

**Facharbeit im Leistungskurs**  
**Englisch**

Thema: How did the movies „Lord of the Rings“  
influence New Zealand?

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## **Leistungskurs Englisch**

**Thema:**

**How did the movies  
“Lord of the Rings”  
influence New Zealand**

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Preamble

When J.R.R. Tolkien started to write „The Lord of the Rings“ (hereafter *Rings*) in 1937 as a sequel to „The Hobbit“, one of his earlier works, he probably didn't even suspect what kind of huge consequences this trilogy would have in the future. With up to now over 80 million copies sold and being translated into dozens of languages *Rings* surely was and still is a huge success. This success can certainly be traced back to Tolkiens attempt to not only tell a fantasy story but to create a whole new world which could really exist with accurate descriptions of landscapes and races, each with their own unique language and history. As a result of this success, soon there were multiple adaptations for radio, film and stage. But due to the lack of technical prospects the first movie realizations of all three parts were animations. Unfortunately these versions didn't please the audience. Years later, when special effects technology and digital editing reached a point where it seemed possible to do a movie like *Rings*, an until then rather fameless director named Peter Jackson was given the opportunity to bring Tolkiens Vision on to the silver screen.

[1]

## 1.2 Why New Zealand?

As New Zealand hasn't been known for many good movies one might ask why *Rings* was shot there in the first place. First of all, director Peter Jackson himself was born and raised in New Zealand. He is the founder of the movie production company WingNut Films which owns Park Road Post, a motion picture post production facility. He is also cofounder of Weta Workshop and later Weta Digital. All these facilities are all based in New Zealand and played a huge part in producing *Rings*. Furthermore, New Zealand has beautiful and varied landscapes. Peter Jackson of



Map of New Zealand [Picture 1]

course knew about that. So it was possible to shoot scenes like the hike over the Misty Mountains and Bilbo Baggins birthday party in the town of Hobbiton in the same small country. Another reason for Peter Jackson to shoot *Rings* there was the great distance between New Zealand and Hollywood and therefore the main office of New Line Cinema, the distribution company for *Rings*. This distance meant that Peter Jackson could do his work almost undisturbed and without being under permanent control of New Line Cinema.

([2], page 17&76)

### 1.3 Premises

Certainly not every movie has the ability to entail such major changes for a whole country like *Rings*. So there have to be some premises to be able to achieve this. One fundamental precondition is that *Rings* has such a solvent financier like New Line Cinema who can afford to shoot a whole trilogy in a row. Something like this has never been done before. All in all New Line provided Peter Jackson and his team with a budget of \$280 million. This huge amount of money could have never been raised by a local company.

The story is also the reason why New Zealand became so popular, because it's about a journey through a whole world where the country was able to show all the different and charming places it has to offer. From the grassy hills of Hobbiton (North Island), the famous "Get off the Road" scene in the forest of Mt Victoria and the snow-covered peaks of the Misty Mountains (Southern Alps) to the devastated area of Mordor (Mt Ruapeho). Especially scenes like the opening sequence of the second movie, where you get a view from a camera flying over the breathtaking landscapes of New Zealand, immediately makes you want to go there. Since there are many fans of the books, and those people who didn't read them at least know the title, there is also a greater basic interest in the public compared to rather unknown stories.

Last but not least you need a director like Peter Jackson who really is keen on investing into the country and who uses the opportunities given by these films to strengthen the movie industry. Other directors might not have done that in such a way like he did.

[3] | ([4] page 25, 31, 43 & 67)

## 2. Main Part

### 2.1 National Government

#### 2.1.1 Investment New Zealand

The National Government quickly tried to use the opportunities of such a huge movie project like *Rings* being shot in New Zealand. In 2001 it allocated a total of NZ\$9 million for the two main events on New Zealand, the America's Cup and Lord of the Rings. The money was mainly used for local and international promotion, especially close to the premier of each three movies.

The main target was to attach the movies as close to New Zealand as possible. To achieve that one keyword besides "promotion" that was especially important to the government was "rebranding". This means that the government wanted to promote the modernized and enlarged high-capacity movie industry and change the worlds view on New Zealand, which wasn't really famous for anything but sheep.

Prime Minister Helen Clark appointed Peter Hodgson, who was associate minister of foreign affairs and trade, to arrange the government plans. Soon he was called "The Minister of *The Lord of the Rings*" by the media, which was not an official position as many people might have guessed.

