

REST IN FAME: CELEBRITY TOURISM IN HOLLYWOOD CEMETERIES

MARTA SOLIGO AND DAVID R. DICKENS

Department of Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV, USA

This research is a critical study of tourism at four cemeteries in the Los Angeles area between 2013 and 2019: Hollywood Forever, Forest Lawn in Glendale, Forest Lawn in Hollywood, and Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery. We examined these venues through the lens of celebrity tourism, since they are known as “Hollywood memorial parks,” hosting the graves of some of the most famous stars in the world. Through participant observation, informal conversations, and content analysis of texts we aimed to understand how the relationship between these venues and the entertainment industry works as a “pull factor” for tourists. Our data collection and analysis led to three main findings. Firstly, we identified the motivations behind the increasing number of tourists who add Los Angeles cemeteries to their must-see list. Although scholars often define cemeteries as dark tourism destinations, our investigation shows that Hollywood memorial parks are more related to celebrity tourism. Secondly, employing the notion of “cult of celebrity,” we described how the experience of tourists visiting their favorite celebrity’s grave can be seen as a modern pilgrimage centered on a collective experience. Thirdly, we analyzed the cemetery as a commodity in which executives work to promote the site as the perfect location where one can spend the “eternal life.” In this sense, we also investigated how memorial parks are often used as venues for cultural events, attracting a large number of tourists. As described in the findings section, initiatives such as movie screenings and guided tours transform cemeteries into much more than just peaceful places where to honor the dead, becoming venues for both commodification and spectacle.

Key words: Celebrity culture; Hollywood; Dark tourism; Tourism; Cemeteries; Critical theory

Introduction

According to several scholars, in addition to being places of mourning and privacy, cemeteries today are affirming themselves as tourist destinations (Tomašević, 2018). An analysis of the literature shows that experts often connect cemeteries to the

phenomenon of dark tourism, which relates to death, suffering, and pain (Privitera, 2016). Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) define dark tourism as the activity of “encountering death and the macabre at sites such as prisons and death camps” (p. 80). Writing about dark tourism at the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, Cohen (2011) proposed the term *in populo*, “to

describe sites which embody and emphasize the story of the people to whom the tragedy befell” (p. 194). Lennon and Foley (2000) included cemeteries in the list of sites that could be said to be connected to death and that are “significant part[s] of tourist experiences in many societies” (p. 4). Experts also employ the term “thanaptosis,” which means meditation upon death (Korstanje & George, 2015; Privitera, 2016), trying to understand if and how it applies to dark tourism.

This kind of analysis brings to the surface the idea that dark tourism is a complex phenomenon, which extends from the contemplation of mortality to consumption (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). In this sense, Korstanje (2016) pointed out that Stone (2012) argued that “darker and lighter products are differentiated according to the degree of suffering they offer to sightseers” (p. 9). This last aspect is particularly relevant for our work here, since our fields are the so-called Hollywood memorial parks as tourist destinations, and scholars increasingly argue that interest in these types of locations goes beyond that of simply death and the macabre (Ravitz, 2009). Analyzing this topic, Seaton (1996) proposed the term “thanatourism,” whose pure form is exclusively motivated “by fascination with death itself, irrespective of the person or persons involved” (p. 240). Seaton, however, mentioned a second—and less pure—form of thanatourism, “in which the dead are both known to, and valued by, the visitor” (p. 240). This second conception best fits our investigation, since cemetery tourists often behave as if they personally know the celebrities who are buried there.

The fact that some of the most famous Hollywood stars are buried in the cemeteries we analyzed strongly suggests the idea of tourism as pilgrimage. Analyzing the phenomenon of film-induced tourism, Beeton (2005) described a trend that started in the second half of the 20th century: “while the growth of mass media was central to the cultivation of celebrity, the worship of movie stars filled a psychological or even spiritual need in a century where religion was declining and heroism was becoming more difficult to identify” (p. 32).

