

# The Synergy of Animation and Tourism Industry: Myths and Ideologies in Mickey Mouse's Traveling Adventures<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The tourism industry circulates signs through its synergies with other cultural industries, such as film, music, museum, video gaming, and the sports industry, to name but a few. This paper aims at exploring the creation or preservation of tourist myths and ideologies through the cartoon industry following the travel experiences of one of the first and most widely known animation characters, Mickey Mouse, in animated films such as the *Hawaiian Holiday* (1937), *Mickey's Trailer* (1938), *Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip* (1940), *On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends* (1956), *Croissant de Triomphe* (2013), *Tokyo Go* (2013), *Yodelberg* (2013), *O Sole Minnie* (2013), *Panda-monium* (2013), *Mumbai Madness* (2014), *O Futebol Clássico* (2014), *¡Feliz Cumpleaños!* (2015), *Al Rojo Vivo* (2015), *Turkish Delights* (2016), *Entombed* (2016), *Dancevidaniya* (2016), *Locked in Love* (2017), or *Shipped Out* (2017). In terms of methodology, this study of animated films and images will be conducted with the help of Greimas' semiotic square combined with Roland Barthes' writings on myth. The main objective of such research is to trace the tourist myths and ideologies that the animation industry proposes and highlights. The focus will therefore be on outlining any simplifications, stereotypes, and boundaries regarding tourist image-brand production, as well as foregrounding the creative practices and invitations to co-productions of meaning offered to young gazes, that is, those of future travelers.

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## Introduction

Many studies suggest that tourist imagery – be it in photographs, postcards, tourist brochures, or posters, television programs and documentaries, film, or social media images – constructs specific identities of places and locations, while producing and privileging narratives that forward oversimplifications, or even stereotypes, of the destinations depicted in those images. Commodification molds location images in ways that would make them suitable for the ‘tourist gaze’ (cf. Urry 1990), making sure that as many potential audiences’ gazes as possible will be beckoned into visiting the portrayed destinations. To that end, Edward Bruner argues that tourism searches for new locations to tell the same stories, “possibly because those stories are the ones that the tourist is willing to buy” (2005: 22).

However, there are indications that such marketing techniques could kindle local interest in abandoned traditions (cf. Medina 2003) or even create new tourist possibilities (e.g. cinematic tourism). Dean MacCannell’s (1976) notion of tourism ‘markers’ as signs that need interpretation, as well as the semiology of tourism, underline the importance of personal perception along with audience members’ and potential visitors’ interests, knowledge, desires, and personal anticipations. Other anthropologists use more emphatic language (cf. Greenwood 2004; Scarles 2004), arguing that tourism is co-created by tourist operators, local inhabitants, and tourists alike, and that this form of cooperation needs to be studied as a whole.

This paper examines the ways in which a tourist destination image is shaped through a number of animated films starring Mickey Mouse, the well-known Disney character. More specifically, the aim of this study is to trace the tourist myths and its ideologies that the animation industry proposes and highlights, as well as point out the ways in which the phenomenon of tourism was mediated through specific animation films over a period of 80 years, that is, from 1937 to 2017.

### 1. Cultural and Creative Industries: Signs and Synergies

In order to reach the best possible understanding of the animation and tourism industries, as well as their synergies, it will be helpful to outline the general notion and common practices of cultural and creative industries. Occupying a large part of contemporary people’s free time, cultural and creative industries produce, promote, and circulate texts that influence people’s knowledge and experiences (cf. Hesmondhalgh 1982). In effect, they manage symbolic goods, the economic value of which stems from their cultural value (cf. O’ Connor 2000:18). Therefore, the contribution of cultural and creative industries to shaping people’s cultural capital, their perception of self,

of otherness, and of various types of social collectivities is crucial, and increasingly so as technological advances change our daily communication practices and cultural resources flood into our houses through bigger or smaller screens every day.

Cultural and creative industries have long been interconnected, forming persistent formations inhabiting various and complex networks of collaboration. Many synergies have thus been created and retain a considerably strong and inspiring role, such as those between the literature and film industry (cf. Borwell 1988; Dudley 1992; McFarlane 1996; Stam 1992), the music and sports industry (cf. Papadaki 2019), the heritage and tourism industry, as well as many more such alliances which, nowadays, shape cultural practices in ways considered obvious and unsurprising.