By that economical sectors especially like filmmaking should be promoted.

Paul Voigt, investment director of for the screen production industry at Investment New Zealand, organized the involved government agencies like New Zealand Film Commission, Film New Zealand and Tourism New Zealand. Though not being a government company, Air New Zealand was also included as the national carrier.

New Line was contacted in order to establish a promotional partnership. By that New Zealand was allowed to be titled as "Home of Middle-earth" without having to pay any licensing fee.

([2], pages 310-312)

### 2.1.2 Tourism New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand quickly made *Rings* part of the “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign. As a result of the campaigns, tourism became the country’s biggest single export earner in March 2004.

In the annual International Visitors Survey conducted, in 2003 questions about *Rings* and its influence on the visitors were added. 89% of the visitors who knew about the movies also knew that they were shot in New Zealand and 7% of these people also said that *Rings* was at least a reason, if not the main or even sole reason. And these people also brought about NZ\$40 million into the country’s economy, based on the average amount of money spent by tourists. The *Return* world premier in Wellington which brought in another NZ\$201 million wasn’t included in this survey.

The monthly hits on the Tourism New Zealand Website (NZ.com) reflect a huge boost after each release of the trilogy. From 2001 to 2005 the percentage increase was about 500%

In 2003 and 2004 New Zealand was chosen the top destination by the staff of the travel-guide publisher Lonely Planet.

([2], pages 312-316)

### 2.1.3 Film New Zealand

Film New Zealand’s assignment was to convince foreign producers to shoot their movies in New Zealand. Several hand-outs and flyer were made and distributed during events like the Cannes Film Festival 2001 with the vantages of New Zealand for filmmakers on it.

One main accomplishment by Film NZ was the “Film Friendly Protocol”. This protocol made it much easier to shoot movies in different locations all over the island because in former times each territorial area had its own consents and rules. Now all the regional film promotion branches have the same rules. The homepage of Film NZ also was visited five times as often after the release of *Fellowship* as before.

In 2003 the government passed the “Large Budget Screen Production Grant” which gave bigger productions from abroad a 12.5% tax rebate if they spent a certain percentage of their budget in New Zealand. This was among other

things one reason for the producers of Narnia to shoot their movie in New Zealand.

In order to make the agency even more successful in bringing in movies from abroad, it was restructured as a trust.

([2], pages 316&317)

#### **2.1.4 The New Zealand Film Commission**

The flip-side of Film New Zealand is The New Zealand Film Commission. It is responsible for supporting national production and selling the results overseas through its distribution wing, New Zealand Film.

*Rings* brought more than three times more money into the country than NZ Film Commissions had invested in movies from 1978 to 2002 and the success of *Rings* also raised the reputation of Kiwi films. The success also draw back directors like Roger Donaldson, Vincent Ward and Geoff Murphy who originated from New Zealand and were working abroad. But also people who worked in all different the departments in the filmmaking process returned with the skills they acquired abroad.

([2], pages 317-319)

## **2.2 Movie Industry**

### **2.2.1 Weta Ltd.**

Weta Ltd. is a company founded by Peter Jackson together with his two friends and fellow filmmakers he had worked with, Jamie Selkirk and Richard Taylor. The company owes its name to a giant cricket called “weta” which is native in New Zealand. Weta is situated in Wellington and after the first movie that which included digital effect shots, “Heavenly Creatures”, was done on a single computer, Weta was split into Weta Workshop and Weta Digital in 1994.

[5]

### 2.2.2 Weta Workshop

The Workshop itself is again divided in seven departments: production, design, prosthetics, creatures, armor, weapons, and miniatures. Due to the size of the *Rings*-Project, Weta had to rent additional warehouses and abandoned factories where they could relocate their miniatures department to or set up a blue screen stage, for example.

Under the leadership of John Howe and Alan Lee, both conceptual designers and famous for their former *Rings*-Illustrations, the design crew draw up countless sketches and drafts as all the items and sets had to be made from scratch.

During the shooting of *Rings*, the physical departments of Weta made over 48000 individual items like facial appliances, Hobbit feet, armors, weapons and arrows. Especially because of the frequent script changes it was very important that the props were made in New Zealand.