Describing journeys to media theme parks and movie locations, Couldry (2003) proposed the term media pilgrimages, which he describes as:

specifically journeys to points with significance in media narratives. Through media pilgrimages,

not only is the abstract nature of the media production system “re-embedded” in an encounter, for example, with a site of filming or a celebrity, but the significance of places “in” the media is more generally confirmed. The media pilgrimage is both a real journey across space, and an acting out in space of the constructed “distance” between “ordinary world” and “media world.” (p. 77)

Although we are aware that motivations that guided pilgrims in medieval times are different from the experience of tourists who visit Hollywood burial sites today, especially in terms of their approach to death (Aries, 1975; Korstanje, 2016), there are nonetheless similarities in terms of behaviors, as we describe in our discussion section.

In the past decades, scholars have begun to focus on the intersection between dark tourism and celebrity culture. One known example is Rojek’s (1993) concept of dark spots, which are locations such as the place where James Dean’s car crash happened, or the spot where J. F. Kennedy was shot, which attract tourists for the authenticity of the death scene. As the goal of our research is to analyze visits to Hollywood memorial parks as a type of dark tourism related to celebrity, a key question for us is what kinds of motivations bring tourists to visit these cemeteries. Moreover, as Korstanje and Baker’s (2018) analysis of literature showed, dark tourism “denotes sites where . . . either a level of private market commoditizing or public commemoration has taken place” (p. 536). This perspective is relevant for our study since Hollywood cemeteries undertake many activities that are best described in terms of commodification.

Analyzing the cultural changes that characterized cemeteries through time, Rojek (1993) explained:

Bourgeois culture constructed the cemetery as a place of dignity and solemnity. . . . However the action of Modernity operated to break down the barriers between the sacred and the profane, the closed world of the cemetery and the outside world of commerce and spectacle. With the rise of mass tourism, the metropolitan cemetery, with its collection of illustrious corpses, became a sight to see just like any other monument. (p. 141)

This aspect goes hand-in-hand with the field of critical cultural studies influenced by the Frankfurt School in the first half of the 20th century, whose exponents looked at how culture changed, from a

human creation to a commodified thing (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1947; Marcuse, 1964). This school of thought was followed by Debord (1970), who proposed the concept of the society of the spectacle, to refer to the idea that in contemporary society everything becomes a spectacular event. Debord, like the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, questioned the neutrality of mass media, explaining that media produce a capitalist-led spectacle that distracts and pacifies the masses.

Critical cultural studies are an important part of the academic literature on tourism, with several scholars investigating the relationship between consumption, commodification, and the travel industry. On the one hand, cultural studies in tourism analyze the commodification of the past, with tourist destinations giving life to a product that represents an answer to tourists' nostalgia (MacCannell, 1976; Urry & Larsen, 2011), often leading to the exploitation of local communities (Smith, 1977). On the other hand, other scholars look at the commodification of the physical space. This is the case, for example, of Augè's (1992) analysis of *non-places*, of Ritzer's (2010) concept of cathedrals of consumption. According to these scholars, the tourism industry creates attractions—such as resorts, airports, and malls—that are increasingly at odds with local identities and culture.

As we point out in the discussion section, these schools of thought are important also for the cemetery tourism phenomenon, especially in the case of the four Hollywood cemeteries we analyzed. On the one hand, in our studies we found that nostalgia plays an important role. Some tourists, in fact, visit the graves of stars who were part of Hollywood's golden era, and complain that the movie industry today is not as good as it was in the past. On the other hand, initiatives such as movie screenings and guided tours transform cemeteries into much more than just peaceful places where to honor the dead. This opens the doors to a debate about commodification and consumption in places, such as memorial parks, that once were considered sacred.

The Field

We conducted qualitative research between 2013 and 2019 at four cemeteries in Los Angeles: Hollywood Forever, Forest Lawn in Glendale, Forest Lawn in Hollywood, and Pierce Brothers Westwood

Village Memorial Park Cemetery. The Hollywood Forever cemetery is one of the oldest memorial parks in Los Angeles. Among the notable burials we find the protagonists of the Hollywood "golden age," such as Rudolph Valentino and Tyrone Power. Additionally, Hollywood Forever is the site of several cultural events, such as the Cinespia movie nights. Every Saturday night, from May to September, hundreds of people crowd the area in front of the cemetery's mausoleum, whose wall becomes a big screen for movies. The cemetery is thus transformed into an open-air movie theater, where people sit on the grass, have picnics, and listen to the DJs who play before and after the movie.