The notion of 'film tourism,' identified as yet another synergy and a new type of tourism, is attributed to the success of films in place marking (cf. Edensor 2001), which in turn stems from a specific arrangement of signs that can even inspire new tourist performances in new film-tourist destinations (cf. Reijnders 2010). The "imaginative geographies" (Urry and Larsen 2011:116) that a film can create, the connection of specific landmarks and landscapes with a specific plot, the characters of the story, and the musical soundtrack all add up to a filmic 'sign industry' which assigns new tourist meaning to banal locales and practices (cf. Tzanelli and Yar 2014).

### 1.1. The Tourism Industry and Its Myths

As one of the biggest cultural industries, the tourism industry is structured upon specific myths and ideologies. The power of certain cultural resources and objects, many of which are structured as powerful signs, and the communicative acts that found the uniqueness of a place on such objects, is part of what Roland Barthes has described as myth: There are certain elements in each tourist destination that all tourists are familiar with, as they are included in the 'language of travel' (cf. Barthes 1983).

Myths create or stress existing ideologies. Myths and their denotative values are formed according to specific ideologies and consist of their forms (Fiske 1989). Ideology is a set of beliefs and ideas that stem from a political stance or characterize a particular culture and guide people's way of thinking. For Barthes, myths are closely related to ideology. Both serve the interests of specific social groups and empower certain relationships. Being an *-ism* itself, tourism is by definition seen as a distinctive system of ideas and practices. Cities, places, and entire countries are re-invented, re-packaged, and promoted as attractive holiday destinations, becoming brands, that is, "complex identities that exist in the minds of consumers" (De Chernatony and McDonald 1992:3). Political and local authorities as well as people working in the tourist business create seductive images for the desired tourist gaze to rest upon. According to John Urry,

places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist-practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze. (1990:3)

Disseminating, distributing, and packaging these images for mass consumption results in the reconceptualization of structures, spaces, cities, and identities (cf. Lasansky 2004), forming the myths and “narratives of place” (Bruner 2005:19-27) as well as shaping the expectations that tourists have of the visited place while conditioning their perception of it (cf. Lasansky 2004).

For Caroline Scarles (2009: 467), “visuals and visual practice are not mere aides in the tourist experience, but emerge through fluid interplays that light up the process of becoming by instilling life and mobilising deeper affiliations between self and other.” From her point of view, the circulation of images through various media “frame destinations according to preferred discourses” and “reinforce the collective gaze.” (Scarles 2009:469) This practice is regarded as a politicization of tourism. Alternative narratives are hard to find (cf. Morgan and Pritchard 1998), since mass media circulate images, narratives, and myths, rendering them widely known and acceptable to the largest possible audience. Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard (1998) have stressed the interconnection between power and tourism along with several other researchers (cf., for example, Cheong and Miller 2000; Hollinshead 1999; Picard and Wood 1997).

## 1.2. The Cartoon Animation Industry

Following the film industry, the animation industry can be seen as one of the largest cultural industries, both in terms of numbers (economic growth, number of workers and studios, etc.), as well as in terms of its symbolic cultural influence, especially upon young audiences. Often overlapping with other forms of media, such as film, television or software (cf. Greenberg 2011), animation is a form of expression mostly based on drawing, recording, and projecting movement (cf. Cholodenko 1991), and this aspect has led animation studios such as Halas and Bachelor to discuss its ‘metaphysical reality,’ rather than the ‘physical reality’ of the action film (cf. Kracauer 1973). As current technological advances make it possible for animated subjects to perfectly mimic physical reality, albeit perhaps a reality with no physical existence, animation can be seen as a tool that blurs the boundaries between reality and its interpretation (cf. Greenberg 2011), stressing its value and power as a semantic universe. Contemporary digital technologies and practices, such as haptic experiences

and immersion, widely known among teenagers and young audiences through their preoccupation with video games, have transformed the formerly distinctive animation experience into an everyday routine, at once helping users to identify with animated characters and avatars. The creation and use of one's own avatar in social media applications has further blurred the boundaries between animated representation and real-life presence.

Within this framework, it should be noted that it is true that "animated films functioning themselves as an 'Other' within a production practice dominated by live-action films, serve as an ideal place to portray a cultural, ethnic 'Other'" (Smoodin 1994:12). Cartoons are about the irrational and the simulation of reality through mass media, and they might as well portray exoticism and otherness. In addition, it is important to stress that these texts are available to young audiences, "constructing the social imaginary, the place where kids situate themselves in their emotional life" (Aronowitz 1992:195), and showing future travelers how to place themselves in particular tourist settings and narratives.