In order to make the small size of Hobbits convincing many requisites had also to be made in two different scales, like mugs and dishes. To accomplish that many Kiwis (how New Zealand people are often called) were hired. Virtually any kind of artisans who could produce medieval items like swords, barrels, saddles, furniture or goblets were needed. They even found two local armour blacksmiths, Stu Johnson and Warren Green and the sword smith Peter Lyon, who could make plate armours and steel swords like in ancient times.

One special problem which had to be solved was the chain mail. Real ones were just too heavy to be used a whole day on set, but existing copies out of synthetic material didn't look real enough. So Weta developed a method to produce a realistic looking chain mail which weigh less than a third of the original. After the shooting was done Weta realized that this product had potential and formed **Weta Tenzan Chainmaille** where the production technique was improved. The fake armor made by Weta Tenzan Chainmaille was later used in movies like "Kingdom of Heaven" and "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe".

After most of the design work was over, Taylor assigned some of his staff to produce items, sculptures and other Sideshow Weta collectibles in order to keep them employed.

All in all 148 people worked for Weta Workshop on *Rings*, and almost all of the employees were Kiwis.

[6] | ([2] page 302) | [7]

### 2.2.3 Weta Digital

After its foundation in 1994 the special effects department of Weta Ltd. upgraded its equipment from one single computer to 50 ones in order to be able to make “The Frighteners” (1995). The success of that movie’s effects gave Weta the self-confidence to tackle a complex project like *Rings*.

By doing this movie Weta Digital was able to expand enormously. After *Fellowship* the company owned about 700 processors with 13 terabytes of hard-disk storage and 135 terabytes of data backed up on tape. By the end of the trilogy the amount of processors had raised to 4200 with 120



The creature „Gollum“ - by Weta Digital [Picture 2]

terabytes of hard-disk-storage and over 500 terabytes of material backed up. These upgrades were necessary for the success of the CGI shots.

The number of these shots grew with each part of *Rings*, from 450 in “The Fellowship of the Ring”, 760 in “The Two Towers” to 1496 in “The Return of the King”.

There were particularly two main problems Weta Digital had to deal with.

First they had to find a way to digitally create the creature Gollum in a way that it would look realistic. As there weren’t any movies using such a technically mature method, a new way had to be found to satisfy Peter Jackson. So by working together with Gino Acevedo, Senior Prosthetics Supervisor and Visual Creature Effects Art Directory and responsible for all the special makeup requirements that Weta Workshop provided, Weta Digital developed a method to create realistic looking skin for Gollum by “simulating subsurface scattering”, which also brought Weta an award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

The second problem they had to face were the shots with huge armies like in the siege of “Helms Deep”. Stephen Regelous came up with a program called “MASSiVE” which made it possible to create masses of people or animals where each individual was able to move independently and so look realistic.

This program was so successful that Regelous founded a new company also based in New Zealand and it was used in famous movies like “*I, Robot*”, “*King Kong*”, “*X-Men: The Last Stand*”, “*Eragon*”, “*300*”, “*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*” or “*Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End*”, just to name a few.

Especially between the first and the second *Rings* movie, Weta Digital grew in expertise, which you can easily see when you compare digital shots from these two movies.

Furthermore, this huge digital project provided work for hundreds of employees working at Weta or subcontracted CGI firms.

So thanks to *Rings*, Weta Digital had become “one of the most sophisticated special effects houses in the world”. The technologies developed at Weta Digital also found use in medicine. On 21 August 2007 ARANZ Medical Limited

announced that they designed a method to monitor wound healing by using equipment originally developed to create the digital creatures



Orks in front of Minas Tirith - Created with MASSiVE [Picture 3]

from wax sculptures for the *Rings* movies.

[8] | [9]

#### 2.2.4 The Film Unit / Park Road Post

Back in 1945, The Film Unit has been founded by the Department of Tourism and was then sold several times. In 1998, when it was put up for sale again, it was “the only film facility that could provide sound production services and a full range of other postproduction services”. To prevent The Film Unit from being bought by an Australian postproduction company, which most likely would have taken all the equipment to their own facilities, Peter Jackson and his wife Fran Walsh bought it themselves. Without this company being situated in New

Zealand, it would have been impossible to make the movies in time. During the shooting of *Rings*, Jackson invested in The Film Unit and bought very expensive equipment which allowed performing the postproduction of movies with a combined total budget of NZ\$900 million in 2000.

