the road two miles away and saw it in the distance but it’s obviously not the same” (I...
5.3.3.3. The Experience of Embodiment

Most participants hoped to “actually walk out and be in the spot or, obviously, within reason. I mean, looking at the movie there’s probably quite a few places that would be very hard to get to. But places that are in reasonable distance of getting to, yeah” (I 10048and10050 NW1). These statements show the importance of the physical visit for the participants. This was further strengthened by comments given by participants about their idea of a perfect tour: many wished for even more physical activities and exposure. Many participants hoped for more tramping activities or, for example, horseback riding at the Edoras location: “just to actually ride through that valley would really give a sense of place” (I 10057 NW1). The opportunity to be physically on location was seen as important even when the weather was bad:

“Walking back through the fog, wind and stinging rain in my face was exhilarating. This is so different from any tour I’ve ever been on. This tour is so ‘physical’, I’m feeling this country not just seeing. I’d felt that I’d left Middle-earth behind but I was back in it” (TJ 12 NW1).

In fact, adverse weather conditions dampened the mood on several occasions (mainly during the first tour) but in fact also enhanced the location experience at times. This was especially true for Mount Ruapehu where various scenes, including those of Frodo and Sam journeying into Mordor were shot: “Today we are going to Ruapehu to view the spot where Sam and Frodo got lost in the mist. We nearly did ourselves as the mist was so thick we couldn’t see a thing!! I was quite pleased though as this was the way Mordor should be!!” (TJ 03 NW3). Another participant agreed that “today was a lovely day - the fog over the site where Frodo and Sam were trying to find their way into Mordor made it seem more real - just like in the beginning of The Two Towers” (TJ 11 NW1). Though adverse weather conditions might have annoyed the participants at times, most remained positive as were the already cited participants: “Even though it was raining, we didn’t care as it seemed fitting somehow” (TJ 03 NW3).

Figure 5.20 Most participants welcomed fog as it seemed to invoke Mordor’s atmosphere

48 ‘Tramping’ is the New Zealand term for hiking in the outdoors.
5.3.3.3. The Experience of Embodiment

The willingness and desire for physical exercise and even strain mirrors the significance of embodiment in the pilgrimage experience and will be discussed further in section 6.2.1.3. The Phenomenon of Embodiment.

As the previous sections have shown, the journey to the film locations, the meaningful and spiritual aspects of the *Lord of the Rings* story and the embodiment involved in being on-site considerably enhanced the film tourism experience for many participants. The following section will discuss the role the notion of ‘community’ played within the film tourism experience.

5.3.3.4. The Experience of Community

This section explores the significance of fellowship and shared adventure for the overall film tourism experience.

The expectations and hopes of becoming part of a fellowship, even if only temporarily, has already been discussed (see section 5.2.3. Expectations of Film Tourism). It seemed, from that discussion, that most participants were eager to travel in a group or at least managed to see some form of benefit from doing so:

“AB: You speak about it was a group experience, also it gave you something else to make the visit to the location special would you say it really deepened your Middle-earth experience?
No, I don’t think that in itself deepened it, no. But I think it was quite useful because there are one or two people in the group, perhaps, who are very, very serious about it. I mean there’s nothing wrong with that, because one of my concerns about coming on this tour was “Oh shit, am I going to be quizzed by other people about my knowledge of *Lord of the Rings* all the time, are people going to be going ‘ha ha, see, I told you, that never happened or XY and Z’. And, although there are people who are incredibly knowledgeable on the tour about the books and everything else, there’s not an element of competition with people trying to be cleverer than other people” (I 10057 NW1).

The example of Edoras is particularly relevant for discussing the forming of the fellowship. However, it should be noted that the visit to Edoras was a different experience on each of the two tours. Due to inadequate planning and adverse weather conditions the visit of the first group was in doubt, which made its eventual success the more meaningful for most participants:

“The positive one certainly is the Edoras tour or trek, because initially we thought perhaps we wouldn’t be able to get as close as we actually did in the end. So that was an absolute bonus…. Basically, in the morning the weather indications seemed to be that we wouldn’t be able to get anywhere near because it was going to be raining, there were streams in spate, etc., the road conditions weren’t brilliant obviously
5.3.3.4. The Experience of Community

we were in a coach, not a specialist 4x4-vehicle and so we got sort of closer and closer, and we got to within 20 km and it was like ‘oh, are we going to get any closer or are we going to have to turn back now’ and I was saying ‘I don’t mind walking the round trip of 35 km from here, if that’s what it takes to get there to see it. And I think there were one or two other people in the group who were saying the same although I don’t know whether they’d actually every walked 35 km before, but... it could have been interesting. And then we got that bit further and we felt... ’ooooohhh it’s even more tantalisingly close now, please don’t let us turn back now’ and then, miraculously, despite what the local weather forecast had been even what the local weather station had been saying it was virtually perfect conditions. I mean, it made for a long day for everybody but I didn’t hear anyone complaining” (I 10057 NW1).

In contrast, on the second tour the participants were able to ascend Mount Sunday while the first tour participants only approached it to within a few hundred meters. All participants but one made it on top and felt deeply rewarded (see also section 5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide).

![Image of participants at Mount Sunday]

Figure 5.21 The ascent of Edoras increased communal bonds among the participants

The visit to Edoras and the climb were clearly seen as one of the highlights of the tour, and it is interesting that both groups realised and deepened their bond during their visit to Edoras (O 29.12.2005) (a further discussion of the role of community follows below) as indicated by the following statements:

“Mount Sunday, home of Meduseld, I couldn’t believe I was standing on the home of Edoras. This was awesome. Simply awesome. It struck me as the day went on, here we are with a group of people who set out on a journey together and here we are facing an impossible situation where we are losing hope but out of pulling together and our amazing coach driver wanting to ‘take us there’ we arrived and it was awesome” (TJ 10 NW1).

On the second tour it was the unmediated cooperation that developed among the participants during the river crossings and the climb itself that facilitated the bonding:

“P1: We felt like we were sort of like a little fellowship, you know, making our own journeys around Middle-earth.
AB: So what do you think it felt like a fellowship…?
P3: It’s almost as if, at that point in time, before that we were close but it was almost as if going there it was a true joining because we were basically all soul mates at that point” (IG 10008 NW2 P1 and P3).
5.3.3.4. The Experience of Community

These examples show the value that most participants placed on the fellowship and its shared adventures, while also confirming the role that embodiment plays in the overall experience.

Other important aspects of the community are the authenticity and sincerity. The previous discussion showed that tourists are more interested in sincere attempts to recreate authenticity rather than authenticity per se (see section 2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity). I have also spoken about the various myths surrounding the making of the Lord of the Rings films, most notably the themes of authentic relationships. As Jones and Smith (2005) observed:

“The authentic experience of the actors is another theme that is repeatedly invoked in the promotional material, with a special emphasis on how the experience of the actors in the ‘making of’ the films paralleled the themes of the films… Like the film’s characters, they experience hardships of harsh weather, isolation, exhaustion” (D. Jones & Smith, 2005).

Both the makers and promoters of the films referred to the similarity of the trials Tolkien’s characters and those re-creating them went through, where bonds and loyalty grew (Brodie, 2002). Many participants spoke explicitly about these themes:

“I mean it’s a film like any other film but I always felt the material they were filming was very special. It’s nice to find out whether the people that were involved in the film were special, too? And I guess it’s because there was so much fantasy involved in this film, just how they worked out how they created it, really. I mean they’ve got amazing scenery but they also had a lot of other things they needed to do to get the finished product” (I 10048and10050 NW1).

In such narratives, too, the Tolkien characters and the film actor would often merge:

“Actually that part I’m really interested in because that’s more the part of the movie that I was into. Not really the sites but the actual actors, and everything like that... other gossip about Aragorn going fishing and everything like that was really interesting… I remember those better than other things” (I 10053 NW1)

and

“I suppose [Long pause.] it’s partly about walking in the footsteps of the actors, but for me, in terms of this film, it’s not ‘I must go and walk where Ian Holmes walked, because he’s Ian Holmes’, or any of the other actors it’s not because of them it’s because of the roles they’re in and it’s the whole thing about identifying with the whole film and the premise behind it. So, it’s actually about, to a small extent, experiencing the environment and the atmosphere” (I 10057 NW1).

Such an emotional connection towards the film characters and actors some participants felt could at times be so strong that participants reported feelings of grief when confronting the post-filming reality:

“I kind of felt... the Lord of the Rings crew... I don’t know, it’s just going to sound really stupid but, the fact that they’ve moved on and Lord of the Rings is in the past and they’re doing new things... because they’re a business and they make movies and stuff, but it’s like kind of... grieving for a relative, and then you just get over it really quickly and move on, I don’t know. It sounds a bit ridiculous really but it was a really good thing to... it makes you appreciate that New Zealand is a real kind of, a Hollywood kind of a
5.3.3.4. The Experience of Community

place and there are other things going on here which is good, but for me personally, because I just want to
know about Lord of the Rings, I’ve not looked into or taken to seriously” (I 10061 NW1).

It should be noted though that such extreme attitudes were usually commented upon critically:

“I know some people not necessarily on this tour but some people, possibly, really, really want to believe
that Middle-earth is real and that it actually happened. And I know one or two people at home who will
not buy the extended version of the DVDs because they do not want to know about the making of it they
don’t want to know that it’s a film. They don’t want to know that Peter Jackson had to do X and Y and
various people did other things, and when they finished being a Hobbit they went off and surfed. They
don’t want to know that. They really want to believe that Hobbits are Hobbits and Middle-earth really
exists” (I 10057 NW1).

Either way, the communication about the value of fellowship, both in the Lord of the Rings
story and the film making, and its emphasis on authenticity and sincerity, may further the
expectations and experiences film tourists have with the community of fellow travellers.

The previous sections have introduced the film tour routine(s), and the anticipation and
experience of a film location visit. The experience was distinguished in the experience of space,
meaningfulness and spirituality, embodiment and community. Furthermore, the role of myths
both about the film making and New Zealand itself and the merging of fantastical and real
elements in the film tourism experience became apparent; and both a desire for authenticity and
a willingness to believe was demonstrated. These elements are characteristic for pilgrimages,
which leads to the question: is the film tourist a modern pilgrim? This notion will be further
discussed in the next chapter (6. Discussion of Findings with Framework), however, now the
role of the tour guide(s) within the film tourism experience will be discussed, followed by an
evaluation of the film tourism experience by the participants and additional information from
the film tourism industry.
5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience

“A guide is needed to make a New Zealand trip a Middle-earth trip.” (I 10200 NW2)

This section describes how tour participants anticipated, experienced and evaluated their tour leader and guides and discusses those findings in the light of relevant literature. It will be argued that film tour guides perform in a way similar to other tourism guides (Ap & Wong, 2001; Cohen, 1985; Fine & Speer, 1985; Geva & Goldman, 1991; Holloway, 1981; Quiroga, 1990) but additionally are dealing with the more ‘spiritual’ themes and demands made by participants that were detailed in the previous sections.

Visits to the 80 locations/settings that were featured in more than 100 film scenes were guided by the tour leader and on some occasions by local tour guides. Guides in film - and especially *Lord of the Rings* - tourism face a variety of challenges. First of all, participants have varied expectations, based on themes like scenery, adventure or the sense of community that were featured in the film(s). Thus the expectations of film tourists are most likely film specific. Most if not all film guides encounter (false) expectations about the existence of film sets (Ted Guise, tour operator and guide, personal communication, 25.07.2006), given that most sets have been destroyed. Also, guides have to mediate the geographical reality with the film where distances and perspectives are distorted enormously. An excellent example is the film sequence of the fall of Aragorn, who is dragged over a cliff in Queenstown to find himself floating in chain mail in the river(s) of Anduin until he beaches on a sandy outcrop near Upper Hutt. The trick technology used for *Lord of the Rings* further confuses any tourists looking for the ‘real’ Middle-earth. Additionally, many locations are in remote places or on private land and thus difficult to access, and there is little signage\(^49\). It is for these reasons that many participants chose guided tours even when possessing Brodie’s guide book that features many *Lord of the Rings* locations: a tour experience is therefore composed of more than just factual information on the tour itself.

\(^{49}\)The lack of signage has been an issue for years and changes are slow to happen. For example, only in 2006 the Wellington City Council put up basic signage to the popular Mount Victoria locations of *Fellowship of the Rings* - seven years after film tourism to these locations had begun.
5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience

Film tourism has developed its own kind of typical tour guide performances (see also Carl et al., 2007). Most operators deal with a highly diverse clientele where some tourists have no, others some and only a few a lot of interest in the featured film (Mark Gilbert, tour operator and guide, personal communication, 16.12.2004; Jack Machiela, tour guide, personal communication, 28.01.1005). A tour guide typically uses laminated screen shots of selected film scenes to illustrate the location and in the case of Lord of the Rings tourism, Brodie’s guide book.

The guide’s knowledge is typically based on the film(s), the ‘making ofs’ that were included in the DVD releases, and sometimes their own experience of the making of the film. The film guides come from a variety of backgrounds and consequently their approach to guiding differs. Some of the guides worked on the films and occasionally welcome tourists while others were full-time guides in other branches of tourism who take some film tours but do not specialize in film tourism. Also, some tours incorporate film-related attractions and involved people, for example, the person who was responsible for plant protection or illustrations during the filming. Such people tend to improvise: “I don’t really do a…have a format to go through…whatever jogs my memory, that’s what
5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience

you get. So… whatever evolves” (O 19.01.2005). This can be successful - or appear unprofessional when there is no flow in the presentation (O 20.01.2005). Overall, each guide creates an individual performance and to date there is no industry standard to specify what constitutes a film tour\(^{50}\). But what do the tourists expect and how do they experience their guide(s)?

5.4.1. Expectations Towards the Film Tourism Guide

The following section examines the variety of expectations participants have towards their tour leader and their guide(s) before they embark on their nationwide tour. While some participants had no expectations, most expected the guide to have knowledge of Lord of the Rings and New Zealand to various degrees and, additionally, a range of interpersonal skills.

Only some of the participants did not specify any expectations. They might not have thought about their expectations towards the leader and guide(s) (“I wasn’t sure” (I 10076 NW1)) or even the tour as a whole (“I had no idea what was going on. I got the itinerary and it just said ‘guide’... That’s all I knew. I didn’t know what they were going to be saying… I wasn’t positive on anything” (I 10053 NW1)). Replies like these expressed an element of uncertainty. This might have been due to inexperience with film tourism or guided tours in general: for a small number of participants this organised tour was their first (O 29.12.2004). Also, there might have been a basic trust in what was to come: “I have no expectations. My goal is to experience and enjoy whatever happens” (Q 077 preNW2). After all, the theme of the tour was obvious: “I just thought... I just assumed there would be someone who was… who knew *Lord of the Rings* quite well… yeah” (I 10076 NW1). Or as another participant put it: “seeing that this is specifically a *Lord of the Rings* tour, I would hope that they would know the area and be familiar with the film locations” (I 10054 NW1). It was an understandable expectation that the leader and guide(s) would be able to “point out the various places where filming took place” (Q

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\(^{50}\) In extreme cases, guides have not read the books nor seen the movies as one participant experienced on a tour with another company: “he had this guide to the locations [Brodie’s guide book] and that was essentially the only contact he’d ever had with Tolkien” (I 10048 and 10050).
5.4.1. Expectations Towards the Film Tourism Guide

068 preNW2). Many had chosen a guided tour to make the “travel easier and richer” (Q 062 preNW2) and to allow the participants “to have the best possible experience of New Zealand” (Q 031 preNW1). Factual knowledge by the guide was important for this. As one participant remarked: “I don’t know where these locations are myself, you appreciate it more when someone can point it out to you that’s where they filmed Edoras, or this is the exact spot where Arwen saved Frodo things like that” (I 10054 NW1). This seemed at the core of many expectations: participants expect the guided tour to

“be more informative. I mean, it would be… if I would just rent a car and go, ‘OK, I think that that’s where they shot this but I’m not a hundred per cent sure’, it’s never as accurate as if you’re with somebody who knows the area. Like, when you live there, you know, everything, you talk the specific details, like… I’m absolutely fascinated by detail and for detail there’s no way I can get that on my own” (I 10095).

This statement indicates that for some film tourists, the detail is more important than the general. It also shows the high expectation towards the *Lord of the Rings*-related knowledge of the guide who should “know at least the same amount of information as the people who he’s giving the tour to, if not more…. They better watch the ‘extras’ on the DVD” (IG 10005 NW2 P4). Participants expected “lots of information regarding filming and locations” (Q 069 preNW2) and wanted a personal touch: “I think… it’s good to get the human touch, like ‘I was there and this is what happened’ and then tell you about the different people and then, if they’ve got a really knowledge of it and a love of it, it makes it more interesting” (IG 10003 NW2 P2).

And there was hope that “the tour guide will have some stories to tell about the films” (Q 026 preNW1), “maybe some gossip on the actors themselves” (I 10054 NW1) and “inside stories of happenings and funny incidents” (Q 063 preNW2).

Besides sharing this *Lord of the Rings*-related knowledge, further professional and personal skills were required, for example, “an in-depth knowledge of the books, the movies and some behind-the-scene knowledge; an appreciation of same, and a willingness to share this with all tour members” (Q 025 preNW1). The guide should be “friendly and informative” (Q 027 preNW1), “professional, fun” (Q 076 preNW2), “happy, friendly, patient” (Q 038 preNW1), show “reliability, good ‘knowledge’ and approachability” (Q 028 preNW1) and “flexibility” (Q 029 preNW1). Some participants also mentioned that experience as a guide would be important (Q 075 preNW2). They hoped for “experience, maturity, courtesy, knowledgeable, well-prepared, professional appearance and presentation” (Q 034 preNW1) and want to be “taken
5.4.1. Expectations Towards the Film Tourism Guide

care of” (Q 070 preNW2). At its extreme, a guide should have “an ability to make us [the
participants] feel like we are having a unique experience” (Q 032 preNW1). Many expectations
tend to be as vague as they are clear:

“P3: I truly believe that the guide and the tour guide can either make it or they can break it for everyone,
and…
P2: Either they’re a good leader or they’re not.
P3: Yeah.
AB: What does that mean?
P3: It means basically if they don’t know what they’re doing…
P2: Exactly.
P3: … you know, anybody can read a tour book, but if they do not bring it to a personal level, they’ve
ruined it…” (IG 10008 NW2 P2 and P3).

This statement is very significant as it shows that the visit to the location itself is not enough:
the tour guide ideally also mediates the spiritual aspects of the experience. Thus the participants
expected more than the professional and personal skills from their guide that are standard in the
field of tourism (Cohen, 1985; Quiroga, 1990). These notions will be further discussed in
section 6.3. The Role of the Tour Guide.

Also, many expected to learn about New Zealand too and not just Middle-earth. Various
participants wanted the guide to be “knowledgeable on the country as a whole, e.g. population,
culture etc” (Q 066 preNW2). They seem to hope for a combination of both “details and unique
‘unconventional’ information about New Zealand and various film locations” (Q 071 preNW2)
though another participant remarked that extensive general knowledge about New Zealand
would be “of secondary importance” (Q 025 preNW1). After all, this was a Lord of the Rings
tour.

In summary it seems the participants had a range of expectations. As one participant summed it
up, the guide was required to deliver “knowledge beyond [the] mind of Tolkien. Knowledge of
the film process of Lord of the Rings. Informed comment, insight, background material,
organisation” (Q 035 preNW1). While, of course, also being friendly and entertaining at all
times. The following section will look at the reality of the tour guide and participant interaction.
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

The following section describes what happened when the participants met their leader and guide(s) (also see section 5.3.1. Film Tour Profile). It will be shown how participants perceived the guide’s knowledge and performance and how strategically used enhancements like film, music and re-enactment could further individualise and enhance the experience. The reasons for disappointments with the guide performance will be detailed. Finally, the importance of the driver for the overall tour atmosphere will be discussed.

Each tour began with a greeting and introduction of the tour leader (the researcher). I met all participants on the first day of arrival at the welcome dinner. While entering the restaurant I noted “there is already loud talking, cheerful and attentive faces. The staff later comments on the cheerfulness of my participants” (F 28.12.2004) compared to the other tourist groups they usually host. I introduced myself as the tour leader, and the participants stopped their conversations to listen.

My field notes show that I was nervous about how to introduce my research at the beginning of each tour though I never experienced any problems; not even when I introduced my tour journal research method to the 20 participants of another company’s tour (O 15.11.2004). I would introduce the tour itinerary, the driver and my research in more detail again on the first day on the bus. Over the following two weeks I observed the tour and its developing community and to a certain extent became part of it. As I was improvising a lot of the guiding on the first tour and was working around 15 hours daily in my role as tour leader, I found it difficult to systematically observe my own guiding and assess its effect on the tour participants. Thus I will only refer to my own experience to further illustrate themes that stood out in the encounter between participants and local tour guides as appropriate.

Both nationwide tours involved many situations where the tour used local tour operators for half or full days. This provided additional opportunities to add to the research data. While all these local tours operated in a similar manner, they also differed due to the individual guide’s performance. Thus the experience of these local tour guides will be discussed separately when appropriate. Both nationwide tours employed temporary tour guides at the following locations:
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

- Queenstown 2 half-day tours, fully guided
- Queenstown 1 half-day tour, partially guided
- Twizel 1 half-day tour, fully guided
- Wellington 1 full-day tour, guided by both the tour leader and a *Lord of the Rings* extra
- Matamata 1 half-day tour, fully guided

These tours varied in that some visited multiple locations that could be found in the same area (Queenstown 1 half-day tour) or required longer traveling in between the locations (Queenstown 2 half-day tours and Wellington 1 full-day tour), while two other tours concentrated on just one location each (Twizel 1 half-day tour and Matamata 1 half-day tour).

The local guides used during the nationwide tour approached guiding in similar ways. Most established a rapport by asking the participants questions, for example about their previous travels or favourite film characters. All guides then made it clear that no film sets had been left (though the reasons given for this fact varied between guides) and that only the scenery remained, which would be visited now. On the way towards the location, guides talked about New Zealand culture, geography and eventually about their own relationship or involvement with the making of the film. It was after a few minutes together that each tour developed its own character when most guides chose to develop a closer relationship with the participants as indicated in the level of interaction they created with the group. Some guides chose to offer an efficient but more formal tour and interacted less with the group.

The number and kind of questions asked was a good indication of the level of *interaction* between guide and tour participants on a particular tour. While most questions referred to the films and film locations, participants would also ask some guides personal questions about their life and family. These types of questions were directed at the most interactive guides. Also, the participants stayed physically closest to these guides while on location and were more spread out when the relation to the guide was more formal, even though this meant they missed

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51 The exception, of course, is the Hobbiton location where some of the set has survived and is now the tourist attraction. Due to the set up of the attraction that includes extensive signage, Hobbiton Movie Set tours are standardised in their presentation. This is also true for the similarly set up Samurai Village tours, which is built around the set of *The Last Samurai*. 
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

comments at times (O 30.12.2004 and 2.01.2006). As one participant explained, without relating to the tourist, without interacting it would be “like telling us something that goes in the ear and come out the other ear” (IG 0004 NW2 P2).

It was interesting to note further similarities and differences in the individual guide’s performances. Most of them used the industry standards of superlatives when talking about New Zealand, the film(s) or film locations: this is the biggest/oldest/rarest example of a landscape/tree/animal etc. All used laminated screenshots to illustrate selected scenes on location and most also used Brodie’s guide book.

![Figure 5.23 Many tour guides utilise the guide book](image)

Most did not play the music or DVDs, probably due to concerns of copyright issues. Some guides re-enacted on location or even had props like costumes or weapons for the participants. Most tried to engage the participants and delivered active and ever-changing performances. Tours changed over time; for example, in one case, a prominent rock feature called ‘Ape Rock’ was re-named ‘King Kong Rock’ after the release of that film in 2005 (O 31.12.2005).

![Figure 5.24 The distinctive rock formation ‘Ape Rock’ has been re-named ‘King Kong Rock’](image)
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

During the same tour, the guide’s tales of his role in the filming process became more dramatic with each re-telling (O 31.12.2005). And another thing became obvious: guides had very different forms of knowledge. This raises the question of how participants dealt with this fact, given their initial expectations.

The Perception of the Guide’s Knowledge and Performance

While being on tour, participants were confronted with restricted, false and missing knowledge being displayed by their guide, which will be discussed, in turn, below.

For example, at times participants were facing guides with restricted knowledge. One participant could barely hide disappointment when stating: “The [company name] guys, their kind of expertise lay in the movies, I guess, and their idea of the locations is all based on the movies and stuff… But, on the other hand, when you’re talking to them about the characters and all this kind of thing, it would be an idea for them to maybe look into the story a bit” (I 10061 NW1). Some guiding comments created insecurity in the participants: it “was cool to see such a spot but got the impression the [company name] guides did not really know their topic... maybe I’m wrong” (TJ 10 NW1). The guide in question later mentioned that his knowledge came only from the movies themselves and was thus restricted.

It was more common for the guides to display false knowledge when unintentionally altering factual knowledge, for example, when a “guide talks about the train ride that Fran Walsh took” (F 26.01.2005) that inspired her to make the Lord of the Rings films when in fact it was Peter Jackson doing that journey. Usually at least one of the participants picked up such errors, which were commented upon at once or later during dinner time. At other times, participants encountered handed down knowledge, when the guide obtained information from outside his or her own experience. The participants were accepting of this, commenting “I don’t know, I think as long as it’s correct…it’s not a big deal” (IG 10005 NW2 P3) and “it may not be as cool as being with someone who actually experienced it or knows more first hand, you know, knowledge, but as long as they know what they’re talking about it doesn’t matter to me that much” (IG 10005 NW2 P2). Another participant admitted that he even expected this practise to a certain extent and wouldn’t mind as long as the basic knowledge would “be more or less correct” (IG 10005 NW2 P3). As another participant added: “if it’s recognisable… it doesn’t
make it less valuable” (IG 10005 NW2 P2). Participants cautioned that it would be bad for a guide “not having correct knowledge” (IG 10005 P3). There were times though when the participants would not criticise (or probably not even realise) incorrect knowledge. This seems to indicate that there is room for negotiation. This is strengthened by another observation: after a few days the participants on the nationwide tours actually distinguished *good and entertaining* tours from *good Lord of the Rings* tours, indicating that they were willing to step down in their expectations of knowledge in return for an otherwise good tour. Why would they be so accepting? – “I think the guys made it fun” (IG 10005 NW2 P3) was a common reply. This also explains why many participants were not fazed when encountering missing knowledge (though some participants were annoyed) and why extra activities like jet-boating were enjoyable even without the anticipated *Lord of the Rings* content (O 29.12.2005).

Most guides displayed accurate knowledge in similar performances. It is interesting that the participants on the nationwide tours still reacted differently towards these guides. And while some participants might have enjoyed a particular tour, others might not. Examples for these different evaluations during the nationwide tours can be found at two locations with half-day guiding. In both cases, the local guides had long-standing relations to the location that pre-dated the films. However, their knowledge and enthusiasm was perceived very differently by participants.

Participants during the first tour at location A were very impressed with the local guide:

“The man who gave us the tour up there, I wasn’t expecting him to be super, super knowledgeable either, but I think part of it with him was that he was so proud it was like it was his land, … he was so proud… that he went out of his way to find out all about everything that had happened there and he had exact photographs to show us and says ‘look, where you’re standing, do you see this?’ and he knew every spot of those that had been used and he was so proud to share that with us, and enthusiastic” (I 10059 NW1).

Most others agreed. “I liked the fellow who was showing us around on [location A] because he was quoting pieces from the film and, just the look on his face, I thought ‘this man loves the film’ and that’s really important to me...” (I 10062 NW1) and even

“the guy at [location A] was amazing. He knew every inch of that land. He was very excited and enthusiastic showing us round and it just gives you confidence because he knows what he’s talking about and it makes the experience more enjoyable” (I 10061 NW1).

On the second tour this particular excursion was done on a rainy day and the same guide gave a similar performance. And yet this time many participants felt differently: “I have the feeling
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

with the man at [location A] that this was just a job” (IG 10004 NW2 P1). Another participant commented: “I mean I’ve had much worse tour guides on other trips. He certainly wasn’t bad I wouldn’t complain about him, but you know, for most of it, it seemed like he was just, you know, going through the motions” (IG 10006 NW2 P2). Another participant added: there “wasn’t a lot of enthusiasm in it... he certainly knew it...I didn’t catch him making any kind of mistake or anything but he just was like, ‘And-here’s-where-Gandalf-did-this and here’s this scene… He seemed very routine” (IG 10005 NW2 P4). And some participants even questioned the knowledge of the guide: “I thought, ‘Here’s a guy who doesn’t really know what he’s talking about, he knows what he has to know, he knows his sites and what happened there, but he doesn’t really know the story’. I might be doing him an injustice but that’s the way he came across to me” (IG 10003 NW2 P3) and even mocked him: “really amusing… ‘Here’s a guy who doesn’t really know what he’s talking about” (IG 10003 NW2 P3). It seems another participant brought it to the point when he commented that the guide “did not connect with us at all” (IG 10008 NW2 P2).

These observations and narratives suggest that the satisfying film tourism experience is co-constructed between participants and tour leader/guides. A focus on what the tour leader/guide provides is incomplete in that the participants respond individually to the leader/guide delivery. The participants ultimately co-create their experience in interaction with the leader/guide depending on their own knowledge, needs and emotions.

This point is further strengthened through the experience at location B, where again the local guide was judged differently by the participants. Most participants of the first tour declared:

“The tour of [location B] exceeded my expectations…. the guide was excellent he spoke well, knew his subject, was very well prepared with a handout and DVD player with the movie, + he initiated tour member participation (plus, he offered to take photos). I thought he was the best of our ‘guest guides’” (TJ 11 NW1)

and

“the tour guide we saw at [location B], he had a very enthusiastic knowledge of all and… a second-hand account of what went on, but he was so enthusiastic about it that it seemed as actually, he did have a first-hand account… And his enthusiasm for it and his preparedness he was so prepared to tell us about each part of the field and what went on in every part of the field” (I 10059 NW1).