### 1.3. Mickey Mouse, Disney, and Their Myths

Disney's most popular character, Mickey Mouse, can be seen as a symbol of American popular culture, reproduced and received on a global scale. Young audiences seem familiar with Mickey, a cartoon star and, at the same time, a best friend. Kids worldwide seem to sleep with a soft toy that looks like Mickey, watch the films he stars in, wear T-shirts or hold school bags with Mickey, and dress up like Mickey when attending carnivals. His big black ears can often be seen on headbands, as children try to imitate their favorite cartoon character, and even literally walk a mile in his shoes.

Starting as a small cartoon-making business back in the 1920s, the Walt Disney Studios has long become one of the biggest contemporary corporations, managing vast theme parks alongside the cartoon animation industry of numerous films and comics, selling commodities and influencing the lives of millions of children and their parents worldwide. Books like Dorfman and Mattelart's *How to Read Donald Duck. Imperialism Ideology in the Disney Comic* (1975), Marin's *Disneyland as a Degenerate Utopia* (1977), and Schiller's *The Mind Managers* (1975) were among the first to portray Disney animation entertainment as intertwined with international politics.

By the 1930s, Disney films had become global, while by the 1940s US public discourse had framed that international success as 'the Disney miracle.' In the years since, Disney has produced multiple cultural discourses and has given rise to considerable research on the connection between cultural production and cultural imperialism, as well as on the various power networks that shape the company's choices, despite its apparent fairytale-like innocence. Audiences might often be less willing to

entertain the idea that animation films could be ideologically charged, a reluctance that only increases the power these films have to construct the social world for audiences from early childhood on. The perfect combination of the corporate and the creative (cf. Smoodin 1994), of commercial concern and cultural production, Disney films tend to strike a balance, in the relevant bibliography (Bell et al 1995; Rojek 1993; Smoodin 1994; Wasko 2001), between commodification and educational entertainment, homogenization and inspirational uniqueness.

For social scientists, it is obvious that the Walt Disney company has contributed to shaping the way people view the world and is responsible for much of the myth-making that takes place in contemporary American culture, including the American way of life portrayed in idealized terms (cf. Rojek 1993). One might even say that Disney has become a metonym for America and has created the “dominant cultural myths of U.S. ideology” (Bell et al. 1995: 5).

## 2. Methodology

This paper examines the connection between the animation and tourism industries in an attempt to underline the tourist motifs circulated via Disney animation films, focusing on Mickey Mouse and his adventures either as a tourist or as an inhabitant of a popular tourist destination. The films to be discussed were gathered from a period of 80 years from 1937 to 2017, that is, from the so-called golden age of travel to the contemporary phenomenon of mass tourism, including all the short films that were created during that time by Walt Disney Studios. On the basis of their portrayal of Mickey Mouse, these eighteen short films can be separated into two large corpora: *Hawaiian Holiday* (1937), *Mickey's Trailer* (1938), *Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip* (1940), *On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends* (1956) from the first two decades, in which Mickey consistently appears as a tourist; and *Croissant de Triomphe* (2013), *Tokyo Go* (2013), *Yodelberg* (2013), *O Sole Mio* (2013), *Panda-monium* (2013), *Mumbai Madness* (2014), *O Futebal Clássico* (2014), *¡Feliz Cumpleaños!* (2015), *Al Rojo Vivo* (2015), *Turkish Delights* (2016), *Entombed* (2016), *Dancevidaniya* (2016), *Locked in Love* (2017), and *Shipped Out* (2017) from the last two decades, in which Mickey is mostly interpreted as a local inhabitant of a tourist destination but is returned to the role of a tourist in some of the most recent productions.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will focus on tracing tourist myths and creative suggestions in the selected animated films. More specifically, as multimodal texts, animated cartoon

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<sup>2</sup> The film *Clogged* (2015) was not included in this study despite its abundant symbolism (the story is set in the Netherlands, among windmills and tulips) as Mickey Mouse does not appear on screen, the protagonist in this case being Minnie Mouse.

films bring together various semiotic systems, such as linguistic, musical, visual, as well as iconographic and spatial ones, through which certain sociocultural codes and myths are presented. Many signs, codes and their structures and interrelations are interwoven into these systems which connect through complex networks in order to finally shape each film's syntagma. As the focus of this paper is presenting tourists and tourist practices through Disney films in the period between 1937 and 2017, the signs, codes, and myths that will be examined pertain to these practices, without disregarding, however, that there are various other cultural values presented or implied. What Real (1937:13) called the "identifiable universe of semantic meaning", Disney's multiverse – that is, the totality of Disney or its many universes, according to Janet Wasko (2001) – will be examined with the help of Barthes' writings on myth as well as Algirdas Julien Greimas' semiotic square.

