"I'm just a tourist, here for the day" – Analysing the cinematic representation of tourists

How do tourist typology and stereotypes in films challenge academic discussions?

Erika Kalácska
S1005204
Master Thesis Tourism and Culture, Radboud University
Supervisor: Christophe Van Eecke
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Contents

Introduction

It is undeniable that the media constantly surround us. Its omnipresence can be well observed in our everyday life; reading a newspaper on the subway, encountering placards of advertisements on city buildings or going to the cinema to watch the latest blockbuster. However, the media is more than just a tool to entertain us or to help us to orientate ourselves in the world. It can be valuable in gaining a better understanding of contemporary life and culture. How does tourism then, come into the picture? To put it simply, "tourism is a key element of popular culture and it is fed, and feeds from, the media" (Long and Robinson, 2012: 109). Of course, the relationship between tourism and media is neither so simple, nor has all aspects of it been thoroughly investigated yet (Crouch et al, 2005). It is especially true with regard to films.

Since we live in a world where the media prioritize the visual image, it is important to make more use of films in critical discussions about tourism. However, instead of focusing on how films produce and circulate culture (as it is usually done in the relevant literature), this thesis will rather analyse how films reflect on and represent culture. Analysing films this way is similar to peeking into distorted mirrors. They help us to see what is being reflected but they also make us question why that reflection appears in that particular (exaggerated, or maybe surprisingly realistic) way. That is to say, by analysing cinematic representations, we can gain a more complex understanding of tourism as a cultural phenomenon. Moreover, films can challenge academic discussions as there seems to be some tension between how films represent tourists or tourism, and how the academic literature discusses them. This issue will also be explored in this thesis.

The main research question is how films, as particular forms of visual media and popular culture, represent tourists. Which stereotypes are used and what are the wider implications of those? How do cinematic representations add to, or nuance academic discussions? In order to receive answers to these questions, three films will be analysed. These analyses will be framed with and guided by a number of theories and concepts, including: tourist typology, stereotypes and the tourist gaze.

In the remaining part of the Introduction, these aspects will be elaborated in more details. Firstly, the theoretical frameworks will be discussed, starting with tourist typology and then moving on to the concepts of media bias, stereotypes and the tourist gaze (which are all closely

connected to each other). This will be followed by the methodology section about film analysis and the primary sources introducing the three specific films. Finally, the outline of the upcoming chapters will be briefly presented. Before focusing on any of these though, the larger phenomenon of the media–tourism relationship needs to be considered, in order to place the topic into a wider context.

There are two major bodies of literature that analyse this topic. On the one hand, there is some literature about how tourism uses the media, from guidebooks to virtual guiding apps; on the other hand, there are analyses about how the media affect tourism (Long and Robinson, 2012). This latter point is more relevant here because such research often focuses on films. Indeed, many have investigated how films have an economic impact on the tourism industry (such as O'Connor et al, 2008). Whilst these studies are useful in acknowledging the financial and marketing benefits of films, they tend to neglect the cultural-critical implications of the phenomenon, which will play a central role in this research. By contrast to these economic analyses, a substantial amount of the film-tourism literature examines how certain destinations are portrayed in films and how those portrayals affect the so-called "tourist gaze" (Urry and Larson, 2011; Buchmann et al, 2010; Lee, 2012). The "tourist gaze" is a collective and constructed way of seeing, including which touristic sites the tourists select to visit and in which way they look at those (Urry, 1990).

There is often some conflict in these discussions because the concept of the tourist gaze has an increasingly negative connotation, evoking association with the "mass tourist" who is often considered to be passive and easily influenced by the media. These discussions are very helpful in understanding the ways in which films can structure the touristic experience but at the same time, they caution us to treat certain terms with critical distance. However, there is not much research in this particular field that moves beyond the "films–destination branding–tourist experience" theme. This thesis aims to fill in the hiatus, by addressing films as reflecting on tourism rather than inducing tourism.

Although hardly used with regard to films, the concept of tourist typology is a very important framework here. Tourist typology is the identification of tourist types, based on their behaviours or motivations. It developed in the late 20th century as a response to the concept of the "mass tourist" which was frequently used in academic discussions up until then. Indeed, scholars from the 70s acknowledged that tourists are not part of a mass, i.e. they are not homogenous. Even though some scholars identified a wide range of tourists including religious

pilgrims, overseas students or businesspeople (Pearce, 1982), most scholars focused on the binary opposition of the "tourist" versus the "traveller" (Bauman, 1998 and Fussel, 1980). The basic distinction between these two types has remained central in almost all tourist typology works. For this reason, this thesis will also consider the fundamental differentiation of the stereotypical tourist and its opposite, the traveller (or post-tourist, adventurer, drifter). Furthermore, similarly to Pearce's work (1982), the idea that all tourists are necessarily leisure-bound will be complicated here.

On the other hand, more recent scholars have approached tourist typology from a very different perspective. They have examined tourist types with regard to a particular destination (McCinn and Cater, 1998; Wickens, 2002). Wickens (2002), for instance, identified 5 types of tourists in Chalkidiki, Greece, among which one type is labelled as the "Shirley Valentine type." *Shirley Valentine* is a film (dir. Gilbert, 1989) which created the stereotypical image of the "Greek gentleman." The film is about a bored middle-aged British housewife who travels to Greece where she finds romance and a new sense of self-worth. The "Shirley Valentine type", then, is a female tourist who either travels alone or with another female friend in the hope of encountering the "Greek God" (Wickens, 2002: 839). This example perfectly illustrates the two-way relationship between films and tourists: films can shape touristic expectations but those expectations also construct filmic portrayals, thus further spreading stereotypes (in this case, stereotypes about the romance-seeking female tourist and the exotic, Mediterranean lover).

These studies are useful for a number of reasons. Firstly, such categorisation is necessary for the industry because tour operators and promoters need to know what kind of tourists attend a specific site so that they can shape the supply according to the demand. Secondly, these studies are important because they acknowledge that touristic behaviours are context-dependent. Consequently, they also acknowledge that tourist types are not fixed.

Building on this argument, there is a particular body of typology literature which challenges the usefulness of the early typology theories. It questions the value of putting labels on tourists (Wilson and Ateljevic, 2008; Uriely, 2010) and argues that categories are limited. In this light, binary oppositions (tourist vs traveller, host vs guest) are deemed rigid as they lead to oversimplifications and overgeneralisations. These arguments are often called postmodern, in a sense that earlier typology studies are "modern" (Uriely, 2010). Postmodernism is a vast and complicated concept but in this thesis, it is used simply to refer to the increasingly adopted

theory that people are diverse and flexible. As some argue, postmodern in this context means that the touristic experience is complex and full of contradictions (Maoz, 2010: 424). In short, it will be argued in this paper that the behaviours and motivations of tourists are subject to change; and so the lines between categories can become blurred. Therefore, an important scientific relevance of this paper is that it contributes to the relatively recent body of literature which increasingly problematizes the classification of tourists and the use of binary oppositions.

Tourist typology is not an isolated concept as it is closely related to "stereotypes" and to the "tourist gaze." Since these two latter concepts are part of the so-called media bias, let us firstly examine what media bias means. The media cannot reproduce reality directly because it can merely re-present a version of it. As a result, the content of a media text is never objective; rather, it is influenced by various factors. For instance, political and economic factors, as well as the personal views of the producers can all influence how something is represented in a film. Stereotypes are the result of such biased and constructed representations.

Stereotypes support the norms of how a certain group of people is expected to behave (Monterrubio, 2018: 57). In tourism context, stereotypes are often shaped or accentuated by the consequence of the tourist-local interaction. The tourist gaze, then, is usually a stereotypical one. This concept does not only refer to a literal gaze but it also refers to the touristic experience in a wider sense. In other words, the tourists' way of perceiving and expecting locals' behaviours is often based on stereotypes that are largely present in visual media.

As opposed to stereotypes, "scripts" are not applicable to people but to situations, to a typical way how an event comes to happen. For instance, referring back to the *Shirley Valentine* example, films often represent the process of "female tourists finding love" in a typical series of events. Due to repetition, these events become conventionalised (Branston and Stafford, 2010: 114) hence they can often lead to real-life expectations. Again, such media-scripts are also part of the tourist gaze since the places or events that we encounter are usually associated with a specific narrative (i.e. with a course of events that we expect to happen). However, there is a significant counter-text to the *Shirley Valentine*-type of films that should be mentioned here: *Paradies: Liebe* (dir. Seidl, 2012) depicts how a middle-aged woman from Austria goes to the Kenyan beach to engage in sexual relationship with local men, only to find out that this is a business there and the men pressure her into giving them her money. In a sense, this film somewhat destroys the illusion and paints a gritty picture of the romance tourism phenomenon.

Still, most Hollywood films do not adopt this kind of approach as they generally focus on the romanticised version.

Examining such recurring media-scripts can help us to understand some important things about contemporary tourism. For instance, if there is an increasing number of films representing the "individual female traveller finding love" theme, portraying the process in a similar way each time, then what does it tell us? Is there an actual shifting trend that is being reflected in the film, or does the film just sell an ideal, hoping to affect contemporary society? It needs to be taken into account that even if the media is not telling us what to think, it certainly tries to tell us what to think *about*. The importance of this theory in this thesis is that there are a number of factors which influence how tourists are being portrayed in films. These factors need to be taken into consideration throughout the analyses.

Moving on from the main concepts and theories which frame the thesis, the methodology of this research will be film analysis. Film analysis is based on film theory and it is an academic approach, employed by scholars of cinema studies. It is "a written interaction *with* and *of* the images and objects and ideas produced *in* and *of* films, and the cinema industry" (Colman, 2014: 2). In other words, film theory is the reading of films in order to understand the film's relationship with society, with the audiences, with other forms of art and with reality in general. Consequently, film theory is not only about examining the film as an isolated entity but rather it is about positioning the film in wider critical discourses. Film theory should not be confused with film criticism, though the two often overlap because both have an analytical nature.

Depending on which aspects of a film are being analysed, the analysis might be based on a specific branch of film theory. These branches include feminist film theory (examining gender stereotyping or "the male gaze"); auteur film theory (examining the artist behind the film and their personal influence on it) or structuralist film theory (examining how the film conveys meaning via visual codes and juxtaposition of images). These will emerge in this paper's analyses, too, when applicable. It is important to note that the writing of film theory is a creative practice thus film analysis as a methodology is also subjective to some degree.

Evidently, the primary sources of this thesis are films. The main criterion of the selection was to choose films that are relatively distinct from each other, including the central character (i.e. the tourist type), the setting (big city or countryside) as well as the genre (from a niche drama to a popular romantic comedy). As the three films are quite different from each other,

this thesis does not provide a comparative analysis. Rather, it aims to present three case studies in order to cover a wide range of tourism-related issues. Of course, this is not to say that they are without connections to each other. As we will see, there are recurring findings and links between how tourists appear. The major thing the films have in common is that they are all contemporary American productions. The reason for this is that whilst each culture has films that are of significance and popularity to their own groups, the reach of Hollywood is global (Beeton, 2006: 182). Most people are familiar with American films and these can be analysed effectively in terms of the highly Westernised perspectives that are present in them.

Even though the details of the films will be explained in the relevant chapters, a brief description should be introduced here. *Lost in Translation* (dir. Coppola, 2003) is set in a big city, Tokyo, and features what we might call as the alienated "post-tourist." Apart from this, the postcolonial representation of the Japanese will also be analysed. By contrast, *Under the Tuscan Sun* (dir. Wells, 2003) is set in the Italian countryside and it deals with the typical female American tourist who turns into one of the locals/hosts. The other major theme of the film that will be analysed is romance tourism. Lastly, *Wild* (dir. Vallée, 2014) features an individual female traveller (backpacker, hobo or pilgrim?) on a long, self-discovering journey. A significant theme in this film that will also be discussed is female empowerment. At certain points other films will be mentioned too, or the books that were used for adaptation, in order to support the relevant arguments.

With regard to the structure of the thesis, each film has its own chapter. Each chapter presents a brief introduction in which some context about the film is provided. This is followed by the main body in which the various themes are analysed: as mentioned above, tourist typology is discussed in each case but the rest depends on the given film. Images will also be included in the text where necessary; all the images are screenshots from the movies that were made by the author. Each chapter presents a conclusion at the end, too. The last chapter, Conclusion will summarise the main findings and it will also include recommendations for future research.