The participants thought the guide was “brilliant because he knew how they did it, and he explained that and it really adds something when you start to think about how difficult it was to do” (I 10063 NW1) and commented how important the guide’s enthusiasm was:
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

“I think people can tell if the person doing a job is jaded or bored because they just can’t… they just don’t inject that same energy into their job, and I think about the man who did the [location name] as a small example, he just seemed so enthusiastic and he seemed to know so much about his subject, and he seemed really happy to share it with people. So I think here’s a little microcosm of what a good tour guide should be” (I 10065 NW1).

Many participants on the first tour shared this perception: “I felt that [guide’s name] was a fellow fan, and that made a difference, like I was talking to someone who really understood why I was there, and that was nice” (I 10059 NW1). All the while, some participants on the second tour found that the guide was “really excited… a fan and a fan with knowledge” (IG 10005 NW2 P4). Another participant confirmed:

“I did like [the guide]. I thought he was… he sort of explained it all to us he gave us the experience of it without making it boring… it’s good to get the human touch, like ‘I was there and this is what happened’ and then tell you about the different people and then, if they’ve got a really knowledge of it and a love of it, it makes it more interesting” (IG 10003 NW2 P3).

And yet, other participants felt that this guide “knew exactly what… he was talking about but he didn’t really try to connect with us very well. He did a great job, like carrying us through the re-enactment part that we did, but I mean he never… I don’t think he asked names really” (IG 10008 NW2 P2). Those participants admitted having felt closer and been more comfortable with other guides who coincidentally offered a good and entertaining but not a good Lord of the Rings tour: participants want to be taken care of. Consequently, in similar situations throughout the tour participants were disappointed when they thought the guide(s) would not care enough about them:

“P: We were down near [location name], and I’m not quite sure whether they knew what we were expecting, as a group. Obviously, they are doing things normally, anyway. Whether they were quite prepared for the fact that we, as a group, although we vary quite a lot in terms of maybe what we are looking for in terms of this tour but the fact we were saying, ‘no, hang on, what we want to do is actually run through that stream, or climb that mountain’ or whatever so whether they were quite geared up for that, I don’t know.
AB: So you felt like they gave you a tour that was a little bit more generic than you would have wished?
P: Yeah. I mean, the first half day that we were with them -I don’t know whether we, as a group had unrealistic expectations or whether we just made assumptions... and as I say, I don’t know whether they had a different set of instructions or whether they had interpreted what they had been asked to do differently. But, having seen the geography of the place and understood some of the things about the composition shots I can see now why it wouldn’t have been a simple thing to do, to go to all the locations that were relevant. Obviously they did the best they could with the time available” (I 10057 NW1).

Others thought “they’ve all been saying, ‘Here’s a location we’re going to show. Better make sure and read this page in the book because you’re getting ready to show that’. It’s like that

\[52\] One explanation might be that the guides of the good and entertaining tour were very hospitable towards the participants, offering snacks and drinks throughout the tour; gestures that were much appreciated.
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

but… I mean, but they do it every day, you’ve got to have some kind of routine like that” (IG 10005 NW2 P4). The guides “seemed to be almost repeating the same things, you know, they had told previous people before on tours” (IG 10004 NW2 P3). Yet other participants had commented they in fact enjoyed the same excursion because there was a lot of interacting between the guides and the participants (O 31.12.2005). So while many perceived personality and “love and knowledge of the materials” (IG 10004 NW2 P1), others felt they were being given a routine tour by the same guide. How did this difference in judgment arise? It seems it came down to how participants perceived the relationship with their guide and in the ways the guide(s) created the tour, which could involve the use of film clips, music or other activities.

The Use of Enhancements like Film, Music and Re-enactment
At times, the tour experience was enhanced by using film, music and re-enactment. In general, tour operators do not use media such as film clips and soundtracks due to anticipated copyright issues. However, there are exceptions and the participants’ comments about the use of such media are positive: “a couple of different times when either you or the guide has shown us the movie scene and then we’ve been at the location, I think that’s been a very good idea” (I 10064 NW1). In many cases, re-viewing selected film scenes enabled the individual to ensure that they were in fact at the right location. As described before, the use of digital enhancement meant that the location at times looked markedly different from its cinematic version. In such cases participants surrounded the portable DVD player to watch a familiar scene with a new point of view (O 01.01.2006) and then again attempted to match landmarks from the screen to reality.

![Figure 5.25](image.png)

Figure 5.25 Participants surround a portable DVD player to watch an excerpt of *Lord of the Rings*
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

On another occasion, excerpts from the soundtrack were played. In the comments made by participants, the location visit to Edoras stood out: “I will never forget my first sight of Edoras with the music of Rohan playing in the background” (TJ 11 NW1) and “It was especially moving to have the music from the film playing when we rounded the corner and saw Mount Sunday sitting there in all its glory” (TJ 13 NW1). A third participant mentioned: “…. and I think because the tour guide played the music... that was really, really good, yeah. So I think that was the difference” (I 10065 NW1) that made the experience so special. Throughout the tour, participants would request _Lord of the Rings_ related music to be played and many debated the great influence music would have on their experience of the film (O 30.12.2004). I later used the end credit song “White Shores” during our farewell to our first driver and many participants were visibly moved, some even crying openly (O 05.01.2005). Due to this strong reaction I did not choose this music for any other farewells, however, the significant impact of the music as an emotional element of the experience was proven.

Another way of enhancing the experience was the re-enactment of film scenes on site.

![Image](image.png)

_Figure 5.26 Sometimes participants would spontaneously re-enact_

During the tour, participants were offered various chances to re-enact selected film scenes by the tour leader and guides. Though not many, if any, participants would initiate a re-enactment, probably due to social restrictions, most participants seemed only too happy to participate in them once suggested. In one case, the participants showed enormous interest when choosing costumes; my field notes indicated that there was “quite some excitement” (F 31.12.2004) and even tears when a costume did not fit (O 31.12.2004).
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

![A participant dressed as Gandalf](image)

**Figure 5.27 A participant dressed as Gandalf**

Some re-enactments required several actors while more commonly a still image of the film was recreated by standing or sitting in the same position as the film character(s).

![Re-enactments were done in groups and individually, for both moving and still images](image)

**Figure 5.28 Re-enactments were done in groups and individually, for both moving and still images**
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

More participants felt comfortable with this kind of re-enactment over time:

“Ithilion was an amazing experience… To see where the film crew stood and actors performed and to be able to stand in those places myself was a real thrill. Any embarrassment went and I went to lay down where Frodo and Sam laid to see the Oliphaunts” (TJ 12 NW1)

and

“Places like the Pelennor Fields were just absolutely spectacular. I was so excited to just be there and we had a lot of interactive role play and that was really a big adrenalin rush because it was like being part of the movie” (I 10054 NW1).

Other participants demonstrated a more ambivalent or self-conscious feeling in relation to re-enactments: “Everyone had fun re-enacting scenes from the movies. What a bunch of crazies we are!” (TJ 02 NW3). Another participant recalled the re-enactment of the Rohirrim charge under King Théoden and commented: “as goofy as it was to go running down the hill, it was really fun!” (TJ 13 NW1).

This appreciation extended to the various enhancement techniques used by the tour leader and guides:

“This has been such a fantastic day. I feel the whole trip would have been worthwhile for this day alone…. When I saw the costumes for people to wear and the swords we could hold I felt privileged to be on a tour where the guides went to so much extra effort to give us a really special experience” (TJ 12 NW1).

It should be noted that the NW1 and NW2 tour groups only occasionally re-enacted whole scenes while the NW3 tours took this approach much further and thus created more resistance too:

“Re-enacted one of the scenes!! It was quite good fun but later, another scene was re-enacted and our domineering member put things into strain again. If we keep re-enacting every scene at every site we’ll never get where we are going!!” (TJ 03 NW3).

This statement comments on the group dynamics on tour NW3 that at times were strained. Still, on the NW1 and NW2 tours even participants who did not actively participate still enjoyed the activities: “it’s so fun to see how excited everyone else is about [it]” (I 10053 NW1). This last comment again highlights another important element for enjoying the location experience: the community of fellow travellers or, as it was called from the first day, “the fellowship” (O 29.12.2004).

Such feelings can be found in other examples of current film tourism, which suggests that it is not entirely a product of Tolkien’s ability to conjure a complete mythical realm.
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

Another form of re-enactment took place when on the first and second tour each a *Lord of the Rings* actor accompanied the group for a day.

![Figure 5.29 Examples for costumes worn by re-enactors and extras](image)

Each time, the participants were visibly impressed and required several encouragements before they interacted with the guest (O 06.01.2005 and 05.01.2006). Soon the participants overcame their shyness:

“[actor’s name] came along who had starred in the movie and we went off, looking at lots of sights and locations from the movies. It felt unreal as we travelled around, standing in the spots that are so ‘standout’ from the movies! Dunharrow was my favourite” (TJ 10 NW1).

It is interesting that the self-made costume was mistaken for a film costume: “it was awesome to have an ‘extra’ with us too he even wore his costume which was pretty cool” (TJ 10 NW1). This shows that the ‘right’ look did not necessarily require the ‘authentic’ look. Furthermore, most participants did not remember his name or exact involvement in the evening (O 06.01.2005 and 05.01.2006). However, the opportunity to take pictures alongside the extra was described as a unique opportunity: “Wow! I forgot standing on the spot where the Dunharrow encampment was shot and having my pictures taken with [extra’s name] our man of Rohan was another highlight. What a day!” (TJ 12 NW1).

![Figure 5.30 Many asked to have pictures taken alongside re-enactors and extras](image)
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

The previous paragraphs have shown how some tour guides successfully incorporated film and music, costumes and re-enactment to further enhance the film tourism experience. Such efforts were usually appreciated by the majority of participants. However, in rare cases there were disappointments with the overall tour guide performance, which will be discussed in the following section.

Disappointments
The critique of disappointment in guides matched in that the participants could not see the guides trying to connect emotionally to the group and its individuals. This led to disappointment even though the quality of the guide’s performance, both in delivered knowledge, details and timing could have been perceived as being high. The source of disappointments appeared, instead, to involve meeting a guide who did not seem to display (enough) enthusiasm and passion. I could observe that these expectations were articulated more directly as the tour(s) went on though it took a few days until the participants began to speak about the importance of enthusiasm and passion. There were disappointments expressed when guides could not fulfill these expectations:

“… and whether you are paid or not it actually boils down to whether you are passionate about doing it. It is just like another job, you know, so you can have an income and they’re just doing it because it’s a job. You’re supposed to, like, build the enthusiasm among your group and its people. If you don’t have the enthusiasm that you can pass on then you don’t know how to do that job because you just, like, disappointed everybody else because you have seen that you’re just doing it for the sake of doing a job. And you can actually tell that…from the other tours that I’ve been on there are some tour guides who are just like, yeah, they just need an income and that’s about it” (IG 10004 NW2 P2)

and

“They were knowledgeable but there was something a little… I don’t think that they are as enthusiastic…. there was something, I don’t know, I can’t explain it there was an enthusiasm for the film but there a feeling almost that they were more enthusiastic about giving the tours than they were actually of… they weren’t as much fans” (I 10059 NW1)

and

“… there was something about it that was a false enthusiasm, I don’t know. And I’m not trying to critical of them for that. I know they were doing a very professional job and everything like that, but it was just a difference of feeling” (I 10059 NW1).

Another participant went as far as to say that the attitude of the guide would influence the experience significantly: “I really felt that he was into the whole experience of the movies, liked cared about it more. And because of that you felt like you have a tighter relationship to that site that you are looking at” (IG 10004 NW2 P3). Participants found it disappointing to
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

experience a tour guide as having no enthusiasm or passion because they had been hoping for these and even further, spiritual, qualities in the guide(s) (the relevance of perceived authenticity will be further discussed in section 6.1.3. The Role of Authenticity). It is interesting that it was impossible to predict how a guide would perform:

“Funnily enough, the person who I least expected to be enthusiastic was the guy in [location name]… It was a classic he seemed to be so dry in the beginning and then you just found him whipping out all these facts and he just really knew his stuff. I suppose that kind of it just shows that even the non-sort of the tour guides that don’t have Lord of the Rings in their tour guide name, even those tour guides will really often be very enthusiastic about it because I suppose it’s in their country and they all probably had something to do with it. It’s really nice to see actually” (I 10052 NW1).

Then again, some participants were also able to see the reality of the profession of guides:

“They’ve probably been to those same sites hundreds of times. I suppose for them it must be hard AB, it may depend on the individual tour guide, but the people you are, in one location all the time and they’ve got hundreds, maybe thousands of people coming through, maybe they might get tired of seeing that site and it might be difficult for them to keep their enthusiasm going” (I 10052 NW1).

The same participant reflected on her own responsibility when it came to making the experience:

“I suppose that’s the main reason for having a tour guide that they will point out things that you have never seen before and, you know, I’m a logical person. I realise that they have seen this stuff all the time so I take what I need from them and the rest… I suppose if you don’t have your own enthusiasm, you can’t expect them to give it to you. So, I do have my own enthusiasm and that’s why something like that is not a problem for me. If, say, you really weren’t into the movie bits but you joined the group, just because… I suppose that might be a bit difficult. It hasn’t been a problem for me, and I’m not saying the tour guides were actually like that, you know, I’m talking about the tour guides in specific places. They were quite good and they did seem to have a level of enthusiasm so it was actually everyone we have seen so far has been good” (I 10052 NW1).

Still, most participants had high expectations of the enthusiasm of the guide:

“Oh, I think it’s pivotal to the success of the whole trip. Your tour guide has that… not only does, I think, a tour guide need to have an in-depth knowledge of a subject, but your tour guide also has to be enthusiastic about the subject as well, and the tour guide has to want to make the people on that tour leave… have the feeling, happy that they did the tour, and it would be a very hard job, but I think that should be the aim of the tour guide. They should treat… even if they’ve done it six, seven, ten times, they should treat every one like it’s the first one, and every person on that tour like this is going to be the best experience of their life and when they leave… if the people leave happy, the tour guide’s done a good job” (I 10065 NW1).

As the previous statements showed, most participants had a range of expectations towards their tour leader and guide spanning organisational and guiding abilities but also hoped for motivational and even spiritual elements. In rare cases, tour guides were experienced as disappointing to some or even most participants; especially when the participants felt that there was a lack of enthusiasm.
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

Now that the interaction between guides and participants has been highlighted, the influence of the driver should also be considered.

**The Influence of the Driver**

As well as tour guides, participants also interact with the coach tour driver. Drivers are often overlooked despite often contributing significantly towards a friendly and professional atmosphere. They do, however, tend to interact less with the group than does the tour guide (though ‘non-traditional’ tours like Kiwi Experience and Magic often combine both roles). Both tours had the same South Island but two different North Island drivers. All drivers had worked in the tourism industry for years and could provide a vast range of information regarding New Zealand, its culture and holidaying opportunities.

![Figure 5.31 The ‘unsung hero’ of every organised tour: the coach driver](image)

None of them, however, had any significant knowledge of the *Lord of the Rings* films, while the South Island driver had not even seen any of the films53. The participants, however, took to him quickly and regarded him as part of the community and valued that he showed “passion” (IG 10004 NW2 P3). One participant thought:

> “I felt we were very, very fortunate in our bus driver, too, who was just willing to go that extra distance and go places where he hasn’t been before and I think a lot of drivers would have said, ‘No, this is where we stop, we stop here, we don’t go there’, yet he was willing to do that and I think the two worked”

53 When I inquired if the tour company knew about this when the driver was assigned to this tour, the driver answered: “I’ll put it this way… You might say that it is taken for granted most, if not all, Kiwis have seen the movie. My boss, for example, he assumed that I’ve seen the movies. Yes, yes he did. When he mentioned… when he said I was now the driver for this tour, he was absolutely surprised when I told him I had not seen one of these movies yet” (I 10058 NW1). I have to admit I was a bit surprised too! Either way, this driver consequently watched the films after the first tour, however, he fell asleep several times and never quite finished them (F 29.12.2005). In stark contrast, the driver was always eager to learn more about film locations.
5.4.2. The Interaction between Participants and Film Tourism Guide

extremely well, and I don’t know that this tour could really be repeated without them, or the pleasure could be repeated without that combination” (I 10062 NW1).

Statements like these indicate how much the participants considered the driver to be part of the group and emphasises the fact that the film tourist experience is also a continuous process of social interaction.

The following section will give an insight into my involvement and function as a tour leader and guide, particular given my dual role as guide and researcher.

5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide

“As I said repeatedly in my dairy, the tour guide is the essential leader of the group. A sense of companionship cannot develop without a leader, one that is charismatic, intelligent, and understanding, with a solid grasp of the material and a sense of adventure” (Q 025 postNW2).

This section gives an insight into how the researcher performed as a tour guide and leader by displaying both professional (e.g., organisational) and personal skills. Various examples will show how the researcher was seen as part of the community, but also its leader, and how important ‘soft skills’ were for the participants.

As explained, my own tour leading and guiding experience started rather unexpectedly when I was advised that not only the guide (as I was advised beforehand) but also the expected Lord of the Rings expert driver fell sick the day before the tour was due to begin (see section 4.1. Entering the Field). Thus my role of escort had been upgraded to tour leader and guide; a multiplicity of roles into which I had to grow.

In order to better reflect on my guiding role, I would later ask participants for feedback, both during interviews and on the post-tour questionnaires; I also received the result of an official evaluation by the tour company. All but one of these evaluations gave highest marks and described me as knowledgeable, hard working and helpful, enthusiastic and passionate54: the “knowledge and experiences brought [Lord of the Rings] to reality” (Q 027 postNW2). I seemed to have fulfilled the professional skills that were expected from a leader and guide and

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54 There was a single evaluation that did not give me the highest mark -because of tour pricing. However, this is an issue that lies within the responsibility of the tour company and not the tour leader and guide.
5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide

displayed the desired social skills. One participant recalled how she came to terms with my role onboard:

“Well, as I said, first of all, we knew that you were on a… she was on a tour of… helping to do a Ph.D., and I thought, ‘This person’s really getting into it. They’re going to do this intellectually as well as just ‘OK, this is the film, get up and have a look at it everybody, this is a location’. She got out, she showed us first of all before we stopped at any location, she explained what we were going to see, what had actually happened there and then we all got out of the bus and we had a look around and then she actually acted out parts herself, and she stood in the places where we could take photos of her, and us all running up the hill or wherever we had to go, you know, things like that. But, as I said at the beginning, the humanity of the person, the spontaneity and talking to everybody and making us feel at ease and a lot of tour guides are kind of bored, they’ve done too much and they’re older and they just sort of think, ‘Oh, but I’m getting paid for this job, I have to do A, B and C’ and you can tell that their heart’s not in it, so our tour guide had all the qualities necessary for a really good tour guide” (I 10066 NW1).

Throughout the tour, I performed a variety of tasks. One participant mentioned: “I would never have plucked up the courage to go on a group guided tour by myself” (I 10056 NW1). Probably especially for such participants, my participating and acting as a problem solver gave them a sense of security:

“I mean… the…from your role, from what I’ve seen, having a main tour guide with you all the time, for the rest of us adds a little bit of a layer of security. Because if you weren’t with us and we were out on the cliffs with those guys in the jeeps, we might be a little like, ‘Are they going to actually kill us?’ But knowing you’re out there also probably going to die with us doesn’t seem so serious…” (IG 10004 NW2 P3).

The significance of providing good organisation as the guide should not be underestimated as indicated by participant’s comments who, “are in a country where we don’t know what we’re doing and so we’re kind of counting on you to keep us safe” (IG 10006 NW2 P3). This element of caring was seen as important:

“P2: I think that you made an effort over time… you would spend time with everybody in the coach or see how people were doing or if you noticed that someone was having a difficult time…

P1: When you first made us stand up and say our names and everything and we had to again in the microphone that kind of helped us. Like the other day when you wanted us to try to get to know [the second driver] better…

P2: Yeah… that surprised me. The level of concern you showed for [the driver’s] feelings and wanting to make sure that he felt included, I got… I felt that was very cool” (IG 10006 NW2 P1 and P2).

Most participants perceived that I paid attention to “these little things… details” (IG 10006 NW2 P1). Furthermore, the ability to clearly communicate is an important element of being a tour leader and guide (Cohen, 1985; V. R. Collins, 2000). To my surprise my accent did not pose a problem for the international participants: “at the beginning it [the accent] was kind of difficult but we got used to it anyway” (IG 10004 NW2 P2). In the perception of the participants I avoided miscommunication: “you have good diction, you throw your voice and
5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide

your voice is high enough that you always can hear what you’re saying from a distance” (IG 10004 NW2 P3). However, I was surprised to learn that my age concerned one participant who could not imagine anybody at that age to have enough knowledge for guiding; however, she later revised her opinion (I 10076 NW1).

Interestingly, several comments referred to me as a friend. Such comments were common and showed that the tour leader was seen and judged differently from the temporary guides as the leader was seen as a part of the community (IG 10004 NW2 P1, P2, P3 and P4), probably partly because of the constant presence. The presence of the tour leader was unexpected: “In the beginning I thought that the tour guide would just be there for some of the time. I didn’t think that they’d actually, like, have dinner with us and kind of become part of our group” (IG 10006 NW2 P2). In fact, most industry training books recommend seating away from the tour group (V. R. Collins, 2000). However, in order to gather observational data I preferred staying close to the tour group.

Altogether, I was involved in many activities and this, again, was not expected:

“But in your case, you know, you participated with your group although you even had other local guides, like the [company’s name]… they had their own guide - but you came along and you participated, and that actually makes a difference” (IG 10004 NW2 P2).

The consequent participation in most activities gave me a very different position than the other guides as shared activities increased the bond between those involved and helped build a community. As a participant commented: “if our tour guide that was with us the whole time, said, OK, thanks a lot, now this person’s taking over, I think a lot of people would, not get scared but they probably wouldn’t like it… because it’s not just the people that I’m on the tour with, it’s the tour guide’s also part of the group. It would change the dynamic of the group” (I 10052 NW1). Besides these shared activities I also was able to alter the itinerary to include further film locations, for which the participants were grateful:

“overall, it totally changed it as I realised that the tour schedule was very different from what I expected, which included a lot of drive-by type things and we don’t even get to stop or actually see these things, and [the researcher] definitely added… every like… got us to those places, and extra stuff, such as [location name], which would have been horrible to miss, but that was a great experience and that was one of my

55 Still, I was in a working relationship towards the participants and not on a holiday like them. All participants seemed aware of this status difference and yet many sought to overcome this professional relationship by attempting to change it into a personal relationship.
favourite times, because the Rohirrim landscape was one of the most exciting things I was looking forward to…” (I 10076 NW1).

Events like these seemed to have created and further deepened a loyalty toward me as the tour leader and main guide. I found it interesting that participants would use me to confirm information they were given by other guides (O 30.12.2004 and 31.12.2005). Also, my skills were never (or at least not openly) questioned as were those of the temporary guides, even after an occasion where I could not identify an exact location. Asked about this event during group interviews, participants commented that they basically thought not much of it: “do it two or three times and I might think ‘oh’ but…yeah… it happened just one time…” (IG 10005 NW2 P2) and “a couple of little things and no big deal” (IG 10005 NW2 P4). Again, there seems to be room for negotiation where the experience of community with the guide was valued above correct knowledge. Furthermore, it seemed that for many participants it was the enthusiasm and passion that the tour leader displayed that in turn enhanced their own experience:

“And our guide is just fantastic, I must say, because I think we’ve been really blessed because I don’t think anyone else would have been... you have to have someone who’s really a fan of the book and the film to be as excited as you are and to want to just go that extra mile, just to go that extra bit to allow us to experience these lovely locations and what happened in these locations. So I really do feel very, very blessed that our guide was such a person and was such a fan of the book and the movie, and I loved the guide’s enthusiasm for the topic because that’s how I feel and it’s lovely to see somebody else who feels that way, and that adds to the excitement and the enjoyment and the pleasure and the number of experiences that we have” (I 10062 NW1).

My field notes show how my relationship with the participants grew and deepened over the tour, as for example expressed in questions directed towards me. While the most common questions in the beginning were about tour routines and locations, questions eventually shifted towards my research and general life. I took care to maintain a certain distance by behaving and dressing formally. That meant, however, that I acted reserved at times and did not join any purely social occasions like spa visits or pub nights. Still, I regularly ended up with participants joining me in my spare time when I was sightseeing or shopping myself. After I missed the communal dinner once, I had to assure participants that there was no further meaning in this act. Overall, participants seemed to perceive that I led, participated, suffered and took risks at their side, which they valued enormously. I was seen as the person who enabled adventure: “she’s just taking us everywhere” (I 10054 NW1). It seems the participation of the tour leader in the activity played an important role:

“P3: Well I think even if the tour guide would have taken us to somewhere like Edoras and said, ‘OK, you can climb it’, I mean most other guides would have stayed back at the bus and not risking injury or harm to
In hindsight I would say that the highly meaningful location experiences of, for example, going to Edoras (see section 5.3.2. The Location Visit) further fostered a strong bond between the tour group and tour leader:

“AB: What does it change, having been on Edoras?
P1: Oh it’s sort of like a Holy Grail, isn’t it, for Lord of the Rings fans. Not only was it hard to get permission I’m sure it was a bit hard to get permission because not that many people have been on the top but… you know, it’s… almost exactly as it was in the film without the snow, I mean, no digital enhancements, it was just beautiful scenery.
P2: It took work to get there and like…
P1: It did.
P2: … and like, once you accomplish that you just feel such a sense of accomplishment and…
P1: We earned that climb so…
P2: … yeah, you earned the climb and you got to the top. It was fantastic, it was a beautiful day.
P1: We felt like we were sort of like a little fellowship, you know, making our own journeys around Middle-earth.
AB: So why do you think it felt like a fellowship…?
P3: It’s almost as if, at that point in time, before that we were close but it was almost as if going there it was a true joining because we were basically all soul mates at that point” (IG 10008 NW2 P1, P2 and P3).

Other tour companies and hoteliers commented upon our community on various occasions. I was surprised that during one occasion local guides split us up into various groups and later commented that those subgroups did not talk negatively about the others, which would usually happen (O 31.12.2005). Eventually, one participant would comment: “wow, you know, you’ve got a really tightly-knit group fostered that we have ever seen, so maybe this is a fairly rare or unique bonding that’s happened with this group- but I don’t believe so! I mean, we’re just average people” (I 10052 NW1). And another participant confirmed: “We’ve become… what’s the Maori name for… group… membership, like that’s what we are on the bus” (I 10066 NW1). Some participants “felt like we were sort of like a little fellowship, you know, making our own journeys around Middle-earth” (IG 10008 NW2 P1) and felt that the tour leader was part of that journey:

“I’d definitely say that our tour guide is an integral part of the group but, in that sense, has also kept professional because she’s doing her utmost to basically do the best that she can by us, and she’s got us to places that we may not have actually seen just even by going off the road 20 minutes on the way to somewhere, or whatever. She’s bent over backwards and gone the extra mile to do the good thing by us, but at the same time she’s a part of the group and she has a laugh with everybody and she talks with them and she chats with them. She is part of the group, but also she’s kept that professional side pretty well” (I 10056 NW1).
5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide

The tour leader was seen as be with the participants ‘in spirit’:

“… if I could sum up very quickly, the tour guide does not follow the journey, like if he’s not there with you, in spirit basically, you know, he has to make that journey with you, see the whole thing. It’s not lessening your… experience” (IG 10004 P4).

This was important as most participants sought a spiritual experience and were looking for a similarly motivated guide (see section 5.3.3. The Spirituality of Film Tourism and 6.4. Summary of Conclusions: Discussion of Findings with Framework).

Overall, the narratives in the previous sections showed how the tour leader and guide, the tour community itself, media and physical activities and re-enactments enhanced the film location visit. Taken together, these processes of enhancement, combined with the participants’ prior commitments and experiences of the book and films, often led to descriptions of their experience that went beyond what might ordinarily be expected as a tour experience. In particular, participants often used terms like ‘spiritual’, ‘magical’ and ‘mythical’ in connection with their film tourism expectations and experiences. Before these terms are further discussed, however, it will be shown how the participants evaluated their overall film tourism experience.
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

“"I am now sold completely on the concept of visiting a strange country with a theme, as you get to see the real country, not the tourist trap illusions. The tour guide is an essential bridge between the theme and the country itself. I count myself lucky to have such an enthusiastic, knowledgeable guide. The guide can make or break the tour” (TJ 17 NW2).

This research utilised post-tour questionnaires and also email questionnaires to gather further information about the participants’ experience. The main reason for this was the acknowledgement that while a holiday is somehow an extraordinary experience, the actual recollection “may produce feelings quite different from the actual experience (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966, p. 33).

The following sections will summarise the general evaluations and give an insight into the most important memories of the participants, which includes the feeling of fellowship and the location visits. The narratives will show that the tour was an important journey for most and even pilgrimage for some participants. A short segment will show how the confrontation of New Zealand and Middle-earth changed the perception of both and of the films. Lastly, disappointments and recommendations will be voiced and the participants differing attitude towards the possibility of future film tourism will be presented.

General Evaluations
This section summarises the general evaluations. All participants summarized their experience as being positive and many referred to the tour leader and guides:

“I think, first of all, you’ve got to have guides who just love the theme, love the topic, love the film or whatever it is, as much as the people who are on the tour. I think that’s really important. And then I think it’s really important to actually be able to spend time standing on the sites, not just looking, standing on the sites, being involved, feeling the grass...” (I 10062 NW1).