Both of the Forest Lawn Cemeteries we analyzed—Glendale and Hollywood Hills—are known not only for the graves of celebrities like Michael Jackson and Stan Laurel, but also for their locations, which offer breathtaking views of the city of Los Angeles. "I believe in happy and eternal life" reads the *Builder's Creed* that Hubert Eaton carved on Forest Lawn Great Mausoleum's wall when he founded the memorial park in 1917. Besides the famous graves, tourists who found themselves at the Glendale location can visit Forest Lawn Museum Galleries, together with replicas of Michelangelo sculptures and Leonardo's Last Supper in the Great Mausoleum.

Finally, despite its smaller size, the Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery is considered a big attraction, as among the notable interments are stars such as Marilyn Monroe and Jack Lemmon. This cemetery has been a burial site since 1880, and it is located in the Westwood area. Tourists often appreciate the location of this memorial park, close to Beverly Hills and the University of California, Los Angeles campus. One of the most consulted Los Angeles tourism websites, Seeing Stars, includes the size of this cemetery among the aspects fans like the most (<https://www.seeing-stars.com/>). Differently from the other memorial parks, whose dimensions make it hard to find famous graves without a map, the Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park offers the possibility to see several stars' gravestones just by walking around.

Methodology

In this study, we adopted a multimethod qualitative approach, with the goal of understanding the

motivations behind tourists' visits to the Hollywood memorial parks. Our specific goal was to investigate the relationship between dark tourism and celebrity culture. In order to answer this question, we tried to understand two fundamental points of view. On the one hand, conversations with tourists and participant observations—during which we took pictures—helped us understand the tourists' perspective. We used these kinds of methodologies in order to answer questions such as: Why do tourists visit the Hollywood memorial parks? What elements attract tourists in these sites? How do tourists behave while in front of celebrities' burial sites? On the other hand, content analysis of the cemeteries' websites and other webpages supported our investigation in terms of the supply side. We centered our attention on how these businesses invite visitors to explore their cemeteries and attend the events they host.

First, we used on-site informal conversations with mainly tour guides and tourists. We carefully selected our participants, trying to find a balance in terms of origins, sex, and age. During the conversations, we paid attention to other nonverbal communication elements too, such as paralinguistic, sounds, facial gesture, proximity, touching, and kinesic movement. If we were interested in something they did not mention or if we wanted to know more about an aspect they mentioned, we used probes. In doing so, we asked questions such as: "You mentioned. . . . Could you tell me more about that?" (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006).

Additionally, we conducted both direct and participant observations. We spent several hours in the four memorial parks, observing tourists' behavior. We went to these locations at various times, from normal weekdays to days when special events were taking place. Additionally, focusing on both guides and tourists, we adopted Kusenbach's (2003) going-along strategy. Kusenbach described the "going along strategy" as the observation of "informants' spatial practices *in situ* while accessing their experiences and interpretations at the same time" (p. 463). Additionally, we followed Büscher and Urry's (2009) "shadowing/stalking" and "walking with" methods. According to them, in mobile ethnographies it is fundamental to observe "people's movement, their strolling, driving, leaning, running,

climbing bodies, bodies lying on the ground, photographing and so on" (p. 104).

Büscher and Urry (2009) further explained the importance of "following the people," directly observing mobile bodies through overt methods such as "shadowing" others, or covert methods that involve sociological "stalking." Urry (2007) also described the "walking with" method, where in a "co-present immersion the researcher moves within modes of movement and employs a range of observation and recording techniques" (p. 40). This strategy was especially helpful while attending guided tours or following tourists around the cemeteries.

