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The Seal on the Seventh Art: Bergman and the Fårö Island

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ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, the link between culture, economy and local development has been growing. Film-induced tourism is a phenomenon that has only recently been created, sometimes unintentionally, thanks to television programs or films that have expressed a growing bond between the narrated events and the land or environment. The aim of this paper is to examine the case of a movie tourism proposal relates to film productions out of date, although very important in the past. We discuss the relation between film-induced tourism and the work of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, with specific reference to some of his films in his beloved island of Fårö.

Keywords: Ingmar Bergman, Fårö Island, Film-induced Tourism

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Introduction

I cannot imagine myself working
somewhere else than in Sweden
[Ingmar Bergman, 1960]

Over the past two decades, the link between culture, economy and local development has been growing (Adorno, 1991; Fitzgerald, 2012; Hesmondhalg, 2013; Ward, 2008). Film-induced tourism is a phenomenon that has only recently been created, intentionally and sometimes unintentionally, thanks to television programs or films that have expressed a growing bond between the narrated events and the land or environment. *Film-induced tourism* or *movie tourism* concerns film fans choosing to take a holiday close to a destination they have appreciated watching television shows or movies. In film-induced tourism there is an emotional relationship between the fan and the place. It's difficult to measure the full impact that a popular movie has, but tourist flow certainly has a tendency to increase when a place is featured in a popular television fiction or in a movie. Film-induced tourism has seen appreciable growth and represents a considerable economic opportunity for many countries to use filming locations (Tetley, 1997; Beeton, 2005). Film-induced tourism represents one of the latest marketing strategies which requires a real and substantial connection with a filmic work (Croy, Walker, 2003). For instance, a case is represented by the success of the television production "Inspector Montalbano", an Italian television fiction produced in Italy since 1999, based on novels of Andrea Camilleri (Giannone, 2011, pp.373-376; Nicosia, 2011, pp.384-387; Power, 2002). This TV series has led to a certain increase in tourism in a part of Sicily. In general, there are several cases in which the phenomenon has exploded with a significant new stream of tourists, with important consequences on the local economy (Nicosia, 2012). Indeed in some cases the connection between a place and the TV or movie production is accentuated or invented entirely. This is the case of the hit series "The Lord of the Rings". In fact, the "Middle-earth", the name used for the habitable parts of *Arda* after the final ruin of *Beleriand*, was imagined by Tolkien, author of the novel, thinking in the British and Scandinavian landscapes, but these places instead were relocated from Peter Jackson, director of the famous movie trilogy, to the national parks of New Zealand. This began the well-known tour of Middle-earth, a popular route for those traveling to New Zealand (Leotta, 2011). Another well-known case of relocation is due to the hit series "The Godfather". In the movies the audience hears about Corleone or Palermo, but the related scenes are often filmed in other places, resulting in a decent flow of tourists to Corleone in search of the places of The Godfather. Clearly in these cases there is no interest on local tourism operators to tell the truth.

The aim of this paper is to examine the case of a movie tourism proposal relates to film productions out of date, although very important in the past. We discuss the relation between film-induced tourism and the work of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, in

particular, with specific reference to some of his films in his beloved island of Fårö, in which the director has spent many years of his life until his death.

The Swedish culture is generally known in the world for the architectural and ideological movement of functionalism that has taken hold in the Thirties of the twentieth century, although a simple survey, in addition to architecture, would highlight the Swedish influence in the field of music (from traditional folk ballads to the extraordinary influence of *Abba* on pop music or the most recent success of the group called *The Cardigans*). No less important to understand the Swedish culture, which is appreciated and recognized throughout the world, is the contribution of the film industry, especially the traditional one, starring the director Ingmar Bergman and actors like Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo, Max von Sydow and Liv Ullman (Power, 2002, p.107). In more recent years, Swedish culture has had a worldwide hit with the trilogy of novels called "Millennium" by writer Stieg Larsson (1954-2004). These novels have had successful film adaptations. There are frequently mentioned places in Stockholm, which after the success of the trilogy, have seen the launch of city tours related to the places of the novels.