As Jackson wanted all of his firms to be as close together as possible he moved The Film Unit from Lower Hutt, which is a 30-minutes drive away from Miramar<sup>1</sup>, into Park Road in Miramar. There, the now into Park Road Post renamed facility is

only about 200m away from the Weta Ltd. headquarter. This



Park Road Post [Picture 4]

postproduction facility now had four times the space it had back in Lower Hutt and was not only able to handle the postproduction of *Return* but later also of well-known movies like “*King Kong*”, “*The Last Samurai*”, “*Vertical Limit*” and “*Cast Away*”. In order to pitch Park Road Post not only to local but also to Hollywood productions, Peter Jackson wanted to make this place as comforting as possible. That’s why he invested about \$US35 million for equipment that is standard in modern postproduction facilities over the world.

[10] | ([2] pages 291, 297-300)

### 2.2.5 Stone Street Studios

The Stone Street Studios is a department of Weta where most of the back lot and interior shoots were made. By the time *Rings* was shot the three existing filming stages weren’t enough for the great variety of sets and the numerous units that were filming simultaneously. Therefore, just like Weta Workshop, they had to rent more space. Also the parking area has been used for shooting whole scenes but especially for completing different shots. So many sets from different locations have been partially rebuilt there, with big blue or green screens in the background.

The Studios also included the art and costume department. The latter provided the actors with about 40 costumes per person. Additionally every Hobbit outfit

<sup>1</sup> Miramar is a suburb of Wellington where Peter Jacksons movie production facilities are located

had to be made in two different scales, one for the actors and one for their smaller doubles.

After *Rings*, with the help of Film Wellington, the first soundproof stage which could be used for movies in New Zealand was built at the Stone Street Studios and, of course, the first movie to be shot there was Peter Jacksons' "*King Kong*".

([2] pages 291, 295 & 302)

### **2.2.6 Upskilling**

Before *Rings*, there were just a few skilled people who had experience in making larger movie productions. Most of the filmmakers went abroad because of the better prospective for work. But this drastically changed. Some of the most experienced people in the world were brought to New Zealand to work on *Rings*. In this way many Kiwis had the chance to learn from the best. According to Ken Saville, who is the head of the Wellington branch of New Zealand Film and Video Technicians Guild and also was the second unit sound recordist for *Rings*, the "skilled labor available for film in New Zealand increased tenfold over the course of this project". In former times foreign production companies which made big movies brought their own department heads. Now there is no need for that anymore because there are enough skilled people who are able to do these jobs just as well. Only 28 of the 158 people working at Weta Workshop during the height of *Rings* had ever worked on a film or television production.

And now, with Wellington having quite a strong movie industry, filmmakers do not necessarily have to go to Hollywood because now they can work on bigger projects also in New Zealand while being close to their family. This increased number of experienced workers makes this country even more attractive for foreign filmmakers to produce their movies there in the first place.

([2] pages 306-310)

## 2.3 Tourism Industry

### 2.3.1 Air New Zealand

With Air New Zealand being the national carrier, it was the only private company directly working together with the government. So Air NZ entered a promotional partnership with New Line for two years and was allowed to use the title “Airline to Middle Earth”. During this time the airline decorated first two and later four of their planes with giant decals each weighing 60 kilograms. These planes were only used for international flights in order to attract people’s attention from all across the world. The crew also wore *Rings* badges and the passengers could watch trailers and making-of documentaries during their flight. They often also were given presents like postcards with the image of the plane on it or a personally autographed “*Lord of the Rings Locations Guidebook*” by Ian Brodie. On 23 October 2004 the last flight with a decorated plane took place, carrying 54 Japanese tourists in *Rings* costumes.

In return for the advertisement Air NZ made for the movies, New Line handed out the airlines’ promotion material in theatres, gave the company’s electronic press kit to reporters on the world premier of *Return* and linked to it’s homepage on the official *Rings* homepage. There was also a “travel” category in the New Line online shop where Air NZ could sell vacation packets.



Air New Zealand decal [Picture 8]

Further partnerships with companies like Virgin Megastore in Europe, Royal Mail and Warner Village Cinemas in the UK were formed and billboard advertising in major cities was set up in order promote the connection between Air New Zealand and *Rings*.