We also decided to follow Liebenberg's (2009) example by including pictures in the data collection and analysis stage. Liebenberg gave a camera to the subjects she was studying and asked them to take pictures. The analysis of these images showed how the combination of interviews and images provided for a fascinating, rich data set where visual representation of lived experiences "allow communication to occur in the worlds we study" (p. 460). Furthermore, according to Liebenberg, the content of pictures is relevant to participants because of how they interpret the meaning attached to the content. As such we cannot understand the meaning of an image in isolation from the context from which it emerged. In other words, analyzing what and how people decided to photograph helped us understand what was meaningful to them. We included this activity in our "shadowing" and "walking with" moments, observing (and taking pictures) of visitors taking pictures. We observed how they behaved in front of their cameras, understanding, for example, if they took selfies close to gravestones. We included this data in the final coding process.

Finally, we conducted content analysis of several websites. Firstly, we analyzed the four cemeteries' official websites to understand how they present themselves. Secondly, we centered our attention on the so-called DMOs (destination marketing/management organizations), which the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2019) defines as "the leading organizational entity which may encompass the various authorities, stakeholders and professionals and facilitates tourism sector partnerships towards a collective destination vision." In the case of Los Angeles and Hollywood, some of the DMOs

were Discoverlosangeles.com and Visitcalifornia.com. Thirdly, our analysis focused on guidebooks, websites, and other tourist information webpages, which allowed us to learn more about the cemeteries' histories and their roles as tourist attractions.

Cemeteries as Destinations: From Dark to Celebrity Tourism

As mentioned in our introduction, scholars often define cemetery tourism as part of the dark tourism phenomenon. Analysis of tourists' behavior in Hollywood memorial parks suggests that the main reason why tourists visit Hollywood cemeteries is the relation these venues have with the movie industry. Although some visitors are attracted by thrilling stories of some celebrities' tragic deaths and other "mysteries," most tourists' motivations are centered on celebrity culture. While interacting with tourists, we observed that authenticity plays a key role in their experiences. Referring to their physical proximity to the stars' bodies, tourists define their visits at the Hollywood memorial parks as if they were encounters with the stars themselves. The Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board's official website explains:

Looking for a guaranteed way to spot a celebrity in Los Angeles? Look no further than a visit to one of L.A.'s unique cemeteries. Take a walk on the dark side and explore the fascinating cemeteries where generations of famous stars have been laid to rest. (Discover Los Angeles, 2019)

As one authorized guide specialized in Hollywood Memorial Parks explained to one of us, being in front of a celebrity's grave is the best way for visitors to feel like they are meeting the star. This situation represents a unique opportunity, especially for young people who did not have a chance to see the Hollywood "golden age" protagonists in person. A meaningful example in this case is Rudolph Valentino's gravesite. Although the Italian star died more than 90 years ago, tourists show a strong interest in visiting his grave. Given the huge following at Valentino's funeral, guides compare it to a modern mass media event, as he was one of the biggest stars of his time.

This kind of storytelling allows tourists, especially the ones who are not familiar with the old-

Hollywood stars, to get to know the people buried at the Hollywood cemeteries, and experience a more authentic Hollywood encounter. Several sociological studies focus on the relationship between tourism and authenticity, especially in terms of nostalgia (MacCannell, 1976; Urry & Larsen, 2011), with tourists frequently dreaming of an idealized past. In our research, we often observed many tourists standing at the gravesite of some stars from the black-and-white movie era fondly remembering the movie industry's good old days, asserting that Hollywood's glory got buried with those stars.