Other comments further described the overall evaluation: “happy and elated. Glad to have had the experience” (Q 010 postNW1), “one of my top two vacation experiences” (Q 092 postNW2), “overall a wonderful, life-changing experience” (Q 011 postNW1), “it has been one of the highlights of my life” (Q 014 postNW1), “I loved the tour and it was a very life-altering experience. Something I would never take back” (Q 017 postNW1), “very satisfied truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience” (Q 021 postNW1), “fulfilling a dream was so important. I planned and arranged it my self, and flew overseas on my own. It was one of the most important things I have achieved for myself“(Q 020 postNW2), “I feel absolutely satisfied and
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

ecstatic that we managed to do all the activities we wanted to do and see all the film locations and more” (Q 018 postNW1), “I will never forget the past two weeks. Some of the best in my life and definitely the best vacation ever” (Q 096 postNW2) and “wouldn’t change a thing about my experience” (Q 019 postNW1). Many participants said they felt “privileged to have been here” (Q 019 postNW1) and thankful (Q 022 postNW1). The experience was “awesome and inspiring” (Q 100 postNW2), “awesome, exceeded all expectations” (Q 085 postNW2), “better than I ever imagined” (Q 087 postNW2) and “absolutely incredible I am still in awe of the whole experience” (Q 023 postNW1).

I then further inquired why the tour had been important to the participants. This revealed a variety of attitudes where some saw the tour as a good holiday opportunity; others wanted to connect with relatives or other participants or had more serious motives. Many came to see New Zealand while others came for Middle-earth. For some participants, this tour was important because it was a holiday: “the tour was important to me because it was the first real holiday my husband and I had had for a long time!” (Q 019 postNW1), “it was my first vacation in three and a half years, and I wanted it to be special” (Q 021 postNW1) and “it was firstly as a much-needed break after a shitty year” (Q 022 postNW1). For some participants, this holiday marked an important event in their life: “Of course it was. I saved up a lot of dollars and gave up a lot to come. Things I’ve learned here will stay with me forever” (Q 011 postNW1). Others sought independence: “it was because I wanted to gain some independence by leaving home by ourselves and to visit the Lord of the Rings locations that inspired me from the films” (Q 084 postNW2; see also Q 017 postNW1 and Q 018 postNW1). For some participants the journey turned out deeply meaningful: “the Lord of the Rings tour was the best decision I’ve made in a long time. It helped me assert my independence” (Q 090 postNW2) and “I learned that my disability is in my mind. I could control it (my lupus) rather than have it control me” (Q 092 postNW2). Another participant summarises: “this has been the best tour I have ever had. Seen so many things (Lord of the Rings-related and New Zealand scenery). Met so many nice people” (Q 104 postNW2).

Further questions inquired towards more specific evaluations; for example; what would participants judge as most important looking back?
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

The Most Treasured Memories
When I inquired about the most meaningful and treasured moments of the tour, the themes of community, the landscapes and the actual film sites visits were mentioned most often. Many participants cited “the locations and the people” (eQ 01 NW1). The memories of New Zealand and its landscape and *Lord of the Rings* and its Middle-earth were often intertwined: “the most meaningful element that stands out the most for me was the people I met and the spectacular landscapes that made up New Zealand and the LotR movies” (eQ 03 NW1). A few participants recalled specific events, for example:

“I’d say the landscape first and foremost and the fact that the first sight of Edoras/Mount Sunday was accompanied by the specific Rohirrim music from *Two Towers*. Sight and sound was a very powerful combination” (eQ 02 NW1).

Other participants reflected:

“I got a chance to see New Zealand, be part in an experience that made me feel as if I was there during filming. I got the chance to meet a group of wonderful people, all with the same interest [and] passion [for] *Lord of the Rings*” (Q 104 postNW2)

and

“what meant most to me was sharing the heart and spirit of the story with everyone, seeing how as opposed to just dwelling on a fantasy, we are relating to and living out aspects of the story in our lives in many ways” (eQ 21 NW2).

Some participants used the tour to seek a closer relationship with a relative: “because it means sharing time with my daughter, getting closer to her sharing this [tour]” (Q 097 postNW2) and “it was an opportunity to share a wonderful experience with my son and connect with him at a different level” (Q 089 postNW2; see also Q 085 postNW2). Others sought community and friendship: “it was an amazing opportunity to see some amazing things, and make some amazing friends” (Q 023 postNW1), “I got to meet people from all over the world including the tour guide” (Q 101 postNW2), appreciated “travelling with people with the same interest. I have found so many new friends” (Q 090 postNW2; also see Q 100 postNW2). For some, “this experience has opened my eyes in several ways. I’m delighted to know that people share a common passion and that they were open to making new friends” (Q 094 postNW2) and “this tour will go down as my all-time favourite! I have been on two other tours in the past, but people on this one were friendly and had a common interest” (Q 095 postNW2). Another participant saw the holiday as a great learning experience: “I feel very happy that I joined this tour as the other travellers were all fans and I learned a lot more about Tolkien and Peter Jackson” (Q 103 postNW2).
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

As the previous sections have shown, the experience of having been part of a fellowship was important to most participants.

The Fellowship

Many participants enjoyed the social aspects of the tour, Often, participants would comment on the community of the group, driver and tour leader: “it was such a nice adventure with people who really did care about each other” (Q 086 postNW2, see also Q 014 postNW1 and Q 016 postNW1), “had a wonderful time. Great to meet other Lord of the Rings fans and it was a pleasure seeing the locations with them” (Q 088 postNW2), “it was an experience that I wouldn’t have traded for anything. I loved the fellowship we all had” (Q 091 postNW2) and:

“I had a wonderful tour experience, the group was excellent, a wide variety of people who intermeshed well, excellent scenery, wonderful sites, terrific bus drivers and a tour escort who shared not just her knowledge, but welcomed us fully into her own very special experiences of Middle-earth” (Q 015 postNW1).

Some participants valued the community experience above all else:

“I think travelling as a group of people with the same interest [was most meaningful]. You had a connection, even if we weren’t seeing anything LotR-ish we understood each other, had respect for each other, knew what the other one was talking about” (eQ 23 NW2)

and “the most meaningful element of the tour became the sense of fellowship that evolved as the tour progressed” (eQ 25 NW2) and “the most meaningful element of the tour for me was a chance to share NZ with other people that love LotR” (eQ 27 NW2).

![Figure 5.32 The importance of ‘the fellowship’ was often highlighted](image)

It seems that the value of the tour group also lay in its ability to experience a temporary fellowship: “the most treasured memories are being able to share the beauty and the magic of Middle-earth with others that really understand how you feel” (eQ 27 NW2) and “to share my
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

experiences with other LotR fans and the comraderie (sic) that grew from this” (eQ 01 NW1). The community was also acknowledged to have enhanced the tour experience: the “best memories are of the landscapes and people associated with them” (eQ 04 NW1) and “I will always treasure my memories of the people I met the most, as well as, the atmosphere and emotions that were generated because of them” (eQ 03 NW1).

Some of the participants stayed in touch after the journey:

“I guess the most meaningful element of the tour was the friendships I formed. I think it is wonderful the way everyone is doing their best to keep in touch now that we are home again and the world is encroaching on our time” (eQ 26 NW2)

and

“… equally and not something that I’d anticipated, have been the friendships that were born out of the journey and the continuing correspondence etc. that has followed. And several of us have met up in different places since the tour and are planning to again and it crosses international boundaries as well as cyberspace” (eQ 02 NW1; see also eQ 01 NW1)

and

“I treasure all the locations we saw, but most of all the fellowship we had between all members of the tour, I will treasure that forever. I made so many new friends, and have been emailing them, it was a wonderful experience” (eQ 20 NW2)

and “we are certainly grateful for having shared our tour of Middle-earth with such a great group of people. It is wonderful we are keeping in touch” (eQ 22 NW2). Such statements highlight the importance of the group and its social interactions to the individual. It also shows that some participants used the opportunity to establish meaningful personal relationships that lasted beyond the tour.

All these positive memories are particularly important as many participants were quite anxious about the kind of people they might meet on the tour. As suggested earlier, it is possible that the spread of film tourist ‘myths’ in the media puts pressure on participants who wonder if they would fit in the community of film tourists. In fact most participants seemed quite concerned about the anticipated level of knowledge of other participants on the tour: “Well, I was really, really worried about what kind of people would be on this group because I was worried they would all be Lord of the Rings fanatics and I wouldn’t really fit in because I don’t really know too much about it” (I 10053 NW1). Another participant commented: “I was expecting, like, anorak-type people dressed… real enthusiasts. Because I’d seen television programs, I guess” (I 10061 NW1). The same participant was relieved to realise: “But this group is a nice mix of
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

people. Everyone’s got different backgrounds and different stories to tell, and people have come from the four corners of the world” (I 10061 NW1). Other participants shared this feeling: “I was a little bit worried that the other people would be terribly geeky and spend all their time spouting Tolkien. But I find there are people, for example, who have never read the books, who have only seen the movies and so there’s a good balance of people” (I 10063 NW1). Most participants found themselves at ease after encountering their fellow travellers: “And then I thought, ‘Well, they wouldn’t be on the trip unless they really loved the film, so they’ve got to be fans’, so I thought ‘it’ll be OK’. But really, it was more than that, it was more than OK, it was really good” (I 10062 NW1). On the downside, some participants were slightly disappointed with their fellow travellers:

“I thought there’d be more experts but there weren’t any really actually on my standard… like, you [the researcher] are, but besides that… no-one else was really like… just because my own friends are all huge fans and they know so much more than everyone else, and… so yeah, I thought there’d be like bigger freaks, but there aren’t … on a scale of one to ten, I’d say my knowledge is probably about five or six and I think for the others there are some who know a bit less than me, there are some who know a little bit more than me. I don’t think anybody on this bus I’d rate more than a seven and a half out of ten, unless… except for the tour guide” (I 10065 NW1).

The post questionnaires confirmed the importance of travelling in a tour group for most participants. The extended time spent on the coach and a shared activity provided many opportunities to get to know other like-minded individuals and was used to develop ongoing relationships. Furthermore, shared physical adventures might have further strengthened the bond of the tour group that many had started calling the ‘fellowship’.

Another important aspect was the journey itself.

**An Emotional Journey and a Pilgrimage**

The experience of the journey was emotional and individual. It was telling that the memory of the film location visits was at times intertwined with earlier memories like those of childhood:

“The two sights that stand out in my mind the most are Mount Edoras and Hobbiton. As to why Edoras and Hobbiton stand out, for me, I think because, I loved the scene of seeing King Théoden being freed and transformed, and Hobbiton, typifies for me the type of close knit neighbourhood village, I grew up in where we were in a deep country area, with our houses spread apart to be on the one hand, not in each others faces, but close enough, where we looked after each other and, could play around in each other’s yards all the time” (eQ 21 NW2).

Furthermore, a few participants explicitly likened their journey to a pilgrimage: “I mean, for me at least, anything that even has the word LotR on it is like a holy relic. Naturally the locations
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

will be in my mind, the souvenirs, all the LotR geeks...I know I’ll treasure them all” (eQ 24 NW2) and “to be immersed in the environment was fantastic, and to walk within the Shire was a pilgrimage” (eQ 28 NW2). Other participants explain:

“I can honestly say that no other film(s) have struck such a chord with me before. And certainly no others have inspired me to travel to the other side of the world. On the Ringers DVD the comment is made that for some Ringers the ultimate act of fandom is to travel to New Zealand and that it's almost a pilgrimage for them. If by that they mean a journey to a place of special importance or significance then they're right and for me that’s what it was” (Q 02 post NW1)

and

“… And being in these places, like you experience the journey yourself and, you know, that story has kind of completed itself in a certain aspect as, you know, our journey will go on, but it’s interesting to see… you know, to be in those places” (I 10076 NW1)

and

“Having now finished this tour, I think in a way Film Tourism is similar to Pilgrimage those on the tour are very enthusiastic, sometimes ‘obsessed’ with their subject be it a film/book/spiritual journey/etc. All participants on the tour have a common bond that makes the journey shared more personal. People are more ready to share” (Q 015 postNW1).

However, some participants also distanced themselves from such comparisons:

“… it’s beautiful scenery, I like… it’s interesting to hear about how the… you know, a particular scene was shot in a particular location but it wasn’t as… I mean for some people it seemed like it was a pilgrimage, you know, to go to some of the those places, it was almost a religious experience and for me it wasn’t really that, it was just… it was another aspect that added to the trip but it wasn’t like this overwhelming thing where I had to see these places” (IG 10006 NW2 P2).

As the previous section has shown, the journey itself was important for many participants. This journey had taken participants through both real and imaginative landscapes.

New Zealand and Middle-earth: The Interaction Between Reality and Film

Intrigued by the many readings of New Zealand, I had inquired into the kind of relationship participants had with both the fantasy and geography, and in particular how their relationship to either had changed.

As written before, most participants enjoyed experiencing New Zealand: “not in the sense of the film. Important in that it gave me an opportunity to see special places in New Zealand” (Q 012 postNW1). For most participants, both New Zealand and its Lord of the Rings connection were important: “as well as seeing Lord of the Rings sites you also see different towns, sites, cultures and tourist sports” (Q 102 postNW2), “we got to see Lord of the Rings locations, do shopping and to see New Zealand and make friends” (Q 083 postNW1) and “you to meet people and interact with them plus locations of my favourite movie, so it make it a nice
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

experience” (Q 098 postNW2). Some participants commented that “this was a fabulous tour of both New Zealand and Lord of the Rings sites” (Q 096 postNW2) and “very happy and satisfied as a Lord of the Rings fan and as a tourist to New Zealand. Best trip ever” (Q 084 postNW2). A few participants noted that, “I had to see New Zealand and the film sets because of watching the movie” (Q 020 postNW1). It was a “great tour with great landscapes and sights. The locations that we went were fantastic. It gives a better prospective to the making of the Lord of the Rings movie” (Q 093 postNW2). And another participant mentioned “New Zealand has been a country I wanted to visit for a long time and Lord of the Rings tour was just the push I needed” (Q 093 postNW2). It was important to have been on a Lord of the Rings tour “because it was the only one that catered to my interests as well as went to lots of locations” (Q 086 postNW2).

For those participants who stated that the Lord of the Rings connection was most important, the reasons given still differed: “Tolkien was a huge part of my ‘teenage years’ my real introduction to fantasy. I have read ‘Lord of the Rings’ several times and still love it” (Q 014 postNW1) and “the book ‘The Lord of the Rings’ and the films are very dear to me and I wanted to see the real ‘Middle-earth’ myself” (Q 013 postNW1). “As a huge Lord of the Rings fan I really wanted to see the locations. It was a dream come true” (Q 088 postNW2) and while “the tour was important to me as I like to know the details about all aspects of production and direction” (Q 103 postNW2), others had came for “a ‘spiritual’ point of view” (Q 022 postNW1). Some excluded all other motives but the book and film: “of course, because Lord of the Rings is my life” (Q 099 postNW2).

It was also found that having been on a film location tour influenced the relationship many participants had with the book and the films. One participant wrote: “having just read the book again I feel that New Zealand is Middle-earth. I can’t see how they could have filmed it anywhere else. Are you sure Tolkien didn’t pay a secret visit to New Zealand at some stage?” (eQ 26 NW2). Another one wondered:

“When I see these sites, it is as if that is here Lord of the Rings history happened. Both book and movie are blended in my mind. The event is of the book ‘happened’ here as did the events of the movie here. It all integrates very nicely. I wonder if the next time I read the book, I will say to myself, ‘I was there!’? I will certainly say that to myself when I see the films again” (TJ 01 NW3).

Also remarkable is that many participants wished they could have seen the films on tour too: “personally I would read the books and bring copies with me and maybe having the DVDs to
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

watch on the longer trips would be excellent too” (Q 015 postNW1). Others wished they had seen the trilogy once more before embarking on the film tour: “I just can’t wait to go back and watch the films and go, ‘oh, we’ve been there, we’ve been there’… it’s just going to be absolutely brilliant” (I 10056 NW1). Even the coach driver, who had not seen the films before the first tour, “made plans where I hope to see all of the three movies in one session. I plan on doing that” (I 10058 NW1). And even though the consequent screening did not turn him into a film fan, he still enjoyed visiting the locations very much for their aesthetic value and also the reactions it would evoke among the participants (I 10002 NW2). Many more participants similarly longed to see the films again. And some participants reported how they felt closer to the films and books after they had visited the setting:

“Having visited the locations I now appreciate even more the dedication that went into making the films. I really love the story of Lord of the Rings and having been there it makes you even fonder” (Q 022 postNW2)

and

“Having been on locations has added a lot to my experience of the movies-- mainly because we found out a lot about how P.J. combined locations to produce a seamless effect of one location. It has also enhanced my experience of the New Zealand landscape” (Q 04 post NW1).

Some participants noted that the tour would cause them to see the films differently:

“P1: At the… get-off-the-road part and you pointed out the finger tree that’s what you called it? I hadn’t recognised any of that and then, it’s funny because I think either that night or the next day Lord of the Rings was on TV…
AB: Fellowship was on.
P1: … Fellowship, and then I recognised it that’s very fun.
P2: Yeah, I think it would be a very different experience watching the movies now” (IG 10006 NW2 P1 and P2)

and

“When you watch a movie, particularly such a big Hollywood movie, it’s kind of a place that you never imagine yourself standing and for me to say ‘I’ve been to Edoras and Rohan, and especially Deer Park Heights where all those Warg scenes and the Pass of the Dead, and all that kind of thing…. I mean, we were there, and it’s very obvious that we’re standing there and having watched some of the film since and pointing out, ‘We were there, we saw that clump of grass’ or ‘we were standing round that lake’… I’m really over the moon that we’ve seen these amazing places… Saying ‘I was there’ is a great feeling, and I feel connected to New Zealand and LotR” (Q 028 postNW2)

and “having been on location I find that the film has become more real. For any particular scene I can say ‘I’ve stood there’” (Q 026 postNW2) and even those participants who had been extras in the film discovered this new aspect: “Now whenever I see the movies, I can remember that I stood in the very same spot” (TJ 13 NW1).56

56 Torchin (2003) looked at the experience of Manhattan film location tourists and suggested that film tourists developed a familiarity with the setting that in turn could enhance the film viewing experience, while also re-affirming the familiarity (and ‘bond’) with the setting.
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 5.33 Two Lord of the Rings extras at a film location**

Some participants were relieved to find: “I have seen all three movies again, and I don’t have any lessened impact by it as some feared they would, having seen the film sightings. Quite the contrary” (eQ 21 NW2). Many would recall their film tourism experience while watching the films:

- “I think the memories I treasure most would be visiting the site of the Bruinnen [Bruinen] Ford (is that how you spell it?) I find that each time I view the film I can see the site in my minds’ eye and I remember the fun we had driving down the river” (eQ 26 NW2)

- “It seems even more real to me now than it did before. For instance when Aragorn and Legolas stand on Edoras in the Return of the King at nighttimes and you see the ring of mountains that surround Mt Sunday, I can hear the wind blowing through that valley and visualise the sheer scale and isolation. And when I see the ‘get off the road’ scene I’m right there with the hobbits in that woodland setting” (eQ 02 NW1)

- “Yes, I have watched the movies again, I see them so differently, because I can spot so many placed that I have been too – in fact I watch them over and over again, and never tire of them, they are so real because I have been there too” (eQ 20 NW2)

- “I have seen all three of them in extended version. One I watched with my mother, and she couldn’t stop laughing, for every time there was a shot of a place we had visited, I was jumping up and down, yelling, I’ve been there, I’ve been there... But I like watching the movies now even more than before, just because you know how well it has been down, how far they had to travel to get there, what the surroundings look like etc. And in my imagination I can go back again and relive the tour (not for to long, for otherwise I won’t see the movies)” (eQ 23 NW2)

- “I have watched all three movies at least five times in the past 13 months since the tour finished. The tour has heightened my enjoyment of the movies. It has given me a greater awareness of the sites and when I see places I have visited in the movies it brings back wonderful memories. Following the tour I feel ‘closer’ to the movies” (eQ 01 NW1).

and “it was great to watch the movies again, especially with others who have been on the tour. We picked out all the places we have been to and we noticed things that we never noticed before” (eQ 03 NW1). This ‘nit-picking’ was also reported by others:
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

“It was really cool to go back and see exactly where you stood. I also grew to appreciate how many places they loved to throw into one scene! In the shots that had a variety of places combined (even if they were a few meters downhill) I was constantly thinking, ‘Ok, they were there, and now they magically teleported here.’ Made it very interesting, and probably was knowing at the sanity of those around me when I watched it” (eQ 24 NW2).

Only one participant reported a negative change: “I have watched the movies again, many times. But I am no longer able to suspend my disbelief- I can see the magician behind the curtain. The same does not hold true for the book, it is the opposite” (eQ 25 NW2).

Most participants stated that their attitude to the film and its location had changed positively: “it was an amazing experience, going to all those locations made it so real for me” (Q 020 postNW2) and “I have watched the movies since returning and Middle-earth seems even more real now. The New Zealand as Middle-earth sections on the DVD’s are great because they take you back to the locations” (eQ 22 NW2). For one participant, the visit “proved to myself that I could do it I could go on my own, but it’s also proved to me that… It’s also demonstrated to me how good the movies are and how good the sites are” (I 10065 NW1). Some detailed how they could develop a different attitude towards the landscape: “just that landscapes mean so much when it connects you with a story that is full of wonder and adventure” (Q 086 postNW2). For many, New Zealand and Middle-earth merged: “For me New Zealand will always now be Middle-earth and I can’t imagine anywhere else being so” (eQ NW1). Some came to believe: “that Middle-earth does exist. It was there. It's fantastic to think about. But also that it can be so easily corrupted to the use of men if things got out of hand” (Q 024 post NW2). Such statements seem to carry a certain notion of nostalgia: “having been on the locations has given me a sense that all of Middle-earth could be/is possible. I want to live there” (Q 025 postNW2).

Consequently, some participants also spoke of sadness: “I watched the extended version the Saturday after I got back- nothing else got done. It was like being there again-a little sad that I am so far away” (eQ 27 NW2). Some participants perceived it as a task to return to their old loves: “unlike now, in my country where we have become more and more a culture of seclusion and isolation. … Just to bless, and feel out and give hope to people, that I might meet along the way amidst the increasing shadow of despair and fatalism” (eQ 21 NW2).

As the many examples show, the relationship with the Lord of the Rings story and films further depend in the majority of cases; thus, having been to the real locations did not take away the
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

feelings of ‘magic’ and ‘mystique’. However, participants also spoke of disappointing experiences and recommended improvements.

**Disappointments and Recommendations**

Some participants mentioned disappointments to various degrees (“I have had an excellent time on this tour a wonderful and positive experience with only a few minor disappointments” (Q 013 postNW1)) and suggested slight adjustments in the tour itinerary (Q 020 postNW1) that were later done (Q 012 postNW1; Q 014 postNW1). Also, most participants wished for more time (Q 084 postNW2; Q 095 postNW2) while some also mentioned “it was so interesting but also exhaustive (tired)” (Q 097 postNW2; see also Q 091 postNW2). Most participants would pack differently (Q 018 postNW1; Q 092 postNW2; Q 103 postNW2) and less (Q 087 postNW2, Q 088 postNW2), for example to make it easier to keep track of the luggage while travelling (Q 095 postNW2).

Another improvement that many participants suggested was the greater use of re-enactment of featured activities in the films at the location: “as far as the tour company goes, to give you more of a real kind of experience going down the river and doing it on an Elvish-carved canoe, or something... Just makes you feel more a part of the whole movie tour experience” (I 10061 NW1).

Finally, all participants were asked how they saw film tourism and its future, and if they could imagine going on another film tour themselves.

**Future Film Tourism**

When asked about the possibility of future film tourism, the picture was diverse. Some participants were very enthusiastic: “this was my first experience of film tourism and I would recommend it highly” (Q 019 postNW1) and

“I don’t think I would ever consider a ‘general interest’ tour – themed tours bring together people with a central point of interest which bonds them together as a group and, in our case, makes the tour a lot more enjoyable” (eQ 01 NW1).

Some participants thought that successful film tourism was limited to the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy:
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

“I think Lord of the Rings is unique in many ways since the locations are all in a small country. Am not sure this type of tour would work for other films in other countries. But for a series of films (like Narnia) it might work (a Narnia tour) if most locations are in New Zealand” (Q 012 postNW1)

and

“Not other film locations. No, because no other film so far has actually grabbed me to the extent these have. There are locations to do with Lord of the Rings that I would actually still want to go and visit and some I would like to revisit again, and maybe in different ways” (I 10057 NW1)

and

“I don’t think any other film tour would be nearly as awesome as this was. I, as of now, don’t think that my interest would make me go on another tour mostly because it would probably not be the grand experience this was” (Q 091 postNW2).

However, other participants remarked that they would be interested in going on other film location tours, both in New Zealand and overseas: “I would like to do a tour of New Zealand that covered other movies made here” (Q 014 postNW1) and:

“I am intrigued by the film tourism concept. E-mailing participants a listing of recommended tours that take this approach would be appreciated. It is hard to imagine another film being quite as adaptable to this concept as was Lord of the Rings, but I would be interested in investigating what is out there” (Q 089 postNW2)

and

“I think from now on, if I go to... go to more countries, I would do a movie-style tour because that takes you off... not a tour, but a theme because it takes you off the beaten tourist track so that you really feel... you see the real country as opposed to just going to the famous places this cathedral here and this building there and the bridge over there. Here you... I really have a sense of this country now and I had no sense what is it going to be like? I was just kind expected seeing Lord of the Rings site and leaving with the knowledge of New Zealand that’s quite extensive and just now seeing the parts of New Zealand... as important as the Lord of the Rings setting” (IG 10004 NW2 P1).

Other participants were eager to extend their film location visits: “I would love to travel to Edoras on foot/by horse and journey through the landscape, even sleep out on the way there. Would also want to visit sites only accessible by helicopter. And also 4 by 4 driving too” (Q 022 postNW1) and “I think New Zealand should have a permanent movie museum and Peter Jackson should put all of his Lord of the Rings props in it” (Q 014 postNW1) and two participants did in fact return to New Zealand within 12 months. Three participants met up in Australia in 2006 to visit the Lord of the Rings: The Motion Picture Trilogy Exhibition that had travelled to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. In rare cases, the same nationwide tour was repeated: two participants of NW1 and five participants of NW2 returned for another film location tour and one person of NW3 had done the ‘same’ nationwide tour three times already (O 15.11.2004). One participant from the first tour and two participants from the second tour decided to immigrate to New Zealand and consequently initiated an extensive relocation process.
5.5. The Participants Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience

These sections have shown how the participants anticipate their experience and the strong influence of pre-tour images in form of the films but in the case of *Lord of the Rings* also the ‘making ofs’. While being on location, a range of emotions is felt and the community seems to add significantly to the experience. There seems to be little disappointment despite the discrepancies between geographical reality and film images, probably benefited through the ‘making ofs’ that extensively spoke about these discrepancies. There were also signs of how the participants wanted to believe, how they try to ‘anchor’ the value-laden myths they associate with the books and films in the real world through their interpretation and construction of their experience.
5.6. And the Bigger Picture... the Experience of Film Tourism-Related Industries

As discussed, a variety of film tourism has taken place in New Zealand and whilst most is currently focused on *Lord of the Rings*, other films have attracted interest from tourists (see section 2. Film Tourism in New Zealand). These include, for example, *Willow, Once Were Warriors, Heavenly Creatures, The Frighteners, The Piano, Vertical Limit, The Last Samurai, Whale Rider, King Kong, Narnia, Without a Paddle, River Queen, The World’s Fastest Indian,* various *Hindi cinema* productions (often called ‘Bollywood’ movies) and TV series like *Shortland Street, Hercules: The Legendary Journeys, Xena: Warrior Princess, Madigans Fantasia* and the animated *Jane and the Dragon*.\(^{57}\)

This section will provide further insight into film tourism by presenting some of the supplemental data that was collected during this study, which mainly focused on the experience of the participants of two nationwide film tours of 15 days each. Additionally, the tour participants and guides of other companies and selected other people involved in film tourism were interviewed in face to face, group and email interviews (see section 3. Methodology). Using the expert interview and snowballing technique, I interviewed more than 50 people who were involved in film tourism: writers, government officials, business owners, film industry employees, tour operators and guides. These interviews will contrast the findings of the previous sections in further diverse and insightful ways.

**The Experiences of the Film Tourism Industry**

Each interviewee was asked about his or her experience with film tourism, which I had defined as “domestic and international tourism that visits a site that is or has been associated with the filming of movies and television feature films”. The answers were very diverse, depending on the industry and position of the interviewee and his or her personal interest. It became evident that most had been surprised by the impact films had and, furthermore, that they had not expected to become involved in consequent film tourism. Most were overwhelmed by the sheer

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\(^{57}\) As clearly stated in section 2. Film Tourism in New Zealand, literally hundreds of films have been made in New Zealand and left their impact in one way or the other. However, the films listed here present those films people talked most commonly about in connection with film tourism.
5.6. And the Bigger Picture... the Experience of Film Tourism-Related Industries

scope of the interest. Even the operators of the most famous *Lord of the Rings*-related attraction, the Hobbiton Movie Set, were surprised by the demand:

“We started advertising that we would do three tours a day, right from Day 1. And we were doing three tours a day and we were doing threes and fours and then it got up to sevens and eights and then all of a sudden we were doing more than the van could handle, so we had to hire another van, and then we had to hire a bus a 19-seater bus plus our van, and then we bought a second van because it was all just getting too big - and that was all within the first six weeks” (I Henry Horne, tour operator, 12.11.2004).