## 2.1. Barthes' Myths and Greimas' Square

Barthes' view of the signification process in modern myths famously entails two orders of meaning. Firstly, each sign is composed of a denotative form and a concept. The form is the explicit image of the sign – the actual word or image – that he names the denotation. The mythic, secondary concept constitutes an additional meaning, mostly associated with ideas or values. With respect to the second order of the signification process, Barthes maintains that certain signs represent social, shared values of a certain culture, that is, more complex concepts he calls myths. Therefore, certain words, objects, and images encode specific cultural myths.

Barthes' model of signification will be used in this paper in order to unravel the myths and ideologies that the selected animation films shape. The analysis will focus on the myths associated with tourism and that are usually taken for granted by most viewers, as the signification of certain definitions helps naturalize the values associated with certain ideologies (cf. Barthes 1993).

The main oppositional myths found by the application of Barthes' signification model to the selected animation films will be further analyzed with the help of Greimas' "semiotic square" (Greimas 1983; Greimas and Courtés 1979). Inspired by the Aristotelian square of logical oppositions, the Greimas square is a useful tool for the analysis of the opposition of signs, concepts, or, in the case of this paper, myths, as it represents the logical structure of any opposition (cf. Courtés 1991:152). Two oppositional myths will form the basis of the square, while the other two terms in the square will be the negations of each myth. As shown in Figure 1, apart from the four terms, six metaterms will arise.

According to Greimas, the square draws upon the structure of human culture and is therefore fundamental for our understanding of contrast and opposition.

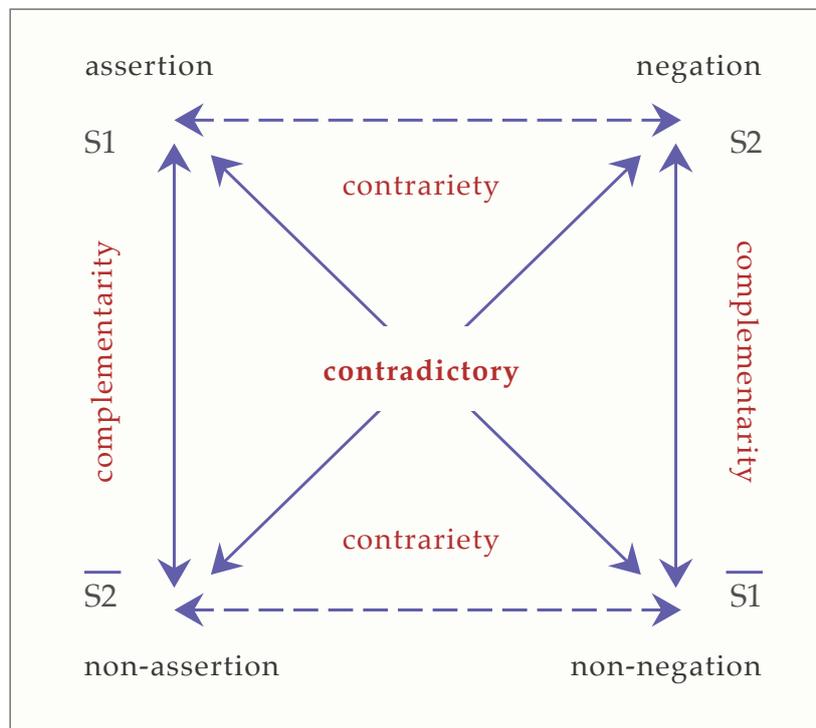


Figure 1. The Greimas semiotic square.

## 2.2. The Films

My content analysis has revealed that, among the numerous films produced by Walt Disney Studios between 1937 and 2017, there are eighteen films starring Mickey Mouse whose main themes are tourism and tourist habits and practices. It is interesting to point out that there are two roles which Mickey Mouse can be seen inhabiting in order to mediate touristic practices: the role of the tourist as a foreigner in a newly-visited land, and the role of the local inhabitant of a well-known tourist destination. There are eight films where Mickey is presented as a tourist and ten films where Mickey sets on an adventure as a local. The viewers watch Mickey wandering through eighteen different cultural settings in total. More specifically, the films directed from 1937 to 1956 [*Hawaiian Holiday* (1937), *Mickey's Trailer* (1938), *Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip* (1940), *On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends* (1956)] present Mickey and his friends as tourists, depicting the image of the tourist at the time. Conversely, during the short period of four years, between 2013 and 2017, ten films were made as episodes of the Mickey Mouse short film series, portraying Mickey Mouse as a local inhabitant of some of the most identifiable tourist destinations, such as Paris, Tokyo, the Swiss Alps, Venice, Mumbai, Mexico, Pamplona, Moscow, Istanbul, and Seoul. These films encompass *Croissant de Triomphe* (2013), *Tokyo Go* (2013), *Yodelberg* (2013), *O Sole Mio* (2013), *Mumbai Madness* (2014),