The cemeteries' locations also are fundamental factors for having an authentic Hollywood experience, being situated in strategic positions close to important movie industry landmarks, such as movie studios and the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The Hollywood Forever Cemetery, for example, is adjacent to Paramount Studios and tourists often express an interest in knowing more about the link between cemeteries and the star system. Tourists identify Hollywood Forever as one of the most authentic attractions, as Alleman (2013) pointed out:

Hollywood Forever is a dramatic fantasy world that could have been conceived by a Cecil B. DeMille or a D. W. Griffith as a background for an epic film. Inside, there are small Greek, Roman and Egyptian temples; obelisks and urns, beautiful green lawns, and majestic palm trees. At the same time, Hollywood is everywhere: Paramount Studios – with its water tower soaring into the air – is smack against the cemetery's southern wall. To the north, the Hollywood Sign dominates the Hollywood Hills. (p. 109)

The link between these cemeteries and celebrity culture is constantly highlighted in guided tours, which often begin with a suggestive view of the Hollywood sign and a brief overview on the history of the film industry. For each grave, guides provide a description of the celebrity's life and their movies, showing pictures and anecdotes. Thus, these kinds of tours represent an experience that goes beyond a simple visit to a gravesite. Although visitors' main purpose is to see the famous gravestones, their attention is also focused on the physical beauty of the location—with its lush gardens, fountains and artworks—and on the fascinating stories about the entertainment world.

Remembering Stars:
A Collective Sacred Experience

In addition to tourists' individual experiences, there is another aspect rooted in celebrity tourism that can be found in a visit to the Hollywood memorial parks: the so-called cult of celebrity. In order to describe the visit to a celebrity's home, Halpern (2007) used the term "pilgrimage" (p. 159), and the way fans behave in front of their favorite stars' graves is not different from a religious experience. The two cases we analyzed for this article, Marilyn Monroe's Memorial Service and the anniversary of the birth and death of Michael Jackson, show how proximity to the celebrity's body can represent an emotional, sacred, and collective moment.

From 1982, every August 5th—the anniversary of Marilyn Monroe's death—a large number of fans from all over the world attend a memorial ceremony in the Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park's chapel, near where the blonde diva is buried. During the event different speakers—friends, colleagues, photographers—talk about their relationships with Marilyn in front of other colleagues and fans. When one of the authors attended the ceremony, on August 5, 2013, the flowers, music, and tears of the people sitting in the church conveyed a sensation of being at a real funeral, as if Marilyn Monroe died only a few days before.

In the church were several women, of all ages, who were impersonating the blonde celebrity. Wearing recognizable Marilyn Monroe attire, makeup, and short curly, blonde hairstyles, those fans were silently sitting in the benches with tears in their eyes. Ferris and Harris (2011) described impersonators as performers who "move in and out of their celebrity role" (p. 74). Our impression is that those women were not there in order to play a role or to entertain an audience. Rather, it looked as if they were wearing those outfits in order to pay tribute to their favorite star.

It is interesting also to note how this experience would not be possible without a sense of collectivity. The main promoter of this ceremony is the fan club, Marilyn Remembered, whose members show a strong interest in promoting a sense of solidarity among fans:

Since its inception, Marilyn Remembered, has expanded into a large gathering of fans who meet to hear guest speakers who worked with or knew

Marilyn, discuss aspects of her life and careers, get the latest Monroe news and to socialize. (From Marilyn Remembered, ceremony booklet 2012)

In this quote, taken from the booklet published for the 50th anniversary of Marilyn's death, socializing seems to be the key word. Marilyn Remembered's members do not want simply to remember the star, they want people to interact with each other, and they want to celebrate the diva all together.

In Summer 2013, we also visited Michael Jackson's gravesite at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale on June 25th, the anniversary of his death, and on August 29th, his birthday. There is no access to the artist's grave, since he is buried in the family's chapel in the southern area of the Memorial Park, so tourists can only stop in front of the chapel's entrance and leave flowers or cards in the garden surrounding it. On August 29th, one of the authors arrived at the cemetery at 8.00 am—the opening time—and found a guard setting the space in front of the chapel. He explained that they were expecting a large number of fans and tourists that day and he was deciding where to place some crash barriers. Part of the street that goes to the gravesite also was closed, making it reachable only by walking.