This coincides with the fact that most tour operators reacted to requests, either by potential tourists themselves or governmental institutions, and only then established *Lord of the Rings* tours (I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004; I Warren Jowett, tour operator and guide, 8.11.2004; Les Cain, tour operator and guide, by mail, 6.12.2004; Michelle Hals, manager of local tourism organisation, by phone, 17.03.2005):

“As City Promotion Manager for Upper Hutt, when we had four film locations nearby used by Peter Jackson, obviously we weren’t aware at that stage when he started using them, obviously we got some profile for the city when people discovered where they were but the flow-on affect started to grow when, probably Ian Brodie wrote his books, and brought together the film locations in one little handy book and people started to say, ‘Hey, we should go and look at these,’ and obviously the localised support here in the Wellington region that Peter Jackson got from people, but then it started to, you know, because *Lord of the Rings* is the second most-read book after the bible, there’s obviously a lot of people around the world with an interest in Tolkien. And… I think it really manifested itself at the world premiere, the third movie, when we saw all these events happening around Wellington” (I Paul Lambert, city promotion manager, 19.02.2005).

This mirrors Tzanelli’s statement that the *Lord of the Rings* tourism industry was largely developed in a de-centralised manner by private enterprises.

There were several sources that I used to obtain further information like information centres, tour operators and hospitality service points. Information centres (‘i-Sites’) are an important source of information for tourists and deal with many inquiries regarding film tourism. They also deal with various misconceptions. Many tourists, for example, “don’t usually have a specific location in mind. They just want to see every or any *Lord of the Rings* location. A lot of them have no idea when they arrive that the locations where they filmed no longer actually have anything there” (I Paul McLaughlin, i-Site Wellington staff, 28.10. 2004). Information centre staff also share the belief of tour operators that most tourists are international: “Um... 90%, 95% even” (I Sue Whiting, i-Site manager, 12.11.2004). Overall, most tour operators have a similar clientele:

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58 It would be noteworthy to examine if the *Lord of the Rings* tourism industry is mirroring the development of another form of film tourism, for example, ‘Anne of Green Gables’- tourism, which has “not encouraged sustainable growth” (Squire, 1996b, p. 131).
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“Ninety-five percent of our clients are international... Most of our market is the United States... United States, UK and Australia form probably 80% of our business... The average age would probably be late twenties who are interested in these things, primarily a younger audience from our... like in comparison to a lot of our tours. Often we’ll get small family groups, so parents with kids who... the kids are interested and the parents are dragged along, and we get people who... as I said the fanatics are absolutely, totally engrossed in the movie” (I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004).

Interestingly, “in general, Kiwis do not seem as excited as international visitors” (I Pat Sowry, shop owner, 12.11.2004). This is true for *Lord of the Rings* but also for *The Last Samurai* tourism: “There are hardly any Kiwis coming at all” (I Sue Redcliffe, tour operator and guide, 11.11.2004). However, the international interest in film tourism, especially following *Lord of the Rings*, has been considerable making it profitable despite a lack of domestic support.

Film tourism can also have surprising longevity. There has been continued interest in film tourism related to *The Piano* ever since tourists began visiting the Karekare Beach location of the film in 1993/94. That tourism is still taking place 10 years later:

“I: a lot of people internationally like to go there and see because they remember it so well, in terms of that and this was shot where they had to deliver the piano onto the beach.
AB: Would you say those people are still coming? Have you heard anything...?
I: Oh yes, yeah. A lot of people do still come” (I Natasha Christie, Film Office manager, 17.11.2004).

*Lord of the Rings* tourism to the Edoras location experienced a 50% increase from the 2005 months of January to September (Nikki Marsh, tour operator, personal communication, 06.11.2006).

*Lord of the Rings* tourism has changed New Zealand and its townships. The township hosting the Hobbiton film set, Matamata, for example “was basically a, sort of drive-through town” (I Jane Richard, local newspaper reporter, 12.11.2004) before the films were released. Since then the town has been constantly growing and several motels and even an Internet café have been opened. Now the once sleepy town can be crowded: “Hordes, hordes of tourists. Yeah, probably ten or fifteen busloads a day” (I Jane Richard, local newspaper reporter, 12.11.2004)59. The same is true for the Mount Sunday region that doubled as Edoras. Once a remote high country region, locals and tour operators now “sometimes experience crowding. Usually the road and the mountain are undisturbed but yesterday there was the guide with a couple, and another couple came too” (I Warren Jowett, tour operator and guide, 8.11.2004). There have been issues following the increase of visitor numbers, mainly because private cars

59 It should be noted that such remarks by individuals are subjective and that further reliable and accurate data are necessary to confirm such statements.
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get stuck and garbage has been left behind (Michelle Hals, manager of local tourism organisation, by phone 17.03.2005). A gate has now been erected to control motorized entry (I Warren Jowett, tour operator and guide, 8.11.2004). A similar measure was taken at the Whale Rider location that is in fact a private settlement. The initial interest in Whale Rider tourism was significant:

“The people were just turning up at Whangara and going for a look. Holiday-makers, travelling around the coast, were just turning up at Whangara... We were getting emails from offshore and domestically, to say, you know, are there any tours going down there? The travel companies were contacting us... contacting us. Media... media’s been huge. I mean we’ve had so much media from offshore come through it’s just been amazing” (I i-Site Gisborne staff member, 30.03.2005).

But some issues with disrespect by tourists arose and locals had to deal with privacy issues and the fact that their property was not respected. Eventually, the road to the settlement was gated (Jo MacClutchy, tour operator and guide, by phone 17.3.2005). To an extent there has also been splits in the community due to differing opinions about how to deal with film tourism (Jo MacClutchy by phone 17.3.2005) and there is an on-going debate where locals wonder if: “we’re commercialising our place” (I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005). In the meantime, interest in Whale Rider tourism is still present: “There are approximately four out of five tour inquires per week in high season and two to three mails per month” (I i-Site Gisborne staff member, 30.03.2005).

Similarly, there was significant interest regarding The Last Samurai after the film release. Once again, locals expect the interest to last: “to Taranaki and tourism, it’s just enormous and I think that it’ll go on. I heard an interesting statistic yesterday the tourism mapping that since the DVD has been released there’s been a huge resurgence in interest from Japan” (I Fay Looney, photographer, 11.11.2004)60. Tourist inquiries include locations but also related activities, like horse-trekking on film horses (I Parani Gibbs, tour operator and guide, 11.11.2004). However, the possible main attraction, The Samurai Village has yet to experience a success similar to that experienced in Hobbiton even though it hosts a significant part of the original film set (I Sue Redcliffe, tour operator and guide, 11.11.2004). Overall, the region has nevertheless experienced considerable success in tourism and further spin-offs: “yes, it certainly has made a significant impact in terms of profiling Taranaki region and... the economic impact of the film
project itself, and the increased tourism as a result of that increased profile” (I Dominic Moran, Film Office staff, 10.11.2004). It was interesting that in the case of the Taranaki region and *The Last Samurai*, a lot of the interest (including media coverage) seems celebrity related: “Yeah, well it’s his branding. It’s the Tom Cruise brand that overrides everything, I thought” (I Steven Looney, tour operator and guide, 11.11.2004). Thus some tourists might have been more interest in following the footsteps of Tom Cruise than that of his fictional character.

![The visit of Tom Cruise and his son at The Three Sisters, Tongaporutu, led to increased visitor numbers at the beach](image)

**Figure 5.34** The visit of Tom Cruise and his son at The Three Sisters, Tongaporutu, led to increased visitor numbers at the beach

The phenomenon of having tourists on tour who are not movie fans is widespread even in *Lord of the Rings* tourism: “However, not all the people who inquire about *Lord of the Rings* are actually *Lord of the Rings* fans. They often simply want to see the scenery that they know is to be found in New Zealand, and previously were unsure of where to look for it” (Les Cain, tour operator and guide, by mail 6.12.2004). Around 50% of the participants of the ‘Ultimate Movie tour’ that combines *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* locations have actually not seen the latter film (Ted Guise, tour operator and guide, personal communication, 25.07.2006).

Another operator confirms: “30% have not watched the movies and they only come along with their family or they might have watched it two times years ago (I Vernon Reid, tour operator and guide, 1.1.2004).” And then there are the true fans onboard, distinguishable from the

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60 In this, the attitude and perception of the Taranaki and the Wellington region is similar as evident in the following statement: “It is the creative side of Wellington that’s now being recognised” (I Christine Weatherall, product development manager of Positively Wellington Tourism, 21.10.2004).

61 I encountered such statements throughout my research, including in an online interview of a tour guide: “Interestingly enough, some ‘customers who come on Nomad’s ‘4WD Safari of the Rings’ have not even seen the
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standard tourist by their outfit, guide book or behaviour, or as one tour operator recalled
“diehard fans will introduce themselves and keep talking all the time” (I Mark Gilbert, tour
operator and guide, 16.12.2004). One tour operator observed such fans at the opening of the Te
Papa’s exhibition:

“So, forty to fifty, somewhere in that sort of number, dressed in capes with plastic swords in their belts.
And that… that was an incredible thing too. They just swarmed over the exhibition and just… drunk it in
like some religious experience… It was something to behold… I’m quite… personally, I very much
believe it… it seems really that it’s a nearly religious experience for some. You see quite extreme
behaviour at times” (I 10008).

It was interesting what words were chosen by those involved in the tourism industry when
describing the location experience of film tourists. Most tour operators confirmed the
importance of the scenery but also the (perceived) authenticity\(^{62}\) and entertainment. Most
participants were described as being eager to explore and re-enact/relive certain scenes. The
participants would show individual reactions even towards such iconic locations as Edoras. One
tour operator, somewhat partial towards Samuel Butler and the Erewhon myth, continues to
successfully combine both tales of Edoras and Erewhon:

“AB: Overall, how great is the interest in Erewhon-facts and tales?
Operator: It’s very good. This is what people really want on the whole. They don’t just want of fantasy of
*Lord of the Rings* they want the real stuff that has made these areas what they are today. They want to
hear the stories of the real people who have made this area their home and who have struggled to make an
existence in quite unforgiving terrain” (Les Cain, tour operator and guide, per mail 6.12.2004).

However, specific inquiries about the Erewhon-aspects of the tour are quite rare (Les Cain, tour
operator and guide, per mail 6.12.2004).

Many tour operators reported that for most participants film and reality seemed to appear
merged: “They like to think of those… it doesn’t seem to spoil it for people to think of the
imaginary characters that they see on screen as being real people who do other things, in fact,
they love it” (I 10063 NW1). Only some participants were described as being media addicted or
dreaming of being a star; attitudes that would lead them to extreme behaviour, for example
taking pictures of themselves with the intention of superimposing these images on the films
(e.g., I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004). For the true film fans, spiritual

\[^{62}\] In a rare case, a film-related tourism operation was shut down in Taranaki as the connection to the film was
considered too weak (I Peter Avery, Film Office manager, 11.11.2004).
elements seemed very important, a notion that even tour operators underestimated. Even in the case of Hobbiton, a learning process was necessary:

“Well, it’s about a base really. We have a base, as individuals home is home. And for a lot of people that watched the movie, Hobbiton was the home of the whole structure of the story because the Bilbo, the Frodo Baggins, the Samwise Gamgee etc, they had to have somewhere to... they had to have somewhere to start. And Hobbiton Movie Set gave them that base. That was home and, I think, the story hinged so far around, so much around the journey of these Hobbits that... I think that’s what... has made it so special and for us is that we understood it as a mythical place, but to see the passion and the desire that people were showing to try and to be a part of it, and the extent they went to actually dress up and be a part of the whole medieval theme themselves, it was quite phenomenal. So, as we’ve got more and more in common with that, and took more of the information in and did a lot more research, we realised how special this place actually was” (I Henry Horne, tour operator, 12.11.2004).

Such dimensions have been particularly difficult to understand for those who have or had no previous interest or knowledge in, for example, the book, film (“I am not a Tolkien fan, never read the books, never been to the movie” (I Sue Whiting, i-Site manager, 12.11.2004) or tourism (I Jane Richard, local newspaper reporter, 12.11.2004) of Lord of the Rings.

Most tour operators watched the films and ‘making ofs’ and many took the opportunity to (re-)read the books and to meet people involved in the making (I Mark Gilbert, tour operator and guide, 16.12.2004). Having a repertoire of stories has been especially important in film tourism:

“And that’s the key, I guess, for the entertainment. The sets have gone. For the free and independent traveller, they can still go to a number of these places, but the sets have gone they don’t tell a story and people are often disappointed when they visit there, you know, there’s nothing there to see it’s just countryside. So a lot of the key are the stories around it, which is why our guides, many of them have actually worked in the industry worked on the movies and so they’ve got real first-hand knowledge” (I 10007).

This section gave an insight into the diverse experiences of the film tourism industry. Many comments also show how the sudden demand for film tourism changed the industry but also New Zealand, its people and its townships. Furthermore, most tour operators confirm the variety of fans and the importance of (perceived) authenticity and entertainment. Also, it could be shown that the films created icons that tourists are eager to visit (compare to section 2.4. The Motivations of Film Tourists). The next sections include further comments especially towards the impact of film tourism in both rural and urban areas.

The Experiences of Otherwise Involved Institutions and Individuals

Besides the locals and tour operators, other bodies like the Department of Conservation also have experience with film tourism. In the case of Lord of the Rings, it is a common
misconception that most scenes were shot in National Parks (see, for example, Beeton 2005, p. 95) and that consequently significant location tourism takes place. It is true that the Department of Conservation has wide-ranging connections to the film industry because of the concessions and permits required for the filming of commercials, music clips and feature films in protected areas (Department of Conservation staff member, personal communication, 18.01.2005).

However,

“as opposed to things like The Vertical Limit which was the really big movie we had just prior to that. It had like, you know, forty-nine locations, whereas Peter [Jackson], from memory, only had ten or twelve... had very few comparatively. So... to move on to the tourism thing, to be honest we haven’t seen a lot of it. There’s the two or three people doing tours and then there’s the aviation companies would be where our main activity would be…” (I Harry Maher, Department of Conservation staff member, 21.03.2005).

Furthermore,

“Film tourism itself, as opposed to just filming or other forms of tourism like glacier walking, bush walking or various sorts of eco-products that we have, is quite new and still fairly low key, from our point of view. It’s been driven almost entirely by Lord of the Rings, so Lord of the Rings we dealt with in a permit situation and we issued them a whole series of permits and spent, probably, two to three years working with them and then they wrapped up the filming and disappeared. And just towards the end of that we picked up two or three queries, and probably only one real concessionaire that specifically wanted to deal with visiting the locations that Peter Jackson used” (I Harry Maher, Department of Conservation staff member, 21.03.2005).

Because the Department of Conservation’s main function is conservation and protection, not much promotion of Lord of the Rings sites is done and not much thought is given to film specific signage, both due to budget constraints and a general scepticism towards the scope of film tourism:

“I’m not aware that anybody wants to do that. It’s hard enough to afford signs to do all sorts of other things, like basic navigation information. I’d be surprised if any of the conservancy, or the area officers were going to start getting into signage of that sort. Normally, what our interpretation is with things like historic sites or other... you know, that road-end stuff about what... where the walks are, how long it takes to get to somewhere, the safety information, stuff like that. Yeah, I’d be surprised. The interest is... moderate but not huge, out there” (I Harry Maher, Department of Conservation staff member, 21.03.2005).

Additionally, the Department is conscious about the amount of digital enhancements that the landscape experienced:

“... You can’t tell where the film crew was and the degree of CGI [Computer-Generated Imagery] that they did during the movie, I think, also tends to... will probably keep it as a fairly low-key product. You know, they just changed a lot of the locations so much, again - as opposed to all the other movies, the BBC movies, Vertical Limits, and other features, well they didn’t change a lot of the scenery because that’s what they wanted to portray whereas Peter did change, and change an awful lot overlaid two or three things at once... Composition shots, all sorts of stuff... that often it’s difficult for people to stand there... I mean the main face of the Remarkables is easy. You can stand there, you can do that at Queenstown, but a lot of the other places, it’s often quite difficult to reconcile the scenes in their minds, with the locations” (I Harry Maher, Department of Conservation staff member, 21.03.2005).
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These statements might explain why little signage designating film sites has been created so far and consequently is lacking in especially remote areas. However, even though many *Lord of the Rings* tourists seek to immerse themselves in the scenery, probably as many travel in urban environments. There are many locations that experience significant film tourism that were not even on screen. For example, Stone Street Studios, Park Road Post and Weta Workshop continue to attract independent and organized tourists alike: “sometimes a minibus but sometimes a full bus that’ll stop, basically have a look and they’re off again” (I Peter Lyon, Weta Workshop employee, 28.10.2004). These places were directly involved in the making of not only the *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* but also *Hellboy*, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, *The Mask of Zorro*, *X-Men III*, *Jane and the Dragon* and *Superman Returns*.63

Other less obvious places also keep attracting film tourism. For example, there is the national museum Te Papa that hosted the *Lord of the Rings: The Motion Picture Trilogy Exhibition*. The exhibition attracted large visitor numbers and became the most visited exhibition ever held in New Zealand (I Ross Shearer, Te Papa staff, 20.10.2004). However, even eight months after the exhibition itself had moved on to overseas, Te Papa and its Exhibition Store still attracted significant numbers of film tourists (I Ross Shearer, Te Papa staff, 20.10.2004). Similarly, tourists keep visiting a local bookstore as it was mentioned in the guide book (I Mark Fry, bookstore staff, 20.10.2004). These tourists come, often in groups, because of the *Lord of the Rings* connection and tend not to buy a lot if at all: “the sales of the group tourists tend not to be… big…” (I Bruce Caddy, bookstore owner, 20.10.2004). Even the airport that displayed a selection of costumes became a photo opportunity: “… there were lots of people taking pictures, you know, really noticing” (I Dieter Ravnijak, airport duty manager, 29.10.2004).

![Figure 5.35 Wellington Airport hosted *Lord of the Rings*-related props. Film tourists even took pictures from outside the Airport (right)](image)

63 The involvement of Weta Workshop in these films is not as well publicised as their connection to the *Lord of the Rings* production; this fate of lack of recognition is partially shared by Weta Digital and Park Road Post.
Another important location is the Embassy Theatre that co-hosted the world premiere of *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. Two years later film tourists (often) sporting the guide book keep visiting. Many take pictures: “Often, just of themselves in the Embassy. They want to take a picture of themselves and... some people want a picture of the seats with the stars names on them”\(^\text{64}\) (I Michelle O’Donnell, Embassy Theatre staff, 19.11.2004). Even the local Film Office, Film Wellington, had to deal with film tourism inquiries:

> “They email me. Just people out of the blue because they go along to the website and they know that’s... I mean, this is the base for *Lord of the Rings*, so... and they know I’ve worked on it so they ask me, you know? Where was such and such filmed? Can I go there? So, not so much now, but when the movies were running, yeah, we had such a lot of enquiries about that” (I Jean Johnston, Film Wellington manager, 18.01.2005).

Many places mentioned in *Lord of the Rings*-related media coverage experienced an increase in visitor numbers. This includes many eateries in Central Wellington; locals noticing a “good spin-off, good spin-off for the restaurants” (I Paul Giles, film extra, 20.10.2004). Even though most places were well established, the *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* brought a new clientele: “they all come down here and they wait...” (Kosta Sakoufakis, eatery owner, 28.10.2004) and “Yep. I had... people coming in and asking where Sean Bean sat” (I Cieran O’Kelly, bar manager, 28.10.2004). Film and celebrity tourists frequent restaurants they know cast and crew have visited too, probably hoping to see celebrities: “Especially the *Lord of the Rings* stars came here to eat, and then tourists wanted to see the people” (I Chris Thompson, café manager, 18.10.2005). Other places like The White House restaurant even attract sightseers and ‘paparazzi’: “I’ve seen photographers hanging around my front door” (I Andrew Cameron, restaurant owner, 28.10.2004). Besides these eateries, cosmetic and clothing stores are also affected: “a lot of tourists come in now that wouldn’t normally and perhaps... a lot of... just people that would never come into the store just come in out of interest because they’ve read that Liv Tyler etc. had shopped here” (I Robynne Leahy, shop manager, 28.10.2004).

In speaking to such a variety of people whose businesses and life had been touched by film tourism, it became clear that films can have strong influences on both communities and individuals. Again and again, I found evidence that film tourism is a much talked about but

\(^{64}\) Most people assume that the name plaques on the seats in the cinema auditorium are of those who were seated here during the premiere. However, the plaque actually commemorates those sponsors that ‘bought’ a seat for ten
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little understood phenomenon. Some interviewees cited the *Sound of Music* as an example of successful film tourism; however, few knew anything specific about the Salzburg tour. Also, the individual definitions of film tourism were quite different. Most people knew little or nothing about other regions: Wellingtonians know little about the scope of film tourism in Taranaki, Aucklanders had little idea about film tourism in the South Island. There was surprisingly little communication among tour operators though that situation began to change in 2005/06. Thus I encountered misunderstandings and ignorance but also very helpful and enthusiastic people. Most interviewees agreed that the films (especially *Lord of the Rings*) had brought success and positive economic and cultural impacts, usually based on what they had heard and read in the media. Many spoke of non-tangible benefits like pride and how the perception of New Zealand had improved worldwide. In this, one might speculate on the creation of a modern myth and its significance for a re-born nationalism. The films and film tourism had changed whole regions and had many unexpected spin offs for local artists, many eateries but also production-related facilities. Thus it was somehow surprising to hear about ‘missed opportunities’, which will be discussed in the following section.

**Opportunities Missed?**

Despite these effects, many interviewees, operators and tourists alike, spoke about opportunities that had not been used. Some interviewees believed that the country as a whole had misjudged the situation despite the central government being “a key investor in the world premiere celebrations… the reasons for their investment are obviously to do with tourism leveraging” (I John Dawson, local government employee, 21.10.2004). However, some interviewees felt that:

“New Zealand has, I still think, missed a real opportunity… we still are not marketing this enough. We still are not supporting… what we could be doing advancing tourists coming here all the time, where can we go? What can we see, you know, what can we take pictures of?... You know, why hasn’t the council made little models of Orcs and have them crashing outside of the council buildings or why don’t they leave the Cave Troll out for people to see?” (I Mark Fry, bookstore staff, 20.10.2004).

Another interviewee had to battle disinterest even in Matamata: “They didn’t understand what was going to come. None of us did really... and now, only now, do they see really, really strong

years as part of the fundraising for the refurbishment of the Embassy Theatre in 2003.

65 For a more detailed introduction of how the New Zealand government supported the making and marketing of the Lord of the Rings, see, for example Beeton, 2005.
benefits” (I Sue Whiting, local newspaper reporter, 12.11.2004) and had trouble organizing the eventually highly successful Hobbit Hole-style window decoration.

It should be mentioned that the difference between a fading interest and “opportunities not used” is yet unclear: for example, the Return to Rivendell event was cancelled in 2005, after a very successful run in 2003 and 2004 (I Paul Lambert, city promotion manager, 19.02.2005). This is in stark contrast to the significant number of film tourists Kaitoke still attracts (see paragraph below). In this case, the assumed lack of interest might have been due to marketing strategy that was misleadingly directed towards locals who in general seem to show less interest in film tourism than do international visitors though exact numbers are not known yet.

One tour operator suggests that more signage could facilitate domestic tourism:

“And they should have left the film… you know, some sort of something there to indicate the movie had been done there which I think more Kiwis would have been more prone to visit than an empty paddock and you saying, ‘This is where the elephant was’…” (I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004).

In general, most interviewees expect the film tourism to continue:

“So, you know. We’ve had... Amazing... I mean, if my children wanted to see where something was made there is no way I would travel to the other side of the world to show... but these people do. And... theoretically, according to a lot of theses... I mean, we get them in here all the time so we yak to them about where they’re from, why they came and they reckon that it’s the tip of the iceberg at the moment. AB: The tip of the iceberg, the people that do come in here? The people that are coming... have come already. They said that they have a lot of... a lot of people come and say they’ve got friends who want to come over and see it as well, but they’re planning it for two years’ time sort of scenario, so... Yeah. So we figure that it’ll keep going for a fair while” (I Kevin Tappin, Internet café owner, 12.11.2004).

At the same time, many interviewees admitted to the need of a lot of work to be put in to ensure future success (see, for example, I 10008; I 10011; I 10023; 10034; I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005; I 10100and10101). And while most interviewees doubted another Lord of the Rings would be released anytime soon, most expected some degree of success even with smaller films. At the same time, hardly anyone felt that they had sufficiently prepared for this scenario. Any future film tourism scenarios are further complicated by the fact that film makers are not necessarily interested in film tourism:

“Generally speaking, especially on studio pictures, they do not have an interest in tourism. It’s an aspect of the business that only theme parks tend to exercise. And so, some of the big studios more, and there’s obviously Disney and... Universal, have these big theme parks and... there are obviously connections with all of the Hollywood connections. And that’s the way they see tourism, because then it’s a revenue stream and it’s a method of controlling their product. So, when it comes to locations and tourism, on which there is quite a growing interest amongst movie fans around the world, it takes them a bit by surprise. That’s the studios, I’m talking about. So, it’s not... from that perspective it’s not a comfortable set. Lord of the Rings was perhaps more an exception, and I think part of that was to do with Peter Jackson and the Tolkien fans, and it’s also partly to do with the New Zealand government and partly to do with the Tourism New
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Zealand as well. So there were very strong linkages in place there to... to market New Zealand on the back of that movie, and you’ve got to say that’s done some very interesting... very good things” (I Peter Avery, Film Office manager, 11.11.2004).

The previous section shows that many people also see missed opportunities besides the success of film tourism, and that further developments within film tourism are often not strategically developed.

The following section takes a quick look at self-organised tours and explains the possible differences to the organised tours that have been surveyed.

A Short Note On Self-Organised Tours

While the experience of self-organized tours could not be examined in greater detail, opportunistic interviews suggest that independent film tourists might experience a strong sense of freedom and accomplishment (I 10098) besides other film tourism related-feelings (see section 5.3.2. The Location Visit). On the downside independent travellers can also experience confusion about where the location is (Michelle Hals, manager of local tourism organisation, by phone, 17.03.2005) and even with the guide book some locations are difficult to find.

Other negative feelings might be disappointment and frustration when the exact spot cannot be identified (Staff member at Christchurch MapWorld, personal communication, 10.06.2003) or interpreted or does not fulfil its expectations. As a further complication, there is very little signage available to film tourists:

“Like, I wandered around in Tongariro and there was hardly any mention of it anywhere and... even asking people, so I had to stumble around and look for it all myself... I’m happy to get the Location book, but it’s not enough because in a big park like... you know, the great big parks, it’s really... you’re

Figure 5.36 Typical film tourism? Even with GPS data, some locations are difficult to identify
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travelling hundreds of kilometres sometimes, to find the spot and then it’s not marked in any way” (I 10100and10101).

As an interesting consequence, such diverse stores as the outdoor clothing equiper Bivouac and the bookstore Border’s (both of Auckland) and Dymocks Booksellers (of Wellington) were confronted by tourists with demands for information regarding locations. Most of the now existing signage has been erected only after the demand became significant:

“What was happening is we were getting a tremendous amount of people, free, independent travellers, coming in, and they certainly had the guide book by Ian Brodie, on the Lord of the Rings sites, but those maps are not detailed and I was certainly noticing a lot of people driving round the park, obviously lost and... I was having to answer a lot of questions about where Rivendell was. And, so I thought, well, we’d get some signage up and even I wasn’t really prepared for how the momentum has carried on. I thought, ‘Oh well, we’ll have the signs up for six months and then, you know, there’ll be something else’. But, they’re now really important to have them there and... you know, on our maps now, that site is known as Rivendell, you know, the track that we’ve got there is called Rivendell. So, you know, it’s here to stay now and I think it’s quite neat” (I Steve Edwards, Department of Conservation ranger, 19.02.2005).

This section has indicated that the experiences of self-organised tours might differ from those of participants of organised tours; however, further primary research is required.
5.7. Conclusion

This chapter spoke about the film tourism experience and its many elements, and the role of the tour leader and guides. In the analysed cases, the actual film tourism experience was an important and usually highly meaningful event for most participants, in which ‘irrational’ feelings and a certain mystification play roles. The study also showed that there is no typical film tourist; film tourists come from diverse backgrounds with multiple expectations. Escape and the pursuit of leisure play roles, and while more film-related issues are involved, surprisingly not all film tourists have seen the film on which the tour focuses. Many tourists learn about film locations when reading the end credits in cinema or on DVD. Internet and especially fan sites are important information tools, too, as are visitor information centres and personal recommendations.

Tourists have expectations regarding the scenery, the location itself and the tour community. Depending on the film, they seek different things: a cultural experience around *Whale Rider*, a star-driven experience in relation to *The Last Samurai*, scenery and community in *Lord of the Rings*. In the latter, certain themes are prominent: many participants acknowledged that friendship, fate, and faith are of great meaning to them. Some participants mention that they take guidance out of the books and movies and the hope that great and meaningful things are still possible. Most look forward to at least one specific spot and want to be able to see, stand on and experience the actual film sites, although look-a-like locations are accepted when access to the exact spot is not possible. Also, many film tourists are not aware that most film sets have been removed and thus cannot be visited.

The tour participants visited around 80 locations/settings that were featured in more than 100 film scenes, guided by the tour leader and, on three occasions, local tour guides. The moment of confrontation of the film images with the reality was experienced as positive by the overwhelming majority. As established, most participants expected to experience the myths of the films, its making and locations rather than a more realistic picture. It was interesting that, for most participants, the locations held up to their mythical connection. Most seemed to have found more than a physical place; they discovered a connection to the storylines that they loved so much in the novel and films: “I can see the characters and I can see them there…” (IG 10003
5.7. Conclusion

NW2 P4). This had been the goal for many: “we had such an attachment to the movie, wanting to see that same attachment come alive here as well” (IG 10004 NW2 P3). And in fact this attachment presented itself for many:

“To me it all became real when we reached Hobbiton. I stood there looking around and it was then that I realised, ‘Wow, I am really here!’ It was where it was all filmed… it hit me deep inside and I just stood there and cried. It was very emotional for me. Very spiritual” (TJ 02 NW3).

