

On location in Liverpool

Film-related tourism and the consumption of place

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Liverpool is a great place. The people are so cool...The town is so much fun.
(Samuel L. Jackson, quoted in 'Boomtown! Liverpool Movie and Television Map', 2002)

Introduction: on 'location'

To date, research into the field of what might provisionally be termed 'film-related tourism' has remained uneven, fragmented and, in disciplinary terms, strongly weighted towards economic and marketing perspectives. Despite an extensive and growing literature in areas of tourism and marketing, coupled with a more general proliferation of film tourism media (e.g. film/television location guides, film tourism websites, movie maps, locative media apps, and so on), there have been surprisingly few critical interventions that have more explicitly focused attention on the sociocultural value of 'location': the common denominator that underscores all film-related tourism practices.

In this chapter, which bases its analysis on the case study of the city of Liverpool in north west England, I set out some preliminary steps towards the development of what might be referred to as a 'spatial anthropology' (Roberts 2015) of film-related tourism. This takes as its *modus operandi* the need for a more holistic and anthropologically-grounded approach to film and media tourism practices which critically foregrounds the role of film and television locations in the wider production and consumption of space and place in an urban context (Lefebvre 1991). A related aim of the chapter is to highlight the ways in which film tourism might instructively be approached less in terms of direct 'inducements' to travel (the consumption of a cinematic or televisual simulacrum of place as the principal motivational factor) and more in terms of the role film and television locations play in place branding and marketing initiatives more generally (e.g. the discursive framing of a city's place-image). While the implications of both may of course be comparable in terms of their underlying economic objectives (the growth in local and regional tourism markets), by placing critical emphasis on the spatialities of location-based consumption rather than the instrumental 'pull factors' by which film tourism practices are otherwise transacted, the focus of discussion is shifted towards analyses that extend beyond the disciplinary confines of more narrowly-framed tourism or film studies perspectives. To these ends, the arguments presented in this chapter might be considered as interventions in broader urban cultural studies debates on the cultural production and consumption of space in cities, and the social and cultural value of 'location' more specifically (Fraser 2015).

From a place marketing perspective, the appeal of a 'hyperreal post-tourist experience of place' (Schofield 1996: 335) is that it makes possible the capacity to harness the symbolic potential of virtual geographies and mediated representations. As a consequence, what might potentially constitute

the ‘tourist gaze’ (the dominant visual index by which a place is discursively constructed) is rendered that much more malleable and plastic. As Urry notes, there is ‘much less sense of the authentic, the once-in-a-lifetime gaze, and much more of the endless availability of gazes through a frame at the flick of a switch’ (1990: 100). The post-touristic appeal of cinematic representations of place is thus one that has generated considerable interest amongst policy makers and practitioners in the cultural, tourism, and heritage industries. This is matched by a growing multi-disciplinary field of scholarship, much of which, as previously noted, has been dominated by tourism management and marketing perspectives focused on the economic and instrumental value of film and television tourism (see for example, Riley and Van Doren 1992; Tooke and Baker 1996; Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998; Busby and Klug 2001; Morkham and Staiff 2002; Kim and Richardson 2003; Beeton 2005; Roesch 2009; Connell 2012). These more industry-based studies sit alongside a more narrowly refined body of work in which discussions on film and tourism straddle perspectives variously reflective of debates in, for example, cultural sociology, media and cultural studies, cultural geography, and film studies (e.g. Edensor 2002; Tzanelli 2007; Crouch *et al.* 2005; Mazierska and Walton 2006; Roberts 2010a, 2010c, 2012; Reijnders 2011; Leotta 2013; Martin-Jones 2014).

Broaden this out to take account of the growing number of film tourism/film location guide books (e.g. the Intellect World Film Locations series), and we begin to glimpse the breadth of interest and debate that coalesces in some shape or form around discussions of film *locations*. Given this, the absence of research focused more squarely on organisations such as film offices, whose remit is to oversee the production, consumption and commodification of location sites becomes all the more evident. Moreover, take into consideration the growing patterns of convergence that position the role of film offices alongside that of tourist and place-marketing bodies, and the increasingly synergistic relationship between the film and tourism industries is found to be similarly wanting in terms of sustained academic scrutiny.