*¡FelizCumpleaños!* (2015), *Al Rojo Vivo* (2015), *Dancevidaniya* (2016), *Turkish Delights* (2016) and *Locked in Love* (2017). They showcase a completely different point of view, bearing, however, common signification structures with the other category of films, as shown in the analysis that follows. The last four films this study examines – *Panda-monium* (2013), *O Futebal Clássico* (2014), *Entombed* (2016) and *Shipped Out* (2017) – once again present Mickey (sometimes accompanied by Minnie) as a tourist in Beijing, Brazil, Egypt, and on a cruise ship respectively, signaling a return to Disney's first attempts at portraying tourist practices.

For the purposes of this study, the corpus of the films will be divided into two broad categories, the basic criterion being the status of the character of Mickey Mouse in them: a tourist in a foreign land (category A) or a local inhabitant in a well-known tourist destination (category B).

### 3. Category A: Mickey Mouse as a Tourist

There are certain easily recognizable significations of tourism in all of the films that portray Mickey Mouse as a tourist, in the sense that the films depict stereotypical aspects of touristic practices. Minnie, for instance, wears a grass skirt, associated with Hawaiian hula dancing, both in *Hawaiian Holiday* (1937) and in *On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends* (1956). In *Entombed* (2016), Mickey finds lost treasures, ancient artifacts, and antiquities, while Minnie wears a traditional headpiece resembling pharaonic jewelry. Such landmarks as the Valley of the Kings in Egypt, the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx, underline the rich history of Egypt. The film introduces young audiences to travelling by camels, to mummies, sarcophaguses, and various other widely known Egyptian historic motifs and archaeological findings. This points to the significance of what Gregory J. Ashworth and John E. Tunbridge (1990) refer to as “heritage tourism”, when explaining the use of history as “a key component in constructing a marketable image for cities” (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990 quoted in Lasansky 2004: xxiii).

In *Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip* (1940), the character of Mickey Mouse offers a sketch of the tourist: An excited person with a hat and a suitcase, traveling with his dog, reading a tourist poster (“Visit the Great Redwoods”) which guides his gaze and his travel choices. The camera is shown as a valuable tool for any tourist in *Panda-monium* (2013), where Mickey tries to photograph a baby panda at the Beijing Zoo. In *O Futebal Clássico* (2014), Mickey tries to find the perfect seat for the World Cup Final in Brazil, as any tourist wishing to watch a spectacle like that would do. The film *On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends* (1956) clearly states everybody's need for vacation and for taking time away from work and one's everyday routine, by showing the protagonists enjoying their hobbies during holiday and

refusing to return to work, even when asked to. Tourist souvenirs or mementos, such as photographs and postcards, are also included in the film, as Minnie sends those from Hawaii to her friends. Specific types of tourism are portrayed in films like *Mickey's Trailer* (1938), *O Futeball Clássico* (2014) and *Shipped Out* (2017), camping, event and cruise tourism respectively.

The above films represent certain tourist myths such as summer holidays by the sea, in exotic places, or in search of something different and 'authentic' (*Hawaiian Holiday* [1937]). Every film that falls in this category adds a piece to the tourist puzzle: sunglasses and cocktails in *Shipped Out*; hat, suitcase, and lots of enthusiasm in *Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip*; the desire to photograph everything in *Panda-monium*, etc. Various means of transportation are also depicted in the films (for example, the trailer in *Mickey's Trailer*, the train in *Mr. Mouse Takes a Trip*, camels in *Entombed*, and the cruise ship in *Shipped Out*). Additionally, in these films the protagonist-tourists do not come into contact with the locals. In fact, no local people appear on our screen at all. Holidays, then, are represented as a happy period with friends or one's loved ones in a foreign land during which people get to know 'authentic' habits of the place visited without, however, encountering local people. Mediated through the travel experience depicted in these films, widely known holiday images are shown (holidays by the sea, holidays with friends or one's partner, camping, etc.), as well as internationally recognizable signs and sign-myths of the places shown (clothing and accessories like Hawaiian leis, music and dance, or even famous landmarks, such as the Pyramids in *Entombed* [2016]). Other signs that signify contemporary global tourist practices include cocktails and the beach (cf. Lencek and Bosker 1998), as well as Hula dancing, which reproduce on film what MacCannell (1984) terms reconstructed ethnicity. Such dancing is nowadays performed for the sake of tourists, some of whom might view it as unmediated, genuine performances of age-old traditions and globally recognizable signifiers of the Hawaiian culture itself.