We often visited the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, and we found it interesting how a place that usually is quiet and empty—not that many tourists know where Michael Jackson is buried—was radically transformed. During both days, the anniversary of his death and birth, a consistent number of fans visited Michael Jackson's gravesite. By noon, the grass of the garden outside the chapel was covered with flowers, balloons, cards, drawings, pictures, and signs with love messages for the "King of Pop." Fans, tourists, journalists, and camera operators crowded the street in front of the entrance.

Although this was not a fan club planned event, as fans independently organized their visits to Michael Jackson's gravesite, there are similarities with Marilyn Monroe's ceremony. Firstly, everyone was sharing an experience as if they were living a sacred moment. Despite the large number of people filling the space, nobody was speaking loudly or acting in a way that would distract others. Someone was playing Michael Jackson's songs at low volume, providing a soft soundtrack to that respectful moment. Secondly, we noted the presence of

several Michael Jackson impersonators. Similar to what we observed with Marilyn's "alter egos," their main purpose that day was not to take pictures with fans or to perform, but to honor their star, quietly standing outside the chapel. Thirdly, we noticed that the majority of the fans wore items that recalled Michael Jackson's style, such as glittery gloves, red leather jackets, and "King of Pop" themed t-shirts.

Also, as with Marilyn Monroe's memorial, at the ceremonies marking Michael Jackson's birth and death, we witnessed the significance of sharing the experience with others. Attendees exhibited the same emotions that one would observe in a more traditional sacral rite, where everyone becomes part of the experience. On the one hand, the memorial service is a get-together for participants who actually had met or worked with the diva who would share their memories with each other. On the other hand, as some guides explained, this event is particularly meaningful for young fans, who can meet people who knew the artist and who can tell first-hand "authentic" stories about her. When we attended the Marilyn Monroe gathering, fans were surrounding both Jimie Morrissey, Marilyn's hairstylist, and Douglas Kirkland, the photographer who, in 1961, took the famous photo shoot of Marilyn under silk sheets, asking questions about the blonde diva. These questions seemed important especially for tourists who came from outside of Los Angeles and who showed an interest in knowing how the Hollywood star-system worked.

We opened this section comparing fans' visits to a religious experience. In the examples of Marilyn Monroe and Michael Jackson we observed a situation that was different from the traditional tourists visit to the stars' graves. Those who were attending Marilyn Monroe's service or visiting Michael Jackson's gravesite were not merely visitors who wanted to see the memorial parks and the graves of the stars. They wanted to celebrate a person and share their emotions with other people who were there for the same purpose.

Marketing, Commodification, and the Promise of Eternal Life

During her trip to Los Angeles in 1954, the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci (2014) expressed surprise in seeing billboards advertising Forest Lawn Memorial Parks:

These are idyllic billboards, with drawings of little lakes, blue swans, pink birds . . . with a speech balloon that says: . . . "Beautiful girl, wouldn't you like to rest through centuries close to Bing Crosby? I have the perfect place for you." No, Bing Crosby is not dead, but he already bought a grave. All the wisest actors already bought a nice piece of land at Forest Lawn, where Jean Harlow and Carole Lombard, John Barrymore and Lupe Velez are buried. (p. 53, author's translation)

When one of us attended Marilyn Monroe's memorial service, a young woman at the entrance of the chapel was distributing to the other visitors a booklet, printed on high-quality, colorful paper, explaining the advantages of buying a grave at the Pierce Brothers Memorial Park. It looked more like a resort brochure than a cemetery description, depicting a peaceful location for eternal life and inviting people to take a tour of the facility.

By analyzing the brochures, posters, and websites of Hollywood memorial parks, we found that the cemeteries were employing corporate-style marketing models to sell their product, focusing on celebrity culture. We also observed that the celebrities who are buried in their venues work as testimonials, given the fact that they chose those locations as the places where they can be remembered forever. The idea of "being remembered" plays a fundamental role here. Featuring symbols, such as the name "Hollywood Forever" or the infinity sign at the gate, suggests to us that these places are in some way promising immortality. The goal of selling a piece of land thus represents the commodification of eternal life. When visitors enter the gates of the memorial parks, they are given the impression that the stars who are buried there will never stop shining.