In this regard, analyses drawn from ongoing research into the cultural and symbolic economy of film locations in Liverpool – and the important role played by the Liverpool Film Office – can offer some tentative insights into the ways that a spatial anthropology of film-related tourism might frame new perspectives on the relationship between moving image cultures and the consumption of place. The aim of this chapter is therefore to sketch out some provisional reflections on the production and consumption of ‘location’ in the cinematic geography of Liverpool. As I go on to explore in the next section, a focus on location can throw a spotlight as much on the heterotopic configuration of the city in film (location as a semiotic marker of ‘other’ places and spaces) as on issues of place-specificity and vernacular cultural spaces (the cinematic city ‘playing itself’¹). Viewed thus, the marketing tagline ‘The World in One City’ (which was conceived as part of endeavours to brand Liverpool as a cosmopolitan city in its early running as a contender for status of European Capital of Culture in 2008) conjures a new set of meanings linked to the ‘generic’ and delocalised cultural value that can be attributed to the city’s landscapes and locations (Roberts 2012: 162–89).

Liverpool: world in one city

I came looking for a beach and they sold me the whole city. International concert halls, Moscow hotels, Parisian apartments, golden synagogues, civic buildings, sand dunes and stately homes.

(Andy Patterson, producer of *Hilary and Jackie*, quoted in ‘Boomtown! Liverpool Movie and Television Map’, 2002)

This quote provides a good illustration of the ways in which the idea of a ‘world in one city’ has been productively harnessed to boost economic activity in the Merseyside area, and attests to the success of

bodies such as the Liverpool Film Office (LFO) in promoting the city as a centre of film and television production in the UK. *Hilary and Jackie* (Anand Tucker, 1998) is a biopic based on Hilary and her brother Piers du Pré's memoir *A Genius in the Family* which chronicles the life of Hilary's sister, the celebrated cellist Jacqueline du Pré who died from multiple sclerosis in 1987 at the age of 42. Most of the film was shot in and around Liverpool, with buildings such as St George's Hall, the Blue Coat School in Wavertree, the Philharmonic Hall, the Adelphi Hotel, the Princes Road Synagogue, the Walker Art Gallery, and the George's Dock Building standing in for locations in a number of international cities, including London, Berlin, Madrid and Moscow. As well as featuring on a film and television map of the city produced in 2002 by Liverpool council, *Hilary and Jackie* also appears on a map of North Wales film and television locations, compiled by Wales Screen Commission (the regional equivalent of the Liverpool film office, now called Wales Screen) in partnership with tourism businesses in the region. Brithdir Mawr, a Grade II-listed farmhouse near the small village of Cilcain in Flintshire, was used as a location for the country home of Hilary and her husband Christopher Finzi, which Jackie visits at one point in the film. Erected at the entrance to the White Horse Inn pub in Cilcain is a heritage plaque marking the fact that scenes from the film were shot in the village. Unveiled in 2005 by the local MP David Hanson, the plaque has no 'authentic' significance in terms of representing local cultural heritage in Cilcain, serving merely as a tangible reminder that for a few days in the late 1990s a film crew visited the area (presumably making use of the White Horse Inn while they were there), and that a movie that in all other respects has no connection with Cilcain whatsoever, and which was received with moderate critical acclaim and commercial success, was eventually released. Moreover, as few people who watched the film would have known that the scenes in question had in fact been shot in Cilcain (a place they probably had never heard of anyway), any cultural significance suggested by the plaque would be limited to those who live in the area, perhaps reflecting local pride that *their* village had been chosen. That such a marker of intangible local heritage should be the basis for attracting visitors to the area highlights the ways in which local authorities and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are exploiting to the hilt the potential benefits of film-related tourism, even in circumstances where the degree of local cultural resonance is comparatively low.²

Similar arguments could be made in relation to the Liverpool locations used in the film. Although, unlike North Wales, there are (as yet) no heritage plaques linked to this, or indeed any other film shot in Liverpool, the inclusion of a selection of the locations on the Liverpool Film and Television map suggests that it is less the influence these cultural markers may have in terms of attracting visitors to the city that determines the function of marketing devices such as movie maps (those visitors to Britain interested in Jacqueline du Pré would presumably seek out the actual locations associated with her life and career), but rather the importance in acknowledging and promoting the fact that Liverpool is suitably equipped to offer a location service to relatively high profile film productions. As such, it is again a largely local constituency that the movie map is directed towards; a recognition that the city's landscapes convey an appeal and significance that extends beyond the local, offering an image of the city that counters that which has long dogged perceptions of Liverpool in the national media as a place wracked by crime, unemployment, and social unrest. As well as highlighting the cultural and economic well-being of Liverpool, the movie map is also a means by which the LFO can promote its services to the wider film industry, whether nationally (and the city's capacity to double up as London has served Liverpool particularly well in this respect), or at international trade expos such as the annual Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Locations Show.