### 3.1. Commoditization, Staged Authenticity, and Invented Tradition in Tourism

There are many examples of local feasts or customs being performed before the tourist gaze. Erik Cohen (1988:372) argues that "colorful local costumes and customs, rituals and feasts, and folk and ethnic arts become tourist services or commodities, as they come to be performed or produced for tourist consumption." In other words, the once sacred ritual has become a meaningless performance, a "cultural commodity," staged for the price of a ticket. The commoditization of locality is, according to Cohen, responsible for the destruction of authenticity of a place, and the emergence of staged authenticity, as MacCannell (1973) puts it in his homonymous paper. In the films mentioned above, Mickey is portrayed as a tourist who discovers

and experiences remote, authentic places, playing local music on his guitar while Minnie dances in traditional costumes. The truth is, however, both for the animated characters and the cinematic tourists—the viewers—(Tzanelli 2004), that the setting was staged, set up in advance, pre-formed for the visit of tourists. Leis appear in various cultures across the world. Grass skirts were, in fact, introduced to Hawaii by immigrants from the Gilbert Islands, though they are now widely considered a marker of Hawaiian culture and are presented to tourists as authentic Hawaiian products. The media, including the animated films studied in this paper, play an important role in creating, disseminating, and preserving this “false tourist consciousness” (Cohen, 1988:373). This serves as an attempt to satisfy the modern tourist's wish for authenticity, considered to be the natural, distant, and distinctively local uniqueness of a place.

Following Cohen, there are five “modes of tourist experience” (1979: 376), which accord to the individual needs and desires of each tourist. From the “existential” tourist who searches for more spontaneous experiences in the place visited, to the “diversionary” tourist (Cohen 1979: 377) who is not concerned with authenticity; according to Cohen both fall prey to MacCannell's staged authenticity (1973) in a more or less sophisticated form. He claims that, moving from “existential” to “authenticity-eager,” “experimental,” “recreational,” and, finally, “diversionary” tourists (Cohen 1979: 378), the criteria for authenticity grow more vague and tourists more eager to accept the staging of authenticity. One could argue that this staging is accepted by recreational and diversionary tourists as a metonymy of the authenticity of the tourist-oriented cultural product as a whole (cf. Cohen 1988:378). This further implies that a hint of ‘authenticity’ or an implication of ‘genuineness’ might be enough for a tourist to imagine the ‘real thing,’ even though they know that its reproduction was staged in order to attract their own gaze. Any tourist nowadays seems “content with [their] obvious inauthentic experiences” (MacCannell 1973:592). In addition, staging local cultural practices does not necessarily deprive a practice of the meaning or aura it might bear but it might as well help a practice declining in strength to become a significant cultural resource or give rise to a whole new custom. In effect, for many sociologists authenticity can be “manifested in cultural evolution and not just strict preservation” (Chhabra, Healy and Sills 2003:709), even if such evolution includes staging or recreation.

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) have suggested that, over time, performances of staged local feasts or customs can become accepted as authentic and have therefore introduced the term ‘invented tradition.’ Bearing in mind that tradition is a dynamic phenomenon, adjustable to historical conditions, and constantly evolving, they argue that certain recreations of past habits or references to old situations are eventually perceived as ‘genuine’ traditions, even in the eyes of the

local inhabitants of a place. What Hobsbawm called “the greatest mass generation of traditions” (Hobsbawm 1983: 2) emerged as a phenomenon forty years after World War I in an attempt to shape notions such as nation, nationalism, and national identity. According to Crick (1989:65), “cultures are invented, remade and the elements reorganized,” or, in Cohen’s words (1988:279-280), “a cultural product [...] which is at one point generally judged as contrived or inauthentic may, in the course of time, become generally recognized as authentic.” These thoughts have helped Cohen envisage the notion of ‘emergent authenticity,’ an example of which may be seen in the current portrayal of Hawaiian leis.