Expectations towards tour guides are high: they are expected to be knowledgeable, passionate and enthusiastic. Tour guides were seen as a vital element of the tour by all participants who wanted to experience the location itself, and also hear about first-hand tales and gossip. This might be the reason why some tourists who initially bought the *Lord of the Rings* guide book ended up booking a tour, though a good price-offer and ease of organisation also played a role. Interestingly, the demands made of the tour guide by participants’ expectations involved not only professional and personal skills but also spiritual aspects. Many comments refer to the importance of the tour guide being ‘one of us’ and a ‘seeker’. Next to the obvious practical demands of providing guidance and reassurance the tour guide is supposed to share the journey.

It could be questioned how particular these expectations towards the guide are for film tourism:

“Again, I don’t think it’s just movie … I mean, the guide not only knows the story, so to speak, but the guide also knows what goes into making the story … I think it would be the same with any trip… I mean film is just one way of approaching a tour. There are a lot of different theme-based tours and types of things. But I do think, no matter what the focus or theme is, if the person leading the tour has to be both knowledgeable, enthusiastic and also well-organised to do the logistics part of it, but I don’t think it’s specific, necessarily, to just film tourism those characteristics” (I 10064 NW1).

Overall, the different readings of landscapes and locations are further proof that participants interpreted locations individually throughout the tour, just as they interpreted the guides’ performances differently (see section 5.4. The Influence of the Tour Guide in the Film Tourism Experience). Film tourists seek personalised experiences and for many tourists there is an element of ‘pilgrimage’ - the experience is part of a modern and popular culture-inspired spirituality in their lives.

In tourism, the intensity, duration, memorability and immediate meanings of an experience are often under-examined. Two decades ago, Mannell and Iso-Ahola noted that “immediate conscious tourist experiences have not been subjected to scientific analysis” (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). However, such moments, when “the subject cannot clearly distinguish himself
5.7. Conclusion

from the object but is bound to it by a direct relationship which amounts to partial identity” (Sharp, 1991), can be described with the anthropological term ‘participation mystique’. Despite the notion that modern Western culture promotes rationality and demythologization, it might be that people still long to experience myths. Consequently, the strongest personal reactions and experiences can often be found when participants experience mythical moments.

These themes of mythical elements and pilgrimage will be further discussed in chapter 6.

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66 At the same time, it is impossible to say how many buyers of the *Lord of the Rings* guide book eventually read the book or even visited some of the locations either self-organized or on guided tours.
6. Discussion of Findings with Framework

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS WITH FRAMEWORK

This chapter will further the discussion of research findings by linking the findings into the previously introduced framework (see section 3. Theoretical Framework: Film, Pilgrimage and the Longing for Myths in Modernity). The previous chapters provide insight into the expectations and actual experience of film tourists. Several themes have been touched upon, including the role of myths both about the film making and New Zealand itself; the merging of fantastical and real elements in the film tourism experience; and a desire for authenticity and a willingness to believe. In doing so, the meaningfulness and spirituality most participants connected with the *Lord of the Rings* stood out, even though there was a range of ‘fan level’ from casual to specific film tourist (see section 5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist).

Furthermore, the aforementioned spiritual aspects and the importance of meaning, community and embodiment indicate a further dimension: is the film tourist a modern pilgrim?

The following section will once more highlight the power of films and images and their importance for destination marketing. While doing so, notions of authenticity and sincerity will be discussed when the research findings are analysed within the greater framework of myths and pilgrimage.
6.1. Film, Images and Myths

This section will discuss the power that film and images have, particularly in tourism, and the influence myths have on modern life. It will be shown that the partially mythical construction of New Zealand and the Lord of the Rings films are influencing the expectations and experiences of film tourists. This leads to a debate into authenticity and sincerity to establish the importance of such notions for film tourism.

Film is a particularly “powerful medium” (Churcher, 2003) that operates both on the visual and emotional level and consequently delivers strong images (Morgan & Pritchard, 2000). Commonly, an image defines what is beautiful, what should be experienced and with whom one should interact (Dann, 1996). The role of image in tourism has been acknowledged as an important factor in decision-making and motivational factors (Pearce, 1982b): film and its images can have a large influence on the choice of holiday destinations (Riley et al., 1998). At the same time, an image, according to Ritchie and Crouch (2003), is a “less controllable element of the destination marketing process than the more conscious activity of destination branding” (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003, as cited in Beeton, 2005, p. 44). Both tourism promotion and film do create myths (Selwyn, 1996). In the case of Lord of the Rings, the foundations of its various myths were laid long ago.

The following sections will show that the perception of New Zealand and its Middle-earth locations was taught to the film tourists through the media, though concepts like ‘scenic’ and ‘the exotic other’ also play a role. However, the willingness to believe can be shown in several examples, which will eventually link film tourists to pilgrims (see section 6.2. A Modern Pilgrimage?).

6.1.1. New Zealand Cinema, its Reception and Role in the Construction of Image and Identity

“What a diverse country New Zealand was, and is. Good farming land for sheep and cattle, deer and goats, forests and orchards, mountains, alpine ranges, big rivers and the sea all around. Its national identity was quickly generated by what our forefathers saw” (O’Shea, 1999).

This section will show how films about and from New Zealand helped shaping the New Zealand image and identity and how both myths and perceived authenticity are relevant in this
6.1.1. New Zealand Cinema, its Reception and Role in the Construction of Image and Identity

process. This discussion helps to understand the reception of the *Lord of the Rings* films and ultimately their success in film tourism.

As New Zealand film director John O’Shea pointed out, the national identity of New Zealand early on “became fused with the look of the land. The rolling hills, the wide open spaces, yet so much of it rugged and craggy” (O’Shea 1999, p. 126). And while most of its citizens live in urban areas, film usually portrays a different reality: “Yet any moving image that comes from New Zealand is likely to be stamped with the inevitable flavour of - strangely enough- the countryside” (O’Shea, 1999, p. 126). In the early days many films made about New Zealand, even when made through overseas locations and directors, were set in the time of early settlement (Simmons, 1999, p. 41). Maori featured as simple and picturesque people for exoticism (Simmons, 1999) and romance -if at all (Conrich & Davy, 1997; Ward, 1990)\(^{67}\). And while early European settlers showed ambivalent behaviour when keeping wilderness at bay and creating new domestic space (Simmons, 1999), most films reduced the country itself “to the status of the scenery, albeit exotically shot, for a story worthy of universal and hence European significance” (S. Jones, 1999, p. 16).

Besides this mystification of destiny and landscape, films often featured storylines of the man alone (Dennis & Bieringa, 1992), showing the traditional male gaze (Simmons, 1999). While film making in New Zealand has been said to be difficult for all directors (Dennis & Bieringa, 1992), not many women directors (Conrich & Davy, 1997) or Maori directors (O'Shea, 1999) were able to leave their mark (this situation has begun to change recently). Instead, New Zealand directors like Geoff Murphy often examined the themes of masculinity, nationality and identity (Rayner, 1999). Many films showed “places of isolation, remote or distinctively rural,

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\(^{67}\) This situation is slow to change. According to Blythe, the Maori film development can be distinguished into three phases: ‘Maoriland’ produced the timeless and the historical romance (1900-1930), ‘New Zealand’ describes the period of discussion of the newsreel from the war years into the social problem documentary (the Maori-as-social-problem) and ultimately the pilgrimage documentary (the Maori-as-source-of-authenticity) (1930-1960), and ‘Aotearoa’ began with the recent filmic responses to the Maori renaissance and the current double bind: the politics of silence; the politics of self-blame (the guilt of colonization); the politics of repression (of the Maori); and the politics of irony (as cross-cultural discourse becomes increasingly ambiguous (1960-1990) (Blythe, 1988). As Blythe concluded the contemporary debates about nationalism and post-modern internationalism, biculturalism and multiculturalism, the rise of Maori nationalism is on-going.
6.1.1. New Zealand Cinema, its Reception and Role in the Construction of Image and Identity

delayed industrialism, individuals trapped in ‘alive’ landscapes dwarfed by the power of land, characters are fragile, eccentric or disturbed” (Conrich & Davy, 1997, p. 7).

While it is true that nature is simply part of New Zealand’s heritage and culture (Schöllmann, Perkins, & Moore, 1998), it is also seen as sporting inherent mythical qualities. Jones (1999) argued that New Zealand has often been misunderstood and has often been idealised overseas as the exotic other and that its films at best attract an awareness for New Zealand film culture. More often, its films have been read in ways meaningful to the receptive culture while ignoring its other messages (S. Jones, 1999). Previous sections already spoke about the myth of a clean and green New Zealand. Tourism campaigns have used the image of vegetated environments for years to promote the whole of the country (Heaton, 1996), and were quite successful. This image of unspoilt countryside has been based on romantic roots (Heaton, 1996; Payne, 1999), and its rhetoric proved strong (Macnaghten & Urry, 2001). Despite it being one of the most developed countries in the world and the less than pristine state of its environment (Becken, 2002), New Zealand still has a ‘green’ image that is heavily used for promotional purposes, for example in the ‘New Zealand 100% Pure’-campaign.

Thus we can see how film has helped shape New Zealand’s image. Modern film myths still work within these already existing myths. It is telling to reflect on the reception of the Lord of the Rings films. Downie (2004) pointed out the similarities between New Zealand and Middle-earth:

“Mythic tales and images of a paradisiacal ‘Middle-earth’ already existing in the Christian, Western imagination before industrialisation took hold in Europe, were carried by the immigrant into the expansionist and colonial adventure as a longed-for recompense for loss and sacrifice, and the constructed events and incidental details springing from the three films’ production were feeding into what has for a long time been part of the constructed New Zealand imaginary. … A tradition, which the films of Jackson and his associates have now successfully globalised, as part of heritage tourism” (Downie, 2004).

Finally, the films were treated as an authentic New Zealand project: “In terms of LotR, national authenticity is based on claiming the trilogy as a local ‘New Zealand’ product, a unique expression of the legacy of national identity, as well as an opportunity to leverage that identity for social and economic development” (D. Jones & Smith, 2005). A vital element of the New Zealand claim to the films was that the director himself was a ‘Kiwi’ (i.e., a New Zealander):

“Central to the claims for the authentic ‘Kiwi’ nature of LotR is the authentic Kiwi nature of its director: […] His personality is seen to exemplify a certain ‘Kiwiness’—the image of the man who can face all
6.1.1. New Zealand Cinema, its Reception and Role in the Construction of Image and Identity

challenges with a ‘she’ll be right’ attitude. This Kiwi approach is extended to the attitudes of the local film crews... The image of Jackson’s creativity, entrepreneurship, patriotism and ‘Kiwi’ character represents in an intense form the themes of creative and national authenticity” (D. Jones & Smith, 2005).

Altogether, the various myths of the making of the films, its Kiwi character and the ‘authentic’ props and relationships it produced were embraced and used for both domestic and international branding of New Zealand and its possibilities for film tourism. Both Middle-earth and New Zealand were constructed as a pre-modern paradise, idealised and sentimentalised; and the hardships of the filming process themselves further strengthened this image that is, for example, used for tourism purposes. Thus, to fully understand the impact of the Lord of the Rings phenomenon it is necessary to look at the creative and national meaning of the Lord of the Rings project68. In this it becomes understandable why the project was embraced so willingly by most of the New Zealand government and its people and the worldwide audience.

It could be argued that, in a curious and complex way, the Lord of the Rings films re-affirm the branding of New Zealand as the ‘exotic other’ that is being longed for by tourists looking for meaningful and authentic experiences (MacCannell, 1976). The blending of the myths of the ‘green and unique’ New Zealand and the adventurous but also nostalgic image of Middle-earth took place seemingly effortlessly. Additionally, similar to the findings of Hanefors and Mossberg’s (2002) research into television travel shows, the ‘making ofs’ and the guide book tutored the tourists “to gaze and experience their destination in a particular way, that they generally found both authentic and enjoyable” (Hanefors & Mossberg, 2002).

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68 Such strong nationalistic identification with landscape can be found in other examples: many Norwegians like to believe that Norway’s scenery is the most extraordinary, beautiful and scenic in the world. This belief has its roots in the strong nationalisation process: Norway became finally independent after years of belonging to Denmark or Sweden; followed by a late industrialisation and urbanisation while strong emotional bonds to pre-industrial and rural bonds were maintained. “‘Untouched nature’ and ‘authentic’ rural communities become ‘green dream places’” (Midtgard, 2003, p. 102). Another example can be found in an examination of the Sound of Music film and its influence on Austrian identity and nationalism (Graml, 2004; Luger, 1992).
6.1.1. New Zealand Cinema, its Reception and Role in the Construction of Image and Identity

The willingness to believe the image, however, says a lot about the longing for myths in modern time (see discussion in section 5.3.3. The Spirituality of Film Tourism). Interestingly enough, these longings could be observed both in *Lord of the Rings* and *Whale Rider* tourism. Most participants clearly projected extraordinary and fantastic elements onto New Zealand and most seemed willing to immerse themselves in this mythical world: “it’s almost like we tune out reality and become engrossed in the magic. In some ways it’s rather sad having to come back to the reality” (IG 10008 NW2 P3). However, the dreamlike journey was facilitated by mythical elements and stories that seemed to flawlessly merge with the geographical reality of New Zealand.

The next section will give an insight into how geography and myths merge in the perception of film tourists, which will lead to a discussion of the terms ‘authenticity’ and ‘sincerity’ and their relevance for this form of tourism in section 6.1.3. The Role of Authenticity.

6.1.2. The Perception of New Zealand and its Middle-earth Locations

It has already been shown that participants differed in their motivations and expectations towards their tourism experience in New Zealand. While some stated: “That’s why my need to come to New Zealand is really not for New Zealand, at the beginning, it was to see Middle-earth and to see all the sites” (IG 10003 NW2 P4), for others it was the other way around:

“AB: What about the others? How important is it to see New Zealand, how important is it to see Middle Earth?
A: For me I especially want to see New Zealand, *Lord of the Rings* was just an excuse to come.
F: It was a good excuse” (IG 10004 NW2 A and F).
6.1.2. The Perception of New Zealand and its Middle-earth Locations

The above statements show two attitudes towards the ‘spectrum’ of real New Zealand and fantastic Middle-earth: while some participants came for the more fantastical aspects of Middle-earth, others came for the more real aspects of New Zealand. Many others positioned themselves between these extremes:

“New Zealand is more…you know, I came here…like, what I wanted to do was New Zealand as well as the location sites. I wanted to do Milford Sound and when they added it to the tour it was like, ‘Oh yeah’ you know, because I want to experience New Zealand, not only Middle Earth and that was extremely important to me so that’s why we got out there” (IG 10004 NW2 P4).

The participants’ confrontation of mythical image and reality took place during many powerful moments throughout the tour. During these encounters it became obvious that the Lord of the Rings films and New Zealand itself were already merged. Most participants became interested in visiting New Zealand after having seen the films or the ‘making ofs’. The DVDs and the included ‘making ofs’ in particular seemed to have made a major contribution to this inclination. Not only were they well loved - “I like watching DVDs and I love seeing how the movie was made, of course” (I 10076 NW1) and “I’ve seen all the extras and everything at the end of the movies” (I 10053 NW1) - but they also formed the participants’ picture of New Zealand and confirmed for many that New Zealand indeed is “absolutely beautiful and green, and has a very diverse number of ecosystems and climates and environments and they’re all gorgeous” (I 10059 NW1). Another participant confirmed how interesting the ‘making ofs’ were and explained: “I found them very interesting because it kind of describes New Zealand as an almost magical place and it just motivated me to want to see it even more” (I 10054 NW1).

Few Lord of the Rings enthusiasts chose not to see the extras on the DVDs. Most participants who had not seen the ‘making ofs’ had simply lacked the required technology (e.g., I 10063).

Irrespective, most participants expected “to see and feel parts of Middle-earth. To experience the people and culture of New Zealand” (Q 028 preNW1), to have an “once-in-a-lifetime experience travelling around the real Middle-earth” (Q 065 preNW2) and “to be totally captivated by the surroundings and beautiful landscape just as if I were on the journey [of the fellowship] myself” (Q 067 preNW2). And while it was not before the actual visit that the relationship between location and film could be tested and confirmed, the actual experience turned out, most often, to be close to its anticipation. This might be partly due to the fact that the images of Middle-earth and New Zealand were similar: both are traditionally characterised
6.1.2. The Perception of New Zealand and its Middle-earth Locations

by rolling farmland, lush forests, clear streams, majestic mountains and an ‘uncomplicated’ lifestyle connected with the outdoors. Furthermore, for those who had seen the films and ‘making ofs’, the impressions of the (New Zealand) landscape were influenced by emotions and romanticism, very much like the findings of Payne’s study (1999) into literary tourists. As demonstrated, even the knowledge of behind the scenes information did not take away from the magic of Middle-earth (see section 5.3.3. The Spirituality of Film Tourism). While there is some suggestion that visitors to film sites may be disappointed when they do not see exactly what was portrayed on screen (Preston, 2000; MacCannell, 1976), quite the opposite seemed true in Lord of the Rings film tourism. Though one could argue that people did not expect to see exactly what they saw on the screen (due to their knowledge of the ‘making ofs’), most participants were impressed by what they found. Furthermore, the power of the myths created became obvious when several participants described visits to locations such as Edoras as “one can feel as if 8,000 years ago the Lord of the Rings actually happened here” (TJ 01 NW3) and “it feels like history and we visited some archaeological site” (TJ 01 NW3). Another participant even described the distinction between film and history as purely intellectual:

“… obviously one is fact, one is fiction but, in the minds of the people involved, the distinction is purely intellectual because, to some people, the Battle of Pelennor Fields might as well be as real as something like, I don’t know, Battle Hill, or any of the other significant European sites.” (I 10019 NW1).

Another commented:

“It’s almost the same kind of thing if you go to Greece, you go and you look at places where people built, say, temples, and you talk about why they put it there, and it often relates to the landscape and so on. This is another use of landscape, a mythological… almost adding to the mythology of New Zealand, with the movies” (I 10063 NW1).

The merging of Middle-earth and New Zealand was apparently common and welcomed: “for me, Middle-earth, I mean, I don’t think I saw Middle-earth… I saw New Zealand” (IG 10006 NW2 P2) and “I am taking this tour of New Zealand because I get to tour a real place and tour my imagination at the same time” (TJ NW3 01).

It is the perception of ‘empty landscapes’ that is crucial in the merging of fictional and geographical place. Many participants would daydream and even see scenes of Lord of the Rings when travelling in between locations:

69 The supporting role of the scenery in both the films and as a background for the journey cannot be underestimated and might suggest why other films might find it more difficult to offer a satisfying tourism experience.
6.1.2. The Perception of New Zealand and its Middle-earth Locations

“My first day in Queenstown, I was at the brownish mountains… I could just see Legolas and Aragorn and Gimli running across this mountain after the Hobbits even though it probably wasn’t filmed there… it was just so clear. The scenery matches the book perfectly…” (IG 10004 NW2 P1).

The main reason for this equivalence of New Zealand and Middle-earth, besides an active participant imagination, lies in the way the scenery is perceived. One participant hinted at this when comparing the experience of the South and North Island: “I was amazed and astonished at the beauty of the South Island. The North Island hasn’t touched me the way the South Island did… I’m not sure why yet. It [North Island] is not quite as charismatic or dramatic in its scenery” (IG 10004 NW2 P1). Asked when the participants would see more of New Zealand, and when more of Middle-earth, the reply was telling:

“Sometimes it’s almost hard to distinguish between the two because a lot of the big landscapes or the big sceneries are in the film, like The Remarkables, Mount Cook, sheep. It’s a bit hard to distinguish, I guess. The only way, I guess, you could really distinguish it is that New Zealand has towns Middle-earth doesn’t” (I 10054 NW1).

This differentiation was crucial for most participants. When features like bus stop signs are encountered it feels “like Middle-earth stepping into New Zealand. Edoras-it felt like we were alone in the world. Middle-earth thing but much more… so unspoilt” (I 10200 NW2).

According to the dichotomies of nature – culture and unspoilt – spoilt (see section 5.3.3.2. The Experience of Meaningfulness and Spirituality), New Zealand stands for cities and their city life and consequently for the parts of New Zealand that are not Middle-earth. In contrast, Middle-earth stands for “mountains, streams, forests places where Hobbits and Elves live” (I 10200 NW2). Thus rural New Zealand and its perceived emptiness is where fiction and reality were most likely to merge though to various degree:

“After a short walk, we come to the most amazing view point, on one side a deep valley with a river down below (you can hear the water) and on the other side the ‘wall’ formation [the tour leader] told about and the snowy top of Mt Ruapehu, fantastic!!! I almost forget we are here for a movie location, Mordor/Emyn Muil, so much do I love this landscape” (TJ 16 NW1).

Overall, for many participants it seemed the merging was facilitated by New Zealand’s range of exciting and unique environments. The participants perceived these environments rarely as somehow similar (TJ 17 NW2 and TJ 18 NW2) but usually as different (TJ 03 NW3; TJ 17 NW2 and TJ 18 NW2) or even vastly different to their home environment (TJ 16 NW2). While this was true in many cases, in places New Zealand is not that different from landscapes in, for example, Oregon, U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. Yet, even participants from these countries often perceived New Zealand as having these mythical qualities (TJ 18 NW2; Q 071 preNW2).
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Overall, most participants shared a common perception of New Zealand: “It is wild, it is primitive, it is remote, it is geologically young. Very ‘Middle-earth’ here. I like it” (TJ 01 NW3). Other participants described and interpreted the actual settings using such words as ‘spectacular’.

In such narratives of participants’ perception of the destination, these participants revealed more about their own point of view than the actual visited country (see also Bhattacharyya, 1997). In this case, New Zealand was representing the exotic ‘other’70. This perception has a long standing tradition, partly due to geographical isolation and distance from Europe, and has influenced the reception of New Zealand films for a long time (S. Jones, 1999; Simmons, 1999). Both the films of Lord of the Rings and the ‘making ofs’ further promote these exotic and mythical qualities. These qualities were also used for the official ‘100% Pure’ New Zealand tourism campaign: New Zealand was portrayed as an exotic and faraway country that is green, clean, exciting and yet safe, without major civil or military conflicts. Thus the image created by the Lord of the Rings production, its accompanying film tourism and the official New Zealand image are very similar in their promotion of mythical elements. As a consequence, most participants had expectations that included such elements towards their own holiday experience. New Zealand was seen as hosting a range of ecosystems and spectacular scenery and at the same time being a safe and relaxing destination with a somewhat familiar culture. Consequently, most participants continued to construct their experience to fit their expectations.

Figure 6.2 New Zealand scenery continued to fascinate participants
Overall, many participants revealed a somewhat antagonistic understanding of nature/uninhabited places and culture/inhabited places. As a consequence, many participants preferred the largely uninhabited South Island over the North Island:

“I think more of a magical thing. Especially in the South Island. There’s a whole kind of mythological, magic feeling in the whole place. Being in the North Island now, there’s a real difference between how I feel now in the North Island and how I was feeling in the South Island. I guess the scenery’s got a lot to do with it, and especially the locations the Mount Sunday location was sort of in the middle of nowhere just this huge mountainous valley and then… that’s just how I felt. It really did feel magical… and the South Island of New Zealand really feels magical and mysterious to me…” (I 10061 NW1).

This constructed opposition of natural (good) and urban (bad but necessary, so to speak) environments is common in Western societies (Engelhardt, 1994; Rabelt, 1994). Interestingly, this also links to Tolkien’s work where he set the idyllic Hobbiton against the industrialised landscape of the wizard Saruman. This theme continues to be popular and partly explains the success of the books within the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s (Carpenter, 1977). However, such a strict distinction between nature and culture is a cultural construction and tells us more about how people see or want to see their own position in the world than what that position really is (Faulstich-Wieland, 1998). Most participants revealed a longing for the exotic other: “Well, for me, Edoras was like magic. When you get to Wellington you’re in a city and I live in a city so I’m sort of… cities I find a little bit boring” (I 10065 NW1) and another participant admitted loving the place “because I don’t live here. Maybe if I did, I’d probably feel different” (I 10061 NW1). In order to maintain the image of the green and clean country, participants seemed to ignore the presence of airports and cities, whose presence in New Zealand did not destroy their image of Middle-earth. Another example was of the location of Ithilien that was seen as “a real ‘untouched’ site AWESOME” (TJ 10 NW1) despite the fact that it was set in the popular camp ground 12 Mile Delta.

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70 In a similar twist, Prince Edward Island, in which the Canadian novel Anne of Green Gables takes place, is a popular attraction for tourists, notably from Japan (Squire, 1996b).
6.1.2. The Perception of New Zealand and its Middle-earth Locations

Such an enthusiastic embrace of both reality and myth has been found in other forms of tourism and led to an on-going debate into the importance of such notions as authenticity and sincerity, a debate that has been especially prominent in film tourism research.

6.1.3. The Role of Authenticity and Sincerity

The previous sections have shown how film tourism is interlaid with myths, especially in *Lord of the Rings* tourism. It will be shown that ‘authenticity’ is important within film tourism though it has to be debated how ‘authentic’ a film tourism experience can be as it involves fictional places.

In *Lord of the Rings* tourism, the significance of authenticity is not only reflected in the quality of the relationships but also the process of making of films and props. For example, the making of props was often described to be close to historical artefacts and as authentic as possible to Tolkien’s words (Sibley, 2002). This was duly accepted by most participants: “they’re talking about the props and the fact that they’re not stage props, they are realistic” (I 10057 NW1). And even more, according to the production designer, Peter Jackson’s goal was described as making “Middle-earth look like it was shot on location” (Grant, 1999). The attention paid to every detail of the film making was discussed often:

“Yeah, from what I’ve seen, in terms of the ‘making of’ DVDs… for instance, there’s a bit about - I think when they’re talking to Orlando Bloom and they’re talking about the Elven costumes - and he’s saying there’s about six layers to this and each layer is absolutely perfect. It’s never actually seen on camera but it’s properly made, it’s as it should be and, obviously, it affects the way the whole costume moves. You could just have had the outer bit done perfectly but then if you just had cotton underneath, or something, and no real substance, it just wouldn’t look right and it wouldn’t move right. … And I suppose, in terms of the actors in the film, the more realistic and well, you can’t say authentic in one sense because perhaps some people would argue whether Middle-earth is this or not, I guess you can convince yourself as an actor that the part you are playing is real, but in fact, one of the most difficult things, as I understand it, is however you then move and how you stand, because it’s not just the look of thing, it’s how things move, it’s the way the actors move” (I 10057 NW1).

This re-telling shows the high value many participants placed on these often mentioned aspects of authenticity. Jones and Smith (2005) rightly pointed out:

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71 Thus this distinction can be found in film tourism studies too, for example, when it is argued that the Lord of the Rings films transformed the New Zealand landscapes “from nature into a cultural product” (Tzanelli, 2004, p. 27) – though nature has been a cultural product all along.
6.1.3. The Role of Authenticity and Sincerity

“The authenticity of the artefacts was central to this faithfulness to Tolkien’s world... The believability of a real, re-created, world is based on a combination of exhaustively researched ‘historical’ details – into medieval weaponry and the techniques for making and finishing it for instance – and twenty-first century high-technology special effects – specially designed software, the latest digital imaging and even the creation of a digital ‘character’ (D. Jones & Smith, 2005).

Speaking about the *King Kong* set, he says “it was so realistic... well constructed... and the materials looked real... this was the case with *Lord of the Rings* too” (I Wally Cannel, *Lord of the Rings* and *King Kong* actor).

The terms authenticity and sincerity are often mentioned in connection with film tourism and are discussed in section 2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity. The following section will introduce further concepts such as hyperreality and simulacrum and show why objective authenticity may be an obsolete term for both within the modern film production and the film tourism industry.

6.1.3.1. A Reality of Hyperreality and Simulacra?

This section will talk about the terms of ‘hyperreality’ and ‘simulacra’ as these are commonly referred to when discussing film tourism; however, it will also be discussed why these concepts may limit our understanding of the film tourism experience (see section 6.1.3.2. What Remains? The Consequences for Film Tourism). Still, it will be shown why ‘hyperreality’ and ‘simulacra’ are often used when describing the reality of modern film production and the consequent experience of film and film tourism.

Eco introduced the term ‘hyperreality’ to describe how, in modern times, the boundaries between copy and original have broken down; consequently ‘authenticity’ can no longer exist (Eco, 1983). Baudrillard used the term ‘simulacrum’ to describe the same phenomenon: a world where fantasy and reality are fused and no more originals exist (Baudrillard, 1983). The worlds one sees on the big screen are such simulacra: places that never existed but seem to have been based on real locations. And in fact, real and hyperreal experiences were at times merged in the narratives of participants who spoke about the history and mythology of Middle-earth and New Zealand (e.g., TJ 01 NW3). Even more poignantly, one participant saw the Middle-earth mythology as
6.1.3.1. A Reality of Hyperreality and Simulacra?

complementary to New Zealand as is the cultural heritage of Greece (I 10063 NW1).

Overall, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that reality and hyperreality evoke the same emotions. Couldry’s (1998) study of the Coronation Street set showed how the simulation of a street became its own reality through its signification as a film set: the fictional setting is considered authentic. Like the setting of Edoras/Mount Sunday, the location is seen as the “‘real place’ of filming, not a mere ‘mock-up’” (Couldry, 1998, p. 97). But how can fictional places become so real? The answer might partly lie in the medium of film itself, in the way films are produced and film images perceived. As Couldry (1998) showed, tourists connected deeply with film locations even if these are fictive places.