1. *Lost in Translation*. Tourists, post-tourists and postcolonial representation of the "other"

Thanks to the stereotypes originating from the media, we have a rather firm idea what a "typical tourist" looks like and how they behave. However, there are some media portrayals that look beyond the major stereotypes. These representations can deepen and complicate our understanding about some of the most basic tourism-related issues. For instance, can we call a businessman a tourist? If a tourist is reluctant to explore the foreign culture, then what type of tourist is he or she? Why is it often places like the hotel's bar where tourists get to know each other? How do tourists relate to the locals? These are all questions that apply to contemporary tourists and that are discussed more or less in the academic field. Contributing to these theoretical debates, this chapter will analyse how *Lost in Translation* represents tourists and the above mentioned questions.

It is generally argued by scholars that the very definition of tourism is the motivation to travel for pleasure or escapism (such as Zuelow, 2016: 9). However, *Lost in Translation* challenges this definition. Firstly, I will analyse the fluctuation of touristic motivation in the film, thus attempting to answer whether to what extent the characters can be considered as tourists if originally they do not travel to Tokyo in order to have a vacation. I will then consider what type of tourists they can be seen as; here I will draw on the academic term of the "post-tourist." In the rest of the chapter I will gradually move on from analysing the specific characters to taking the larger contexts into consideration: I will examine the space that most often surrounds them (the hotel as the touristic bubble) as well as the issue of postcolonial representation that frames the whole film (Japanese people as the "other").

First of all, some background information about *Lost in Translation* is necessary. The film was written and directed by Sofia Coppola in 2002 and it was both a commercial as well as a critical success. It stars Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson, playing Bob and Charlotte, two characters who feel alienated and lonely. Charlotte is a young Philosophy graduate from America, escorting her husband who is a music producer and has business in Tokyo. Bob, an American middle-aged B-movie star arrives to shoot a commercial in the same city. They stay in the same hotel and they start to form a platonic relationship throughout the film.

Who qualifies as a tourist?

The first, fundamental question that the film raises (with regard to tourism) is: who is actually a tourist? Coming from a background in psychology, Pearce considers a wider range of motivations for tourists than just pleasure and escapism (2005). He argues that personal development and self-actualisation are also reasons why people travel, especially in our modern, globalised world. He further argues that – moving away from the generally accepted definition – religious pilgrims, businesspeople and study abroad students can all be considered to be tourists to varying forms and degrees. Building on this argument, let us first examine how Bob appears in the film.

We first see him in a close-up as he is dozing off in the taxi which takes him from the airport to the hotel in Tokyo. As we can see, he is wearing elegant clothes rather than casual ones. This fact in itself does not suggest anything explicitly but if we consider the widely spread stereotype according to which a "typical tourist" usually wears leisure clothes, then we could say that Bob's clothes already indicate that he is on business rather than on holiday. After a few seconds, Bob wakes up and gazes out the window. We can see what he sees from the car as the camera follows Bob's point of view. These images show Tokyo as huge and overwhelming with its flashing neon lights and giant skyscrapers towering above us. The significance of this shot is that it establishes an atmosphere that will be present throughout the whole film: a feeling of alienation in a chaotic, modern world. Bob's facial expression shows that he is fascinated by what he is seeing and this forecasts that he is open-minded to explore Tokyo as a first-time visitor.

In spite of this, for quite some time we only see him in his hotel room or during work: he does not really do any "touristy" things. However, when considering his behaviour, we have to take his personality and other factors into account (he is jet-lagged, emotionally burnt out and has a midlife crisis). It is only later that he does engage in some leisure activities, such as playing golf (fg. 1) and it is only after he meets Charlotte that he goes out with her into the city and has some actual fun. This shows that the contextual influences – such as who his companionship is – can change his motivation and behaviour significantly.

Indeed, the character of Charlotte is more open to go out and visit Tokyo, even when she is alone (fg 2). (The way *how* she experiences the city is a different question and will be discussed with regard to post-tourism). However, she still spends a substantial amount of her time inside her room or roaming the foyers of the hotel, seemingly bored. One of the first scenes

in which we see her illustrates this rather effectively; she is sitting on the windowsill and she is gazing out of the window (fg 3). Again, personality and other circumstances – feeling disconnected in her marriage and searching for her way in life after graduation – probably play a role in Charlotte's choice of staying in the hotel most of the time. At any rate, if we consider the several stereotypes about tourists that exist in the media, we can see that Bob and Charlotte do not quite fit into those images: they do not seem active or eager to explore the new city and culture they are in.

Figure 1: Bob's idea of leisure

Figure 2: Charlotte wandering in the city

Figure 3: Staying in, gazing out

The most important aspect here is that there is a gradual change in their motivations and behaviours throughout the film. After the two have met, they venture into the city more, eating out in restaurants and mingling with locals in a nightclub. Thus there is a process shown in the film, from the characters first being indifferent to then becoming more outgoing. A relevant example to be mentioned here is from another film called *In Bruges* (dir. McDonagh, 2008). The two main characters, Ray and Ken are British hitmen who are sent to Bruges on a mission against their will (at this point they can hardly be called as tourists). Ray stays indifferent and annoyed throughout the forced vacation but Ken is actually rather enthusiastic: he decides that if he has to be in Bruges, then he will make the most out of it. He engages in some proper sightseeing and appreciates Bruges just like "normal" tourists. This film, along with *Lost in Translation* effectively demonstrates that contrary to academic discussions, there is not always one set, clear line between who we consider a tourist and who we do not.

This fact points toward more recent discussions in academia that adopt a postmodern approach (Uriely, 2010). These discussions remind us that people do not always have clear-cut and straightforward motivations and that their behaviours are shifting. What started out as a business trip might turn into something more. The opposite might be true, as well: even if the original purpose of travelling is pleasure or escapism, certain circumstances can shape one's attitude in a negative way (becoming disappointed or uninterested). Therefore, the film reaffirms the argument that motivation and behaviour are complicated and depend on personality as well as on other factors. Thus to answer whether Bob and Charlotte qualify as tourists or not: they are not the usual tourists we are used to from the media stereotypes, but they *are* some kind of tourists. This, then, raises the next question: what kind of tourists are they?

Tourist typology: Post-tourists

This introduces the theory of what is called in academia the "post-tourist." Whilst this particular term is relatively recent in the academic field, the meaning attached to it was present in discussions as early as the second half of the 20th century. These discussions used different names to describe post-tourists, referring to them for instance as "antitourists" (Fussel, 1980: 47). In general, it is argued that the antitourist or post-tourist is a self-conscious, role-distanced and cynical person (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994: 136). In other interpretations, the post-tourist is playful and creative because unlike the mass tourist, they do not receive and consume the pre-

packaged touristic experience passively which is distributed by the media (Campbell, 2005: 202). This means that sometimes they might mock other tourists or interpret the mainstream touristic trends critically. To bring a contemporary example for this last point: the post-tourist will not pose as holding the crooked tower of Pisa and snap the expected photo of it (Osborne, 2000: 118). They will either come up with an entirely different way of photographing the tower or they will take an unflattering photo of all the other tourists, posing all the same way. Cinematic examples can be found with regard to this critical-mocking attitude, too. In another film, *Copenhagen* (dir. Raso, 2014), the main character visits some of the highlights of Copenhagen but with a rather clipped enthusiasm; he often poses on the sites with showing bad gestures or goes to the famous Little Mermaid statue when it is completely dark only to smoke a cigarette. Referring back to *In Bruges*, at one point, Ray makes fun of three American tourists who are represented in an extremely stereotypical, insulting way. Whilst Ray's behaviour towards the "typical" American tourist might mostly stem from his generally rude attitude, it still indicates that he considers himself to be different from them.

This sense of being different from (maybe even better than) other tourists is a significant aspect of the post-tourist. Consequently, adopting the behaviour of a post-tourist implies a certain cultural capital. One reason for the increasing need to differentiate ourselves from the masses might be the fact that we live in a (post)modern, highly globalised world where we are surrounded by recycled images, mainstream trends and superficial values (Jameson, 1991) – an atmosphere that is effectively captured by the visual representation of Tokyo. Whilst this rather negative perception of the world is debatable, it would partly explain why some tourists might feel the need to be unique and why the past and a sense of nostalgia becomes more and more attractive for contemporary tourists (Uriely, 2010). From this perspective, being a post-tourist might indeed be a conscious choice, in order to draw a distinction between them and the mass tourists. (Although it should be noted that the term post-tourist is only used in academia, not in real life, therefore people do not actually think of themselves as "post-tourists"; they merely think of themselves as "different.")

Again, *Lost in Translation* complicates this issue. Perhaps the most significant example is the scene in which Charlotte travels to a shrine where monks are praying. The very fact that she visits the site indicates that despite her initial reluctance to leave her hotel room, Charlotte is a tourist who chooses to explore some culture. On the other hand, the post-tourist aspect comes into the picture in the following scene, when she is back at the hotel and tearfully calls one of her friends on the phone and says (00:13:12): "I went to this shrine today. And there

were these monks and they were chanting. And I didn't feel anything. You know?" The interesting aspect here is that she is thoroughly disappointed in her own unimpressed experience. Her distress implies that she was expecting to experience some kind of feelings and considers her visit at the shrine a sort of failure. Thus she is not "different" by choice and she is not proud of it. Therefore, considering the film's representation of Charlotte, contrary to academic arguments, in fact not all post-tourists are proud (or even aware) of themselves being critical, cynical and hard-to-impress. Rather, some might feel troubled by it, just like Charlotte does, as she finds out during her shrine-visit that she is not touched by the experience at all. Her conclusion about this – implied by the distressed phone call – is that maybe there is something wrong with her.

This could suggest that there is an expectation in society about how tourists in general should experience things. If someone differs from that, then it is unusual and it is not necessarily a good thing. *In Bruges* also demonstrates this issue effectively. When Ken is about to enter the tower on the main square of Bruges, Ray vehemently objects and says that he would rather just sit on a bench and wait until Ken is finished. Ken annoyingly remarks: "Ray, you are about the worst tourist in the whole world" – meaning probably something like: who in their right mind would reject some sightseeing? This comment from Ken illustrates that we, as a society, would expect a "good" tourist to grab any chance to see the sights and to have a nice experience. This expectation is linked to the theory of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990). The concept of the tourist gaze means that there is a typical selection of which sites we look at and the way how we see those things. It is this collective tourist gaze that post-tourists are trying to avoid.

Consequently, a further essential characteristic of the post-tourist is that they avoid the tourist magnet places. Instead, they tend to seek alternative sites, adventure and authenticity (Feifer, 1985). For this reason, the post-tourist is similar to the widely used labels of the traveller, explorer, drifter or adventurer. Unlike the mass tourist, they usually go off the beaten track. They are interested in exploring the authentic culture of the locals and in experiencing it with the use of all their senses; tasting, hearing, touching, smelling – this also refutes Urry's theory (1990) because he argues that the vision is the most dominant factor in structuring the touristic experience (Crouch et al, 2001: 259).

In terms of Bob and Charlotte, these criteria apply to some extent but not entirely. It is true that we do not see them going to the mainstream touristic sites in Tokyo. However, we do not really see them interested in the hidden, authentic, undiscovered aspects of the city either –

unless we count the fact that they thoroughly explore the nightlife of Tokyo and meet some Japanese friends (fg 4-5). This way of exploring a city can be observed in other similar films, too, such as in *Before Sunrise* (dir. Linklater, 1995). In this film, instead of visiting the popular places of Vienna, the main characters choose to go to underground pubs and wander on hidden alleys, all the while engaging in philosophical conversations and generally implying that they are different from the mainstream.

In another scene in *Lost in Translation*, after a quite awkward lunch in a restaurant, Bob and Charlotte discuss the following in a humorously-outraged manner (01:26:40):

> Charlotte: *That was the worst lunch.*
> Bob: *So bad. What kind of restaurant makes you cook your own food?!*

This is only one of the jabs that they make towards Japanese culture. Watching the film, it becomes apparent that Bob and Charlotte are not really interested in getting to know Japan outside the walls of the hotel. When they do go out to eat in the restaurant or to have fun in a nightclub, their focus continues to be on bonding with each other rather than on experiencing Tokyo. When Bob's wife from America assures him over the phone that she is glad Bob is having a good time, he is quick to object (00:56:33):

> Lydia: *Look, I'm glad you're having fun.*
> Bob: *It's not fun. It's just… It's just very, very different.*

Whilst this "difference" is precisely what post-tourists and travellers are searching for, Bob, on the other hand, does not sound appreciative about it. This means that considering the major post-tourist characteristics set by the academic field (being critical, creative, adventurous and so on), we can observe that some of them apply to the characters of *Lost in Translation*, but certainly not all.