[11] | ([2] pages 107, 108 & 311)

### 2.3.2 Red Carpet Tours

Red Carpet Tours (RCT), a company created “for and by fans” offers the “Middle Earth Tours” to the most important *Rings* locations since 2002. On these trips, which usually take 12 days, it is also possible to visit places which

are inaccessible for other tours because of the special agreements RCT made with several land owners. That also means tourists are able to talk to people who were at these locations the whole time during the shooting. Though normally only 18-25 people join such a tour, in 2005 a group of 160 fans went on this trip, which included visiting the premier of *Return* in Wellington.

Vic James, who together with his wife founded RCT, also is responsible for preventing Hobbiton from being destroyed. When he called the owner of the land where the Hobbit village was build the set was about to be destroyed. In the end New Line Cinema agreed that at least the Hobbit holes could stay.

[12] | ([2] page 288)

### **2.3.3 Rover Rings Tour**

When Jason Bragg first realized how people were interested in visiting the film locations of *Rings* in 2001 shortly after the release of *Fellowship*, he decided to create a special *Rings* tour with his small company, the Wellington Rover Tours. The Rover Rings Tours started in July 2003 and because of the huge request he was able to employ two more people and also buy two new cars. This tour brings in about 60% of the income the company is making.

([2] page 285)

### **2.3.4 Glenorchy Air**

Founded in 1992 and owned by Robert and Jane Rutherford, Glenorchy Air offered small-plane trips over the Southern Alps and Milford Sound. When in 1999 Peter Jackson and his crew started the production of *Rings*, Robert, who is also a fan of Tolkien and his books, went to the production manager Nick Korda and offered his services as a carrier to the diverse locations. The first flights people of the production team using Glenorchy Air were location scouts. Later on Robert also took people from the cast and props to the locations.

After New York Times travel writer James Brook took a flight over the landscapes where *Rings* was shot in December 2002 and published two major stories suddenly there was a huge demand for “trilogytrail” tour. In September 2003 Glenorchy Air could afford a second, bigger plane called LOR in honour of the movie which made this new acquisition possible.

([2] page 285 & 286)

### 2.3.5 Nomad Safaris

After purchasing Nomad Safaris in 1994, David and Amanda Gatward-Ferguson's company employed only four people and owned three old vehicles. After the first movie came out they planned a tour visiting the *Rings* locations which they added to their program in May 2002. In December of the same year, the business had risen by about 30 percent and they had bought a new Land Rover especially for this tour. Two years later the company owned 20 vehicles with 16 of them only used for the *Rings* tours. A shop to sell *Rings* merchandise was opened and Nomad Safaris now had 37 employees. According to David, all in all the business was up by about 500 percent. With the rising amount of films being shot in New Zealand the tour was renamed to "Safari of the Scenes" in order to add film locations of other movies.

Nomad Safaris is multiple winner of the New Zealand Tourism award, one of, if not the most important tourism award in New Zealand. It also won the Green Globe award due to their operation with the Department of Conservation which is dedicated to the "protection of New Zealand's natural and historic heritage".

[13] | [14] | ([2] page 287 & 288)

### 2.3.6 Dart River Safaris

Unlike Nomad Safaris, Dart River Safaris didn't create a whole new tour especially for the *Rings* location as its clients aren't usually hard-core fans but people who know the movies and enjoy seeing some of the places like Lothlorien (Elvish wood) or the spot where the last great battle of the first movie (Amon Hen) was shot. So in 2000, manager Hilary Finnie added some information about these locations to publicity materials and also a separate section on the companies' homepage was created. In the year after the release of the first movie, the business was up by 20 percent, followed by a continuing rise and major boosts with each new movie.

Dart River Safaris also opened a storefront selling *Rings* merchandise in addition to their tour-tickets.

([2] page 268)