Hollywood on the Mersey

Buoyed by the unexpected success of the low budget film *Letter to Brezhnev* (Chris Bernard, 1985) in 1989 the city council set up the LFO which was the UK's first city film commission. The overall remit of the LFO has been to provide a film liaison service to the film and television industry and to stimulate demand for local production skills. As Lynn Saunders, manager of the LFO has pointed out, the marketing of Liverpool and Merseyside as a site of film tourism is recognized by council leaders as an increasingly important part of the wider promotional strategies focused around the Liverpool brand.³ The development of movie maps, both in printed form and as part of on-line marketing campaigns, has been at the forefront of on-going initiatives surrounding film-related tourism in Merseyside. Published in 2002 by Liverpool City Council's tourism unit and film office, 'Boomtown! Liverpool Movie and Television Map' was less far reaching in its scope as a place-marketing tool, and as a consequence met with limited success. This was prior to the spotlight that was soon to be cast on the city, however. The designation of European Capital of Culture status which was to follow a year later was instrumental in positioning the Liverpool brand within a more global consumer marketplace.

As a site of film-related production and consumption Liverpool's cinematic geographies reflect a heterotopic configuration of urban space in which markers of place denote a fragmentary and increasingly de-localised topography defined by style and genre rather than local urban specificity. Liverpool's status as the UK's second most filmed city (after London) has meant that many of its most popular locations (of which films such as *Hilary and Jackie* provide a fairly representative spread) have featured in hundreds of productions, although in only a small percentage of these can Liverpool be said to be 'playing itself'. Promising a 'world in one city', Liverpool's success as a location base is therefore founded on its ability to 'mask out' the real city and exploit the semiotic value attached to a handful of key locations, each of which is designed to convey a particular style, setting or 'sense of place' in some way evocative of the diegetic world imagined by the filmmaker, writer, or audience. The production of these post-industrial spaces of representation developed out of initiatives begun in the late 1980s which sought to build on the city's new found role as a film set:

'When the Victorian and Edwardian merchant princes laid the cornerstones of Liverpool's imperialistic heyday, little did they know that they were building some of the best film sets of the late twentieth century. Focus a camera on the architecture, landscape or seascape of this city, and you can still be anywhere from pre-revolutionary France to post-revolutionary Romania.'

(Liverpool Echo, 21 February 1991: 6-7)

Headlines in the local press such as 'Hollywood on the Mersey' or 'Hollywood Dream: It's a big Scouse drive for new film industry'⁴ captured the sense of optimism felt by those involved in the development of a film industry in Liverpool in the early 1990s. Behind the 'Hollywood Dream' rhetoric lay the more sober reality of an industry that relies little on local talent and production skills, and whose main contribution to the local economy is in the form of 'business tourism' (Channon [sic] 1996: 180). While these short-term economic benefits are of importance to the hotel and catering businesses in the city, and job opportunities are often available for film extras, in terms of 'trapping' (ibid) expenditure in the region, and channelling investment towards the development of local film production in Merseyside, 'Hollywood on the Mersey' this most certainly is not. Commenting on the Liverpool 'boom town' tag, the actor Ricky Tomlinson likens the US studios who film in the city to 'seagulls': 'They fly in, shit all over you, and fly out again. None of this is any good unless it helps the people of Liverpool'. Conditional to Tomlinson's involvement in a big-budget studio production is that the foreign film crews make an effort to hire local people.⁵

As well as its capacity to look like somewhere else, the desirability of Liverpool as a film location was based on its cheapness and accessibility (Brown 1995: 10), not to mention, in comparison to cities such as London, its relatively traffic- and crowd-free streets. A consequence of years of depopulation and economic decline, this somewhat down-at-heel urban situation (which the LFO initiatives were designed to address) was, ironically, one of the key selling points for attracting prospective filmmakers to the city.