As Fallaci (2014), who was herself in Los Angeles as a tourist, pointed out, in order to convince people to buy a burial plot Forest Lawn wrote on its billboards that Bing Crosby already bought his plot, which also again demonstrates how dead celebrities are treated as vehicles for the commodification of eternal life. Sociological and anthropological studies show how cemeteries work as mirrors of communities' past lives and historic eras (Warner, 1959) and we similarly observed how Hollywood memorial parks function as representations of Hollywood itself, especially in the eyes of tourists. In contemporary society, a memorial park can be seen as a "collective

representation, a sacred, symbolic replica of the living community that expressed many of the community's basic beliefs and values" (Francis, 2003, p. 255). Tourists who take Hollywood guided tours are often told that since the dawn of Hollywood, stars have wanted to hang out with other stars—going to the same restaurants and bars for example—in order to be seen and affirm their celebrity status. Similarly, in the case of Hollywood cemeteries, stars want to be buried with the other stars who made Hollywood great, and be remembered with them.

This strategy is appealing not only to celebrities, but also to common people who may be fascinated by the idea of resting close to the "immortal" ones. A large portion of promotional activities are addressed to relatives who would like a "beautiful resting place for (their) loved ones" (<https://forestlawn.com/>). For those who are worried about the expenses, Forest Lawn promises in a Google advertisement: "Forest Lawn-Affordable Funeral Services." This aspect also recalls the notion of the cult of celebrity described above: tourists and fans often see celebrities as divine beings with the gift of immortality, so the marketing strategies of memorial parks seek to capitalize on this idea. Interestingly, this concept of immortal celebrities follows a trend in celebrity culture literature that centers on the idea that fans do not see stars as normal humans, instead portraying them as almost divine creatures (Ferris & Harris, 2011; Halpern, 2007). Compared to celebrities, in earthly life common people are "outsiders." Yet outsiders can become part of that celebrity culture system by being buried close to the immortal ones.

Additionally, the aesthetic features of the locations are an important part of the marketing strategy. These memorial parks are not gray and sad spaces, but pleasant places with beautiful gardens, fountains, and sculptures. These features contribute toward creating an aesthetic experience for the visitor, who not only admires the stars' graves (with all the authenticity factors mentioned above), but also enjoys the luxurious landscape. The beauty of the location, thus, becomes also a way to "sell" the cemetery itself. This aspect potentially leads to a debate concerning the concept of a cemetery that "focuses on the survivors," since "the dead no longer need the administrations of the living" (Francis, 2003, 226). The goal is to convince the people who visit them to choose those places for their eternal

life, because their relatives will love to remember them in such enchanting locations.

Finally, our analysis of the cemeteries' promotional activities brought to the surface their interest in advertising other related events. The most prominent examples are the cultural activities, such as concerts, that take place usually twice a month at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, and that attract a large number of tourists. It is interesting to note that on the cemetery's website the link where people can buy tickets for these activities is right next to the link for funeral services.

Talking with tourists attending events, such as the Cinespia nights, we noticed that they were fascinated by the discrepancy between the peacefulness that is typically implied in a place like a cemetery and the "noise" of the Cinespia movie nights. During the day Hollywood Forever is a peaceful and sacred place, but during movie nights it is transformed in what we would define as a commodified product. It becomes a concert or a movie venue, whose main goal is to sell tickets. Talking with tourists at the Cinespia nights, we were informed that these events represent what is perceived as an authentic Hollywood experience. The cemetery's location, in the heart of Hollywood and close to Paramount Studios (where some of the movies that are screened during those nights were filmed), plays a key role. Visitors are watching Hollywood movies in Hollywood, close to the studios and to the graves of the stars who made them.

Discussion

At the beginning of this article we noted that some scholars define cemeteries as mirrors of the values of the communities that surround them. Our research aimed at understanding how Hollywood memorial parks reflect the dynamics of the Hollywood industry through the lens of celebrity culture. The analysis of tourists' behavior at the cemeteries showed strong analogies with traditional star-fan encounters, where the experience is shaped by the search for authenticity. Tourists take pictures in front of the graves showing they were physically close to the celebrities and they want to know more about Hollywood history through the stories of the most famous stars of all time.