### 3.2. *Shipped Out*

The following section focuses on analyzing one of the films in category A more closely, keeping in mind Barthes’ two levels of the signification process. *Shipped Out* (2017), seen as an archetypical example of its category here, is a film that portrays the all-inclusive tourist experience as a practice that leaves no room for holiday-makers to experience or discover anything by themselves. Tourists feel they should follow the tourist ‘program’ set by the tourist provider, in this case the cruise organizer. The cruise ship seems like a parody of *Harmony of the Seas*, a cruise ship launched in 2016 by Royal Caribbean International. The film makes a statement on contemporary tourist practices: simplified, staged traditions appear removed from their original setting. (For instance, Mickey and Minnie are given Hawaiian flower garlands on board, representing a lei greeting.) The tourist experience is reduced to the image of the protagonists lying on sunbeds, with sunglasses and cocktails at hand. However, as soon as the cruise director understands that Mickey and Minnie have paid for ‘the VIP experience,’ everything changes. The viewers hear the director say to the protagonists: “We don’t have a moment to spare!” Mickey and Minnie are thrown into the pool and onto water slides, we see them do body jumping and play volleyball. They are fed, they watch ballet shows, and they are never allowed a break. At some point, we even hear them say: “They are killing us with fun!” and: “Forget the VIP experience, we’ve got to get out of here!” After many more images of organized fun, they end up landing on a small island. There, they finally seem relaxed, drinking from coconuts, as Minnie exclaims: “This is the VIP experience!” Of course, the image of a couple holding coconuts on sunbeds on a clichéd tropical island is one of the most widely established Western images of exotic tourism, promoted as ‘authentic’ through the widespread dissemination of such images through the media. It is indeed part of the tourism industry discourse, seen on tourist leaflets and posters worldwide, in many cases featured as the ideal honeymoon experience.

Following Barthes' theory of the signification process, the film signifies cruise tourism as a package of specific tourist practices offering relaxing and fun moments (for example, sunbeds, cocktails, organized activities, etc.). At the second level of signification and as a simple signifier, cruise tourism interacts with myth. In essence, signification is the myth itself, the very distortion it causes. The specific film establishes a myth that implies the need for self-discovery and the search for authenticity in a foreign land. It normalizes the tourist activities of sunbathing on a sunbed, and drinking cocktails under a palm tree, all symbols of a relaxing time, and labels such activities 'authentic' because they are not offered through an organized tourist package. Reality is, therefore, distorted because, as shown in the previous sections of this paper, such 'authenticity' is no less staged, pre-formed, and disseminated through media screens and tourist posters worldwide, and thus cannot account for self-discovery. Regarding power and ideology, this film could be interpreted as Disney's attempt to comment on the new cruise ship of Royal Caribbean Cruises, one of the most competitive rivals of Disney Cruise Line.

Although, as Barthes argues, myth is always motivated, the fact that their motivation remains invisible makes myths appear as natural (Barthes 1993: 117). Spreading images of couples drinking cocktails on sunbeds under palm trees through the media has been such an extensive practice that people believe this is the definition of tropical holidays. However, what seems 'natural' or 'universal' in these images encompasses connotations that normalize the 'American dream' of summer holidays as charted out by tourist agents through media screens (see Table 1). That interpretation alone transforms semiology into ideology, as myth "transforms history into nature" (Barthes 1993:129), making it the subject of an "immediate impression" as it has an "imperfectible" and "unquestionable" character (130). For Barthes, "[m]yth is read as a factual system, whereas it is but a semiological system" (131).

**Table 1.** Barthes' model of signification as applied to *Shipped Out*

<b>1. Signifier</b> TOURIST PRACTISES SHOWN ON FILM	<b>2. Signified</b> HAPPY HOLIDAYS
<b>3. Sign</b> I. SIGNIFIER (happy holidays)	<b>II. SIGNIFIED</b> self-discovery/authenticity
<b>III. SIGNIFICATION</b> Ideology: The American dream regarding summer holidays	

#### 4. Category B: Mickey Mouse as a Local Inhabitant in a Famous Tourist Destination

The films that depict Mickey Mouse as a local inhabitant in a well-known tourist destination convey a different approach: Dialogue – even the opening titles in half of the films – is in the language of the featuring country, the music is always intended as indicative of the specific culture, and the distinctiveness of the place depicted is stressed through the wanderings and activities that the protagonists engage in. All of these films use a variety of semiotic systems (linguistic, musical, and visual) in order to illustrate supposed specificity and uniqueness: Native language, traditional music, widely recognizable landscapes, habits, and distinct lifestyle traits are depicted in various national settings. Joanne Connell (2012) has stressed the significance of landscape images in cinema and film-induced tourism for their value as identifiers, ‘markers’ or promoters of the distinctiveness of a place. In tourism, the greatest value is the value of difference, and in these films the viewers are ‘overwhelmed with evidence,’ as Barthes would say: no one can doubt that the characters are in Paris, Tokyo, Bern, Venice, Mumbai, Mexico, Pamplona, Moscow, Istanbul, or Seoul. These films feature locals on screen – Mickey among them – participating in the everyday practices of the place shown, rather than tourists.