Beeton (2005) summarized how the Monument of Scottish hero William Wallace became an economically successful tourist attraction only after the release of Braveheart in 1995, followed by the creation of a statue in the main actor’s liking. However, the film was mainly shot in Ireland! Such runaway productions where a film is not shot at the location that it portrays are quite common. For example, buildings in Toronto have portrayed (among others) Harvard College in Good Will Hunting (1987), New York and San Francisco in Serendipity (2001), Chicago in My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002) and a 1930s New York in Cinderella Man (2005). New Zealand, too, has been used by International directors as a backdrop for their films as early as 1912 (Conrich & Davy, 1997) . In an interesting reversal, The Frighteners was set in a U.S. coastal town but identifiable as a New Zealand setting for schooled eyes (Simmons, 1999). However, New Zealand usually plays only a minor role as a setting. The Bounty, for example, was shot around Gisborne in 1981 where “it uses, rather than identifies, New Zealand locations and associations” (Martin & Edwards, 1997, p. 197). The same happened with Rapa-Nui in 1994 when the “only authentic elements are the setting itself and the presence of some islanders as extras” (Martin & Edwards, 1997, p. 197).

The very production of film requires considerable organisation and results in a highly de-fragmented product. These include the aforementioned location management and also finances: there are numerous examples for films set and shot in New Zealand but
6.1.3.1. A Reality of Hyperreality and Simulacra?

financed from overseas (*The Piano*), and also films shot overseas but with a New Zealand financial background and production (*A Soldier’s Tale*), followed by many more examples of films shot in New Zealand but without any significant New Zealand input (Martin & Edwards, 1997).

All these facts question the very use of the term ‘authenticity’ in connection with film. As Beeton (2005) pointed out:

“In terms of ‘authenticity’, on location sites are not necessarily authentic, in that many places are filmed in such a way that they appear quite different from ‘real life’ (larger, smaller or more extensive, for example), or may even be presented as a completely different site (such as in a runaway production)” (Beeton, 2005, p. 174).

As one *King Kong* extra remarked: they say “the camera doesn’t lie... well, it does” (Wally Cannel, personal communication, 20.03.2006). It is for these reasons that many authors keep referring to ‘hyperreality’ and ‘simulacra’ in connection with film tourism research. However, as the next section explains these concepts will need expanding to be helpful in understanding film tourism as the debate of the significance of ‘authenticity’ and ‘sincerity’ within the film tourism experience will show.

6.1.3.2. What Remains? The Consequences for Film Tourism

This section shows that the notion of ‘authenticity’ is important within film tourism, though the understanding of the very term ‘authenticity’ has to be refined. It will be shown that the film tourists toured both an imaginary and the real geography.

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72 Apparently, there was a welcoming sign to be found at Otaki in 1921 that stated “Town of Otaki. The Home of Maoriland Films and the Los Angeles of New Zealand’s Moving Pictures Industry” (Dennis & Bieringa, 1992).

73 It is interesting that even those involved in the making of a film are often amazed or confused about the discrepancies between film and reality. For example, the Monty Python DVD “The Search for the Holy Grail” (2005) features a documentary of the actors Michael Palin and Terry Jones, who are revisiting the castle. While they explain how the scenes were shot, however, they make frequent comments about how their memories and reality differ, especially in reference to space.
In this study of film tourism, as in the case of literary tourism studied by Herbert, “issues of authenticity were evident though rarely in explicit forms” (Herbert, 2001). However, it was also shown how significant the authenticity concept has been in relation to the making and promotion of the Lord of the Rings films. The analysis of data showed repeatedly how important perceived authenticity was for the participants who wanted to experience this authenticity (in fact is made up by a variety of myths). As Herbert noted in the case of literary tourism, “the visit needed to be pleasurable and the ‘package’ was not being scrutinized in any detailed way to test its authenticity” (Herbert, 2001). An example of this occurred when a Lord of the Rings actor accompanied the tour for a few hours (see section 5.3.2. The Location Visit), where the (inauthentic) costume was well received: the ‘appearance of authenticity’ – and the effort and acknowledgment of its importance signified through the attempts made to ‘be’ authentic did matter (compare to Halewood & Hannam, 2001). Also, most participants could not remember the actor’s name or many not even the exact form of the actor’s involvement with the films a few hours later; yet they continued to value the actor’s participation as something very special (O 06.01.2005 and 05.01.2006). The event was valued due to its perceived and, in the participants’ frame of reference, actual authenticity, the encounter being perceived as sincere (compare to Taylor, 2001) (section 2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity).

While the debate over the nature of tourism authenticity is on-going (Selwyn, 1996), Wang (1999) showed that the tourism industry has already reacted to the longing of tourists by offering ‘authentic’ experiences. However, these would be but commodities. Halewood and Hannam (2001) explained that: “commodification is an issue that is closely tied to the concept of authenticity. When unbridled, it is generally perceived as negative and something that devalues an experience or cultural activity” (Halewood & Hannam, 2001) – the tourists do not want to see too many contradictions to the performed authenticity. Thus one faces the contradiction of both the importance and impossibility of authenticity. That is, however, only true if one believes in ‘objective’ authenticity. Many academics have instead argued for a wider understanding of the term authenticity (see section 2.5. A Short Discussion of the Terms Authenticity and Sincerity). Bruner understood culture as continually changing and consequently that there is no one single real authentic culture as “there are no originals” (Bruner, 2005, p. 93). Consequently, Bruner also rejected the notions of hyperreality, simulacra...
6.1.3.2. What Remains? The Consequences for Film Tourism

and the like, seeing it as a Eurocentric bias against American culture. Wang (1999) and Kim and Jamal (2007) argued that both the bodily presence of the tourist and the trials the tourist goes through create existential authenticity that -though individualised- can be described as authentic.

Similarly, Poria, Butler and Airey suggested that tourist perception is important in understanding visitation patterns, as the meaning and not so much the artefact itself is crucial (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2006). Only such an approach can explain this participant’s comment: “I am now sold completely on the concept of visiting a strange country with a theme, as you get to see the real country, not the tourist trap illusions” (TJ 17 NW2). In the similar case of Shangri-La, Cater showed how tourists had internalized their expectations and consequently toured an imaginative geography (Cater, 2001). The journey was meaningful and authentic in the participant’s perception despite its many ‘staged authenticities’. In a sense, the authenticity was judged by how well it managed to sustain the myths. Interestingly enough, one participant was well aware of how myths are created in modern times:

“Sometimes people have a lot of illusions about what happened in the historical battles... you know, Scottish history is a great example. You know, what most Scots think happened in Scottish history has very little to do with the reality. I think Braveheart… You see, that’s where fact and fiction become mixed” (I10019).

Still, it seemed that for most participants it was exactly the merging of both reality and myths that made for the most fulfilling, and authentic, experience: “for me to be able to walk onto those fields is magical because I keep turning around looking for Gandalf or Frodo or somebody. And yet at the same time I’m able to bend down and touch the grass” (IG 10008 NW2 P3)\(^74\). The experience was constantly negotiated between the opposites of fiction and reality in an individual way (see also Torchin, 2003).

This research indicates that embodiment, sincerity and authenticity are important in the film tourism experience; however, the latter term refers to perceived authenticity. Ultimately, the authenticity and sincerity of the experience is co-constructed by the participants within the existing discourse that exists around the authenticity of the making of the film. This discourse also explains why the film tourist came to New Zealand instead of journeying to the original

\(^74\) This statement also highlighted the importance of being physically on location where reality and film could finally be merged.
6.1.3.2. What Remains? The Consequences for Film Tourism

locations that inspired Tolkien’s Middle-earth like South Africa, Birmingham and the European Alps\textsuperscript{75} (Greenwood & Greenwood, 2003). The following section connects the research findings with the greater framework and consequently shows the similarities between film tourists and pilgrims.

\textsuperscript{75} Unfortunately it is not known how many participants were aware of the ‘original’ locations and their significance. It seems that film tourism has become part of New Zealand culture while the original locations of South Africa, England and Italy are losing out for the time being. However, at least one interviewee believed that authenticity will triumph over hyperreality and that “New Zealand has spectacular scenery… [but] the New Zealand connection [to Lord of the Rings] will be forgotten in 20 years” (I Robert S. Blackham, tour operator and guide in Birmingham, UK, 12.8.2005).
6.2. A Modern Pilgrimage?

This section will discuss to what extent the modern film tourists can be seen as pilgrims.

Various researchers have compared tourists to pilgrims (Cohen, 1992; Davidson & Spearritt, 2000; N. H. H. Graburn, 1989; Lickorish & Jensen, 1997; V.L. Smith, 1977; Wickens, 2002). Others have explicitly compared literary tourists (Herbert, 2001; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Beeton, 2005) and, with even more relevance, film tourists to pilgrims (Riley, 1992; Couldry, 1998; Moran, 1999; Beeton, 2005).

Among the shared characteristics of (film) tourists and pilgrims are the elements of journey, shared behaviour including the search for meaning and shared infrastructure (N. H. H. Graburn, 1983; Rinschede, 1992) (also see section 3.2. The Rebirth of Pilgrimage?). Tourism and pilgrimage both combine a physical and a psychological journey (see also Lennon & Foley, 2000), are physical journeys and metaphorical passages full of meaning (Coleman & Elsner, 1995). Finucane pointed out that, besides its obvious religious foundation, the social motivation, the desire for adventure and break from home were significant motivators for the medieval pilgrimage (Finucane, 1977). It is commonly believed that religious journeys have always been multifunctional, both in medieval times (Rinschede, 1992) as well as in modern times (Hudman & Jackson, 1992). Beeton saw similarities in film tourism and pilgrimage as both journeys involve tourists travelling “to sites considered sacred through their connection with fame and notions of fantasy; and both tourist and pilgrims collect memorabilia, taking them home along with stories of fame that graced them up in the view of their peers” (Beeton, 2005, p. 34). Both follow scripted guidelines (holy texts and popular texts) while also creating their own experience.

It has been shown that most participants expected not just a well organised tour, community and tour experience but sought a closer relation with the myths of Middle-earth, which extended to a meaningful journey and fellowship bonds. Many hoped that the other participants would share their ‘belief system’. Further similarities and differences will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.
6.2.1. The Similarities Between Film Tourists and Pilgrims

This section discusses the most significant similarities between film tourists and pilgrims. It will be shown how both pilgrims and film tourists move towards ritual places and that these places do have an aura in the eyes of the believer. The importance of authenticity and sincerity, especially in relationships and the role of the community and embodiment will be discussed.

6.2.1.1. The Phenomenon of Pilgrimage Sites

Both traditional pilgrimages and film tourism travel to sites that present a ‘ritual place’ and seem to have an ‘aura’. Typically, a pilgrimage centre is (at least in Western traditions) ‘out there’ (Turner, 1973) and yet the pilgrims travel towards it. This travelling towards a supposed centre is an element of pilgrimage (Shenkav-Keller, 1995). Beeton described a trip to the film location of Monty Python’s *The Search for the Holy Grail* and too sets it “in the realm of pilgrimage, complete with a sense of place, history and fame” (Beeton, 2005, p. 36). Schofield (1996) showed in his observation of film tours in Manchester, how sites that had been considered commonplace and ordinary acquired interest, status and ambience because of their association with fame. This phenomenon is typical for film tourism where a cornfield can become a tourist destination because it was featured in *Field of Dreams*. Couldry (1998) mentioned that film sites would become pilgrimage sites and ritual places that consequently film tourists would visit as part of their search for authenticity and a reaffirmation of their beliefs (see also Squire, 1994b). For example, even though Mount Sunday is situated on an operating farm and is being used for grazing, the images of empty ruralness and remoteness prevailed and were romanticised:

“It was fantastic… just coming over the hills and just seeing it there and… then getting out and a bit closer, and it was just so beautiful and isolated and… […] it was so far from everything and once we’re outside the bus you could easily pretend that you’re in the middle of nowhere, that there was no civilisation anywhere, that you really were on Middle-earth” (I 10055 NW1).

Also, many statements indicated a semi-religious aura: “Seeing it with my eyes, the place where Mount Sunday was” (I 10063 NW1). Couldry (1998) refers to the concepts of ‘aura’ and pilgrimage to explain the pulling power of sets. This explains why most participants are able to enjoy a location even with all sets and other sign markers gone: “you can still tell that it’s the same place and there’s something about that that’s a very unique experience” (I 10095) (see also section 5.3.2. The Location Visit). The participants are aware of the association of the film with the site and consequently perceive the site as more important: “a huge film was just filmed
6.2.1.1. The Phenomenon of Pilgrimage Sites

in this location here that connects sort of significance to it” (IG 0005 NW2 P1). At the same time, this increase in significance seems difficult to describe: “… hard to put into words. It’s just a sort of Middle-earth feeling to it” (IG 10005 NW2 P1).

On an interesting note, a few participants also began collecting stones or filled small film containers with sand or water during the visit to film locations; they also collected postcards and other forms of printed material from *Lord of the Rings*-related stores and eateries. This has been done by pilgrims for thousands of years, who took ‘souvenir boxes’ that “actually contain material from or even fragments of the pilgrimage site in the form of natural matter to be found there, such as water, earth and bits of wood or stone” (Coleman & Elsner, 1995, p. 100).

This section compared filming locations to pilgrim sites and established similarities as both are ritual places with an aura. The following section compares the quality of experience of both the film tourists and pilgrims.

6.2.1.2. The Phenomenon of Meaningfulness, Authenticity and Sincerity

This section compares the significance of meaningfulness, authenticity and sincerity within the film tourism and pilgrim experience; also the importance of a classification system for film tourists will be debated.

Research findings seem to strengthen MacCannell’s (1976) argument that tourists seek more authentic ways of life in places away from home; a behaviour that would liken them to pilgrims who are on value-affirming journeys to distant places (Turner and Turner 1978). The emotional connection towards the *Lord of the Rings* story was central to the descriptions of the participants’ relationship. Participants reported a spiritual and meaningful relationship with *Lord of the Rings* touring even in cases where individuals knew relatively little about the films or books. However, they were aware of the central themes of the novel: fellowship, sacrifice and sacredness. It seems the familiarity with the overall myths was more important than an in-depth factual film or book knowledge and it was these myths that the participants sought in the exotic setting of New Zealand. This research also showed that some people who act as film tourists are not necessarily “*Lord of the Rings* fans. They often simply want to see the scenery that they know is to be found in New Zealand, and previously where were (sic) unsure of where
6.2.1.2. The Phenomenon of Meaningfulness, Authenticity and Sincerity

to look for it” (Les Cain, tour operator and guide, per mail, 6.12.2004) or they “only come along with their family or they might have watched it two times ago” (I Vernon Reid, tour operator and guide, 1.1.2004). Sometimes film tourists are not even fans at all as one tour company confirms:

“And then we’ve got the people who are dragged along by their children, often, or their partner, or sometimes even people have told them, ‘While you’re in New Zealand, you’ve got to do a Lord of the Rings location and bring me back a T-shirt’. And those people, sometimes, haven’t even seen the movie, haven’t read the book… and so they’re more interested in general stories about the country, about the countryside” (I Mark Rogers, tour operator and guide, 20.10.2004).

These statements again confirm the different ‘fan levels’ of the observed film tourists, ranging from casual follower to semi-religious believer (see section 5.1. Characteristics of the Film Tourist). A Lord of the Rings Market Research Summary Report found that though 65% of potential visitors said they were more likely to visit New Zealand as a result of the films or the associated publicity, only 9% cited Lord of the Rings as one reason among others and 0.3% as the only reason (NFO New Zealand, 2003). Similar, Herbert, for example, found that:

“The notion of a set of literary pilgrims was difficult to sustain at both Chawton and Laugharne. Using the strict criterion of those who, giving their main reason for making the visit, described themselves as ‘fans’, expressed a specific interest in the writer, and had read his or her work, no more than 15% would qualify as literary pilgrims at either site. Some visitors to Laugharne actually used the phrase ‘making a pilgrimage’, but they were a small minority” (Herbert, 2001).

Even though film pilgrims might be low in numbers, they do exist. And the ‘true fans’, as one tour operator put it, are distinguishable from the standard tourist by their outfit, guide book and/or behaviour: they wear Lord of the Rings merchandise or costumes, and are very enthusiastic and active (I Mark Gilbert, tour operator and guide, 16.12.2004).

For most film tourists the sincerity of the guide(s) in the personal encounter was important to maintain the semi-sacral atmosphere of the journey that presented a considerable financial and personal investment by the participants.

The spiritual meaningfulness and pilgrimage-like character of film tourism in this study was further strengthened through additional comments made by members of the tourism industry and otherwise involved people (see section 5.6. And the Bigger Picture... the Experience of Film Tourism-related Industries).
6.2.1.3. The Phenomenon of Embodiment

“Actually experiencing what the land felt like under my feet and visualising it as I’ve seen it on the screen was just a magical feeling… Otherwise you are sort of looking at it as you’re looking at it on the screen or looking at it on the video you’re sort of detached from it. And it’s not until you’re right on that spot and you can feel the air around you and feel the grass under your feet and walk up hills that was really important walking up the hills, down hills and through the vegetation, then I felt as though I was really experiencing it” (I 10062 NW1).

The experience of embodiment is crucial for both the pilgrim and the film tourist. Couldry (1998) noted how important the physical presence of the film tourists is for the experience of the *Coronation Street* set:

“‘Being there’ involves connecting one’s ‘everyday’ practice of private viewing with the public place where the programme is actually filmed. The connection is intrinsically significant. That is why just the basic acts of occupying space on the Street (standing there, walking up and down) are spoken of as worthwhile in themselves” (Couldry, 1998, p. 104).

This experience is mirrored in the example of the Edoras/Mount Sunday setting where the crossing of streams and the climbing of the hill became important elements of the experience (see section 5.3.2. The Location Visit). The importance of physical presence is described as crucial: “It’s a matter of just standing in the place where the action happened. You stand there, you can kind of feel the vibrations or something. It really happened there. It just makes it so much more real” (IG 10004 NW2 P1). These statements show the importance of the physical element within the film tourism experience, ultimately creating an embodied spiritual experience. This further strengthens Cloke and Perkins’ (1998) critique of Urry’s (1990) notion of the (somewhat passive) tourist gaze. As shown, most participants spoke about the significance of being able to spend time on the location and to develop a sense of place. This was further strengthened by participants’ comments about their idea of a perfect tour: many wished for even more physical activities and exposure. Many participants deemed it important: “actually walk out and be in the spot” (I 10048and10050 NW1). Yet, many participants were subsequently surprised to find themselves in New Zealand (e.g., TJ 02 NW3). Embodiment turned out to be a central aspect of the overall experience and again, this likens film tourists to pilgrims. As Barsalou, Barbey, Simmons and Santos (2005) pointed out, embodied knowledge is central to the various aspects of the religious experience:

“In religious visions, the process of simulation offers a natural account of how these experiences are produced. In religious beliefs, knowledge about the body and the environment are typically central in religious frameworks, and are likely to affect the perception of daily experience. In religious rituals, embodiments appear central to conveying religious ideas metaphorically and to establishing them in memory. To the extent that religious knowledge is like non-religious knowledge, embodiment is likely to play central roles” (Barsalou, Barbey, Simmons, & Santos, 2005, p. 14).
6.2.1.3. The Phenomenon of Embodiment

The element of embodiment also helps counteract feelings of surreality that many participants reported when arriving or at a previously ‘mentally’ experienced but not visited place. One participant found it hard to believe she had finally made it to the geographical location and even after having visited several locations still described the experience as “kind of surreal” (I 10061 NW1). The same participant added: “I’m really over the moon that we’ve seen these amazing places, but… I can’t quite explain… it hasn’t quite hit me that we’ve been to these magical places” (I 10061 NW1). This is somewhat understandable as each location actually connects two places: the cinematic portrait and the geographical place. As the research findings show, the physical presence became very important in negotiating the two places. Only then could the ‘aura’ of the place be felt and the experience authenticated. Boorstin suggested that one reason for visiting sites was curiosity as to whether a depiction is real or not (Boorstin, 1964). Aden et al. (1995) also emphasised the importance of physical interaction with a site and report a sense of awe from their participants in reaction to the main location of Field of Dreams:

“Visitors to the field are struck by its incongruous appearance it seems real, yet unreal. They know the place to be real, but also recognise the field is simultaneously (1) the scene of a fictional movie and (2) stuck in a cornfield […] Initially, visitors negotiate the sense that they are at a fictional, yet real, site. The incongruity frequently awes visitors […] by visiting a real place depicted in an ‘unreal’ film, individuals feel as if they are in a different, unique location” (Aden et al., 1995).

Even adverse weather conditions contributed further authenticity (see section 5.3.2. The Location Visit). The significance of being physically exposed to the elements was considerable:

“Walking back through the fog, wind and stinging rain in my face was exhilarating. This is so different from any tour I’ve ever been on. This tour is so ‘physical’, I’m feeling this country [presumably New Zealand] not just seeing” (TJ 12 NW1). This statement describes the feelings of ‘being alive’ and shows the high value the participant puts on this experience. It also shows that film tourists, like pilgrims, welcome physical exercise and even discomfort as a further validation of their experience as authentic.

While individual embodiment was important for the experience, the shared physical exercises also deepened bonds between individual travellers. The many physical activities on tour turned out to be another method for enhancing the sense of fellowship as well as the general experience (see also section 5.4.1. Expectations Towards the Film Tourism Guide). The river crossing and climbing at the Mount Edoras location, for example, stood out in many recollections of the tour. It has been stated that both novelty and otherness of a destination can
6.2.1.3. The Phenomenon of Embodiment

enhance relaxation (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). More importantly, it has been reported in recreation literature that group bonding can be enhanced through shared activities (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Ewert, 1989). In this, challenging activities are especially appreciated (Ewert, 1989) as long as the participants can successfully manage the challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). In this case, cooperation and laughter soon characterised the event. Even the least adventurous participants were pleased with the way that they performed.

As for physical interaction in the form of re-enactment, Urry (1990) and other tourism researchers emphasised people often display behaviour during holidays that they would not consider at home due to existing social restrictions. On tour, however, the approach of the tour leader helped ease the sense of these restrictions even for the more reserved participants:

“You, as an operator, as an organiser, helped to bring me out, too, because you’ve got all those people to deal with, and if I was to put myself in your shoes, I would be responding to the outgoing ones, the ones who are talking and open, because they get your attention, they grab your attention. But, people who are quieter and more in the background, they still need to be made aware that they are there and they’re important. And you did that. You managed to reach into the... behind all the noisy ones, and to see… there’s quite a few quiet ones, you’ll notice, on the trip” (I 10066 NW1).

These descriptions also resemble the limnoid state in which the pilgrim moves; a transitory stage between established social status (Turner, 1973), where emotional release can be attained from the world of everyday structure (Eade, 1992). Both film tourist and pilgrim experience a state of limniality that allows experimentation before they re-integrate into their former life with a changed social status.

This section showed the importance of embodiment for the spiritual experience and hinted at the role of shared physical activities in the bonding process between travellers. The next section will look at the significance of community.

6.2.1.4. The Phenomenon of Community

This section confirms the significant impact the community has on the experience of both film tourism and pilgrimage as previously illustrated in section 5.3.3.4. The Experience of Community.
6.2.1.4. The Phenomenon of Community

The wish and need to be part of a larger community is a further parallel between (organised) film tourists and pilgrims (Turner & Turner, 1978). Many participants hoped that others would share their understanding and love of the stories - and their search (see also section 6.3. The Role of the Tour Guide). The variety of shared physical activities and mealtimes provided opportunities to interact and bond; midday breaks and evenings allowed for some individual ‘down time’ throughout the tour. Comments and observations suggest a similar picture to that of Aden et al. (1995):

“The purpose of many visitors, generally speaking, appears to be one of simultaneously re-connecting with oneself and with others, emphasizing one’s uniqueness and place in the world. Visitors express delight in both the sense of community and the feeling of isolation they encounter at the field. Because the visitors share an appreciation of the film, they often feel as if they are performing with soulmates […] At the same time that individuals feel a bond with others, however, they also feel safely isolated within their own thoughts” (Aden et al., 1995).

In both cases (Field of Dreams and Lord of the Rings) the participants came as strangers who shared a common interest and search: “Overall, the Field of Dreams site serves to gather together an interpretive community within which individuals can feel unique yet part of a larger congregation” (Aden et al., 1995). As Squire (1994b) noted, the participants seemed to enjoy activities and themes that were not part of their everyday life while also communicating and presumably re-evaluating their personal attitudes and values during their participation in a temporary community. At times the presence and form of the group seemed to make it easier to remain immersed in the experience: “the group is such a close group, we kind of entertain each other and we continue the magic of the tour, even though we’re not on an actual activity tour” (I 10054 NW1). In this case, the community acts as a constant reminder of the purpose of the journey, keeping discussion on the significance and elements of the experience.

This section highlighted the importance of the community within the film tourism and pilgrimage experience. The following section concludes the comparisons of film tourism and pilgrimage.

6.2.1.5. Conclusion

Overall, the growth of film tourism in the current historical context gives insight into how people seek to understand themselves and what they deem important for their lives. Lord of the Rings seems to offer the promise that meaning can still be a part of modern life and offers possible identities through the interpretation of the films and their making. Lord of the Rings
tourists seem to be on a search for these identities, which they seek to confirm not discover with
the help of a tour guide. Such trust in a greater authority - in this case the film makers, tour
guides and the researcher - is another pilgrim characteristic. Yet, it is not easy to answer the
question of just how much of a pilgrim a film tourist can be considered to be. There are still
different views about “what the essence of tourism is” (Eade, 1992, p. 29), or even if
researchers should be looking for an ‘essence’ at all. Compounding this problem are the many
forms of religious or spiritual tourism (Rinschede, 1992). Also, both the categories of pilgrims
and tourists have contested meaning (Eade, 1992).

So, is the film tourist a pilgrim as Riley and Van Doren (1992) and Couldry (1998) suggest? It
could be said that some film tourists are pilgrims, very much like some other tourists have been
suggested to be pilgrims (Cohen, 2000). The previous sections compared the characteristics and
parallels between the behaviour of film tourists and pilgrims. Both are on a meaningful journey
to distant places. Both follow scripted guidelines (provided by holy texts like the Bible and
popular texts like the ‘making ofs’ of the Lord of the Rings films) while also creating their own
experience. Both experience benefits: comforting emotions; a perceived offering of strength,
empowerment and control; social support and a sense of belonging (see also Siegel &
Schrimshaw, 2002).

Overall, it seems that most film tourists were ‘followers’ very much like pilgrims: people were
willing to ‘follow in the footsteps’ of the film stars and crew when choosing which film
locations and eateries to visit. The followers sought places that had attained an aura in their
own eyes, authenticated by cast and crew comments. And there is another dimension: it has
been suggested people have a growing sense of disconnection from their local community to
which they wish to belong; consequently they listen to celebrities instead. However, the actual
pilgrimage experience might be limited due to prescribed parameters, most likely the
reconfirmation of current (Western) values. Thus the pilgrim renews faith in the current cultural
scripture: film tourists ultimately seek adventure within the boundary of what they are already
aware. Though these modern pilgrims do not follow traditional religious doctrines, they follow

76 Though it may not be clear if pilgrims would leave the centre of their everyday life behind and move towards the
periphery of their known world (Hutt, 1996; MacCannell 1976/1989), or if they indeed move towards their
6.2.1.5. Conclusion

the ‘doctrines’ of (selected representatives of) popular culture. However, the participants are not merely following such a doctrine but also actively create their journey by showing commitment, a willingness to endure hardship and build a community (fellowship) with other participants.

Clearly, the sharing of the experience, its challenges and rewards fostered a strong group bonding. Most participants were taken by the scenery itself but also formed bonds of fellowship that became visible during and after this day. Of course, one needs to keep in mind the extensive pre-tour exposure to the novel and films, which all emphasise the significance of fellowship. Thus one might assume that film tourists consciously or unconsciously emphasized such elements throughout their tour experience too. Either way, some participants struggled with the distinction of film and reality at times (e.g., TJ 12 NW1).

Most participants evaluated their experience as emotionally charged; deeply meaningful and transformative (see section 5.5. The Evaluation of the Film Tourism Experience). While such benefit has also been described in other forms of tourism (Hummon, 1988; Ryan, 1997). Noy (2004) showed how central the transformative theme was in the religious-pilgrimage discourses where the journey was “constructed as transcending the boundaries of that which is existentially familiar, while seeking the sublime, authentic ‘Other’” (Noy, 2004). And, though Turner (1973) argued that obligation is an essential trait of the pilgrim, the modern film tourist is volunteering to go on a journey. It must be noted that “pilgrimage in a context of secularisation or pluralism is a radically different phenomenon from religious travel in an age where atheism was virtually inconceivable” (Coleman & Elsner, 1995, p. 198).

It could be argued that the more dedicated film tourists could be seen as pilgrims when focusing on the types of activities and the range of perceived benefits while other film tourists might be more moderate (compare to Cohen, 1979). This is especially evident in the case of Lord of the Rings multiple day tours on which this study concentrated. Like pilgrims, Lord of the Rings fans are already ‘converted’ spiritually and undertake a pilgrimage with those they hope are spiritual kin. For both, “events are imbued with profound meaning and significance, following spiritual centre as all things related to Lord of the Rings are seen as “my life” (Q 078 preDH2; see also Q 099
6.2.1.5. Conclusion

which the individual is changed. As with tourism, religious discourse also designates sites in which the divine is said to be present in a more ‘condensed’ form” (Uriely et al., 2001), making it appear more accessible. The pilgrimage metaphor also explains the significance of both the notion of a location’s ‘aura’ as well as that of the importance of embodied experience: in the pilgrim’s quest, existential authenticity and sincerity are essential.

Tour participants sought an authentic experience while some even rated their ‘pilgrimage’ as more important and meaningful than their lives at home. In the case of Lord of the Rings tourism the influence of the actual films and especially the ‘making ofs’ was clearly visible through anticipatory images to which participants were exposed while still at home. Narratives revealed that many participants had consciously or unconsciously modelled their expectations on tales featured on the DVDs. They expected a meaningful time with great encounters and great meaning for one’s personal life, much as the cast and crew reported their own experiences of being part of the film. Furthermore, the DVDs had created and authenticated myths.