For this reason, as the film illustrates, labelling tourist types is not always helpful. We cannot just point at a person and describe them as being a post-tourist or antitourist or traveller because that would ignore the fact (already discussed above) that touristic motivations and behaviours are diverse and constantly change. We might be both "typical tourists" and "post-tourists" at the same time; it largely depends on the context. We might act differently based on the location we are at or the people that surround us. Thus in order to avoid analysing the characters as isolated entities, it is essential to position them into larger contexts. Let us now

examine two major issues that both shape and reflect the tourist self: space and the locals. As we will see, these two aspects are closely related to each other.

Figure 4-5: Mingling with locals: Bob in a nightclub and Charlotte doing karaoke

Inside the tourist bubble

Space is an important part of every touristic experience. Whilst in the academic field the binary opposition of the tourist versus the host is widely used, there is a third essential aspect in the picture which sometimes tends to be ignored: space, which negotiates between the two. It is argued that space is more than merely a physical location because meaning and behaviour are constructed and negotiated through space (Wearing eat al, 2010: 111). For instance, the way a space is constructed – e.g. partitioning an area between tourists and locals – can construct and change the relationship between people. If space is analysed, it is usually done with regard to the so-called "tourist enclaves" or "tourist bubbles." In general, these refer to a place where there is relative uniformity, where tourists can feel safe behind the walls of the familiar and they can create their own reality (Smith, 1977: 6). As *Lost in Translation* shows, however, not only cruise ships or backpacker communities can count as tourist enclaves: hotels or airports –

often called meta-spaces or pseudo-places (Fussel, 1980: 43) – are also locations that are recognisable and familiar for tourists.

The hotel in *Lost in Translation* has a significant role. Not only because several scenes take place there but because it can also count as a tourist bubble. It is especially interesting to examine Charlotte's hotel room. Unlike Bob, Charlotte wants to turn the impersonal hotel room into a home-like place by decorating it with various things, such as with Japanese flowers. The fact that her room is messy but cosy does not only reflect her personality but it also indicates that she spends a lot of time there (fg 6). At first she rarely leaves the confined space of her bubble and even after she does, she spends quite some time in the hotel – at "home". Again, staying behind safe walls is not what a post-tourist would usually do. However, as the hotel highlights the distinction between the outside world (loud, bright, foreign) and the inside (silent and safe), the film reaffirms the theory that at the end of the day, all tourists desire to go back to a safe haven – post-tourist or not. It is also inside the hotel that Bob and Charlotte bond with each other the most. The space itself is not the only reason they are bonding, though; all the foreign people surrounding them play a significant role in it, too.

Figure 6: Plenty of time spent in the safe bubble

That is to say, the guests of the hotel do not consist solely of Western tourists, there are locals there as well. Tourists do not only interact with each other in tourist bubbles because they are confined in a space together but also because there is a sense of belonging between them. This sense of belonging is strengthened by the presence of locals. When there are locals around, forming groups for tourists is even easier because the distinction is even stronger between foreigner and local. The first bonding in the hotel between Bob and Charlotte happens when

they are standing in the elevator, surrounded by Japanese people (fg 7). The two eventually look and smile at each other and it is mainly because they are the only Western people in the room. What they share is that they are all outsiders in a foreign culture; this gives them a common basis for interaction. Even though it is only a brief smile, a mere acknowledgement of each other, the result is that an instant bond is created. This mutual affection is then acted upon later in the hotel's bar, where the two enter into a conversation. Indeed, hotel bars and lobbies are typical locations for developing these stranger-yet-familiar relationships between tourists (Smith, 1977:6).

Figure 7: The only Western guests: first encounter in the elevator

Postcolonial representation of the "other"

The presence of the locals is also essential when examining the larger context, not in the least *how* they appear. In order to understand how they are represented in the film, let us overview briefly what postcolonialism means in this context. Postcolonial discourse within the tourism field focuses on tourism in the less developed countries; on the cultural, political and economic implications of tourism encounters; and importantly, on issues of representation and identity (Tucker and Akama, 2009: 504). Such discourses developed because it is believed that "colonialism has been, and still is, one of the main sources of influence on the West's interpretations of and relationship with people from other (mainly non-Western) places and cultures" (Tucker and Akama, 2009: 505). In other words, even though the territorial control of the colonised world ended in the 20th century, it is believed that the West has an ongoing central and dominant ideological position, thus marginalising the non-West to the peripheries. Marginalised non-Western people are often referred to as the "other".

Regarding this, it is important to consider how such power relations between the West and the Other can manifest in the media in particular. For example, if a guidebook presents the "others" of a specific country as being there either to serve the tourists or to act as the exotic and interesting Other, then this shows serious power relations (Bhattacharyya, 1997). Indeed, the "other" is an important aspect of the tourist gaze because the gaze is based on "difference" (Urry, 1990). Contemporary marketing in the media represents quite a few dominating myths about the "other" (Tucker and Akama, 2009: 511). The "primitive but noble savage" myth refers to people of a less developed country (e.g. tribes in Africa) who, according to the tourist gaze, live a wise and harmonious life in close contact with nature. Another myth in promotional texts is the "tropical paradise" which indicates a place that resists globalisation and modernisation thus remains unspoiled. These myths and other colonial narratives within contemporary tourism are being critically analysed in postcolonial discourses.

Although these particular myths or stereotypes mostly concern Africa, South America and Oceania, other non-Western countries are also subject to be viewed in a specific way by the Western tourist gaze and Japan is no exception. Japan is anything but a less developed country, considering their excellence in technology and their leading position in the global market. Still, there are some wide-spread stereotypes about Japanese people among Western tourists. Before examining some specific examples, it is important to mention that the role of stereotypes is crucial in the media. On the one hand, stereotypes are useful because they can help us to orientate ourselves in the world and to make sense of our surroundings. For instance, the stereotype according to which Japanese people do not usually showcase their emotions in public can help us to follow suit and respect this aspect of their culture when we visit the country. However, there are some less positive stereotypes which cautions us to be critical – especially when those stereotypes display a colonial underpinning (a Western vs Other cultural bias).

This is especially the case when it comes to films that are American productions, just like *Lost in Translation*. These films are inherently based on a strong Western perspective, not to mention the possible extra influence of the director's personal views. Sofia Coppola stayed in Tokyo for quite some time during her youth and as she stated, she had always imagined that she would once make a film in the place that fascinated her so much (Mitchell, 2004). Consequently, she stated in interviews that she had not had any negative intentions with how the Japanese were portrayed in her film: instead, her focus was on the story, on the relationship between Bob and Charlotte (Mitchell, 2004). Whilst Japanese critics also acknowledged that

the story of *Lost in Translation* is good, they complained about the image that the film paints about them. As the stereotypical representation of the "other" is made from a Western point of view, it is unsurprising that the movie was well-received in America and Europe but it was not really appreciated in Japan. According to the locals, the film is "unpleasant" because of the cultural bias and unfair representation of the people (Marquand, 2004).

Several examples support this biased image in the film; a moment here and there, and entire scenes as well. The smaller moments include how the Japanese cannot pronounce the letter R or how Bill cannot shower properly because of the low height of the shower head. A significant scene which presents the "weirdness" of Japanese people in a lengthy manner is the gaming room scene. Japanese people are portrayed as being addictive, childish and obsessed; it seems that the outer world (i.e. reality) ceases to exist to them. Charlotte wanders around the room, contemplating them (fg 8-9). Her facial expression shows fascination and amusement; no trace of negative feelings and no explicit sign of contempt. However, the whole scene clearly depicts Japanese as "robotic and cartoon-like" (Marquand, 2004) and portrays Charlotte as more mature, because she is so out of place and new to this kind of experience.

Figure 8-9: Charlotte in the gaming room

What are the implications of these biased cultural representations, then? What possible purpose do they serve? Referring back to Coppola's claim about her focus being on Bob and Charlotte, we might conclude that this stereotypical representation of Tokyo was used in order to provide an effective setting for the narrative. The city's visibly modern and globalised environment efficiently highlights how lost and disconnected the two characters feel. The representation of the locals might serve this purpose as well; by emphasizing how different they are from Western people, we get a better sense of how much Bob and Charlotte feel like they do not belong (literally: in Tokyo, and metaphorically: in their own lives and relationships). Whilst this explanation does not excuse the unflattering image of Japan, at least it justifies its purpose in providing a backdrop for Bob and Charlotte's complicated emotional state.

Another explanation for the stereotypes might be that they serve as a source of humour. This, however, basically means that Japanese people are being made fun of. Again, this clearly indicates that the film's target audience is Western people. Western tourists, in particular, can identify with Bob's and Charlotte's bewilderment in that foreign place because this stereotypical and exaggerated portrayal captures how first time visitors usually see and experience Tokyo (Marquand, 2004). However, for anyone that has spent some more time there, these stereotypes can seem unfair.

Nevertheless, to the film's credit, we have to take into account that *Lost in Translation* never claims to portray Tokyo objectively or authentically (King, 2005). In fact, there are a few instances where the perspectives are reversed and we see how Asians see Western people. For instance, at one point, Bob is standing in the elevator with some Japanese businessmen (fg 10). On the one hand, we can argue that since the camera height matches his height, we are positioned in his point of view; him standing in the middle of the crowd and towering above the others indicates a Western superior perspective. On the other hand, we can also argue that in this instance, he is the "exotic other" and not the Japanese, as he is so clearly out of place. In another scene, we see him as being weird and silly through a Japanese man's eyes, when Bob fails to understand the man in the hospital waiting room and thus the man makes fun of him. In addition, when Bob is filming his whiskey commercial, the director – another Japanese man – clearly sees him as the manifestation of the stereotypical Hollywood masculinity (King, 2005) because he asks Bob to perform all the cliché moves and gestures associated with this masculinity. Thanks to these instances we not only witness how Western tourists see the locals but we also get a glimpse of how the locals see American tourists. These glimpses reveal that Asians might see Western visitors just as stereotypically as vice versa.

Figure 10: Who is the "exotic other"?

Conclusion

To sum up this case study, two major issues were examined; firstly, the representation of the main characters as tourists and secondly, the larger contexts that shaped and reflected their touristic behaviour and identity. As the film illustrates, the most widely used definition of the tourist in the academic field is too limited; we have to acknowledge the complex nature of people's motivations. The film also demonstrates that the use of the so-called post-tourist label is somewhat controversial: as Bob and Charlotte's example shows, whilst some characteristics of a certain category might apply to a given person, others might not. For a thorough analysis of representation, context is also essential – we need to position tourists within a context to see the full picture. Accordingly, the film highlights that hotels as touristic bubbles have a significant role in how tourists interact with each other. Regarding the production-related context, we could observe that there is a strong Western perspective in the film and this influences how the tourists and the locals are represented. Thus both academic discussions and films need to be treated with a critical distance. All in all, *Lost in Translation* is a film that can be analysed from various perspectives such as the unique visual style or the complicated relationship between people who feel alienated in a big city, among others. Examining how the film reflects tourists and tourism as a cultural and social phenomenon is only one perspective, but it proved to be a useful analysis because it could challenge, confirm and nuance some academic arguments.

2. *Under the Tuscan Sun*. From tourist to local and the case of romance tourism

There are numerous contemporary American romantic comedies/dramas that take place either in a big city such as Rome or Paris or take place in the countryside, such as in Tuscany or in the vineyards of Provence. What these films have in common is the American (or sometimes European) tourist who has a lot of contact with local people and sometimes even moves to live at that foreign place. Just to name a few of these films: *Under the Tuscan Sun, Eat Pray Love* (dir. Murphy, 2010), *When in Rome* (dir. Johnson, 2010), *Letters to Juliet* (dir. Winick, 2010), *To Rome with Love* (dir. Allen, 2012), *A Good Year* (dir. Scott, 2006), *Leap Year* (dir. Tucker, 2010). These commercial films deserve more in-depth attention as they are useful material to analyse certain issues. For instance, what stages do tourists go through from being merely a visitor to someone with significant attachment to the destination? Which stereotypes are used when portraying the locals? How is the romantic atmosphere conveyed and what is the films' relation to the so-called romance tourism phenomenon?