In addition to the obvious economic benefits, it was also felt that Liverpool's increased screen presence would have a positive psychological impact on the city. As Paul Mingard, the LFO's first film liaison officer suggests, 'Imagine – you see your city, this derided place, up there on the screen, again and again, and it tells you that Liverpool is special.... It tells you that faith in this city is justified' (Gilbey 1995). However, as we have seen, how much of itself Liverpool does in fact see up there on the screen is a moot point. While in *Letter to Brezhnev* Liverpool was uncharacteristically (and unflinchingly) 'playing itself' the industry it helped spawn is one in which, typically, locations count only insofar as they are able to enhance another city's screen presence, or to sustain the production of 'generic' spaces and narratives. Although, as Mingard suggests, the on-screen visibility of the city's urban landscapes may, from a local perspective, boost confidence and pride in terms of countering negative perceptions of Liverpool, that many viewers from outside the city would not necessarily know that specific productions had been filmed there means that local film production alone would have had little direct impact on the enhancement of the city's overall place-image. The subsequent growth in film-related place marketing discourses of Liverpool and Merseyside can thus be seen as an attempt to make that crucial geographical connection much more explicit, bringing a greater level of awareness to the fact that Liverpool, as a much-visited site of *virtual* tourism, has also much to offer as an actual tourist destination, providing an experience where 'the imagined journey of movie watchers' is made complete through the act of travelling to the spaces previously seen on screen (Tzanelli 2007: 3).

Themed city tours: Holmesian Liverpool

The marketing surrounding the release of the films *Sherlock Holmes* (Guy Ritchie, 2009) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* (David Yates, 2010) provide a good illustration of the way Liverpool film locations are currently being promoted as visitor attractions. In Visit Britain's marketing evaluation report for *Sherlock Holmes*, they outline the rationale for launching a high-profile global campaign based around the film, stating that Sherlock Holmes, according to the Guinness World Records, is the 'most portrayed movie character' and as such represents 'a powerful brand not only in the UK, but also internationally' (Visit Britain 2010). The international success of the BBC television drama series *Sherlock* (2010-) is cited as a factor that illustrates the further reach of the Sherlock Holmes brand, and which thus provides a good indicator by which to gauge the likely success of *Sherlock Holmes* the film in the global marketing of Britain as a tourist destination. The film was shot on location in London, Liverpool and Manchester, and as part of Visit Britain's campaign the organisation ran a competition called *Discover Sherlock Holmes' Britain*. Promoted in 30 countries, two winners from each country enjoyed a prize of a tour around locations linked to the film and to Arthur Conan Doyle who wrote the original stories. The marketing campaign and the competition promotion was the result of a partnership between Visit Britain and Warner Bros Pictures, with additional sponsorship from Radisson Edwardian Hotels, as well as other promotional partners including Visit Liverpool, Visit Manchester, St Paul's Cathedral, Peckforton Castle in Cheshire and the Sherlock Holmes Museum in London. The competition was promoted via online advertising in thirteen countries, print advertising in twelve countries, and television advertising in six. Using stills and marketing imagery from Warner Bros, additional promotional activities included a dedicated

website, a British Film Locations iPhone app, as well as a range of other marketing devices and literature. Visit Britain's stand at the annual London-based World Travel Market in 2009 featured *Sherlock Holmes* and film tourism more generally as its main theme. Visit Britain's campaign material was also exhibited and distributed at local premiere screenings of the film. In short, the use of the film in UK place marketing was extensive. The choice of the film's locations was thus the principal factor underpinning the rationale and overall effectiveness of the global campaign.