## 2.4 Environment & Film Locations

### 2.4.1 Environmentally Friendly Filming

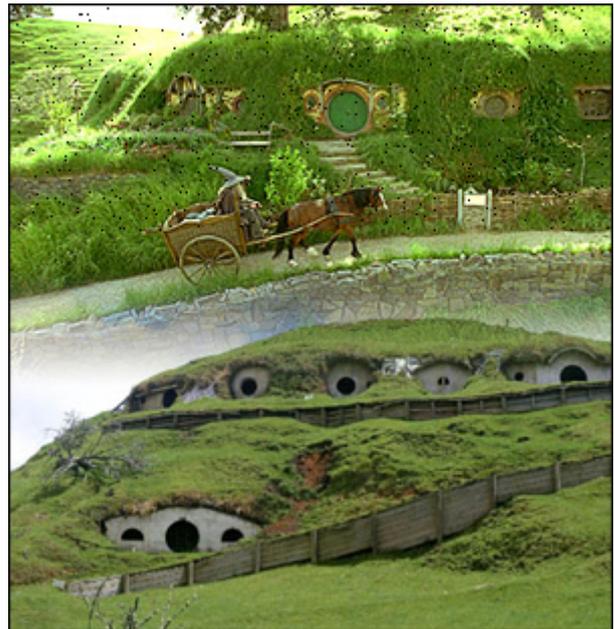
Lord of the Rings was filmed over 274 days using more than 150 locations. As most of the locations were nature protection area and National Parks, the filmmakers weren't allowed to damage the nature and had to leave the area just like they had found it. Often plants and trees had to be replanted into nurseries, to avoid damaging them. For example in Queenstown, location of big battle scenes, the crew laid out lots of red carpet to protect the plants from the sometimes up to 1100 people on set.

[15]

### 2.4.2 Hobbiton

The village Hobbiton was build on the Alexander Farm on the North Island and it took the crew nine months to finish the set. During this time, the New Zealand Army built 1.5km of road to the site, 37 Hobbit-holes have been dug and lots of trees and plants for gardens had been planted.

After the shooting New Line didn't want any tours to visit the sets but then agreed to at least not destroy the Hobbit holes. Nevertheless all *Rings*-related items and set-parts like fences and the facades had to be removed. All that is left now are



Hobbiton during and after the shooting [Pictures 5&6]

the empty holes and the stairs, but you still can imagine how the complete set had looked like and tourists are happy to be able to visit these ruins.

[16] | ([2] page 288)

### 2.4.3 Eodoras

Eodoras was probably one of the most complex sets which had to be built. Within eleven months a whole small village was built, including walls, houses and “Meduseld”, the great hall of King Theoden. It was constructed on top of Mt Sunday which rises out of the basin of a glacier moraine not far from the Southern Alps. To make the buildings creditable, the workers even had to learn how to thatch a roof with straw they got from a farmer nearby. The fact that the place where the producers wanted Eodoras to be was right inside a nature protection area brought some unpleasant circumstances with it. First, the New Zealand Army was assigned the task to build service roads to the set, as there was no infrastructure at all. The second problem was that the team mustn't damage the nature, so plants and the grass had to be replanted into a nursery and had to stay there for 18 months until they could be brought back to their original place.

During the existence of this village many people with binoculars and cameras tried to get a glimpse of this small fort-like city.

After the shooting all the houses, walls and the great hall, even the service roads had to be removed so that now nothing reminds you of *Rings* anymore.

([4] page 69)

### 2.4.4 Helms Deep

The set for Helms Deep was built in a deserted quarry outside of Wellington. In this way it could be attached to existing rock and real stone walls. The set was divided into separate parts, the causeway ramp and the front of the castle in full size and also in quarter scale, a long stair carved into real stone, the main wall with a section which could be blown up, and the top of the “Hornburg Tower”.



Miniature of Helms Deep [Picture 7]

After the set wasn't needed anymore it was transformed into the much larger set of Minas Tirith, using old set parts and attaching them to the new one during the six month of reconstruction.

Though the set of Helms Deep also had to be completely removed it was an impressive structure during its existence. The actor Billy Boys (Pippin) describes it that way:

"You are driving a long that small way and everything you see looks very New Zealand. And then you look up there is that sort of [...] British castle [...]"

[17]

## 2.5 Media Coverage

The affords the New Zealand Government and the individual movie and tourism companies have taken to raise the awareness of New Zealand being a great holiday destination resulted in a huge media coverage. Stories and reports where New Zealand was mentioned together with *Rings* reached about 600 million people all around the globe. There were several specials in for example newspaper, television and magazines dealing with the successful movies of *Rings* and its film locations.

The famous "*Stern Magazine*", which has the largest readership in Germany, published a 16 pages making-of the movies.

In the UK, "*The Mail on Sunday*" released a front page article including a promotion CD containing *Rings* images and comments which was distributed to 1.2 million readers.

In India the most famous music television channel MTV promoted New Zealand, including a contest with a trip to New Zealand as a price, and a link to the homepage of Tourism New Zealand.

In North America both the LA Times and the LA Times Magazine published *Rings*-related articles featuring tourism activities in New Zealand.

