

# Lost in translation – spatial analysis essay sample

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Hotel](#)



## Summary

The film takes place in Tokyo where two characters find themselves feeling alone and lost in the foreign landscape. Bob, a famous American actor, and Charlotte, who is married to constantly working photographer, are drawn to each other. They grow sympathetic towards one another and together they navigate the spaces (clubs, restaurants, karaoke bars) of an unfamiliar culture. They gain a deeper understanding of one another. Charlotte fears she won't know what to do with her life. Bob speaks about the troubling side of marriage. They don't act out on their feelings. Before he leaves, they say goodbye, both embarrassed. On his way to the airport, he spots her walking. He finds her and whispers something encouraging. They kiss gently before going their separate ways.

## Quotes

“ Sofia Coppola romanticizes Tokyo and her film is an idealization of this space.” (Ahi, and Karaoghlanian, 2012)

Lost in Translation is a film of contrast. This is seen between interior and exterior, between colours and between pacing.

## Analysis in terms of space

Tokyo as a setting is interesting. One of the largest cities in the world, it is an energetic neon metropolis. Places of travel such as hotel rooms are transient non-places; they dislocate the character from the landscape. Lost in Translation embodies Augé's idea of solitude in supermodernity according to Clarke et al (2009: 285). There is a disconnection between watching and  
<https://assignbuster.com/lost-in-translation-spatial-analysis-essay-sample/>

experiencing, hearing and understanding or misunderstanding. Coppola emphasises this through interior and exterior spaces, through intimacy and immensity. (Haslem, 2004) Charlotte tries to make the hotel room at the Park Hyatt into home with her possessions. She sits by the window with a vista of the city but remains anonymous and cannot participate in it. What's more, the intimacy between Bob and Charlotte can be seen as an attempt to escape the immensity of Tokyo.

### Colour

Interiors are predominantly muted greens, browns, and greys. These colours are “ disinclined toward movement...[they] neither recede from the spectator nor reach out to the spectator... tend[ing] to be silent and passive, eliciting weariness and even boredom.” Exterior spaces have consistent bluish hues. “ Blue, unlike the earthly greens and browns of the Park Hyatt, is inclined toward movement and draws away from the viewer, creating a strong sense of depth. As a cool colour, blue typically induces a sense of calm and relaxation.” (Ott & Keeling, 2011: 373) Warmer colours show up in the lights of the city. Bob wears a bright yellow t-shirt. These colours capture attention. More so as the steady blue sits opposite the yellow tones.

Adam Smith (2008) states that the film is as much a love story as it is an exploration our relationship to the post-modern cityscape. When Charlotte travels to Kyoto and sees a traditionally dressed, young Japanese bride. She can see the look of new love in her eyes. This experience can illustrate her alienation with the culture as much as that with her husband. This may be

why she reaches out to Bob. Charlotte's boredom and feelings of alienation is what lead to her expeditions into the city. Space extends in every direction, it is crowded and confusing – this is emphasised in the “ overabundance of attraction.” (Haslem, 2004). This generates a hyper-reality and characters experience defamiliarisation. This may be why Bob reaches out to Charlotte in turn as he seeks familiarity in the environment.

Coppola explains that *Lost in Translation* is about “ being disconnected and looking for moments of connection. There are so many moments in life when people don't say what they mean, when they are just missing each other...” (Haslem, 2004) The spaces in the hotel offer opportunities for a series of encounters. Which is how Bob and Charlotte first come to interact. He spots her for the first time in the elevator and she smiles at him. She sits next to him at the bar and they start talking. Bob runs into her in a corridor from the pool. These spaces are what allowed the narrative between them to take place. These characters would not have interacted otherwise in such an overpopulated setting.

## References

Ahi, M. and Karaoghlanian, A. (2012). *Lost in Translation*. *Interiors*, [online] (8). Available at: <http://issuu.com/interiorsjournal/docs/interiors0812> [Accessed 2 May. 2014]. Clarke, D., Pfannhauser, V. and Doel, M. (2009). *Moving Pictures/Stopping Places*. 1st ed. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, pp. 285. Haslem, W. (2004). *Neon Gothic: Lost in Translation*. *senses of cinema*, [online] (31). Available at: [http://sensesofcinema.com/2004/feature-articles/lost\\_in\\_translation/](http://sensesofcinema.com/2004/feature-articles/lost_in_translation/) [Accessed 2 May. 2014]. Ott, B. <https://assignbuster.com/lost-in-translation-spatial-analysis-essay-sample/>

and Keeling, D. (2011). Cinema and Choric Connection: Lost in Translation as Sensual Experience. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, [online] 947(4). Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00335630.2011.608704> [Accessed 2 May. 2014].

Smith, A. (2008). Film Analysis of 'Lost In Translation'. [online] *Tourism*. Available at: <http://touristoftourism.blogspot.com/2008/12/film-analysis-of-lost-in-translation.html> [Accessed 2 May. 2014].