This chapter seeks answers by analysing one representative of the above mentioned group of films: *Under the Tuscan Sun.* Drawing on academic arguments about the tourist versus host topic, I will analyse how the main character becomes from tourist to (an almost) local. I will discuss how she relates to the locals, how the locals see her, and how she settles into a new culture. In the second section I will focus more on the romance aspect, looking at the significance of the location as well as the idea whether academic romance-tourism matches cinematic romance-tourism.

Under the Tuscan was written and directed by Audrey Wells in 2003. The film is loosely based on a book by the same title, written by Frances Mayes in 1997. However, as the book and the film are almost completely different, there is no point in comparing them. The film stars Diane Lane who plays Frances, an author who – after having a divorce – travels to Tuscany. She impulsively buys an abandoned villa in the countryside and hires some construction workers to renovate it. The film spans over about one year in which Frances tries to find her place in her new home, forming relationships with her neighbours and managing her personal life. The film was a box office success and whilst the story was deemed superficial, the beautiful setting of Tuscany and Lane's performance were praised (for instance Ingman, 2003 and Mitchell, 2003).

Tourist typology: From guest to host

One of the first and most significant piece of literature about tourist typology belongs to Cohen (1972). As a response to labelling people as homogenous mass tourists in the early 20th century, he identified a number of different tourist types, thus acknowledging the heterogeneity of them. His main categories are the organised mass, the individual mass, the explorer and the drifter. The first two are parts of the so-called "institutionalised tourists" who – regarding their destinations – are socially separate from other people. By contrast, the latter two are parts of the "non-institutionalised tourists" who usually meet a wide range of people (Cohen, 1972). Whilst these categories are too general, they are helpful in beginning to sort some basic characteristics. Using this as a starting point, let us now analyse how Frances becomes from an "institutionalised-organised" tourist to someone who transforms into a local. Firstly, though, it should be noted that when I refer to the "local" status of Frances, I do not think along the lines of citizens but rather along the lines of behaviour.

At the beginning of the film Frances receives a booked ticket to a 10-day tour in Tuscany that originally belonged to two of her friends. The fact that this is an organised tour helps to convince Frances to accept the gift: everything is pre-arranged for her. The next time we see her she is already in rural Italy with the other tourists. All the tourists wear a uniform baseball cap; this way not only do they have a group identity but they can also find each other more easily in the crowds of a city. Secondly, there is a designated tour guide who has an object with him at all times. This is a huge sunflower which he holds up when leading the group so that the tourists will not get lost (fg 1-2). Thirdly, the agenda of the tour seems to be rather typical, too; there is a hired bus for the group which takes them from one place to next.

Even though this organised-tour aspect is only shown for about 7 minutes in the film, we can conclude a couple of things. On the one hand, we can observe that these are all typical characteristics of an organised tour. On the other hand, the idea of participants being socially separate from locals could be nuanced. Indeed, the tourists form a close-knit group but this does not mean that there is no interaction between them and the locals at all. For instance, when given free time, Frances wanders away from the group; she notices an advert on a wall about a house that is on sale. As she is reading the advert, a local called Katherine approaches her and addresses her (00:18:48):

Katherine: *Are you going to buy it?*
Frances: *No, no. no. I'm just a tourist, here for the day.*

They then continue to chat. This scene, as well as the fact that the participants receive free time at each destination shows that the tourists do have some opportunity to mingle with locals. Thus based on Frances' example, we can see that organised tours do not necessarily provide a limited touristic experience in which participants are entirely segregated. Rather, such tour can be a flexible experience in which individuals can find their own little adventures. Of course, with a schedule to follow there is a limit to their freedom. No wonder that the film quickly dismisses this tour-plot and shows Frances leaving the group behind, thus indicating that more exciting things are about to happen.

Indeed, there is a 180 degree turn in the tourist status of Frances: from being an "organised mass tourist" she becomes something that is difficult to characterise. Since she does not continue her travelling and sightseeing alone, in this sense she is not an "individual mass tourist." Neither is she an "explorer" or "drifter" except for the fact that she does go off-the-beaten track and later meets a wide variety of local people. However, the reason why she does not fit into either of these categories is that they all assume a touristic motivation. By contrast, Frances has completely different ambitions: after leaving the group, she goes to find the house about which she has earlier seen the "for sale" advert and she buys it. This decision to live there is the first step in her transition: from "just a tourist, here for the day", she starts to become a local.

Figure 1-2: The group on the bus, and the sunflower held by the tour guide among the umbrellas

The host-guest relationship is most often examined in terms of ethnic tourism in the academic field. This means that the host-guest dynamics are analysed with regard to holiday resorts and other tourist enclaves where the locals largely depend on tourists' money (Bimonte and Punzo, 2015). Postcolonial power relations are significant frameworks for these analyses. That is because in such tourist resorts there is usually a superior-inferior relationship between middle/upper class Western guests and the ethnic hosts whose role is to serve the guests. However, *Under the Tuscan Sun* presents a different kind of relationship. Here, hosts and guests are equal and unlike in a tourist resort, there is a lot of interaction between them. Tourists' impact on the hosts' environment is not a theme in the film; rather, the focus is on how a single tourist transitions into being a local, over an extended period of time.

How does a tourist become a local then, according to the film? There are several hints in the film regarding the process. Firstly, Frances opens an Italian bank account for the transaction of buying the house. Secondly, although it is never explicitly mentioned, she tries to learn Italian. Thirdly and most importantly, she actually wants to get to know the people around her and to embrace Italian culture. This last aspect could be said about the post-tourist or the backpacker as well because as academia often argues, such tourists are the most likely to engage in authentic, local relationships and cultural experiences (Maoz, 2007). In this light, the case of Frances is an interesting one: it could be argued that she hinges on the border of a tourist and of a local because she is as curious and open-minded as a tourist but has stronger motivations in actually adapting to the locals because unlike a tourist, she wants to stay there permanently and she wants to be one of the locals.

In the academic field the tourist-local division is a rather strong binary opposition which is often used as a basic starting-point for various arguments. However, as the film emphasizes,

the line is not always clear and sharp. The position of Frances is only one example. For instance, if a tourist stays at a certain place for a longer period of time than usual, lives with locals, has a temporary job working with them – then that tourist can in fact be seen as a local to some extent (again, thinking along the lines of behaviours and not citizens). For this reason, the separation of the guest from the host should not always be taken for granted.

To further support this argument, there is a particular character in the *Under the Tuscan Sun* who takes up the role of the negotiator between the locals and Frances: Katherine. She is an aging British actress who has been living in Italy for a very long time. She speaks Italian fluently and she is the one who translates for Frances at the beginning. She is also the one who reveals some facts about Italian culture to her (such as "flirting is a ritual in Italy"). As some scholars argue, such person is the "cultural ambassador" who explains local traditions to the tourist (Jaworski et al, 2003: 141). She is somewhat like a guardian and advisor, smoothing the line between the natives and the newcomer. She is yet another example of a person who – whilst technically not an Italian – behaves and lives like one and is fully accepted by the community. In fact, the character of Katherine foreshadows what Frances might become in a few years. Until then, we only see the start of her journey to become a member of the local community.

The representation of this journey is somewhat idealised. The film paints a (not quite realistic) picture in which becoming from tourist to local is relatively easy. At first, Frances doubts whether her decision to buy the house was reasonable and she struggles with the renovation of it. She is also lost and lonely as she still has not processed her divorce. However, these are mostly inner struggles which do not have too much to do with Italy. She does not seem to face many practical problems – even the language barrier is not presented as a difficulty for her. Instead, the film emphasizes the positive aspects of her efforts in settling down in a new community: she invites her neighbours and she is invited by them; and she takes part in their traditions and culture (such as harvesting olives together). Thus the film presents a romanticised and idealised scenario: Frances escapes from her personal problems in San Francisco and finds the solution in what the characters call "romantic Tuscany." This is a recurring element in similar films (*Eat, Pray Love; A Good Year* etc) where the protagonist finds peace and happiness after either moving to a different country or after simply interacting a lot with locals. That is because by getting to know the locals and their culture, the foreigner can gain new perspectives, wisdom and experiences. This indicates that locals are usually represented in the same way all the time; in a romantic and stereotypical way.

Stereotypes of the tourist gaze and of the host gaze

Moving on from Frances, it is essential to analyse how the majority of the characters, the locals are represented. It can be observed that there are two major ways in which they are portrayed. On the one hand, they appear as people who honour traditions much more than modernity. Most of the locals are elderly people in simple clothing who do not (or barely) speak English. Family and religion seem to mean a lot to them and several examples support this. Regarding religion, the villa Frances moves in is full of religious motifs including the picture of the Virgin Mary on the bed-frame. Furthermore, as the voice-over of Frances tells us, she is surrounded by people who are all strong believers. She is admittedly not a Catholic; yet she is often given advice by locals such as to "have faith." Regarding family, young and old seem to live together and work together, at least around the household. The strong bond of the families can also be observed in how they harvest olives together and how they always eat together (fg 3-4). The family gets together at the table – from the great-grandma to the young ones – to have an abundant and boisterous meal: it seems to be a typical image from the everyday life of Italians. Based on these representations, it could be argued that the locals appear in a romanticised way as they are portrayed to be kind people who live a harmonious life in contact with nature and traditions instead of following mainstream trends or modern technology.

Figure 3-4: Getting together to honour traditions

On the other hand, the other way of representing the locals is completely different from this tradition-honouring, simple but kind people living in the countryside. It is the portrayal of the flirtatious, handsome Italian men who always try to seduce (foreign) women. There are several occasions in the film where Italian men flirt shamelessly with Frances even though she is clearly not open to it. In one scene Frances goes to Rome where she is chased by three men (fg 5-7). She tries to escape but the men keep following her until Frances bumps into another man. To get rid of the three men, she decides to pretend that this random man whom she has never met before is her husband. This man called Marcello of course starts to flirt with her, too (00:58:17):

> Marcello: *I know you think maybe I'm just trying to pull you up.*
> Frances: *Pull me up? Oh,* [you mean] *pick me up. Yes, there is that chance.*
> Marcello: *[…] You are probably one of those crazy American women like "Charlie's Angels" and maybe you are going to kung-fu me in the head and steal my car.*

Later on the flirting continues:

> Marcello: *You have beautiful eyes, Franceska. I wish I could swim inside them.*
> Frances: *[bursts out laughing]*
> Marcello [offended]: *What?*
> Frances: *No. It's just that's exactly what American women think Italian men say.*
> […]
> Marcello: *You are asking me to sleep with you?*
> Frances: *Yes.*
> Marcello: *Hm. That is exactly the kind of thing we Italian men think American women say.*
> Frances [embarrassed]: *Oh…*

This conversation indicates two things. Firstly, neither of the characters are happy when they hear the prevailing stereotype about their people; Marcello is offended and Frances is embarrassed. This shows that whilst not only tourists but locals are also familiar with stereotypes, those stereotypes are exaggerated. Secondly, we finally get a glimpse of how locals' see American tourists. In academic literature it is very rare that residents' stereotypes about tourists are examined (Monterrubio, 2018: 57) and this film does not go in-depth about this issue either. However, moments such as this conversation confirm that locals definitely have their own stereotypes about tourists, too – if not else, then from movies like *Charlie's Angels*. In fact, referencing *Charlie's Angels* points out the important role of media because the media does not only affect the tourist gaze but it also constructs the host gaze as well. At any rate, Frances is still distinctively American in the eyes of the hosts.

Figure 5-7: Just a few of the stereotypical-looking Italians who flirt with Frances, and her being literally chased by men

We have to consider what these representations suggest. Just as tourism research is strongly biased towards the view of the one-sided "tourist gaze" (Jaworski et al, 2003: 156), so does *Under the Tuscan Sun* exemplify that most American commercial films also rely on this biased perspective. The camera lens, after all, are the extension of the tourist gaze (Osborne, 2000). The result is that hosts become stereotyped. Indeed, as it was argued and illustrated above, locals in *Under the Tuscan Sun* are trapped into cliché stereotypes instead of going beyond the surface and portraying them in a more complex manner. It is understandable though if we consider the wider production context. *Under the Tuscan Sun* was not meant to be an

artistic/niche film but rather an easy, entertaining romantic comedy which addresses a wide range of audiences (though probably mostly women). Stereotypes, then, are used because they make us recognise people and events more easily. To put it differently, they can serve as identification points for the viewers as the stereotypical characters may seem more relatable. However, as stereotypes can shape our expectations and behaviours about how locals should be treated, viewers need to have an awareness of how stereotypes are used in these films. They are usually exaggerated and constructed in a way that might induce unfair and negative cultural perceptions. Whilst *Under the Tuscan Sun* does not present any stereotypes that are outward offensive (although it is up for debate), the very fact that it manages to exploit all the existing stereotypes about Italians warns us to have a critical distance.