On Visit Britain's dedicated *Sherlock Holmes* web page, they provide information about each of the locations featured in the film, with suggested itineraries for those planning a trip to London, Liverpool or Manchester. The Liverpool itinerary invites visitors to '[t]ake a stroll through Liverpool's historic Georgian Quarter.... The houses around the Canning area with blackened ironwork and cobbled streets are much the same today as they were in Arthur Conan Doyle's time'. It then suggests a visit to Croxteth Hall which was used as a location in the Granada television series *Sherlock Holmes* (1984–1994). After lunch in a restaurant set in an 'elegant Georgian house' in Falkner Street, visitors are invited to visit Albert Dock which is located near to disused Stanley Dock where an action scene from Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* was filmed. Ironically, the only Liverpool location that is actually used in the film is off-limits to tourists who are only able to see it from the road. In the evening after dinner (in another restaurant set in a Georgian house), visitors are encouraged to have a pint in the famous Philharmonic Dining Rooms, described as 'a Holmesian pub with antique charm in buckets'.⁶

What is clear from this example is that it is not so much the capacity of the film *text* to 'induce' tourists that underpins the effectiveness of the campaign, but rather the ways in which the film functions as a mechanism by which DMOs can tap into a wider cultural imaginary that is resonant with consumers in the global marketplace. The role of DMOs and place marketing discourses that surround the film text is therefore of crucial importance in 'directing' the film-related tourist gaze. In the Liverpool *Sherlock Holmes* itinerary it is not the actual locations that appear in the film that are of importance. It is the associative meanings that attach themselves to the text (or rather the character of Holmes) that demand attention. In this example the evocation of a certain imaginary of place conjures an 'idea' of Liverpool as a 'Holmesian' period theme park. Although the Holmes stories were set in the Victorian era, and tropes associated with the character such as pea-souper fog have remained popular metonyms of Victorian London (Brunsdon 2007: 45–47), the emphasis placed on Liverpool's Georgian buildings in the Liverpool itinerary plays on the 'authenticity' of the period architecture, steering its semiotic connotations towards the creation of a setting (or set) that is in some way reminiscent of the symbolic landscapes evoked by the Holmes character and stories.

Tunnel vision: Harry Potter and the magic of CGI

The *Sherlock Holmes* example illustrates the growing importance placed on film-related tourism by the travel industry and the role of the film text as part of the arsenal of place marketing tools at the disposal of DMOs such as Visit Britain. Another example worth briefly mentioning here is that of the hugely successful series of Harry Potter films. Film-related Harry Potter tourism dates back to the release in 2001 of the first in the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Visit Britain (or the British Tourism Authority as it was then) produced a movie map to accompany the film, and the Potter brand has since gone on to play an increasingly important role in film-related tourism marketing and consumption in the UK. Although much could be said about the Potter phenomenon and its value to the UK tourism market, for the purposes of the present discussion I want to limit my analysis to the Liverpool location used in the seventh film in the series, *Deathly Hallows Part 1*.

On Visit Britain's web page detailing 'a roster of "not-to-be-missed" locations throughout the UK for Harry Potter fans wishing to experience the magic up close', Great Britain is divided into four

sections: 'London in Lumos', 'Enchanted England', 'Sorcerer's Scotland', and 'Wizardly Wales'. The page also gives information on a range of Potter-themed tours available in different parts of the country. The entry under 'Enchanted England' begins with a reference to Liverpool and *Deathly Hallows*: 'In the new film fans will see the Mersey Tunnels of Liverpool during a scene where Hagrid and Harry flee from the pursuit of some Death Eaters.... Fans can visit the tunnels and other great sites Liverpool offers.'⁷ Compared to some of the other locations on offer to visitors of 'Enchanted England', such as Christchurch College Oxford, Gloucester Cathedral, and Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, the 'pull factor' (Riley and Doren 1992) of a busy road tunnel underneath the Mersey is likely to be minimal. Even if a die-hard Potter fan were motivated to visit the actual location (i.e. the interior of the tunnel) in most cases s/he could only 'experience the magic up close' by driving or getting a bus through the tunnel and hoping that something meaningful offers itself up along the way. The scene in question, a chase sequence involving Harry and Hagrid, is brief and involves extensive use of computer generated imagery (CGI), so the likelihood that a) the location could accrue sufficient cultural resonance to 'induce' visits to Liverpool, or b) Potter tourists, were they to visit the tunnel, would be able to identify anything directly recognizable from the film (other than the tunnel wall more generally), would appear to be small. That said, reports in the Liverpool Echo newspaper that 'film fans rushed to snap up one-off Harry Potter Mersey tunnel tour tickets' suggest that there is some degree of interest in the film location.⁸ However, the tour is run by Merseytravel who already organize regular tours of the tunnel and ventilation tower for visitors interested in the history and engineering of the tunnel system. The publicity generated by the release of *Deathly Hallows* thus served to enhance the profile of an existing Liverpool tourist attraction. The special one-off tour that took place in December 2010, as well as allowing visitors to see the workings of the tunnel (as with the usual tour), provided a rare opportunity to walk out onto the tunnel roadway where filming had taken place.⁹ Tickets for the tour quickly sold out, the overwhelming majority of which, according to Merseytravel, were bought by people from the Merseyside area.¹⁰