This study suggests that besides the film and its storyline, another myth has been created within the Lord of the Rings phenomenon: one that carries the story’s themes of friendship, adventure and meaning into the film-making process. This myth was often referred to in cast and crew interviews and thus given authority. Consequently, many film tourists who come to New Zealand do not only come in order to visit film locations but also to experience these intangible qualities associated both with the filming process and Middle-earth.

An alternative explanation may be that the Lord of the Rings phenomenon itself may have created not so much film pilgrims in general but Lord of the Rings film pilgrims. The Lord of the Rings played a special role for film tourists (see sections 5.2.1. The Meaning of Film and other Motivators) and many participants saw spiritual aspects in the story: “a way to experience other places, situations, time periods… a way to explore the human condition and my own experiences” (Q 034 preNW1). The stories “are close to reality to me. And a religion and history on their own” (Q 061 preNW2) and “they are my life” (Q 078 preNW2; see also Q 099 postNW1). Thus, the Lord of the Rings novel and films may promote one reason why participants entered the tours with a ‘predisposition’ to act as pilgrims. Further, the degree of
6.2.1.5. Conclusion

commercial promotion of the films around the world and the promotion of various ‘myths’ surrounding its production may have added to the ‘devotion’ of Lord of the Rings tourists.

I did, however, also find indications of a similar strong spiritual significance for Whale Rider tourism (see section 5.3.3. The Spirituality of Film Tourism). Somewhat surprisingly for the Whale Rider tour operator, tourists wanted to be on location to both simply see it but at times also to perform rituals marking the encounter. In particular, several indigenous groups stressed the significance of their connection the storyline, stating “we used to be like this” (I Hone Temanu, tour operator and guide, 30.03.2005). However, a tourism industry worker critically points out that: “Whale Rider... appeals, obviously, to a different kind of audience where people, perhaps, from an urban area like to experience... very simplistic - perhaps they see it as [an] idealistic way of life” (I Paul McLaughlin, i-Site Wellington staff, 28.10. 2004).

This section offered an insight into the parallels of film tourism and pilgrimage and consequently likened the experience of the film tourist to that of pilgrims. However, if such an analogy is worthwhile, what roles do the tour leader and guide play in this social and ‘spiritual’ process?
6.3. The Role of the Tour Guide

"I mean the rest of the country is absolutely beautiful and it was very interesting hearing little bits about it, but really it was all the anecdotes and the talk about the weapons and the fighting and the stars and the making and the director, and all those little things just made the trip fascinating, even before we actually got to the site where the film was made..." (I 10062 NW1).

This section discusses the various roles of the tour leader and guide in the light of relevant literature some of which was not included in the literature review chapters, as explained in section 1. Introduction.

A body of literature exists that argues that tour guides can considerably shape the tourists’ experiences. They not only give information (Holloway, 1981), but also encompass instrumental, social, interactionary, and communicative elements, with a leadership function that focuses on interaction (Cohen, 1985). It is “through their knowledge and interpretation of a destination’s attractions and culture, and their communication and service skills, [that] they have the ability to transform the tourists’ visit from a tour into an experience” (Ap & Wong, 2001). Guides in film - and especially Lord of the Rings - tourism face a variety of challenges in their job that are specific to this branch of tourism. First of all, participants have varied expectations based on the themes featured in the film(s): they might look especially forward to the scenery, or to more intangible elements like adventure and community. Another challenge is that the technology used for the film production of Lord of the Rings confuses tourists looking for the ‘real’ Middle-earth. Even if a location is found through use of GPS information, it often turns out to be an ‘empty landscape’, where interpretational help is vital. However, most location offer a variety of stories, ranging from cultural history; the film making itself; and the cast and crew adventures, all of which allow guides to develop and customize their own scripts according to the needs of the tourists.

Tour companies employ guides to customize and personalize their tour (Geva & Goldman, 1991) and at times to enhance it. And this is what most participants expected: “I think it makes a big difference you get to hear a lot more about places … understand things a bit better … you get a bit more of a personal viewpoint than just reading the guide books and so on” (I 10055 NW1). Participants had diverse but generally high expectations concerning the
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professional and personal skills of their guide(s) though these were sometimes not clearly formulated. First, film tourists often expected the guide to help them experience the unique culture of New Zealand. This was done when the guides introduced the tourists to local social customs and rituals and facilitated their understanding by likening them to, for example, British or American customs: “kia ora means welcome!” (O 31.12.2005). Thus a guide translates “the unfamiliar of a foreign culture into a cultural idiom familiar to the visitors” (Cohen, 1985, p. 15; see also Holloway, 1981). This process of ‘pointing out’ was welcomed not only at film locations but also at other sights: “the guide points out, what I cannot see, e.g. exotic trees” (I 10200 NW2). This element of tour guiding led Urry (1990) to state that tourists are taught to systematically look, or as he calls it, gaze, at sights and to conclude that the tourist experience would be largely a visual one (Urry, 1990)\(^\text{78}\) (however, this research found that there is also a significant physical component to the film tourism experience, see section 6.2.1.3. The Phenomenon of Embodiment). Guides screened out information by pointing out the important sights (see also Cohen, 1996); and often underlined the uniqueness of that sight, a guide trait common in the tourism industry. Often, while guiding, guides performed an active and sometimes dramatising role. This research observed guides transforming ordinary sights into valued sights (see also Fine and Speer, 1985), for example: by re-naming ‘Ape Rock’ in ‘King Kong Rock’. While doing so, dramatising and manipulative (Holloway, 1981) performances were used. Such a performance might be particularly important in film tourism as the main attraction only exists on screen and significant interpretational aids are needed (see section 2.1. The Phenomenon of Film Tourism).

The leader, guides and driver in turn employed various approaches to engage the tourists; the most successful ones managed to establish an emotional rapport with the group. I also observed that the guide influenced the group and its experience depending on the level of her or his perceived involvement and commitment shown as enthusiasm and even passion. At the same time I observed significant differences in the expectations towards the permanent and temporary tour guide(s). I came to understand that participants differed in how they perceived

\(^{77}\) As another consequence, the film tour operator may also delegate the responsibility for achieving participants’ satisfaction to the leader and possibly other guides (Geva & Goldman, 1991).

\(^{78}\) This was later criticised through the examination of adventure tourism that shows an interpretation and consumption of the tourist product beyond a simple visual element, where embodiment is central (Cloke & Perkins, 1998).
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Knowledge, enthusiasm and authenticity and that the same guiding or event would be judged differently by individual film tourists. If the tourism experience itself is a multi-dimensional phenomenon (Dann, Nash, & Pearce, 1988; Masberg & Silverman, 1996) that is complex and even ambiguous or contradictory, so is the guiding experience.

Most participants wanted a personal bond with their leader, guide(s) and even driver. They were disappointed when they assumed the guide(s) was only doing the job as a routine task as they wished for an enthusiastic and even immersed guide: “you’ve got to have guides who just love the theme, love the topic, love the film or whatever it is, as much as the people who are on the tour. I think that’s really important” (I 10062 NW1). This is important because many if not the majority of film tourists on this organised tour are on a spiritually meaningful journey, a pilgrimage, and thus want a leader who would shows commitment to this cause. Most participants wished to see enthusiasm and even passion for the subject in their leader and guide(s), someone who is personally touched by the subject and willing to not only ‘join the fellowship’ but also to lead it. This allowed many to feel a deeper connection to the theme of the journey (see, for example, IG 10004 NW2). In this, displaying enthusiasm and immersion was or became even more important for the participants than factual knowledge about the films; contrary to Hughes’ conclusion, even lack of book and film knowledge did not necessarily ruin the experience (compare to Hughes, 1991), as, for example, visible in the example of the South Island driver who was held in high regard by the participants despite a lack of Lord of the Rings-related knowledge.

Perceived authenticity formed an important part of the overall experience. Participants especially admired those guides who had been part of the filming, regardless of capacity and duration, and in such cases would accept information they knew to be wrong without complaint or even comment (O 31.12.2005). At the same time, so-called “false enthusiasm” (I 10059 NW1) was strongly condemned; the participants preferred to encounter fellow fans and not routine guides:

“I wasn’t expecting [it] but it makes such a difference when the guides are a fan of the films as well and if they’re not, there’s something that comes through that tells you. It’s not quite that they aren’t… you know, there’s something, as enthusiastic as they can be and as wonderful as they are in many ways, it’s just a really nice feeling when you share that [being a fan] with someone who’s showing you the locations” (I 10059 NW1).
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These statements demonstrate that the film tourism experience not only depended on the knowledge and skills of the guide, as often stated in the general tourism literature (Schmidt, 1979, p. 446), but also on more elusive qualities as being consistent with the depth of experience participants sought (this might be true for all guided tours though). The experience also depended on participants’ moods and perceptions. The experience turned out to be especially influenced by an interactive relationship between the participants and the guide(s). In an interesting paper about Israeli madrichis79, Reisinger and Steiner argued that in tourism that searches for meaning, tour guides should not so much offer simple interpretation but mentoring and mediating instead as this “could encourage authentic experiences with destinations and sights” (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006a, p. 495). In this case, too, such mentoring and mediating skills seemed important. Altogether, most tour leader and guide performances were welcomed.

However, there were a few criticisms when participants perceived that the guides did not connect emotionally to the group and its individual members. This led to disappointment even though the quality of the guide’s performance, both in delivered knowledge, details and timing might have been relatively high. This perceived deficiency of enthusiasm and passion seems to have been the source of most major disappointments because participants had been hoping for these and even further ‘spiritual’ qualities in the guide(s).

Furthermore, despite initial high expectations, sometimes good stories seemed more important than being on the exact spot (see previous sections). Many tour participants tend to focus on the tour guide’s narrative and consequently depend heavily on this element of the tour. Even though one might have anticipated disappointments considering the difference between the reality of New Zealand and the ideal of Middle-earth, the positive experiences prevailed.

While participants reported at most locations how important it was to stand on the spot, they also accepted locations that were similar to the actual filming location and at times even enjoyed such locations (as in the case of the Lothlórien forest). There was the interesting example of visiting the filming location of Gollum’s Pool that is at the Mangawhero Falls. Tour operators had begun taking film tourists to another, much more accessible, location as the tour

79 Madrichs are “informal counsellor-guides who accompany adolescent study tours from other countries to Israel”
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participants learned at their hotel. Due to requests we visited that pretend location, which includes an easy walk to a waterfall. Once we reached the site, some tour participants thought they recognised the film setting and had difficulty believing me that this was not the exact spot: “We leave at 8.30 and stop pretty soon for a walk to a beautiful waterfall. Most tour guides say this is Gollum’s pool, but according to [the tour leader] it is not. But it does look great” (TJ 16 NW2). In this case, some participants approached me individually to confirm that this in fact was not the filming location (O 08.01.2006). However, most participants did not seem to be disappointed to go to this pool, with all walking down to the waterfall and many taking pictures –of the ‘fake’ location that they knew was utilised by many tour operators as the ‘right’ location.

This experience shows how interactive the location experience is. MacCannell (1976) showed how a sight can be transformed into a tourist attraction through five stages of ‘sight sacralization’ that include naming, framing and elevation, enshrinement, mechanical reproduction, and social reproduction. As Fine and Speer showed, a guide who follows these stages does not only transform a simple sight into an attraction but also has “the potential to accomplish a ritual transformation of liminoid tourists into a state of communitas with the hostess and tour sight” (Fine & Speer, 1985): tourist and guide co-create the sight and experience.

(Reisinger & Steiner, 2006a, p. 493).
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Furthermore, it seemed that for many participants it was the enthusiasm and passion that the tour leader displayed that in turn enhanced their own experience (see section 5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide). Overall, participants seemed to perceive that the tour leader led, participated, suffered and took risks at their side, which they valued enormously. It “felt like we were sort of like a little fellowship, you know, making our own journeys around Middle-earth” (IG 10008 NW2 P1) and the tour leader was part of that journey. On another occasion the tour leader was described as sharing “in spirit basically” (IG 10004 NW2 P4). This was important as most participants\(^8\) sought a pilgrim-like spiritual experience and were looking for a guide open to this aspect. Other comments suggested that the tour leader was seen as delivering authenticity in knowledge and sincerity in enthusiasm (see section 5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide). However, respond individually to the leader/guide delivery; therefore a focus on what the tour leader/guide provides is incomplete. Besides the guide, the scenery and physical presence of the participants, further elements like community and re-enactment influenced the experience. Consequently, many of the most commonly re-called memories were of locations where the participants had been able to explore the setting and re-enact scenes together:

“Sitting on the ledge where Frodo and Sam sat and, like, seeing... looking out where they would have saw the Oliphaunts, and all that kind of stuff, and just being able to walk there... actually being able to experience what they must have, like being on location not just kind of like being out of the bus and taking a picture and getting back on. Like, I did not like that. I wanted, like, more of an experience, like a physical where you can feel and hear and touch things, it’s much different than snapping a photo. You can, you know, you just get that if you just buy the guide book” (I 10076 NW1).

The participants ultimately co-create their experience in interaction with the leader/guide depending on their own knowledge, needs and emotions.

The role of the tour guide in enhancing the experience of Middle-earth fans is highlighted, with participants valuing the tour leader's enthusiasm and involvement in the journey. The tour leader's presence and the physical experience of re-enacting scenes are seen as crucial for the pilgrim-like spiritual experience sought by the participants.

\(^8\) It is perhaps useful to think of a continuum that ranges from tourists with some if any pilgrim-like characteristics to those film tourists that are comparable to pilgrims in a range of characteristics.
6.3. The Role of the Tour Guide

This research sought to gain insights into the role of the tour guide(s) in visitors’ experiences of film-location tours. The guide’s influence showed to be significant and yet specific to each tour (and tour segment). Not only did this influence depend on the individual guide and tour group but particularly on the interaction between both. And while the role of guiding involved a number of subsidiary and sometimes conflicting sub-roles, it was personal skills that made the difference. Guides who developed a more ‘personal’ relationship with the group and utilised interaction components (Cohen, 1985) received the best evaluation. The participants enjoyed guides who made them excited and involved. This research further supports the suggestion that film guides are also spiritual leaders: they deal with pilgrims who, for example, sought a mythical Middle-earth in the geographical New Zealand or a spiritual encounter with *Whale Rider* descendants. Thus the guide(s) doubled as mentor, ensuring safety and yet was part of the travelling community, or, as it was often called, the fellowship. That is why trust in the sincerity of the leader and guide became such an important aspect: as in the Middle Ages a modern pilgrimage represents a considerable financial and personal investment, a journey whose motivations are multi-layered and highly meaningful; thus requiring a semi-sacral atmosphere.

At the same time, most participants had strong pre-tour images that stemmed from the films but also the ‘making ofs’81. These documentaries promoted a homogenous view of the filming process, also portrayed as highly meaningful and life-changing for everyone involved. The narratives are usually limited to the re-telling of the technical and especially harmonious and spiritual sides of the film making. It is these images the participants sought to confirm. As a consequence guides had to perform an active (re-)construction of anticipated experience(s). However, each guide could and did customize each tour according to the perceived needs of the group, thus making each tour similar and at the same time unique. Thus the participants had a significance influence on the tour themselves.

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81 One can only wonder how much the increased use of DVDs and their extras will further change the experience we have of films, their ‘making ofs’ and, of course, the locations.
6.4. Conclusion of Chapter Discussions of Findings with Framework

Even though *Lord of the Rings* tourists reported that they primarily came to see New Zealand’s scenery, they actually hoped for much more: they sought the myth(s) that were built around the making of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. This is supported by the fact that they chose a *Lord of the Rings* tour and not a tour of the scenic highlights of New Zealand. Most participants were aware of the contradictions between reality and illusion but still wished to establish a kind of certainty by visiting the geographical and also mythical place. One finds his reality by losing reality: meaning the participants felt they found a meaningful reality in the fiction of *Lord of the Rings*. Most participants seemed eager to be immersed in myths. Despite experiencing urban environments, environmental pollution, unfriendly locals and ever-present consumerism, most if not all participants continued to interpret the industrialised New Zealand as a green and friendly place without any significant problems: “I thought, ‘Yes, this is, indeed, Middle-earth’” (I 10058 NW1). It is telling that the participants did not turn to the original roots of Middle-earth (for example, the U.K.) but to exotic New Zealand. As one participant comments: “I would almost feel it pointless to go round England looking for locations related to Tolkien, because, not being funny, but, OK, Tolkien may well have lived there but I don’t care where he lived because he wrote the books and the books have been brought to life in New Zealand, so that’s what’s important” (I 10057 NW1).

Being here was a dream come true for many (e.g. TJ 01 NW3). The benefit of the film tour included a range of emotions; and the gaining of experience, skills and knowledge (Stebbins, 2001), including ‘feeling alive’ and an embodied spiritual experience.

This research has unearthed the possibility that we are witnessing a growth in film tourism that can be likened to a modern pilgrimage in ways perhaps even more literal than how this metaphor has been used to date by tourism researchers. For example, if a pilgrimage is defined as a long journey or search of great moral significance, certain forms of film tourism can easily be seen as pilgrimages by virtue of the explicitly moral themes and emotions upon which those films (and books) are based. It has been argued that the primary motivation of each person is to seek meaning: “man is always reaching out for meaning, always setting out on his search for meaning” (Frankl, 1978, p. 31). Thus one might assume that people seek meaning through their tourist activities too. In a time when social identities are increasingly constructed through the consumptions of goods and services including tourism (Urry, 1995; Crouch, 1999), film
6.4. Conclusion of Chapter Discussions of Findings with Framework

tourism might indicate how people do - or want to - see themselves. And though tourists undertake a holiday in relation to their biography, lifespan and aspirations (Cohen, 1979), their journey comes very close to those that pilgrims undertake. This is revealed through the words and feelings film tourists use when being interviewed about their experiences. The findings suggest that many people have become uncomfortable in their lives and look for meaningfulness in popular culture (Vukonic, 1992). In other words, an increasing number of people are looking for new and old guidelines to orientate themselves, a function that was served by religion for many years (V. Reynolds & Tanner, 1995). It may seem easier to follow someone’s dream rather than creating one’s own and, in a sense, film tourists are made when tourists commit themselves to someone else’s vision(s).

In this, film tourists are followers like pilgrims: both act within the interpretative discourse of a greater authority, respectively their specific popular culture and religion. They both move towards their sacral sites that coincidentally are usually found far away from home. The pilgrimage element may also explain why participants seek a controlled experience: they mean to chase the myth, not deconstruct it. However, the will to believe gives film tourists an active role in the myth maintenance. At its most extreme, reality for tourists, and consequently for locals, is framed after myths that were created or portrayed by film. In this lies the danger of manipulation through the media, as Baudrillard (1983), MacCannell (1976) and Schofield (1996) cautioned. Frost showed how both the destination Lone Pine in California and the Australian myth of Ned Kelly myth were reshaped over time to match their mediated images (Frost, 2004, 2006). Similarly, Beeton observed a change of the image(s) of rural Australia in and through promotion (Beeton, 2004). Kong and Tay (1998) saw similar changes in the image of a country in a children’s book:

“What then are the possible implications for children who look forward to the future while they are selectively reminded of the mythologised past? The likelihood is the development of a collective memory that valorises certain values associated (rightly or wrongly) with the past, such as social integration, community support and close family ties” (Kong & Tay, 1998).

Reality might be modelled on fiction (Beeton, 2005; Schofield, 1996). For example, the Upper Rangitata Valley is better known for its former use as a film location (Edoras/Mount Sunday) than its literary use in the *Erewhon* novels (though in another 100 years both myths might be forgotten or replaced by yet another myth). It is not sure yet whether film tourism creates only a
temporal phenomenon for specific films or films can forever influence the image of a place. Either way, the forms of film tourism that seek to merge and reconnect to emotions, enchantment/fantasies, and emphasise the embodiment seem to operate beyond escapism or reactionism. Despite the supposedly irrational and spiritual elements, most tourists seem interested in a balance of fantasy and reality and demand exposure to both aspects: a controlled immersion into fantasy counterbalanced by technical talk about the film making, etc. The modern pilgrim is both secular and spiritual; the modern tourist both rational and irrational.
7. Reflections on Research

7. REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH

This section reviews some of the challenges that arose in this study and will, in particular, focus on the question of my presence in and interaction with the research setting. I have already discussed the challenges of the chosen qualitative research methods in chapter 4, Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods. In doing so, I paid special attention to the reliability and validity of this research and how I sought to increase these by opting for a multi-method approach and using triangulation. Now I will reflect on whether the chosen approaches worked, and in what ways I, especially as tour leader and guide, might have influenced or modified my data collection, analysis and interpretation and, finally, what could have been done differently to improve the validity.

A familiar concern in qualitative research regards the degree of objectivity and reflexivity involved in particular research strategies (Berger & Luckmann, 1985; Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Moore, 2000). In this case, my own involvement in the qualitative research setting was considerable which raises the question of the effect of my role in this study on the data and interpretation. In contrast to quantitative studies, my own behaviour and reactions inevitably became enmeshed in the data gathering and analysis phases. As noted previously, I had nevertheless decided that quantitative methods were unsuitable for this research (see section 4. Methodology: A Mix of Qualitative Methods) and instead chose a qualitative approach that included continuous self-reflection. This, in turn, helped me understand and interpret the findings. However, it meant that I might have caused changes in the way people were thinking while interviewing them about film tourism (Hall & Hall, 1996). As the literature emphasises, ambiguities, trust and involvement are important issues in fieldwork (Emerson, 1988) and as a researcher I had to keep a certain “scientific detachment” (Babbie, 2004, p. 279). No matter how informal the occasion, I would always identify myself as a researcher and depend only on voluntary participation; while ensuring no harm would be caused and anonymity and confidentiality assurances were maintained (Babbie, 2004).

I travelled extensively for this research and communicated with more than 100 people using various qualitative methods. Additionally, I read publications and participated in events that were related to film tourism such as film premieres, exhibitions and other special events.
7. Reflections on Research

However, I found myself far more involved than I had expected when my role was upgraded from tour escort to tour leader and guide on the first day of the first tour when both the guide and the *Lord of the Rings* expert driver had become unavailable (see section 5.4.3. The Researcher as a Film Tourism Leader and Guide). First of all I was a researcher and explained my research intentions to tour members clearly by describing the purpose and scope of the study, and its various methods such as observation and interviews. However, being the tour leader and main guide meant that I could hardly ever sit back and observe – instead I was kept busy by the multiple demands of my role(s). As an escort I was responsible for organizing the hotel check-ins, setting and supervising departure times, the coordination travel routes and sights with the driver and arrangements for additional activities, etc. As the tour leader and main guide I had to prepare and deliver in-depth commentaries about the physical and social features of New Zealand and the movies and books of J.R.R. Tolkien. There were a few occasions when the coach driver or local tour guides would allow me to take a less central role; I was usually very involved.

This involvement put a further burden on me when I experienced difficulties during the analysis of my observations. I realised I had very much been part of the group and at times might have been reluctant to make harsh judgments. In other words, I had come to know the participants and developed social bonds with them and consequently might have subconsciously edited observations and field notes. The cohesion of each group, especially the second group during NW2, was strong. As the data revealed, most participants sought a personal relationship with the tour leader and guides, and because of that I was claimed as part of the group early in the tours. The tour community and emotional bonds proved to be important to the participants and my actions, in both active and passive participation, would often affect the group. Even within the role of tour guide there was a certain ambiguity: it was necessary to switch the various roles of leader, caretaker, entertainer and friend as appropriate while negotiating group and individual needs (Poynter, 1993). In the examined tours, the personal influence of the driver and guide seemed at times considerable for the film tourism experience, both while travelling and during location visits. Yet for a long time, and especially throughout the first tour NW1, I found it difficult to understand the influence of the tour guide. This may be partly due to the fact that I was given the role as tour guide unexpectedly and had to grow into the role. Also, a lot of the work of a tour guide is quite difficult to quantify: a guide has to work but,
7. Reflections on Research

paradoxically, make it look like something other than ‘work’. Thus, besides professional skills, personal attributes and attitudes are also important. As the tour leader I advanced beyond simple tour guiding and emphasised the communicative and interactive component of my role (Cohen, 1985). I was also aware that the promotion of interaction within the group has been described as crucial for the development of multiple day tours (Quiroga, 1990); it helps the participants who came for very different reasons (Fay, 1992) to form a temporary community. This also meant that the participants at times took the initiative to organise themselves and facilitate their own interactions with fellow travellers.

Over time I learnt more about the role(s) of tour guides, which became more understandable through reported disappointments that were usually related to perceived lack of enthusiasm in other guides. It is not clear how responsible I am for this as I was perceived to have displayed these qualities throughout the tour and thus may have influenced the expectations of the participants.

There is a positive side to my immersion in the world of guiding, a side that is not unknown in previous studies. Bruner, for example, consciously took on a role as tour guide to study tourism from the inside (Bruner, 1995, 2005). Such immersion can lead to the useful consequence of gaining “insider understanding” (Lofland and Lofland, 1995, p. 61). In addition, the two tours (NW1 and NW2) in this study were a year apart and that timing allowed a learning process to take place and permitted me to reflect on the role of a guide in relation to different groups of tourists. The theories that I had developed over time in a Grounded Theory approach could be reflected upon through post-tour evaluations. Though non-responsiveness proved a challenge the overwhelming majority of those participants who replied confirmed my findings and theories gained through participant observation.

I immersed myself in the complexity and ambiguity of the film tourism experience and its subjective meaning, which, it could be argued, added to rather than subtracted from the validity of the research. Throughout my research I developed an increasingly comprehensive understanding of the film tourism phenomenon. I interviewed a variety of people to learn about their different points of view. While doing so, I remained curious and inquisitive and paid attention to the context. Sometimes interviewees did not seem to have ready answers and it took them a while to form a sentence (Gillham, 2000). I spoke to a variety of people from different
7. Reflections on Research

backgrounds to inquire how they understood film tourism; what their involvement was; and how they saw the future of the film tourism industry. In interviews I was an active listener and strived to open myself to the interviewee’s world. Film tourism is not yet a well-defined industry and there was a wide variety of tour operators within which there was a considerable turn-over rate. Interviewees had quite different experiences depending on their involvement and the context of that involvement. I came to know individuals and their history, development and setting. Clearly, the perceptions of film tourism varied according to the relative economic importance and level of tourism development in the various regions I visited. At times, I realised how small New Zealand can appear and that the role of individuals could be considerable. There were certain times when the objective assessment and study of film sites became impossible, for example during the premiere of *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* in December 2003. During that event, where I was significantly involved as a performer, and in similar situations, I made the decision not to collect research data. The main difference between acting as a performer and acting as a guide was the duration of the activity: during the premiere I had little time to overcome or ameliorate my influence and lacked the ability to observe as I was preoccupied. The situation on the longer tours, however, was different as I could overcome these limitations as I had more time. In other cases, field visits and interviews sometimes became quite intense, when interviewees would seek my advice or help in regards to their professional or personal lives.

Overall, the research process was characterised by the evolution of the research in terms of both method and direction and my understanding grew as the data collection and analysis continued. The chosen research methods allowed me to apply a variety of research instruments and build significant research skills. The Grounded Theory approach worked well and, importantly, there was time for the process and for reflection on the process. I could compare my research experiences on two tours and further examine how much I influenced the data on the role of the tour guide. I was able to iterate between the different emerging understandings and experiences of participants, for example: noting how different professionals described the same phenomenon (Lewins, 1992).

There is more to the phenomenon of film tourism than numbers or economic or ecological impacts and it is revealed in the depth of longing so many film tourists display. My
7. Reflections on Research

understanding of film tourism – over and above ‘formal’ data - was produced from embodied experience with its physical, emotional and intellectual elements. The reflections upon my own feelings (e.g., what does it feel like to be at a location, to deal with an actor, to interact with tourists, etc.) helped me to understand the diverse motivations and experiences film tourism can incorporate. Similarly, Bruner (1995) described how blurred boundaries between researcher, tour guide, tourist, and local resident can be useful in overcoming binary thinking and thus producing a deep understanding. It can allow us to see “multiple, competing meanings in individual sites, contrasting meanings in different sites in the same country, and changes in the meaning of sites over time” (Klein, 2005). Eventually I realised that my knowledge of the film industry, the films themselves and some of the key players greatly improved my understanding of the film tourism industry. The analysis of my findings led me back to a hypothesis that I had earlier abandoned, having believed in the rationality of the modern human; I found proof that, for many, film tourism was a modern form of pilgrimage. After having talked to a variety of people I realised that most people, if not all, have been tourists (as Urry suggested in 1990) or even film tourists at one point: be it a visit to the Eiffel Tower in Paris or gazing upon Aoraki/Mt. Cook, most of us have seen such sights on film before experiencing them physically.