The so called *seventh art* presents different attitudes. One of these is to appeal to the reality to overcome and rebuild it. The art of storytelling, accompanying the life of man since he begins to understand and to speak, has always been considered an act that accompanies human life; speaking as Aristotle, there can be no "talking animal" that is not at the same time "narrative", that is capable of telling to those around him experiences, thoughts and moods (Giacomarra, 2014, pp.13-15). Cinema, with its images and with the use of sound, often creates a more striking effect than any other art form. Cinema often exceeds the theater and the novel thanks to the suggestions of the environment, the atmosphere and sound.

The Swedish cinema moves his first steps in the early years of the twentieth century with the work of the filmmaker and writer Charles Magnusson (1878-1948) and director of photography Jaenzon Julius (1885-1961). The latter is known to have perfected the technique of "double exposure", successfully used in 1921 in the film "The Phantom Carriage" ("Körkarlen" the original Swedish title), directed by Victor Sjöström (1879-1960) and considered one of the most important and influential films of the Swedish traditional cinema. The activity of Sjöström, on the other hand, has greatly influenced the work of Ingmar Bergman. There are clear references to "The Phantom Carriage" in "Wild Strawberries", written and directed by Bergman in 1957.

The first artificial spaces dedicated to cinema in Sweden were placed in Kristianstad in Skåne, the southernmost county of Sweden (Marklund, 2010, p.45). From 1917 to 1924, the Swedish cinema was even marked by a defined "golden age", with contributions by Mauritz Stiller (1883-1928) and Victor Sjöström (Eriksson, 2010, p.99; Larsson, Marklund, 2010; Marini, 2007, pp.21-22). The traditional Swedish cinema is characterized by a strong focus on reflections, often pessimistic, regarding the human condition. It's a cinema perceived as serious and cold, in line with the latitudes of Sweden, prevailing natural environments, the dangers of human relationships and the theme of death (Eriksson, 2010, p.99). Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) was the director

who, more than anyone else has been able to translate into images the dilemmas of the human soul. The Swedish director is known for his films that put the focus on the person, on the human, social relations, and certainly on the destiny of human beings. Bergman is also known for a particular technique of directing, designing and developing with great effect the theme of loneliness and the relationship between love and death. All topics that have somehow marked the existence of the director. Bergman's films have in fact a strong autobiographical character. Ingmar Bergman has been a major Swedish "brand" and is considered a symbol of Sweden.

1. Bergman and film production on the island of Fårö

We wonder what role the depiction of landscape and territory has had in the work of Ingmar Bergman. Is there a correlation between the work of Bergman and film-induced tourism? The answer is positive if you take into account a number of films in which the landscape becomes the engine of the soul and feeling. These include a number of movies filmed on the island of Fårö. The director discovered the island in 1960, while seeking a perfect setting to shoot the Oscar-winning film "Through a Glass Darkly" (1961), which opens the so-called "God and Man Trilogy" (with "Winter Light" and "The Silence"). The landscape had an essential role in the preparation of this film. The island's landscape is essential and minimalist. Bergman elected Fårö as a place of excellence for his vocation to psychological introspection. The representation of inner discomfort has in the landscapes of Fårö its natural manifestation. In some movies ("Hour of the Wolf" in particular) the landscape is useful to Bergman to express strong feelings of loneliness of the individual and his difficulty in communicating with others and with the surrounding reality. On the island the director will shoot five more films ("Persona" in 1966, "Hour of the Wolf" and "Shame" in 1968, "The Passion of Anna" in 1969 and "The Touch" in 1970) and a documentary for television, as well as two documentaries dedicated to the island (one in 1969 and the second in 1979). The hit film "Persona" coincides with a first period of withdrawal of the director on the island of Fårö. In 1968 on the island was made a film about war called "Shame", a film much criticized for its positions on the war in Vietnam. The need to have on the island indoor environments and professional facilities forced Bergman to create some artificial spaces, a small town movie, a small "Cinecittà" (Garcia, 2002). The role of the coastal and interior landscape was essential for the film "Hour of the Wolf", the first horror film of Bergman. In this film landscape is rugged, so the climate and the characteristic of the island are perfectly integrated into the story (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: “Hour of the Wolf”: the arrival of main characters on the island.