Role of the romantic landscape

Since there are so many romance films that take place in Italy, it is important to consider the reasons and wider implications of it. In terms of geography, academic literature mostly analyses places like the Caribbean, Asia or Africa. Clearly, a romantic location for Western tourists most often equals an exotic location in a developing country. However, as several films remind us, we should not forget about the case of Western tourists finding Western countries exotic. The reason why American tourists choose such Western destination for an exotic and romantic holiday over a developing country is probably that tourists want safety above all. In other words, it is argued that tourists generally want an exotic holiday; but not *that* exotic, because the destination still needs to be a non-threatening place (Fan et al, 2017: 998). *Under the Tuscan* reflects this issue, too; Frances is not surrounded by ethnic locals or by a completely unfamiliar culture, yet Italy and its people still appear as exotic, different and romanticised. Thus based on films like *Under the Tuscan Sun* (and with brief mention of the "heritage film" later on), it is worth examining what counts as romantic in the media and why, especially with regard to Italy.

The romance of travel, in various forms, is often emphasized by the media (Trauer and Ryan, 2004: 483). For instance, landscape is a crucial element of romance. In a wider sense, it fits into the theory that space is an essential aspect of tourism; as mentioned in the previous chapter, tourists and hosts are not the only agents in tourism. The way a space is constructed and perceived by people can have a significant effect on touristic experiences (Wearing eat al, 2010: 111). If a place is generally considered to be romantic, it is more likely that people will initiate intimate relationships there. For instance, the beach is typically seen as a romantic

location (Panagakos, 2016: 293), especially in sunset. Indeed, the beach is solely connected to the romance plot of *Under the Tuscan Sun* because that is where Marcello lives. Whenever Frances is at the beach, Marcello is with her. However, it should be noted that the beach in sunset is not inherently beautiful: we were taught to see it as beautiful. In other words, what we consider romantic is socially constructed – just as the tourist gaze itself is not innocent or natural but socially and culturally constructed (Larsen, 2006: 245).

Besides the beach, ancestral villages are also seen as romantic locations (Panagakos, 2016: 294). Frances lives close to a small village with a cosy little square and medieval atmosphere. Her house is literally a ruin, surrounded by lush nature. Nature, too, has long been associated with romantic ideals, wildness and originality (Trauer and Ryan, 2005: 489). Accordingly, there are several images in these films that could belong to a postcard or a painting (fg 8-11). These images are usually long shots which means that the view of the scenery is shot from a distance. As these films are commercial ones, such shots do not serve artistic purposes but they are establishing shots subordinated to the narrative, meaning that they appear to inform the viewer where a scene takes place (Bordwell et al, 1985: 24). Still, they have more significance here because they create a distinctive atmosphere and construct the tourist gaze, too.

What are the origins of these romantic locations and what do they imply? Regarding the historical origins of Italy being considered as romantic, the Grand Tour has to be mentioned. In the 17-18th century young, noble British travelled in Europe, mostly in order to study and gain cultural capital. Italy was one of the most popular destinations as it presented both antique heritage (e.g. Colosseum) as well as the Renaissance (e.g. Florence). The art movement of Romanticism only enhanced the appeal of the country in the 19th century. During the Romanticism, painters started to create works that reflected the "sublime" and the "picturesque" and emphasized emotions (Zuelow, 2016: 41). The sublime encompassed mountains and the sea whilst the picturesque referred to romantic ruins of forgotten castles or the harmonious countryside. These images then had an influence on the tourist gaze (much like visual media constructs our views today) as people started to travel in order to find the sublime and the picturesque. As Italy has ruins, romantic countryside and sea, these all further enriched its attractiveness. This fact is also reflected in a number of films that are often called "heritage films", such as *A Room with a View* (dir. Ivory, 1985) or *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (dir. Sturridge, 1991), both films set in Tuscany. Since these costume drama films are often based on 19th century literature, they are set in the 19th century; they usually feature privileged English

classes and the historical context in such films is that of the colonial British empire (Van Eecke, 2017). For this reason, regarding the represented experiences of the tourists, these films are different from *Under the Tuscan Sun* but what they do have in common is that the landscape has an important role in the story. Indeed, they also depict the Tuscan landscape in a rather romantic way. This supports the argument that the appeal of Italy is not new: the country has long been associated with the romance.

The implication of the romantic landscape is that heritage is greatly valued. The increasing appeal of heritage for tourists means that it is considered to be authentic; as the present seems problematic, so the past seems more idealistic. Consequently, everything related to nostalgia and tradition seems romanticised. Traditions are strongly present in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, too: family, gastronomy and religion appear as important values.

Figure 8 – 11: Images of the romantic tourist gaze: sunset, sea and picturesque landscapes
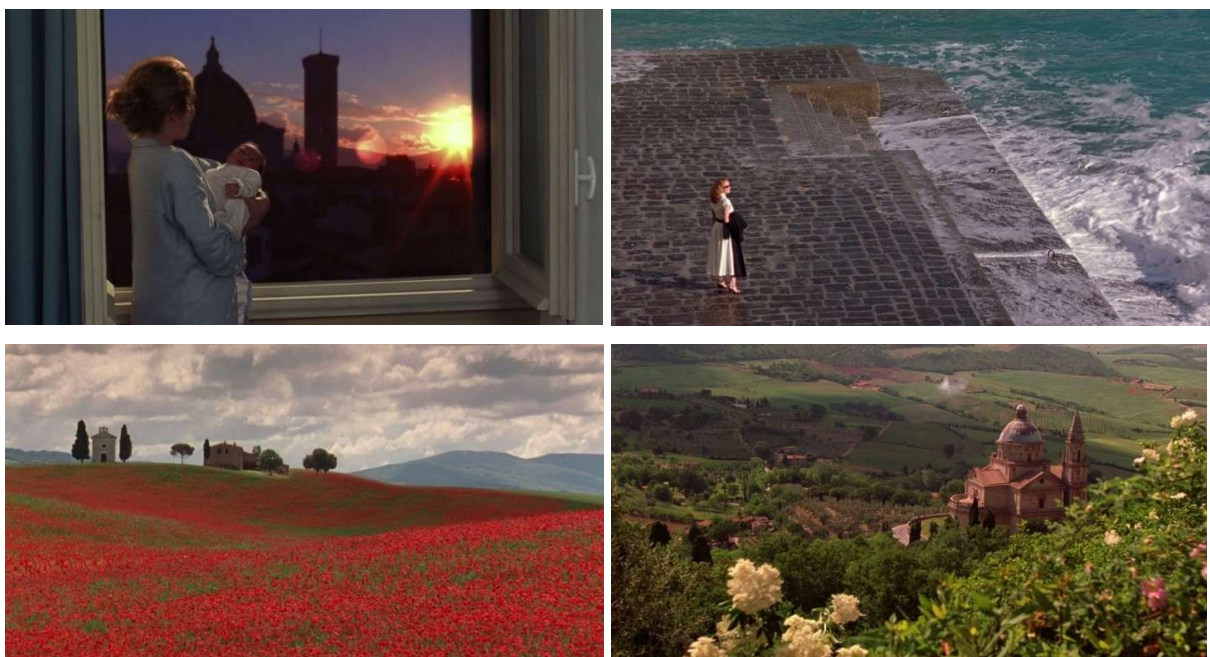
Romance tourism: in film versus academia

Having established why and how the location is associated with romance, let us now examine the other essential aspect of romance-tourism: the motivation and behaviour of the female tourist. In order to analyse this, we first have to consider the definition of romance-tourism. Romance tourism is mostly defined as the female version of sex-tourism. Sex-tourism is a kind of leisure activity in which men travel in order to initiate sexual relationship with local women, usually for their money (Jeffreys, 2003: 223). In romance tourism on the other hand, it is the

woman who travels in the hope of finding a local man with whom she can have a physical relationship, just as the Shirley Valentine type of tourist does (Wickens, 2002). Sometimes female tourists might want more than just a physical affair; they might want to experience a more serious emotional attachment, too. Their motivations can differ but they are most often: searching for identity, experiencing empowerment and escaping from the conventional gender roles that are expected from them in their home societies.

Drawing on these characteristics, we can observe that some of them apply to Frances but not all. Considering her motivation, at first she rejects the idea of meeting anyone. When her friends first offer her the ticket to what they call "romantic Tuscany", she objects (00:10:24): "Thank you so much, but there is not a way I can go on a romantic tour of Tuscany right now. I'm not ready to meet anyone." She has just finalised her divorce; whilst this might be the very reason why some women choose to escape into a no-strings-attached affair, Frances is the opposite because she refuses anything to do with romance. Consequently, since her motivation to travel is not to find love but simply to have a change of scenery, we cannot say that she is a pursuer of romance tourism. However, later she still has a short-lived and mostly physical relationship with Marcello. Clearly, the romantic landscape has worked on her. This indicates that, again, people's motivations and behaviour are complex and subject to change.

Regarding how she relates to local love-interests, as it was already mentioned, she perceives them in a very stereotypical way. However, she herself is aware of this fact. For instance, after buying the villa she speaks to her American friend on the phone. The friend asks how she plans to reconstruct the building and she replies (00:28:32): "I'm in Italy, I can just hire the muscular descendants of roman gods to do the heavy lifting." She is completely aware of the Italian-lover sort of stereotype and does not fail to make ironic comments about this. There is a bit of a contradiction here: the film is fully built on stereotypes yet Frances is represented as someone who tries not to fall for such silly stereotypes; rather, she often mocks those.

Playing upon such romance-related stereotypes is important, then, in order to establish the differences between foreigner versus native (Panagakos, 2016: 289). There are numerous occasions where these differences are emphasised in such explicit remarks as "These Italians know more about having fun than we do!" (00:17:28) or in the earlier presented flirtatious conversation between Frances and Marcello where they are faced with the stereotypes about their own people. What all these instances have in common is that they all reinforce the line

between "we, Americans" and "them, Italians." There is a sense of being so different from each other and it is necessary in romance tourism because if the love interest was similar to the tourist, then the tourist could have just stayed at home and meet with a fellow citizen. The more different or exotic the native is, the more exciting and challenging it is for the foreigner to engage in an intimate relationship with them.

As we can see, even though the academic definitions do not really apply to Frances, romance is still a significant element of the film. Based on how romance is represented in *Under the Tuscan Sun* and in several similar films, we can observe that it is not only about finding romance and it is barely ever about going abroad to have an affair. Rather, romance is about the landscape which is socially constructed to be romantic; and it is also about the authentic and idealised traditions of the locals which enhance the value of legacy and heritage. Furthermore, romance is also about the lifestyle that the tourist adopts (often in the process of becoming a local): forming relationships with locals, adopting to their cultures and being more in sync with their own inner self than they were in their original country. Considering this, romance is self-care (Trauer and Ryan, 2005: 489) and not necessarily an intimate relationship with someone. In this respect, what *Under the Tuscan Sun* and such films add to academia is that the interpretation of romance-tourism could be broadened, encompassing all these aspects apart. To put it differently, I would argue that romance-tourism should have a wider interpretation in the academic field. Perhaps "romantic tourism" is a better way to describe what these films represent because they refer to the romantic nature of the whole experience of being abroad whereas the term "romance tourism" refers to the purpose of travelling which is to find a romantic relationship.