If we analyze this phenomenon through the lens of dark tourism, we understand that, although

tourists' interest in the death or in the macabre can be part of the experience, it is important to take into consideration the idea of honoring the dead through celebrity-driven tourism. Also in this case, authenticity plays a key role on three levels. Firstly, through the cemetery visit, tourists can live an authentic Hollywood experience. These four memorial parks are located in Los Angeles, which is home not only to the movie industry but also to the most famous Hollywood stars. Surrounded by Hollywood-based landmarks, tourists can feel like they are having a genuine encounter with the star-system world. Secondly, authenticity is obtained through the physical presence of the stars. As one of the tour guides explained, when visiting famous graves, tourists often feel like they are meeting their favorite stars in person. They often take pictures in front of the gravestone, in order to document that proximity to the artist. Finally, we observed that nostalgia, related to authenticity, is an important feeling for these visits. It is especially so in the case of the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, which hosts the burial sites of Hollywood golden era stars. Tourists who remember those stars often claim they represented the authentic Hollywood, stating sadly that is hard today to find artists of that kind.

Additionally, we found the connection between celebrity culture and religion interesting, especially while attending Marilyn Monroe and Michael Jackson's memorial services. Similar to what happens during a religious service, the experience of attending these memorial services is enhanced by a sense of collectivity. Fans share their love for the dead stars with other fans, just as if they were participants in a religious ritual. To us, the behavior of tourists in front of their favorite stars' graves recalls what happens in Catholic churches when people worship Saints in front of their relics. Observing the lipstick marks left by fans on Marilyn Monroe's gravestone reminds us of worshippers kissing the saints' burial sites in European Basilicas. The messages and gifts in front of Michael Jackson's grave, moreover, recall the offerings that people leave under images in churches or sacred sites in order to ask or give thanks for protection.

Finally, our analysis of the cemeteries' marketing strategies shows a trend toward the commodification of the burial sites. Detached from their traditional sacred aura, cemeteries adopt corporate strategies to

sell pieces of land or movie tickets. On the one hand, the promise of eternal life is broadcasted through billboards, websites, and social media. The promise of eternal life, therefore, belongs to everyone. Also, tourists who visit the memorial park represent a possible target, since one day they could choose one of the four venues for their burial. And the investment becomes even more valuable if we think that the venue's appeal is enriched by the presence of famous celebrities' bodies.

On the other hand, going back to Debord's (1970) concept of the society of spectacle, it is interesting to notice how not only cemeteries lost their aura, but how they acquired new, entertainment-based purposes. During the movie screenings and concert nights at the Hollywood Forever, for example, the venue partially—if not completely—changes its purpose. Although our observations show that tourists are aware that they are in an unusual and somehow sacred place, the entertainment aspect seems to prevail. During those events, the location becomes a park, a theater, or a place to have a picnic on the grass while enjoying the show. Consequently, rather than remembering and contemplating the people buried in the cemetery, attendees focus their attention on what is happening on the temporary screen or stage.

In their research on celebrity culture, Ferris and Harris (2011) identify an asymmetry between stars and fans, where "the fan knows far more about the identity of the celebrity than vice versa" (p. 14). On one hand, this phenomenon happens also when tourists visit cemeteries and fans attend memorial events. They leave flowers and cards in front of the gravesites, as if they knew the celebrities personally, treating them as friends or family members. On the other hand, however, the marketing strategies of the memorial parks blur this asymmetry. Promising a charming environment at affordable prices and promoting the presence of stars in their venues, Hollywood memorial parks seem to aim at guaranteeing a happy and eternal life to everyone. In this article we have addressed the critical perspectives of scholars such as those of the Frankfurt School and the French theorist Guy Debord, as these apply to the Hollywood celebrity tourism. In our view, these critical perspectives provide the most insightful view for understanding celebrity cemeteries' place in the broader society.

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