Source: Image extracted from one of the opening scenes of the film (author’s personal collection)

Figure 2: “Hour of the Wolf”: Typical interior landscape of Fårö.



Source: Image extracted from one of the opening scenes of the film (author’s personal collection)

Actually, although only six are movies filmed on the island of Fårö, we can find other movies where there are landscapes similar to those of the small Swedish island, like in the movie masterpiece “The seventh seal” (“Det sjunde inseglet” is the original

Swedish title), where there is a strong link between the landscape and the places of the mind (Marini, 2007, p.66).

Recently Sweden, and in particular the island of Fårö, have launched tourist proposals related to the Bergman film. Complying with the positive outcomes of other initiatives related to film-induced tourism, since 2009 it has been proposed in Sweden (mainly in Stockholm), a festival dedicated to the works of Ingmar Bergman called *Bergmanfestival*, which offers not only classic filmic visions, but also works of contemporary theater and music related to Bergman. At the same time, it marked the revival of the best movies (sometimes the complete opera) in Dvd, but also Blu-ray, starting from the new high-definition masters, and sometimes including scenes originally censored, with a series of captivating documentaries on the work of the Swedish director.

As we have already mentioned, the island of Fårö is a place that is more significant than any other Bergman-related. It was the setting for several films and in which the director has decided to spend much of his life until his death.

Fårö is the name of a Swedish island of just over 110 sq. km. The island is mostly a nature reserve. It is located in the Baltic Sea to the north west of Gotland, an island much larger. The peculiarity of the island of Fårö is given by the so-called *Rauk*. These rock formations of limestone sometimes reach considerable size with impressive forms.

The island has no other special or sensational attractions. Its landscape has remained almost unchanged for centuries. It is not easy to reach the island. This can be done only by a ferry from Gotland. On the island there is a population of residents of about 500 people, but in the summer this number increases considerably.

Every summer, since 2004, a group of local fans organizes a successful initiative on the island called "Bergman Week", in which, among other things, there are tours to film locations used by Bergman. The Bergman Week is a summer festival with Swedish international guests, conferences, film screenings, theater performances and of course tours to the various places Bergman related. The organizations currently involved in the dissemination of the work of the director and the promotion of the island are the *Fårö Bergman Center Foundation* (which today is the main organizer of the Bergman Week), *The Bergman Estate on Fårö* and the *Ingmar Bergman Foundation*, founded in 2002 to administer, preserve and distribute information on Ingmar Bergman and his collected artistic works. These three organizations work closely together to achieve the best results.

The Bergman Estate on Fårö, founded in 2010, is a non-commercial foundation. It aims to administrate Ingmar Bergman's houses and properties on Fårö as a non-commercial place of work and as a retreat for performing and creative artists and scholars from around the world.

The *Fårö Bergman Center Foundation* organizes tours on the island dedicated to the director. The tourist can even "rent" an expert guide on Bergman.

Conclusions

The interest in film-induced tourism is growing in Sweden, as well as in other parts of the world. In recent years, to better recognize the available development options, the Swedish Government has even commissioned a study called “The Millennium Report” about the impact of film-induced tourism (based on the legacy with the Millennium trilogy).

In this case, the result of film-induced tourism is not mass tourism, and cannot expect a big income from these proposals. It is certainly a tourism for fans of the genre, for those who discover today the work of Bergman and probably for those traveling to Sweden to visit other places more famous. There are no official statistics, but according to the three organizations mentioned above, about 5000 tourists come every year on the island of Fårö for reasons related to the Swedish director. This is certainly an activity, lead with passion and perseverance, which gives its results in terms of helping the local economy and in terms of maintaining a certain attention to one of the expressions of Swedish culture. Film-induced tourism, in this case, is also a way to introduce to the younger generation an important symbol of Swedish culture.

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