

Panthers and Places: Filmic representation and destination image

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Abstract:

This paper is part of a larger Master's thesis in Heritage and Cultural Tourism at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of this multi-disciplinary study is to investigate the influence of popular media representations, specifically film and television, on narratives of place and tourist destination image. The study explores the relationship between narratives or stories about certain places and the ultimate images that they create in the minds of potential publics before tourist visitation. These narratives or stories in the form of a popular media, such as film or television, can be seen as forms of autonomous knowledge that familiarises a place, its culture and associated characteristics to potential tourists, consequently making it an option for travel. The study is grounded in a growing body of literature on the phenomena of 'film tourism' or 'popular media induced tourism' and 'filmic place branding'. From an initial global perspective, the paper reflects on a number of associated characteristics that are conceptually mapped to the landscape of continents, countries and cities. These characteristics can be seen as forms of cultural capital that entice potential tourists and is represented in a number of filmic genres or styles, in both the global north and south, such as Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood. This information is then ultimately adapted and applied to an African, South African and Johannesburg environment by reflecting on films that depict the continent, country and city in specific ways and the constructions or images that they create. It further considers the potential and ability of South Africa and other African countries to capitalise on the cultural products represented in the major Hollywood blockbuster films, such as the Black Panther (2018), to present a narrative for landscapes and places and ultimately laying claim to cultural products and inspiring tourist interest.