There is, as Paul Swann has observed, 'a postmodern inexorability in valuing cities as images rather than as sites of production' (2001: 96). Indeed – and as is increasingly the case – from a studio perspective it may be that the 'site' of production is such that it is the virtual architectures of digital space rather than the material landscapes of the city that offer the more favourable creative environment. Access to blueprints of buildings, or measurements and dimensions of a specific architectural space allow the possibility for filmmakers to digitally recreate the landscape or building in question without the inconvenience (and cost) of filming in the actual location. Not surprisingly, the use of computer generated imagery to virtually render the one commodity upon which screen agencies are dependent – *location* – is a practice that is looked upon rather less favourably by those local authorities, businesses and communities who have benefited from income generated from productions based in real geographies and real spaces. By way of illustration, LFO manager Lynn Saunders describes a location recce in the pre-production stage of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1*. Having taken members of the production crew to view a 'typical' Northern terraced house, Saunders watched as they crawled around the building taking measurements: 'We knew they had no intention of filming there', she recalled, 'It's just impossible for a huge Hollywood production to film in a small terraced house. But that is the reality and local authorities need to be aware of that.'¹¹

Conclusion: location, location, location

The kind of semiotic bargain sale which sees a city's urban landscape virtually harvested for CGI reconstruction, reduced to a categorical typology of topographic forms in a film and television locations database, or re-imagined as a period theme park, has shaped a cultural economy in which *location, location, location* is the guiding mantra. Refashioned by the virtualizing logic of the global

sign industries (Tzanelli 2007), cities and other landscapes become stages or sets where imaginaries and narratives can be played out in ways that demand little if any intrinsic connection with 'real' geographies of place and identity. If, as Tzanelli suggests, 'there is a danger that tourist consumption of simulatory landscape and cultures will overwrite specific histories of actual places and cultures' (2004: 38), then it is one that is weighed against the many instrumental benefits offered by film-related place-marketing strategies. The fetishization of place and space which underpins the cultural economics of film tourism has laid the foundations for a growing convergence between the film, tourism and marketing industries and the development of a 'new, differentiated heritage [product]' (Schofield 1996: 339). While it is the case that films such as those discussed in this chapter may exert something of a 'pull factor' in terms of influencing film-related tourism practices, there is little evidence in support of the claim that the film text alone directly 'induces' tourists to visit city locations previously seen on screen. The effectiveness of film-related tourism can be attributed instead to the capacity of high profile film productions to shape and manipulate the dominant place-image attached to a given destination. In this respect, the film text (and the cinematic geographies therein) functions as part of a wider integrated marketing campaign centred around the film and its locations. Film-related tourism, in other words, is an increasingly powerful engine in the cultural production of space and place in cities and other destinations. As the case of Liverpool shows, mapping a city through the heterotopic prism of its cinematic geographies both reveals and reinforces the schizophrenic patterning of the city's symbolic landscapes. As part of an image-based economy, the cinematic production and consumption of urban-architectural simulacra enables cities to assume (or accommodate) preordained identities and narratives (e.g. a nineteenth century 'Holmesian' period setting), yet often does little to project a more socially embedded sense of history, place and urban identity. The 'place' of Liverpool in these heterotopic landscapes of consumption therefore becomes increasingly less certain; less geographically 'concrete'.