There is a further reason why the repeating pattern of these films is worth more academic attention: often "there is a particular script for romances" (Panagakos, 2016: 289) which can affect real tourists' behaviours and expectations. In *Under the Tuscan Sun* and other related films even if the female tourist does not seek romance, apparently it still bounds to happen. Indeed, if the woman is not a typical romance-tourist, just like Frances is not one, and even if there is not a conventional happy ending for the couple, the conclusion of such films is that romance is inevitable to happen when a foreign person engages with exotic locals. The chicken-egg question emerges here, too. Do films *reflect* real tendencies of society or do filmic reflections *affect* the real tendencies of society? In truth, there is a two-way relationship between media and society as both reflect and influence each other at the very same time (Long and Robinson, 2012). However, it could be argued that these films are more famous for affecting

tourists than reflecting actual societal trends; there are some arguments which support the idea that these kinds of films have a particularly important role in constructing the tourist gaze (again, the gaze is not only gazing upon sites and people but in a wider sense, it is a way of experiencing and anticipating things).

One such argument is that storytelling is an essential part of the tourism experience; whenever a story is attached to a destination, people remember it more (Kim and Youn, 2017). Consequently, as these films have specific, easily recognisable and easy-to-memorise narratives, they might be more effective in constructing touristic expectation. In other words, in such films the sights are not isolated entities (i.e. not merely part of the setting) but they have more significance because they are very closely connected to the narrative. Thus the expectation of that narrative/script becomes part of the tourist gaze. For instance, we know that once we are in Paris, we ought to visit the Eiffel Tower. However, the Eiffel Tower is not only famous for its impressive architecture but it is also famous for things that we associate with it: things that the tower symbolizes. Paris and the Eiffel Tower are generally associated with romance (e.g. proposing on top of the tower is something that has become a frequent, real-life script) and this association is largely due to films such as the ones discussed in this chapter.

In short, the main reasons why the stories/stereotypes represented in these films are so often recreated in reality by actual tourists are that 1: these films are commercial box-office hits and they are seen by a very large number of people and 2: the narrative patterns are repetitive and simple thus they are easily recognised, memorised and relatable. As mentioned in the Introduction, one research found that there is a particular type of female tourist in Greece who are called by the author as "Shirley Valentines", who travelled for the sole purpose of finding love in a way that they saw in the movie (Wickens, 2002). On a broader level, this is a perfect example of film-induced tourism and on a more specific level, it shows that romance tourism as a phenomenon is significantly affected by films; women actually anticipated the performed media-script to happen in reality, too.

Conclusion

Under the Tuscan Sun presents a somewhat unique scenario regarding tourists. Whilst the main character starts out as an "organised mass tourist", she quickly becomes someone who is closer to being a host than a guest. The tourist versus local binary opposition is frequently used in the academic field but as the film demonstrates, these categories should be treated in a more flexible

way. Frances is indeed in the process of becoming an immigrant but at the same time, she is still American, speaking English and often being frustrated by Italian stereotypes. This indicates that on the one hand, the lines are getting blurred but on the other hand, there is still a strong sense of "us" and "them." Stereotypes have a major role in the film, as the hosts appear through rather stereotypical lens. However, at some points we get to see that locals see Frances in a stereotypical way, too, mainly as the American female tourist who wants to have a fling with an Italian man. A particular aspect of the foreign-native relationship is romance. This occurs in *Under the Tuscan Sun* and in several other films that are built on the same patterns (in terms of plot, setting and the employed stereotypes). These films show that academic definitions could be broader: instead of focusing on the actual romance between tourists and locals, there could be more focus on experiencing romance in a wider sense: in the landscape, in the heritage of locals and in a particular lifestyle where more emphasis is put on such idealised things as traditions, nostalgia, nature and culture.

3. *Wild*. Representation of the backpacker and female empowerment through the journey

Just a pack on your back and the road stretching ahead – an image that we have all seen in various forms of media. These representations can be found for example in guidebooks (such as in *Lonely Planet*) or on social media (such as on *Pinterest*) and they tend to portray backpacking in an appealing, romanticised way: the backpacker is adventurous because they go off the beaten track; the backpacker engages in the culture of the local people; the backpacker avoids typical touristy spaces. These indeed all sound very idealistic but we have to look beyond the surface. Does backpacking really connote pleasure and freedom or is it more complicated than that? What types of backpackers can we distinguish, based on cinematic representations and the academic field – and is there a validity in doing so? How does empowerment play a role in the ideology behind backpacking? This chapter will analyse how the above mentioned issues are represented in the film *Wild*.

Having examined two films that position the tourist into the sphere of the "cultural other" (whether that is a foreign place, culture or people), this third case study now analyses a person who is a tourist in her own country and who barely meets other people. This chapter will analyse two major tourism-related issues. Firstly, just like in the other case studies, tourist typology will be examined but this time within the broader framework of the ideology behind backpacking, asking: why does this form of tourism appear to be authentic? Secondly, I will narrow the focus down to the gender aspect of the film. The case of "female empowerment through tourism" is also an important topic within academia and by analysing the representation of the solo female traveller, we can observe how the film contributes to such discussions.

The film is based on the book *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, a memoir by Cheryl Strayed which was published in 2012. The script was written by Nick Hornby and the film was directed by Jean-Marc Vallée in 2014. It stars Reese Witherspoon as Cheryl Strayed, who completed the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) in 1995 when she was 26 years old. The PCT is a roughly 4000 km long hiking trail along the coast of the Pacific Ocean in the USA, from south to north. The film is surprisingly faithful to the book; whilst a two-hour movie of course cannot display all elements of a 300-page book, the scenes and dialogues that made it into the film are almost exactly the same as in the book.

Tourist typology: backpackers, hobos and pilgrims

If we aim to better understand what the overall ideology behind backpacking encompasses, then firstly we have to consider the definition of backpacking and secondly, we have to consider the major motivations of backpackers. In terms of the first point, what seems to be a general consensus in academia about the definition of backpacking is that it means going on a self-organised and multiple-destination journey with a flexible itinerary (Myers and Hannam, 2008: 177). As the journey usually occurs over an extended period of time, it is generally based on a low budget (Teo and Leong, 2006: 109). This means that backpackers tend to stay at cheap hostels, camp along the road or sometimes they hitchhike in order to save money. Backpacker tourists are fundamentally pleasure tourists (Niggel and Benson, 2008) who want to experience the culture of the locals. Their primary focus is on culture, nature and adventure and on avoiding mainstream touristic venues. At the same time, in several cases the findings showed that backpackers did end up on popular touristy places (Maoz, 2007: 123). Thus backpackers are often not really interested in the locals' culture, after all; they rather just meet fellow backpackers and form groups with them.

The controversies do not end there, though. If backpackers are generally claimed to be pleasure tourists, then how come a lot of research presents motivations that can hardly be called pleasurable? For instance, apart from exploring locals' culture and engaging in adventurous experiences, numerous backpackers say that they are on the road for something more, something deeper. This mostly means finding answers within oneself or escaping from personal problems. Consequently, most of the backpackers embark on their journey when their lives are at a turning point (Maoz, 2010: 124; Myers and Hannam, 2008). In case of young people, this can be just after graduation, before moving away from the parents and starting their adult, professional lives. In case of older people, it can be at times of divorce; when the children have grown up and moved away; when they have quit their jobs; or when they have a midlife crisis. On the one hand, these allow people to have substantial time to travel, usually lasting several months. On the other hand, these events indeed inspire people to travel in order to make peace with the current events of their lives, to find meaning or to leave societal expectations behind. To what extent these motivations count as pleasure is dubious.

To further examine backpacker motivations, let us analyse how they appear in *Wild*. The first significant remark about Cheryl's motivation happens relatively early in the film: she stays in a motel the day before she starts the hike and she calls her ex-husband Paul on the phone. At this point, we as the audience are not yet given any specific information about what happened

to Cheryl and what made her decide to hike the PCT. The strained phone conversation includes the following (0:05:06):

> Paul: *I'm sorry you have to walk a thousand miles just to …*
> Cheryl: *Finish that sentence. Why do I have to walk a thousand miles?*

This is followed by confused silence and then the subject is changed. This exchange shows that even the characters themselves are not quite sure why Cheryl embarks on this journey. Furthermore, the key word in the exchange is "have to." Instead of "want to" – which would indicate a motivation based on pleasure – the journey is something that "has to" be done for Cheryl. This also supports the idea that hiking a 1000 miles just for fun is not the case; there is a serious personal reason which "forces" Cheryl to accomplish the hike.

There is another example which further strengthens this point. It is only in the second half of the film that Cheryl finally meets another hiker who is also female, called Stacy. Grabbing the rare opportunity to talk with a fellow woman backpacker, they engage in a conversation (1:14:30):

> Cheryl: *Why are you here?*
> Stacy: *I don't know. I just need to find something in myself, you know? I think the trail is good for that.*

Stacy is a middle aged woman and that is basically all that we know about her, but her answer indicates that something must have happened in her life that prompted her do the hike. Her answer is similar to what Cheryl says in the book about her own motivation: "I thought it would help to find my center" (Strayed, 2012: 116). However, in the film such a straightforward expression never happens.

Nevertheless, as the film proceeds, we start to understand more and more about what happened to Cheryl in the past (mostly due to flashbacks because the film has a memory-driven narrative). Still, there is not an explicit reason articulated by Cheryl about what she hopes to achieve with the hike. When she is halfway through the journey, she leaves a voicemail to her ex-husband in which she gives a brief summary of her whereabouts. At the end of the call, she says in an indifferent tone (0:51:30): "Anyway, I'm still alive. And that's all my news. And the sum total of what I've learned on my hike." This implies that whatever she hoped to gain from the hike is not happening for quite a long time. It is only in the very last minutes of the film, after she has arrived at her destination, that her voice-over summarizes her experience. In short,

the journey helped her to make peace with her mother's death as well as with her heroine-addicted past: she realised that even if she could go back, she would not change anything because everything has taught her some important life lessons. This suggests that it is only after completing the hike that she herself can articulate what she needed to learn. As the film shows, backpacker motivations and expectations are so complex and unclear that sometimes even the backpackers do not know them clearly.

Based on such vague motivation, it is difficult to decide which tourist-status characterises Cheryl the most. Building on the fact that backpackers are fundamentally pleasure tourists who want to explore locals' culture, we cannot declare Cheryl to be a backpacker. In the film she calls herself and others on the PCT simply as "hiker." This seems fitting but it merely refers to the mode of travelling rather than to the people themselves doing the hike, including their ambitions. If we insist on strictly-speaking definitions, we may also call her simply a "traveller" as she travels over a long period of time from point A to point B. However, this is also a limited way of looking at Chery and her tour, because the journey is not only physical but also a spiritual and emotional one. How can we call her, then? In other words: which academic definition matches her cinematic representation the most?

A relevant and important category here is that of the vagabonds or hobos as defined by Bauman (1998). Vagabonds, hobos or drifters are on the road not because they want to be, like tourists do, but because they *have to be* for reasons beyond their control. They are basically homeless and they do not stay at a particular place for long because they are generally not welcome (Bauman, 1998: 93). There are some aspects in this approach that apply to Cheryl. Whilst it is a strong exaggeration that she is unwelcome by the locals along the way, there are two major instances which indicate how they see Cheryl. The first instance is when she spends the night at a married couple who take her in after seeing how hungry and miserable she is. When Cheryl is about to sit down to the table, already set for dinner, the wife stops her just before she is about to touch the chair. She covers the chair with some newspapers so that Cheryl will not soil it. Indeed, Cheryl is very much out of place in the nice home of the couple: she is visibly dirty and slovenly. The second instance is when she goes into a boutique which sells make up for ladies. She is trying on lipsticks when the shop assistant approaches her (fg 1). At first, the assistant is shocked at her sight and then says in a condescending manner, covered up with fake politeness (1:30:35): "The nicest lipstick in the world can't help a girl if she doesn't take care of her personal hygiene. It really needs to be a priority, sweetie." Again, Cheryl is completely out of place with her huge backpack, ragged clothing, dirt on her face and smelling

quite bad (something which she admits at one point on the film). Thanks to these scenes, we can see Cheryl through the eyes of "normal" people. The way they see her, then, is that she appears to be a hobo – and they treat her as such.