Reflection on the research process in the field also suggested some improvements that could be adopted in future studies. Field research is always challenging (Singleton & Straits, 1999) and involved a great deal of travelling. At a practical level, every effort that is made to contact and identify relevant individuals before entering the field is extremely worthwhile. Also, since at times it simply became tiring to listen to others and conduct research more or less continuously it would have been wiser to schedule half-days off while covering substantial distances. At the same time, learning from the field was also very rewarding (Whyte, 1984) – and at times distracting! One of the most important accomplishments is to remain focused as sidetracking can occur relatively easily: people often make suggestions about the research direction which, while sometimes useful, need to be carefully thought through in relation to the overall research objectives before time and energy is expended (e.g., there was one suggestion that domestic tourists seem to be neglected in film tourism promotions compared to international tourists. This may well be true but exploring the issue in any detail would have distracted me from the focus on the organised nationwide tour participants that were at the centre of the study).
7. Reflections on Research

Film tourism has become an active and rapidly expanding area of study. While this thesis has reviewed some of this work, it has also highlighted aspects that need further examination. The major limitation in this study was the narrow range of film tourists sampled. Only film tourists on particular *Lord of the Rings* tours as opposed to all film tourists, both on guided and unguided tours, were sampled. Thus future research has to confirm as to how widely applicable the notions of ‘pilgrim’, ‘pilgrimage’, ‘spiritual motives’, etc. are to (film) tourists. Also, given some of the interviewee’s responses, the question arises as to what extent film tourism may express a longing for experiences perhaps unable to be directly experienced within modern social and economic settings. In this sense, the tourism and leisure industry could be viewed as perpetuating the means to create desire for its consumption, as well as the ability to supply satisfaction. Conversely, is it possible that film tourism - given its unique characteristics and the industry that created it (kind and reach of media, etc.) - can in effect channel desires that might otherwise be used to radically change a lifestyle or even inspire wider community changes? Like other tourism, the film tourism experience might be simply reactive or an active search, a life-changing experience or a mere confirmation of the status quo of both society and their own position in society. Thus film tourism remains in the contradiction of walking away from and walking towards social situations and places. And, if the continuing rise in numbers of (film) tourists is any indication, the number of those willing to walk (in this sense) increases. I myself have walked in the footsteps of the fellowship(s) and hopefully also made some footsteps of my own. In doing so I encountered archetypal themes of life, meaningfulness and human desire that continue to play a central part in many people’s lives.
8. **FINAL THESIS SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

“In fact tourist talk is perhaps one of the most interesting and fundamental frames of discourse through which to analyse contemporary social mores and moral concerns” (McCabe, 2005, p. 102).

The phenomenon of film tourism is a relatively new field of research and this study allows new insights due to its methodological approach of a diversity of primarily qualitative methods. This study sought to conceptualise the nature of experiences gained by *Lord of the Rings* tourists on guided tours in New Zealand; to examine the motivations and expectations of these tourists; and to gain insights into the role of the tour guide(s) in visitors’ experiences of film-location tours through the study of a specific sample of the multiple-day guided *Lord of the Rings* tourist in New Zealand.

The findings suggest that film tourists want to experience more than just locations and scenery. In particular, the role of emotions, the influence of pre-tour images and the variety of contemporary film tourism needs to be acknowledged to improve understanding of this phenomenon. Furthermore, a conceptual framework has been suggested to place film tourism in its broader sociological context. This study utilised a Grounded Theory approach and theorises that film and, in particular, film tourism represents a way in which people pursue meaning in life, and even guidance, in an increasingly secularised world. The search leads film tourists to an active and involved journey towards values they share and a sense of community they crave. In the following section I will summarise the findings and apply them to the original three objectives.

**Main Study Findings**

The first objective was to conceptualise the nature of experiences gained by film tourists in New Zealand. The study of a specific sample of multiple-day guided *Lord of the Rings* tourists suggest that expectations were based on the films and novel and, more subtly, also on their publicity. The ever-present element of a ‘journey’ in all its physical and metaphorical aspects also pervaded the experiences reported and observed. Furthermore, the emotional elements of the experience need to be acknowledged as they are crucial for the overall experience. While this experience is an individual one it is also set in a ‘meta-script’, which involves, for example, the morals connected to the novel and films and, in another register, the communication of the
process of its filming. Overall, the film tourism experience that emerges is a spiritual experience with a pilgrim-like character as both film tourists and pilgrims share the journey element towards a site and the meaningfulness of authentic and sincere relationships to the meta-text (in this case, the novel and the film) and also to the tour community and its leader and guides. Furthermore, the ‘fellowship’ element proved crucial: the participants anticipated and consequently built a fellowship that added significantly to their experience. The shared physical experience added further to the journey by strengthening the bonds of the fellowship and by authenticating the journey as a ‘worthy journey’.

The second objective was to examine the motivations and expectations of film tourists in New Zealand. The study of the multiple-day guided *Lord of the Rings* tourists suggests that these tourists came with the intention of having a meaningful journey. As outlined above, they anticipated an authentic and sincere experience. Many were also quite concerned about their fellow travellers as some feared being sidelined by Tolkien and film ‘experts’ only to find that their companions were similar to themselves. While the tourists wanted to experience the New Zealand landscape(s) they also sought the more mythical ‘Middle-earth’. Pre-tour images proved crucial for the formation of their expectations and included not only a New Zealand image of a ‘green and clean’ country but also the *Lord of the Rings* films, the novel on which the films was based and the ‘making ofs’. Many film tourists had seen these behind the scenes-documentaries either on television or on the DVDs and thus had been told about the technical and emotional process of the film making. They also heard many stories about the ‘authenticity’ of the props and storylines and the extensive use of computer special effects.

While the stories might have taught the film tourists to expect and seek a ‘fellowship’, the behind the scene-stories also prepared them for their encounter with the actual location. And while many of them hoped to experience the location physically, it was found that standing on the exact spot was at times less important than the general experience of journeying and sincerity. Overall, the study found that while the motivations and expectations were at times not formulated clearly, they referred to pre-tour images the film tourists had been exposed to before their journey.
8. Final Thesis Summary and Recommendations

The third objective sought to gain insights into the role of the tour guide(s) in visitors’ experiences of film-location tours. The study established that film tourism and the discrepancies between cinematic portrayal and geographic locations proved a considerable challenge, which the individual tour companies and guides sought to overcome in different ways. Most film tour guides utilised laminated screen shots that are presented at the location to allow a recall of the film scene and thus a comparison of screen portrait and reality. Furthermore, they retold stories of the film making that they had either experienced first hand or had been told; some tour guides also used film music or even film clips to further enhance the experience. Most tour guides used individualised scripts, and thus could colour the location tour with their own individuality. The Lord of the Rings tourists expected enthusiasm, passion and sincerity from their guides and showed disappointment if they perceived a guide to be ‘routine’. It was important for them to experience a committed guide that was part of their interpretative community. Thus the tour guide(s) could influence the film tourism experience considerably as the guides’ behaviour speaks directly to a central motive for taking the tour; at the same time it became clear that the ultimate experience was co-constructed between participants and tour leader/guides in an active negotiation of the encounter.

This study examined the experience of multiple-day guided Lord of the Rings tourist in New Zealand and the boundaries, and limitations, of such research must be acknowledged. The sample was primarily focused on multi-day tours and the dedicated nature of tourists on such a specialist nationwide tour should be noted. However, the additional insights into Whale Rider and The Last Samurai tourism suggest that Lord of the Rings tourism may not be that different after all. This study indicates that various film tourists in New Zealand seem to seek authenticity and spiritual elements though only more research will allow further generalisations or comparisons.

The study proposes a conceptual framework in which film tourism is a relatively select but increasingly significant means by which members of modern societies attempt to come to terms with life and represents an embodied search for meaning as expressed and guided by film in the act of engaging in film tourism. Such journeys have fascinated people for a long time: stories like Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales and Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings show laborious journeys and the worthiness of the overall experience, especially in regards to the relationships that develop
8. Final Thesis Summary and Recommendations

between the travellers. In these aspects, following the footsteps of the (novel and film) fellowship becomes a significant experience for the individual. Overall, the journey elements draw a complex picture of the sort of person attracted to a *Lord of the Rings* tour and the desire for meaning. Yet, are these questions about tourist phenomena relevant to tourism in general, or only to special-interest tourism or only to certain forms of film tourism?

*Lord of the Rings* film tourism offers people a commodified experience of ‘fellowship’ both by focusing on the film and novel, which emphasise this theme, and by incorporating a ‘fellowship’ in terms of the tour group. This might be why the participants expressed satisfaction when they experienced a ‘fellowship’ with their fellow tour members; it might also explain why they wanted the tour guide to be a participant in the experience rather than just a professional guide. This raises an interesting question about the notions of authenticity and sincerity. Film tourists on an organised tour follow the footsteps of actors whose characters come from a fictional book; and hope to tour with an authentic tour group and guide(s) to the exact spots. However, like pilgrims, film tourists follow a prescribed ‘journey’ that, given the commercial impetus associated with film making, could potentially lead to the commodification by the (film) tourism industry of that ‘journey’. It was MacCannell (1976) who proposed that any ‘staged authenticity’ would leave the tourist unsatisfied and wanting; consequently, film tourists might continue their search and chase the next experience. However, Wang (1999) has suggested that tourists gain existential authenticity; an existential state of being that is perceived as ‘authentic’ and independent of the issue of whether toured objects are real. Following this concept, a highly committed tourist can gain “self” authenticity – at least temporarily.

But why film tourism in the first place? Moving pictures have a significant visual impact and have become an integral part of modern culture. It could be said that films ultimately show how we (or more specifically, how those with discursive power) see ourselves and our past, present and future; films negotiate the ways in which we see the world and what alternatives we can imagine. While doing so, films can deal with the real desires and dreams of the audience (for example, the longing for a caring and accepting world) but can also be used for manipulation and restructuring of knowledge (for example, when ‘based on a true story’ films introduce fictional elements into the story). Film can offer changes to the way one sees the world and at the same time tend to have the effect of keeping one occupied with interesting questions and
8. Final Thesis Summary and Recommendations

also comforting one with what one has already got. Either way, the film tourists identify strongly with films that seem to incorporate values not perceived to be present at home.

It has to be remembered that the film tourists observed in this study went on a challenging journey of both self-(re)assurance and self-discovery, where the element of ‘feeling alive’ was important. By travelling to film locations, film tourists go beyond the desire to immerse themselves in the fictional world of a film so as to accommodate their dreams and values, but actively seek to gain some experience of these in real world settings and places. In doing so, they can live an authentic experience (Bruner, 2005; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999). While the film tourists sought to establish meaning in modern life by using film as guidance, they also proved to be knowledgeable (about the film themes and making) and engaged (again, with both the story and the community).

**Future Possibilities and Recommendations for the Film Tourism Industry**

Before finally concluding, I shall say a few words about the operational aspects of film tourism. One of the main problems facing planners when dealing with the prospect of film tourism is that it is difficult to know how popular a film will be and for how long it will act as an incentive for people to become tourists to destinations. While this question is still being investigated, it is clear that the quality of tours and guides will make a difference for future success. Film tourists expect various professional and personal skills from their tour guides, and above all enthusiasm and sincerity.

Currently film tourism is a mainly privately operated business that has not yet developed specific management guidelines or regulations. More training programmes could be developed in this field (see also Harris Management Solutions Ltd., 1995) incorporating particular emphasis on cooperative interaction with tourists to produce the desired experiences in a sincere manner. Staff training with the possibility to enhance in-house training (S. Collins, Sweeney, & Geen, 1994) and a monitoring system like the Qualmark endorsement, an independent classification and quality grading system for rating services, might be applied to ensure high standards of the tour guiding in film tourism. A respective high guiding performance would “not only affect the company image, customer loyalty and word of mouth
communication but it can also be the factor that differentiates the tour in question from competitors’ tours” (Bowen, 1999). Even minor changes might improve a company’s profile considerably. For example, some companies misspell location names in their promotional material. Furthermore, those whose knowledge is based solely on information given on the film DVDs might experience a drop in bookings. However, tour operators have a vast range of resources, ranging from the readily available novel to behind-the-scene books and the DVD documentaries to oral history of the locals who were involved in the filming. At the same time, both Lord of the Rings-related and local myths could be incorporated as most film tourists, like pilgrims, seek myths that have some anchor in the real world. During a film location tour, the tour guide(s) should seek to engage the tourists to allow for a sincere encounter. Furthermore, the tour could incorporate a storyline referring to the main story elements like the journey element itself (Lord of the Rings), the cultural elements (Whale Rider) or the wonderful aspects of a children’s adventure (The Chronicles of Narnia). Either way, the tour guide(s) should offer various approaches and include more realistic and more fantastical elements, as well as visual and auditive cues in the tour to acknowledge the presence of different types and personalities of film tourists. The opportunity to individualise scripts should be given to facilitate a sincere encounter between guide(s) and tourist(s). Lastly, tour companies should apply and extend methods of evaluations, for example with qualitative interviews with individuals and focus groups and consult a variety of experts to allow their operation to establish and grow in the competitive market of film tourism.

Possible Future Research
The film tourism phenomenon has attracted academic interest over recent years though primary research is still limited. In most studies, examining film tourism has focused on defining the film tourism product; exploring connections between destination image and decision-making and investigating impacts of film tourism on host communities. In contrast, this study focused on the motivations, expectations and experiences of film tourists and the influence of the tour guide on this experience in an ethnographic manner. While this primary research produced a wealth of data for future analysis, it also revealed opportunities for future research. These include the need for further research into the similarities and differences in terms of the kinds of experiences generated by different types of film tourism and specific films and audiences.
8. Final Thesis Summary and Recommendations

Characteristics like personality types, origin, ethnicity and above all gender are sure to influence the film tourism experience. Also, the influence of DVD and other informational ‘extras’ on the knowledge and expectations of film tourists requires some investigation, especially in relation to serious ‘film buff’ tourists. Indeed, Internet-based clips and documentaries might create yet another extension to this form of tourism. Also, the role of participants’ photography for the experience and memory of the location visit(s) could provide further insights into what makes the experience. It would also be very interesting to compare the experiences produced by organised and unorganised film tourism to further investigate the influence of the guide on the whole experience. The inclusion of more films could determine if and how pilgrimage motives are expressed in other forms of film tourism. And, of course, the question remains how the changed perception of a region by popular culture ultimately alters the local heritage; the replacement of historical realities by fictional stories could be an issue: What and whose stories will shape our perception of ourselves and the world? In film tourism the shaping of these perceptions is taken beyond the straightforward mediation processes characteristic of modern media and is more thoroughly incorporated into people’s lives. Film tourism thus adds an additional layer of complexity to the notion of ‘mediated’ experience of life which produces effects in the lives of individuals that, as yet, are only just beginning to be understood. The contribution of this research to that understanding can be summed up in the following way: Through a seemingly fantastical, simulated and fictively based activity some film tourists, at least, seem to desire the authentic and actual incarnation of deeply held values within their lives. In essence, film tourists follow footsteps while also creating their own fellowships and stories.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Contact Letter Tour Operator/Involved People
Appendix B: Information and Consent Form for Interviews of Tour Operator/Involved People
Appendix C: Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Operator/Involved People
Appendix D: Information and Consent Form for Interviews of Tour Participants
Appendix E: Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Participants
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Appendix A Contact Letter Tour Operator/Involved People

Dear [insert name]

My name is Anne Buchmann and I am a Ph.D. student at Lincoln University where I am researching ‘film’ tourism. I understand ‘film’ as both movies and television feature films and ‘film tourists’ as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been associated with filming. The aim of my project is to understand the motivations, expectations and experiences of film tourists in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, I am very interested in your views as someone who is involved in film tourism and I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

I would like to speak about the following questions in an interview of 5 to 15-minutes:

1. In your own words, please describe your involvement with film tourism?
2. Describe the film tourists who you come in contact with?
3. What do you think those tourists seek from film tourism?
4. Do you think they are different from other tourists?
5. How do you think film tourism will evolve?
6. Could you recommend anyone else I should talk to in this matter?

All findings will be handled confidentially and neither the interviewee nor the organisation will be identifiable if that is the wish of [insert name of organisation].

This project is being carried out by me, Anne Buchmann, and I can be contacted at [insert phone number] or by mail [insert email]. I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about your participation in the project. Also, you can contact my supervisor Dr. David Fisher at [insert phone number] or by mail at [insert email]. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.

I would very much appreciate your cooperation. As I would like to conduct the interviews personally I suggest an appointment [insert dates]. If these times are not suitable, another date or communication per mail can be arranged.

Yours sincerely

Anne Buchmann
Ph.D. student
Appendix B Information and Consent Form for Interviews of Tour Operator/Involved People

Lincoln University

Environment, Society and Design Division

INFORMATION

Dear interviewee,

I am a Ph.D. student at Lincoln University and as part of my study I am researching film tourism. I understand ‘film’ as both movies and television feature films and ‘film tourists’ as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been associated with filming. The aim of my project is to understand the motivations, expectations and experiences of film tourists in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, I am very interested in your views as someone who is involved in film tourism and I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

I would like to interview you and ask you about your experiences with film tourism. I would like to record and transcribe the interview to analyse the given information. Only my supervisors and I will have access to transcripts of the interviews. When I report my findings you will not be able to be identified if that is your wish or the wish of your organisation.

To repeat, the results of the project may be published, but your identity or the identity of your organisation will not be made public without your consent and only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data. If you are interested in receiving a summary of the findings, you can request a summarizing report by sending an email to [insert email] or by writing a letter to the postal address given below.

The project is being carried out by Anne Buchmann who can be contacted at [insert phone number] or (preferably) under [insert email]. I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project. Also, you can contact my main supervisor Dr. Kevin Moore at [insert phone number] or by mail at Social Science, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design Division, Lincoln University, P.O. Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.
CONSENT FORM

Film tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand
“Film tourism is understood as domestic and international tourism that visits a site that is or has been associated with the filming of movies and television feature films”

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate in the project by giving an interview.

Please indicate the level of confidentiality you seek (tick the appropriate box):

☐ I consent to the publication of the results of the project, including my full name and that of my organisation.
   or
☐ I consent to the publication of the results of the project, including my full name and that of my organisation as long as it is clear these are not the views of my organisation as a whole.
   or
☐ I consent to the publication of the results of the project if I cannot be personally identified though my organisation can be mentioned.
   or
☐ I consent to the publication of the results of the project if neither I nor my organisation can be identified.

I understand also that I may withdraw my cooperation from the project, including the information I give in any interview, up until the time when the data analysis process begins.

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Name in clear print:
Appendix C Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Operator/Involved People

How did your contact with the film location tourism started?
How would you describe your job?
For how long have you been a tour guide with this company?
How did you come to be a tour guide?
Have you got previous guiding experience? Film-location related experience?
Were you involved in the making of the movie?
How familiar are you with Tolkien’s books?
How familiar are you with Jackson’s movies?

What can you tell me about the tourists that are coming here?
What are the tourists like?
What do the tourists do on site?
How do the tourists leave?
What seems important to the tourists?
What do you think they seek?
What do they want from you?
Did you ever experience problems in your position as guide? If so, what happened?
What do you personally enjoy most?

What has changed over time?
What would you like to change?
Have you changed your performances for them?
What are your short-term goals in this industry?
What are your long-term goals in this industry?

What is special about film tourists/film tourism?
Appendix D Information and Consent Form for Interviews of Tour Participants

Lincoln University

Environment, Society and Design Division

INFORMATION

Dear interviewee,

I am a Ph.D. student at Lincoln University and as part of my study I am researching film tourism. I understand ‘film’ as both movies and television feature films and ‘film tourists’ as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been associated with filming. The aim of my project is to understand the motivations, expectations and experiences of film tourists in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, I am very interested in your views as someone who is involved in film tourism and I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

I would like to interview you and ask you about your experiences with film tourism. I would like to record and transcribe the interview to analyse the given information. Only my supervisors and I will have access to transcripts of the interviews. When I report my findings you will not be able to be identified if that is your wish or the wish of your organisation.

To repeat, the results of the project may be published, but your identity or the identity of your organisation will not be made public without your consent and only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data. If you are interested in receiving a summary of the findings, you can request a summarizing report by sending an email to [insert email] or by writing a letter to the postal address given below.

The project is being carried out by Anne Buchmann who can be contacted at [insert phone number] or (preferably) under [insert email]. I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project. Also, you can contact my supervisor Dr. David Fisher at [insert phone number] or by mail at Social Science, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design Division, Lincoln University, P.O. Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.
CONSENT FORM

Film tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand
“Film tourism is understood as domestic and international tourism that visits a site that is or has been associated with the filming of movies and television feature films”

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate in the project by giving an interview.

*Please indicate the level of confidentiality you seek (tick the appropriate box):*

☐ I consent to the publication of the results of the project, including my full name.

or

☐ I consent to the publication of the results of the project if I cannot be identified.

I understand also that I may withdraw my cooperation from the project, including the information I give in any interview, up until the time when the data analysis process begins.

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Name in clear print:
Appendix E Interview Guidance Questions for Tour Participants

Why did you go on this tour?
Can you describe your experience on tour?
What is special about this tour experience?
Can you describe what this tour is about?
What distinguishes this tour from other forms of travelling?
How would you describe this tour to a friend?

What day of travel is this for you?
Can you tell me a little about what you have already seen so far?
What did you enjoy most?
Were there any surprises?
What did not you like?

How important is the overall atmosphere for you?
How does it feel like being in this group?
Have you got to know other people already?
How do you think others experience the tour?

What is it like to see the locations?
Can you recognise/identify the locations?
If you compare Middle-earth to the real world, how do you feel?
What do you enjoy most on site?
What do you not like so much?
What would you change and how?

How did you experience the film(s)?
When, where and with whom did you watch it?

What do you think about the itinerary?
What do you think about your guide?
Are you happy with the tour guide?
What do you like most about the guide?
What do you like least about the guide?
What do you appreciated most?
What would you like to change?
Would you like to have a friend from home on tour with you?
What would you do if you had a friend with you?

What are your overall feelings?
Do you have any problems with Kiwi slang/English being spoken all the time?
How do you think you could take this experience over into your daily life?

Is there any thing you would like to let me know?
Appendix F Information and Consent Form for Questionnaires of Tour Participants

Lincoln University
Environment, Society and Design Division
INFORMATION

Dear tour participant,

I am a Ph.D. student at Lincoln University and as part of my study I am researching film tourism. I understand ‘film’ as both movies and television feature films and ‘film tourists’ as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been used for filming purposes. The aim of my project is to understand the motivations, expectations and experiences of film tourists in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, I am very interested in your views as a film-location visitor and I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

I understand that this is a very special time for you and would be grateful if you could fill out two questionnaires for me while being on tour: The first questionnaire will ask you about your motivations to go on tour and how you made your decision to join this tour. It includes questions about some of your basic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, etc.). This questionnaire will take up to half an hour to fill out. A second questionnaire will be given out at the end of the tour, which asks for your experiences while on tour, what you did and did not enjoy and how this tour may influence your future holiday options. Again, it will take up to half an hour to complete.

Your answers will be treated with great care to ensure confidentiality and only my supervisors and I will have access to the original questionnaires. When I report my findings you will not be able to be identified. To repeat, the results of the project may be published, but you can be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation. To ensure confidentiality, the consent forms and the data will be separated; also, only my supervisors and I will have access to the data. If you indicate your interest in receiving a summary of the findings, I can send one such summary to your address. In this case, please fill out the attached address form and place it into the box at the bus entrance.

Please note that I do not have any obligations to the tour company and that the tour guide is as much a respondent as is everyone else.

The project is being carried out by Anne Buchmann who can be contacted at [insert phone number]. I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project. Also, you can contact my main supervisor Dr. Kevin Moore at [insert phone number] or by mail at Social Science, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design Division, Lincoln University, P.O. Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.
CONSENT FORM

Film tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand
“Film tourism is understood as domestic and international tourism that visits a site that is or has been associated with the filming of movies and television feature films”

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate in the project by filling out questionnaires.
I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

I understand also that I may withdraw my cooperation from the project, including the information I give in any interview, up until the time when the data analysis process begins.

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Name in clear print:
Appendix G Pre-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants

1. What do you expect of this tour?

2. What is especially important to you?

3. What do you expect from your tour guide?

4. How did you prepare your journey?

5. Why did you choose to go on an organized tour?

6. How did you hear about this tour?

7. Have you been to Aotearoa New Zealand before? If yes, when and where? How often?

8. Have you been on a film-location tour before? If yes, when and where? How long?

9. Do you expect to visit other film locations in New Zealand, too?

10. If so, what film locations?

11. What film location is most important to you?

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me, which relates to your interest in and experience of film tourism?

13. What do the movies/books mean to you?
14. How familiar are you with Peter Jackson’s Lord of the Rings-film(s)?
   4 (very familiar)-3 (familiar)-2 (a little familiar)-1 (unfamiliar)

   How often have you seen FotR _____ TTT _____ RotK _____?

15. Have you seen Making-Offs, for example on the DVDs?

16. How familiar are you with JRR Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings-books?
   4 (very familiar)-3 (familiar)-2 (a little familiar)-1 (unfamiliar)

17. How often have you read the books? FotR _____ TTT _____ RotK _____

18. When have you read the books for the last time?

19. How familiar are you with other JRR Tolkien-books?
   4 (very familiar)-3 (familiar)-2 (a little familiar)-1 (unfamiliar)

20. What other JRR Tolkien’s books have you read?

21. What is your age or age span? (e.g. 16-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61+)

22. What is/are your occupation/s?

23. What is your country of residence?

24. What is your country of origin?

25. Are you travelling (please circle the appropriate option(s):
   Alone, with a friend, a group of friends, family members, relatives
Appendix H Post-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants

1. How do you feel about your tour experience?

2. What was most important to you?

3. How did the tour guide affect your experience?

4. Was the tour like you expected it? Please explain!

5. Was the tour important to you? Why?

6. Do you plan on going on similar tours in the future? When, where and what place?

7. What would you do different?

8. Will you recommend this tour to your friends? Why?

9. Will you publish your experiences on-line? Where?

10. Are you part of an on-line community? If so, what communities?

11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me, which relates to your interest in and experience of film tourism?
**Appendix I** Email Post-Tour Questionnaires for Tour Participants

1. Looking back to your time on tour - what stands out as the most meaningful element for you?

2. What memories do you treasure most? Are they about locations, people, souvenirs bought, ...?

3. How did your friends and relatives react when you told them about the tour?

4. Have you watched the movies again? If so, what was it like watching the movies again?

5. What do you think now about having been on location(s)?

6. How important was it to “stand on the exact spot”?

7. Would you go on another film themed tour? If you would go on another tour - what should it concentrate on?

8. Is there anything else you would like to mention?
Appendix J Information and Consent Form for Tour Journals of Tour Participants

Lincoln University
Environment, Society and Design Division

INFORMATION

Dear tour participant,

I am a Ph.D. student at Lincoln University and as part of my study I am researching film tourism. I understand ‘film’ as both movies and television feature films and ‘film tourists’ as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been associated with filming. The aim of my project is to understand the motivations, expectations and experiences of film tourists in Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, I am very interested in your views as a film-location visitor and I would like to invite you to participate in this project.

I understand that this is a very special time for you and would be grateful if you could keep a tour journal while you are on this tour. The journal is a like a diary that you would use to reflect on the day’s experiences and your feelings. You would write specifically about tour-related experiences though other important events can be included if they seem important to you; the diary features a few questions that may be helpful for you in deciding what to write about. Because of its immediate availability and intimate character this method promises unique insights into the film tourism experience. The journal will be handled confidentially and no one but the researcher herself and her supervisors will read it or have access to it. When I report my findings you will not be able to be identified.

This cooperation represents an ongoing commitment during the tour, for which I am grateful. It would be great if you could write a few notes at least each second day. It will take approximately 10 to 30 minutes on every day you choose to write down a few notes.

To repeat, the results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will not be made public without their consent. To ensure confidentiality, the consent forms and the data will be separated; also, only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data. Any publication of data would respect anonymity. If you are interested in receiving a summary of the findings, you can request a summarizing report by sending an email to [insert email] or by writing a letter to the postal address given below.

Please note that I am not associated with the tour company in any way and that the tour guide is as much a respondent as is everyone else.

The project is being carried out by Anne Buchmann who can be contacted at [insert phone number]. I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project. Also, you can contact my supervisor Dr. David Fisher at [insert phone number] or per mail via Social Science, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design Division, Lincoln University, P.O. Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand. The project has been reviewed and approved by Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.
CONSENT FORM

Film tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand
“Film tourism is understood as domestic and international tourism that visits a site that is or has been associated with the filming of movies and television feature films”

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate in the project by keeping a tour journal.

I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may withdraw my cooperation from the project, including the information I give in the journal, up until the time when the data analysis process begins.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Name in clear print:
Appendix K Questionnaires for Tour Journals of Tour Participants

On what tour are you (company, itinerary)?

What is your gender? Female ___ Male ___

What is your age or age span? (e.g. 25-30)

What is/are your occupation/s?

What is your country of residence?

What is your country of origin?

Have you ever been to Aotearoa New Zealand before? If yes, when and where?

How familiar are you with Peter Jackson’s Lord of the Rings-film(s)?

4 (very familiar)-3 (familiar)-2 (a little familiar)-1 (unfamiliar)

How often have you seen FotR ____ TTT ____ RotK ____ ?

Have you seen Making-Offs, for example on the DVDs?

How familiar are you with JRR Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings-books?

4 (very familiar)-3 (familiar)-2 (a little familiar)-1 (unfamiliar)

How often have you read the books? FotR ____ TTT ____ RotK ____

When have you read the books for the last time?

How familiar are you with other JRR Tolkien-books?

4 (very familiar)-3 (familiar)-2 (a little familiar)-1 (unfamiliar)

What other JRR Tolkien’s books have you read?

Have you been on a film-location tour before? If yes, when and where? How long?

Have you ever been to Aotearoa New Zealand before? If yes, when and where? How often?

Are you travelling alone or with a friend, a group of friends, family members or relatives?

Please circle one or more of the appropriate option(s)

Is there anything else you would like to tell me, which relates to your interest in and experience of film tourism?
Appendix L  Guidance Questions for Tour Journals of Tour Participants

Using the Journal

Dear tour participant,

Thank you for participating in this project about the expectations and experiences of film tourists in Aotearoa New Zealand. I understand film as both movies and television feature films and film tourists as domestic and international tourists who visit a site that is or has been used for filming purposes.

This journal is yours to keep for the duration of the tour and should be treated similarly to a diary. I would like to ask you to write down a few notes on a daily basis or whenever you find the time. It would be great if you could write specifically about tour-related experiences though other important events can be included if they seem important to you.

I have indicated a few questions below that may help you in your writings: however, these are guidance questions only and you do not have to answer all of them each time.

The following questions might help you in deciding what to write about:
1. What did you experience in the past day(s)?
2. How did this make you feel?
3. What did you enjoy most? Least? Please be as specific as possible!
4. Did the tour guide(s) influence your experience? In what ways?
5. What are you particularly looking forward to for the remainder of the tour? Why?