While, from an economic vantage point, the competitive cut and thrust of place-based location filming policies may out trump the significance otherwise afforded critically to issues of authenticity, habitus and identity, the degree to which a city's cinematic geographies contribute to the further virtualization or 'cinematization' of urban space is nevertheless of not inconsiderable import. In this respect, the Liverpool case study might productively be considered alongside examples of other cities or regions that have sought to harness the economic opportunities offered by location-based filming, whether from a tourism or film industry perspective. If the mainstay of extant research into film-related or film/movie-induced tourism has been oriented towards analyses of the economic and marketing potential of location-based filming, then approaches that cast a more critical or anthropological lens on these practices remain comparatively under-developed. Building on existing research conducted into film, place and intangible cultural heritage in Liverpool (Roberts 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012, 2014; Hallam and Roberts 2011), studies that examine the spatial anthropology of film-related tourism in the city can sharpen critical insights into the production and consumption of cinematic geographies of place in a post-industrial region. But equally they can cast into sharper relief the ways in which film and archival film practices (Roberts 2014) might conceivably bolster rather than overwrite a city's embedded geographies of place, history and identity.¹² It is not that cinematic geographies of cities project an irredeemably 'inauthentic' or 'pseudo' layering of image on place. It is rather that, by developing more of an holistic understanding of film-related tourism practices it is possible to graft a more detailed map of a city's symbolic spaces of representation onto an urban landscape otherwise rendered mute. After all, cities in film rarely 'play themselves' however correspondingly 'real' they may be in terms of their projected on-screen identity. Cinematic geographies should not be looked upon as a priori bearers of signification but as markers of place

whose meanings are more productively harvested from the lived spaces and symbolic practices that constitute the anthropological – and contested – field of film and media-related tourism consumption.

Notes

- 1 As a 'cinematic city', Liverpool's on-screen identity has been shaped by a number of key films and locations (not least iconic landmarks such as the Liver Building and River Mersey). But the extent to which the city gets to 'play itself' is far outweighed by the number of productions that use the city's locations in more generic terms. Not surprisingly, it is this latter, more heterotopic conception of Liverpool as a 'cinematic city' that has informed the development of film and media tourism initiatives in the city. That said, with the release of Terence Davies's celebrated 'cine-poem' *Of Time and the City* (2008) and a greater awareness of Liverpool's film and television heritage, there remains significant scope for capitalising on this heritage as part of future film tourism and place-based marketing activities. The proposed Liverpool Film Posters exhibition, scheduled for opening at the Museum of Liverpool in 2016, is one example of endeavours to put the city's film heritage more firmly on the map (see Conolly and Whelan 2013; for online resources see the British Film Institute's Screenonline website: www.screenonline.org.uk/liverpool; see also the University of Liverpool's *Mapping the City in Film* project: www.liv.ac.uk/communication-and-media/research/cityfilm).
- 2 This is, however, an area of analysis which will benefit from more detailed ethnographic research into local and visitor perceptions of film heritage plaques, movie maps and cinematographic tourism.
- 3 Although, as she also notes, the redevelopment and transformation of parts of the city centre can impact on the availability of attractive film location sites (interviews with Lynn Saunders conducted by the author, June and November 2009).
- 4 Liverpool Echo 21 February 1991: 6–7, and 10 October 1988: 8.
- 5 'Boom Town', 15 December 2000, www.guardian.co.uk/film/2000/dec/15/culture.features2, (accessed 7 May 2008).
- 6 www2.visitbritain.com/en/campaigns/sherlock-holmes/Locations-itineraries/itineraries/index.aspx (accessed 9 December 2010).
- 7 www.visitbritain.us/campaigns/film/deathly-hallows/deathly-hallows-locations.aspx (accessed 10 December 2010).
- 8 'Harry Potter fans snap up Mersey tunnel tour tickets', 7 December 2010, www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-entertainment/harry-potter/2010/12/07/harry-potter-fans-snap-up-mersey-tunnel-tour-tickets-100252-27779372/ (accessed 10 December 2010).
- 9 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-11921779 (accessed 10 December 2010).
- 10 Merseytravel, personal communication, 10 December 2010.
- 11 Interview with Lynn Saunders, manager of Liverpool Film Office, November 2009.
- 12 The University of Liverpool's *Mapping the City in Film* project (on which the author was lead research associate) is one such initiative that has sought to put the city's film history and heritage more firmly on the map (in this case, quite literally, information on over 1700 archive films of the city were mapped by location using geographical information system (GIS) tools to create a comprehensive interactive heritage map of Liverpool in film). The map, along with related project data, as well as a selection of digitised film clips, can be accessed online at: www.liv.ac.uk/communication-and-media/research/cityfilm).

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