Figure 1: Out of place in a sophisticated boutique

As far as the homelessness and unemployed aspect of the vagabond/hobo is concerned, there is a contradiction there. Whilst Cheryl is technically indeed homeless and unemployed, she strongly rejects the idea of herself being a hobo. In the book, she states: "Being a hobo and being a hiker are two entirely different things" (Strayed, 2012: 179). A relevant scene in the film (0:52:37) is when she is hitchhiking and a car pulls over. The driver, called Jimmy, wants to make an interview with her. He works for the "Hobo Times" magazine, driving around the country and searching for hobos whom he can talk to. Cheryl objects; "You are mistaken, I am not a hobo" but Jimmy keeps referring to her as such, to which she annoyingly repeats "Let me reiterate to you, I am not a hobo!" The conversation continues:

> Jimmy: *Okay, so if you are not a hobo, where do you live?*
> Cheryl: *I'm between places right now. […]*
> Jimmy: *So you're trying to tell me you're not a hobo, so that means you have a job then, right?*
> Cheryl: *I've had a whole lot of different jobs. Up until a couple of years ago, I was studying.*
> Jimmy: *I hope you don't think this is too personal, but I've noticed it is often a personal trauma that forces people out of their life and into the hobo life. Would you say that's been the case for you?*
> Cheryl: *This is my life. I am just taking a little time out. This is not a hobo life. I don't know what else to tell you.*

Regarding this scene, there are two major implications. Firstly, this example reinforces Bauman's argument that there is usually a personal trauma that uproots people from their

everyday lives (1998: 92). As the whole film portrays Cheryl's journey, we indeed get the impression that hikers or backpackers are somewhat hobos (or vagabonds or drifters) because they are almost completely detached from society. Secondly, Cheryl is annoyed and embarrassed by the hobo label. Even though technically she is a hobo to some extent, there is a strong reason why she does not think of herself as such. The reason is that she has a purpose with her journey: she has a final destination and she has every intention of getting back into society and settling down.

Considering these, referring back to textbook definitions: yes, she is doing the journey because she has to but no, she is not doing that because external forces made her to. She needs to do this for inner, personal and spiritual reasons which urge her to find meaning and peace but the journey, after all, is an arbitrary choice. What is the importance of this? It is that this way, the film effectively emphasizes what academic discussions do not: that motivation behind travelling is more important than the *mode* of travelling. Whilst Cheryl does check most of the items off the hobo-list, if she does not think of herself as a hobo, then she is not one. Thus when characterising tourists, motivations are more important than the practicalities of travelling.

Moving beyond these typologies, there is another essential category that is closely related to backpackers: pilgrims. The main attribute of pilgrims is that they have a religious motivation which draws a strong distinction between them and "recreational tourists" whose motivations are pleasure and escapism. At the same time, some scholars emphasize that pilgrimage and modern tourism are not so different after all; in fact, tourism itself is a sort of modern pilgrimage (MacCannell, 1973). This particular argument effectively shows that the lines are rather blurred between the different forms of tourism within academic discussions, too.

I would argue that contrary to how it seems at first glance, Cheryl and tourists with similar motivations are closer to pilgrims than to simple backpackers. It is true that Cheryl is an atheist and thus she is not travelling to a sacred place (or church/shrine/commemoration place) like pilgrims generally do. However, we have to acknowledge that religion is now becoming increasingly fused with spirituality. What spirituality means exactly is a whole different topic but we can agree that it is in connection with "searching for salvation, healing, miracle, spiritual help, answers, fulfilling wows, finding meaning to life, searching for cultural and national identity, escaping from personal problems" (Maoz, 2010: 425). Whilst these are all listed as motivations for pilgrimage, in fact all of these can be motivations for backpackers,

too. In this respect, the film supports the idea that pilgrimage is not necessarily undertaken by the religious only but also by those who seek self-fulfilment which is a typical backpacker motivation (Teo and Leong, 2006: 111).

There are further hints – both in the film and the book – that point toward the pilgrimage-nature of Cheryl's journey. Regarding the film, a symbolical hint is that even though she is an atheist, she chooses to prolong the original route of her journey so that it ends at a bridge that is called the "Bridge of Gods." Regarding the book, at one point she meets a Swiss couple. The Swiss woman says to Cheryl: "We call what you're doing the pilgrim way" (Strayed, 2012: 243). On the one hand, this comment indicates that different people from different cultural backgrounds might interpret what counts as backpacking/pilgrimage differently. On the other hand, this comment is perfectly understandable because essentially, what Cheryl is doing is walking on a designated route to a specific destination which has personal, religious or spiritual significance to her – this could be said about, say, the Santiago pilgrimage, too. Thus even though Cheryl indeed has a huge backpack and hikes in the wild in the literal sense, she is still more a pilgrim than just a backpacker or hiker. "Backpacker" or "hiker" mark her mode of travelling whereas the "pilgrim" aspect refers to her personal motivations. Again, this supports the idea that motivation has more significance than the mode of travelling. Alternatively, Cheryl can be seen as a "spiritual backpacker" as some backpackers tend to call themselves (Maoz, 2010: 430). Still, we cannot pronounce her as just one type of tourist. She is a confused human being, one individual among diverse tourists around her. She has all of the above mentioned labels or none of them; the rigid categories of academia do not really work because she is a mixture of all.

The ideology behind backpacking

Having established the most frequently mentioned motivations and typologies regarding backpacker tourism, both in the film and in academia, let us now consider the overall ideology behind the phenomenon. Why do people like backpacking? Why is it considered to be popular? Perhaps the most important issues here are the idea of adventure and the concept of authenticity. Adventure tourism can involve two types of activities: "soft" activities such as hiking and backpacking and "hard" activities, such as canoeing, skydiving, mountaineering or wilderness backpacking (Doran, 2016: 58). Interestingly, hiking, backpacking and wilderness backpacking are mentioned as separate things in the article (Doran, 2016). Based on the previously discussed

issues, we can conclude that Cheryl is a little bit of all. Indeed, backpacking itself is an adventure, regardless whether the backpacker engages in risky activities or not. In other words, even if the backpacker stays in touch with society and civilisation (e.g. sleeping in hostels and using public transport), the very nature of the tour is an adventurous one. They live from a tight budget, they walk a lot and they might engage in the locals' unfamiliar culture more than regular tourists would. This is where authenticity comes into the picture because all these adventurous aspects of backpacking connote a sense of authentic experience. That is to say, whilst objective authenticity means that the toured object (monument, site or tradition) is preserved relatively in its original form thus being deemed as authentic, existential authenticity refers to the activities and experiences of the tourist (Park, 2014: 62). Thus existential authenticity is in relation with the feelings and perceptions of the person.

How does this fact constitute to the ideology behind backpacking? Firstly, drawing on this adventure-aspect, the fact that backpackers are constantly outside their comfort zone might play a role in it: in this light, backpackers are considered to be brave and resourceful. Secondly, as it was discussed in the *Lost in Translation* chapter, there is an increasing tendency for tourists to turn to heritage and nature (Uriely, 2010). This might be because in our highly globalised and modernised world the values of old times are becoming more and more attractive again (Park, 2014: 67). In this light, backpacking has a great appeal because instead of taking part in the "mainstream", backpackers are more in touch with nature and with people (either fellow backpackers or locals). To put it differently, backpacking might be attractive because it connotes engaging with the "alternative" and the "authentic." These associations are also related to the so-called post-tourist. Based on these ideologies, then, we can observe that to a certain degree, the backpacker shares some characteristics with the post-tourist: mainly because they supposedly have a higher cultural capital than a regular tourist. Of course, as it was discussed, this is not necessarily always the case. It is a widely spread stereotype, a common belief, but in fact a lot of research finds that backpackers are not always looking for the "original" and the "different"; they often feel content with going to popular touristic places and making friends with the members of their enclave rather than with local people (Wilson and Richards, 2008).

Still, *Wild* strengthens the basic stereotype, because the film overall suggests that backpacking is essentially a raw and authentic experience where, during the journey, the person can get in touch with real values and with the natural environment. Considering these, backpacking experience is indeed portrayed in an idealised way in *Wild* – although the film

does not sugar-coat the hardships that can occur during hiking. This introduces the issue of empowerment which is a result of overcoming such hardships.

Empowerment of the solo female backpacker

There is a further aspect of the ideology behind backpacking and other forms of adventure tourism: the issue of empowerment, especially regarding women. Empowerment is a crucial aspect of gender equality where both men and women "can take control over their lives, gain skills, have their skills and knowledge recognised, enjoy the same opportunities, increase self-confidence and develop self-reliance" (Doran, 2016: 57). Empowerment can derive from negotiating and overcoming certain difficulties. Let us now analyse to what extent this empowerment is represented – and how – in *Wild*. Two major issues occur in the film: firstly, Cheryl's struggle and negotiation with practical restraints (such as physical and financial problems) and secondly, her fear of certain men.

Regarding the first point, there are multiple scenes where we can witness Cheryl struggling with practical and physical things. For instance, one of the first scenes in the film is when she is trying to put on her backpack but fails to do so because it is extremely heavy (fg 2-4). She is trying different positions to be able to do it and finally she succeeds by lying on the floor, easing the backpack onto her back and then standing up by grabbing a table for support. The fact that this scene is so elaborate indicates that it has an importance in showing us that 1; Cheryl is somewhat unprepared but 2; she does not quit until she achieves what she wants. She similarly struggles with putting up the tent the first night or later climbing over a huge rock that stands in her way. In both instances though, after portraying her struggle in a somewhat lengthy way – with her swearing, panting and groaning – she is able to overcome all obstacles.

Figure 2-4: The weight of a huge backpack vs a petite woman

"Personal" and "socio-cultural" constraints are even more emphasized in the film; self-doubt is a typically personal constraint (Doran, 2016: 60) and Cheryl is no exception. For instance, she cannot proceed as fast on her journey as she expects from herself. At one point she mutters to herself (0:33:43): "You are doing good, Strayed. 5 to 7 miles a day. At this rate, you will be finished in about 20 years." When she meets a fellow backpacker and he says that he is averaging 22 miles a day, the shock on Cheryl's face is visible. She replies with a lie (0:36:55): "I am only managing about… 11 or 12." Not only is she exasperated by her inability to walk faster, she is ashamed by it in front of others. Clearly, there is a general expectation about how many miles a hiker usually completes during one day. We might ask, however: would she have lied about this if she was talking to a female backpacker and not a man? Is it really about achievement or is it more about the fact that she does not want to seem like she does not belong with all the other (mostly male) backpackers? She certainly has some interesting encounters with men throughout the film which prompts us to further analyse this.

The issue of "unwanted male attention", a socio-cultural constraint (Doran, 2016: 60), is significantly present in the film. One example is when Cheryl, out of money and starving, meets a man who is working on the fields (from 0:23:10). She asks him to take her to the closest town. The man says he has to finish his work first but she can wait for him in his car. Cheryl sits in his car for what seems like a long time as it gets completely dark outside. Whilst waiting, she finds a gun in the car. When the man finally arrives (half undressed), he is represented as a typical serial-killer (fg 5-7). He says that he has a better idea: rather than taking Cheryl into

town, he will take her to his home, because every shop is closed by now. He then takes out his flask and offers some drink to Cheryl. Her way of subtly making sure that she survives this encounter is by saying: "You know my husband is hiking the PCT with me. He's just a little bit further ahead on the trail. We're gonna meet up really soon." This is of course a lie and then as it turns out, the man has no intention of hurting her.

The question emerges: is the man really acting so creepy or do we just see him that way because we see him through Cheryl's eyes? This last option is more probable because when Cheryl first approaches him (she is not yet suspicious, merely happy that she finally found another human being), he does not seem and act like a shady person. It is only later that she sees him differently, after she has been waiting for him for hours and had time to overanalyse the situation and become scared. Cheryl is clearly familiar with all the negative stereotypes about men and she projects all of those onto him once she realises that it has become dark and they are all alone out in the fields (a stereotypical scenario for the beginning of a murder story).

Figure 5-7: A terrified Cheryl: how she sees Frank when scared vs how she sees him when she is relaxed

Throughout her journey, she is constantly aware of herself being a solo female hiker. When she is hitchhiking, she says to herself in an ironical manner (0:52:04): "Hi, I am Cheryl. I am an unaccompanied female hitchhiker. Would it be okay if I got into your car so that you can rape and dismember me?" This remark has probably something to do with the fact that California had a very high crime-rate in the exceptionally violent decades of the 70s and 80s regarding serial killers, some of those who specifically attacked female hitchhikers (California Digital Newspaper Collection). Clearly, Cheryl has heard of these from the media. This is an attitude that most solo female travellers can identify with; even if women are generally characterised as risk-takers rather than risk-avoiders (although of course lot depends on the person and the context), they are still aware of the negative stereotypes of men.