[18]

## 2.6 Awareness of Rings in the New Zealand population

When it comes to *Rings* most people outside of New Zealand immediately think of that small country aside of Australia. But what do the people actually living there think about these movies. Are people who were not involved in the filmmaking progress and don't own or work at a company which is dependent on tourists even aware of any changes induced by that great film project? Talking to a pupil from Auckland (Northern Island) it became clear to me that "normal" people didn't experience any severe changes. During the shooting there was kind of a *Rings* mania, especially when it comes to young people. Many locals are rather amused when foreigners come to visit their country just because they want to visit the film locations.

Still, that doesn't mean at all that Kiwis don't care about these movies. In fact, the enthusiasm in the population was enormous when Mark Ordesky, tricked by Peter Jackson, announced at the New Zealand premier of *Towers* that the world premier of *Return* would take place in Wellington. Before, Jackson told the audience that Ordesky would now name the location, and so the executive producer had no other chance then to choose this small city with its only 300.000 inhabitants.

### 3. Conclusion

Without any doubt, the “Lord of The Rings” trilogy was one of the most successful ever made. It made a box-office gross of \$2.91 billion and won 17 Oscars. In fact, with eleven Academy Awards only for *Return* in 2003, this movie actually was able to measure up to “*Titanic*” (1997) and “*Ben-Hur*” (1959) with also eleven Oscars. Also the now very famous actor Orlando Bloom hasn’t been known until these movies. A whole franchise comparable to “*Star Wars*” was built up and merchandise like board games, toys, computer games, calendars or all sorts of cloths were produced and sold. The New Zealand author Ian Broodie even wrote a book called “The Lord of the Rings Location Guidebook” which became a bestseller and was published also in an extended and a revised edition.

But *Rings* is so much more than just three movies which brought a lot of money to a film or toys production company. There are changes which maybe can’t be seen on the first look and maybe not even by people living in this country. USA Today didn’t give the first place of “*Hollywood highlights: 25 movies with real impact*” to *Rings* without any reason.

Surely the tourism industry benefited quite a lot from the trilogy. Numerous new companies were founded and those who already existed and took the opportunities and especially the tourists *Rings* brought with it were able to expand. This brought lots of new workplaces and helped to strengthen the economy. New Zealand also experienced an average visitors growth of 3.4% p.a. from 2001 to 2003 (number of visitors: 2001: 1.93 million; 2002: 1.98 million; 2003: 2.06 million). But it is also pretty obvious that the amount of visitors coming from abroad to see *Rings* locations will rapidly decrease in the next few years. At least the new image of New Zealand, as a country worth going to, can’t be taken away from it anymore.

The government has taken a risky course using *Rings* as the figurehead for the whole country, not knowing wheter the movies would be a hit or flop. But the success proved all doubters wrong and the diverse departments working together were able to tap the movies full potential.

Still, in my opinion it is the movie industry Peter Jackson built up in Miramar / Wellington that New Zealand will profit of the most in the next years. Jackson

was able to draw a movie budget of \$280 million into the country though the existing movie production facilities weren't nearly as good as those in Hollywood. But with this money he managed to create "Wellywood", just a number of companies which can compete against all other movie industries all over the world. And he also showed that the movie infrastructure works perfectly and that you can make an overwhelming and Oscar-wining film with it. Further more, *Rings'* prequel, "*The Hobbit*" is most likely also to be shot in New Zealand, though this time Peter Jackson will be only the executive producer and not the director anymore.

Maybe the only change people realized during the shooting of *Rings* was also the only thing which wasn't meant to last in the first place. All the elaborate sets have been removed and now there is almost nothing visible left which could remind you of that remarkable story becoming reality in that remarkable New Zealand landscape.

([4] page 289) | [18] | [19] | [20] | [21]

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## Pictures

[Picture 1] “Map of New Zealand”

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[Picture 2] “The creature ‘Gollum’”

[<http://www.ewallpaper.ru/lmg/gollum.jpg>]

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[Picture 3] “Orks in front of Minas Tirith”

Screenshot | *Return* DVD EE | 2<sup>nd</sup> disc | 24:27

[Picture 4] “Park Road Post”

[<http://parkroad.co.nz/images/uploads/home-page.jpg>]

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[Picture 5] “Hobbiton during the shooting”

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[Picture 6] "Hobbiton after the shooting"

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[Picture 7] "Miniature of Helms Deep"

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[Picture 8] "Air New Zealand decal"

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