Whilst in both these instances her fears prove to be unnecessary, there is one scene which displays actual threat. At a watering hole she meets two men who make comments about her physical appearance in an unfriendly way, though disguised as harmless jokes. Cheryl quickly leaves them but later, as she is dressing up beside her tent, she sees that one of the man is watching her from a distance. The stalker approaches her and continues "teasing" her in a creepy way (fg 8-9). Had his partner not called for him to get moving, it is strongly indicated that he would have taken physical actions with Cheryl. Before reluctantly leaving, the man raises his beer and says (1:28:05) "Here's to a young girl alone in the woods." To the film's credit it should be noted that this scene (and all the similar scenes) are not over-dramatized by creepy sound effects or enhanced camera movements: we simply see what Cheryl is experiencing.

Figure 8-9: Cheryl dressing up whilst being stalked by a man

Implications of fearing the male

It is important to consider where this fear comes from. In general, many of the negative stereotypes about men originate from the cultural differences. For example, one research found that certain women (from the West) decided not to include Turkey in their itinerary because they heard that Turkish men come up to them in the streets, touch their hair and, generally, just tend to bother women (Myers and Hannam, 2008: 183). This example explains why Western women abroad might be on guard with men; because it is not just about gender, it is also about the cultural difference. In short, it is not just about the male, it is about the "male other." However, Cheryl is not in a foreign culture, surrounded by foreign men. Therefore, the reason why she might feel so much on alert is probably because backpacking as an activity – as represented in the film – is very much dominated by men.

It is also noteworthy that whilst Cheryl is on guard with men, it only applies to non-backpacker men. Thus in a sense, it is a bit as if she was abroad after all: foreign men (non-backpackers) are scary but fellow-tourist men from her country (backpackers), are not. Again, this is linked to the issue of the tourist bubble or tourist enclave. Tourist enclaves in backpacker communities are especially strong: backpackers generally tend to form groups and friendships with each other more than regular tourists because there is a sense of common goal, shared experience and sense of belonging between them (Wilson and Richards, 2008). This is probably due to the nature of backpacking as a distinguished form of tourism. In this sense then, Cheryl might feel discriminated – positively or negatively – between the other backpackers, because backpacking is represented as a highly male environment. However, it is only the "outsider"

male that makes her actually afraid. This reaffirms the theory that tourists generally feel safe within their communities but they are cautious with "others."

These scenes challenge and reaffirm further relevant academic arguments. Firstly, the film challenges the idea that solo female travellers are positioned at the two extreme ends of the scale; they are generally risk-takers and fearless at one end and they are very cautious and risk-avoiders at the other end (McNamara, 2009: 253). Cheryl does not occupy either of those categories. She is risk-taker in a sense that she decides to sit into the car of a stranger man in the middle of nowhere when it is dark outside. She is also very cautious and scared at the same time, because she constantly expects the worst when it comes to men on her journey. Therefore, based on how the film represents Cheryl's character (and how she herself writes in the book) we could argue that real, complex women actually move between the two extremes. The given environment, company or emotional state all influence how women react in a given situation to the threat of men. One thing that seems to be sure, emphasized by both the film and the book, is that the threat of men is indeed something that women have to deal with. Regardless whether they are intimidated by it or not, they are aware that this issue is very much present when they are travelling.

Consequently, this is what the film reaffirms: that solo female travellers usually feel on guard in a way that men do not. It is especially the case in male dominated environments, such as the one Cheryl is in; backpacking and other forms of adventure tourism. Even though in all cases the men around Cheryl turn out to be helpful and kind, she never lets off her guard. Even the fact that she is welcomed and celebrated by a group of men at Kennedy Meadows (a resort for hikers) indicates that there is a big distinction between how female versus male backpackers are perceived.

This representation links back to the idea that in general, the tourism industry and the tourist gaze (as induced by the media) inherently "assumes a particular kind of tourist: white, western, male and heterosexual" (Tucker and Akama, 2009: 510). In this light, the female backpacker is rare and special, thus men are impressed by her. For example, at another camping site, another group of backpacker men name Cheryl as the "Queen". Accordingly, the film frames backpacker tourism as a masculine sphere therefore the female is treated differently.

All in all, despite the several instances where Cheryl faces personal, socio-cultural or practical constraints, she does seem empowered because she overcomes every obstacle. We follow her journey from the first steps which are extremely hard for her to becoming more and

more practical and finally to the last steps at the "Bridges of God" where she is in a much more peaceful state than at the beginning of the film. The journey was tough, demanding both physically and emotionally, but she made it to the end. The overall representation of the film is certainly a positive one.

Conclusion

To sum up, the representation of the backpacker in *Wild* complicates a few academic arguments. Firstly, by analysing touristic motivation and thus tourist typology, it was found that the main character in the film is not purely a backpacker/hiker/drifter/pilgrim; or on the contrary, she is all of these types at the same time. Consequently, attributing a specific status to her does not seem very useful. However, analysing these various categories can be helpful, too, because her motivation and behaviour does tell us something about the ideology behind backpacking (or, to be precise, about the ideology that is *represented*). Going off the beaten track, being in close contact with nature and finding (spiritual) meanings are all aspects that make backpacking seem an appealing and authentic experience in the film. Contrary to academia though, engaging with local people and being interested in their culture is not something that appears in *Wild* – probably because Cheryl is not backpacking in a foreign country. Again, these suggest that each individual and each journey is different. As for the empowerment of the main character, it is a major theme throughout the film. Several scenes and examples support the theory that women can gain self-confidence and a sense of independence by overcoming various difficulties. Importantly, numerous difficulties are related to harassment and unwanted male attention. Just like academic literature, the film highlights that regardless how risk-taking or fearless a solo female traveller might be, a strong awareness of being different from the norm is present in most situations (the norm being the white, heterosexual male tourist in general).

Conclusion

This thesis contributed to filling the gap in the relevant literature, analysing films as representing tourists and tourism rather than inducing those. The three films proved to be useful in analysing how tourists are portrayed and what kind of ideology or message is conveyed with those representations. The films showed biased and constructed representations full of stereotypes and they provided answers to the research questions that were introduced at the beginning of the thesis: In which ways and with which stereotypes are tourists represented in contemporary American films? How do those representations, mainly focusing on tourist typology, contribute to academic discussions? This concluding chapter will provide an overview of the findings and point out future research possibilities. Firstly, let us examine the specific findings of each chapter and then consider the wider connections between them, i.e. the conclusions that apply to all case studies.

With regard to *Lost in Translation*, it was found that the post-tourist category is full of contradictions. As opposed to academic arguments, the post-tourist is not always necessarily aware/proud of their status. Thus it is not necessarily a specific kind of touristic behaviour that assumes a higher cultural capital. Rather, it is a complex touristic behaviour in which tourists indeed often do things differently from what is generally expected from the stereotypical, regular tourist. The controversial nature of the post-tourist as portrayed in various forms of media could be a subject of future research.

In the chapter about *Under the Tuscan Sun*, it was argued that the academic definition of romance-tourism does not really match what this film and numerous other movies represent. According to the literature, romance tourism is mostly about women seeking romance abroad whereas the films usually display a main character who goes (or moves) abroad to a romantic environment and meets the culture, heritage and tradition of the locals. As a result, the main character lives a harmonious life as opposed to their stressful home life. Since so many films represent this very same scenario about the "romantic lifestyle", this type of romance tourism could be more discussed in academia, too – perhaps with the use of the term "romantic tourism".

It was found in the chapter about *Wild* that if we try to describe or label a certain type of tourist, then the motivation is more important than the mode of travelling. Backpacking or hiking certainly fits the people in *Wild* but this does not refer to their main ambition behind travelling. The hobo/drifter/vagabond may also refer to their mode of travelling or more

precisely to the nomadic nature of their journey. However, the "spiritual backpacker" or the "non-religious pilgrim" can tell us more about the person doing the hike. For future research, it could also be analysed in-depth how women negotiate the various constraints they face in a particular backpacking environment.

Apart from these film-dependent arguments, there are a number of things that are represented in the same way in all three cases. For instance, one thing all films have in common is that stereotypes and scripts play a significant role in how tourists, locals and events are represented. Scripts play an important role in films and they can affect real tourists (again, not referring to the film-script that was written but to script as a stereotypical way of an event happening). The most remarkable one is the "female tourist finding love" theme with a conventionalised process, as seen in *Under the Tuscan Sun*. Another popular media-script is about embarking on a long hike or pilgrimage such as in *Wild* and finding enlightenment on the journey. These can inspire real tourist expectations. For instance, soon after *Wild* was released, the number of hikers on the trail increased to double compared to the year before the film came out (Lippe-McGraw, 2017). This also indicates why such films need to be analysed: the representations and ideologies embedded in the film can not only tell us a lot about the phenomenon itself but they can also affect actual tourists.

Space is a crucial part of these expectations. Indeed, another connection between the three films' representation is that they all emphasize the importance of space. As it was argued, space can be a safe "tourist bubble" where tourists are more likely to form relationships with each other or it can refer to the landscape, too. Nature, beach and ruins are associated with romance thus these places can induce a more intimate relationship between tourists and locals. The importance of this is that space tends to be neglected in academia because it focuses mostly on the binary opposition of the tourist and the local. However, there is a third element which is crucial in constructing those interactions. It is in the confined space of the hotel where Bob and Charlotte start a conversation; it is at the beach where Frances finally lets herself be seduced by Marcello; and it is far away from people in the wild nature where Cheryl can find peace. Therefore, these films effectively represent how space can affect touristic behaviour.

Besides scripts that refer to events, stereotypes about people are strongly present in all films. As the films demonstrated, the tourists see other people in a very stereotypical way. In other words, their perspective is based on the tourist gaze which was confirmed to be a significant element of visual media.

The stereotypes of the tourist gaze appeared in two major ways. The first one is seeing locals as the "exotic other" which suggests a dominant Western perspective that is analysed in postcolonial discourses. We could see that this was very much present in *Lost in Translation*. Since most of these stereotypes about the "other" are non-flattering, the represented cultural differences are imbued with a sense of Western superiority. The influence of the writer/director can also be important when considering media bias: whilst Coppola did not intend to create a negative image of Japan, her own personal experiences when she lived there affected the film.

The other kind of stereotypical tourist gaze is the one present in *Under the Tuscan Sun*. In this film, the locals either appear in a cliché stereotype which is being sarcastically commented on (the Italian lover) or they also appear as exotic to some extent but in a completely different manner: rather than appearing in an unfavourable light, their exoticness is romanticised and idealised. This mostly applies to the people living in the countryside to whom traditions and heritage are great values. Nature and finding peace within oneself are also portrayed as idealised values in *Wild*. These findings are important because they all reflect on the recent trend of tourists seeking authentic and heritage-related experiences. Based on the films, we can see that such values indeed become increasingly attractive in contemporary society (Uriely, 2010).

As far as the host gaze is concerned, it is quite underrepresented in films (just like in the academic field). That is mostly because the producers are dominantly American. That being said, the host gaze is sometimes represented in brief moments. These moments let us know that they see tourists in a stereotypical way, too – however, this gaze is also based on what Western people *think* the hosts see. Japanese see American tourists as strange and sometimes ridiculous; Italian men expect American women to pursue a fling with them. These are not flattering images either.

Despite the frequent use of stereotypes – or precisely because of them – it was found that in all films, the categorisation of tourist types is rather problematic. The motivation of tourists is subject to change due to various factors therefore they can move between categories. In fact, even if the initial motivation to travel is not pleasure or escapism but other reasons such as business, these motivations can shift into an open-minded touristic behaviour. Therefore, and mostly based on *Lost in Translation*, it was argued that tourism does not necessarily start out as a leisure-bound activity. The other two films also confirmed that touristic behaviours are

complex and complicated therefore rigid categories and binary oppositions (host vs guest, tourist vs traveller) do not always work very well.

At the same time, this thesis demonstrated that there *is* some usefulness to categorisations after all. Whilst classifying tourists can indeed lead to oversimplifications and overgeneralisations, claiming that it is not a useful practice at all is only another end of the extreme. The balance is somewhere in between. This thesis showed that people cannot really fall into strictly defined categories but to some extent, they really can be labelled as certain types. In other words, categorisation can be helpful to start sorting some basic characteristics of people. Without using the various typology theories here, we could not have gained a deeper understanding of cinematic tourists' motivations, behaviours, expectations and experiences. We only have to be careful not to rely on those categories too much and keep in mind that every individual is diverse.

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