*Croissant de Triomphe* (2013), for instance, is set in Paris. The story revolves around Minnie’s need to get more croissants for her café. Croissants are pastries mostly associated with France (despite the fact that they are of Austrian origin). Apart from the Parisian cafés and patisseries, the audience can spot many well-known landmarks of Paris, such as Notre-Dame and Moulin Rouge, as well as signs of French nationality. For instance, birds in this film wear black berets, which is considered typical of Frenchmen, as the mass production of berets began in France; for many Western countries a beret is thus the national hat of France. Mickey is chased by the French police, he runs past Cinderella’s palace, where the viewers see the prince putting a glass slipper on Cinderella’s foot; he goes through a French barn and a carousel with children. All these images are considered highly connected to France: For the English-speaking world, the most well-known literary version of the Cinderella story was written by Charles Perrault in French; a French barn has a distinct architecture; the carousel was historically popular in France, as one of the first carousels with wooden horses was set up at the Place du Carrousel in Paris in the 17th century, and one of the first carousel manufacturers was French. At the end of the film, Mickey wears an armor – reinforcing the myth of the Romantic knight fighting for his beloved one –, uses a baguette – a type of bread of French origin –, as his sword, and collects the croissants, earning Minnie’s kiss.

Just like *Croissant de Triomphe* does with Paris, *Tokyo Go* (2013) represents Tokyo, and some of its well-known aspects of otherness. Japanese music is heard over the

sound and images of heavy traffic, images of bridges and of tall buildings abound, people are seen crammed in a train, and there is a sumo match, representing this sport as a Japanese peculiarity for American audiences. There are also scenes from a video game, that is, a cultural reference to Akihabara, a hot spot for gamers, while the film features sounds from the 1985 Nintendo video game *Super Mario Bros*. The train eventually reaches a station that looks like a typical Japanese pagoda. Mickey starts his work in a park with children's trains, reminiscent of Disneyland Railroad, while the sound the train makes resembles that from TIE fighters in *Star Wars*. The film is in Japanese, and underlines basic widely recognizable Japanese metonymies, that is, technology, video games, sumo, traditional architecture (pagoda), and heavy traffic.

In a similar manner, *Yodelberg* (2013) is set in a winter location, a snowy Swiss mountain landscape, and includes easily identifiable signs of Swiss winter tourism, while the music featured is *Swisskapolka*. *O Sole Minnie* (2013) is set in Venice, where Mickey Mouse is a gondolier. Apart from the Venetian canals, Italian spaghetti, and some landscapes, the Italian atmosphere is enhanced by the sound of a Venetian serenade. The story is about Mickey winning the heart of Minnie the waitress, reinforcing the stereotype of romance born in Venice. Similarly, in *¡Feliz Cumpleaños!* (2015), the heroes are dressed in colorful 'traditional' Mexican clothing, with Goofy wearing a sombrero, Mickey wearing a poncho, while Minnie and Daisy are singing and dancing with flowers in their hair and long skirts, just like Mexican women. The film is about Mickey's birthday, as the Spanish title of the film suggests. Here, some hostile piñatas attack Mickey, as in Mexican culture the piñata symbolizes the struggle of man against temptation. Moving on, *Al Rojo Vivo* (2015) is set in Pamplona, where Mickey is chased by a bull. Many signs of 'Spanish-ness' are featured in the film, such as traditional clothing, the flamenco guitar, music and dance, the "La Tomatina" food fight festival, and the Pamplona Bull Run. Furthermore, *Dancevidaniya* (2016) shows Mickey trying to rescue Minnie from Pete through a Russian folk-dance battle. Signs of 'Russian-ness' include the Bolshoi Theater, a Fabergé egg, a Russian nesting doll, the folk tune "Kalinka," as well as the Russian fur hats or ushanka, which Mickey and Minnie wear on their way out of the theater. The next film, *Turkish Delights* (2016), is about selling goods in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar. The bazaar is portrayed as a vivid, colorful place where vendors advertise their merchandise with loud cries, amidst children running in the market. The film shows the Grand Bazaar and its Nuruosmaniye Gate, carpets and kilims – as historically the Turks were among the first carpet weavers –, Turkish famous desserts, as well as other landmarks, like the Bosphorus Bridge, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque – also known as the Blue Mosque – and the Galata Tower. It is interesting to point out that Goofy plays various Turkish string instruments (e.g. yayli tambur), while both Goofy and Donald wear a moustache. Finally, *Locked in Love* (2017) is set in Seoul, near the town's most

iconic symbol, the Seoul Tower, a popular spot for couples who wish to lock their 'padlock of love' onto the fence around the Tower. The film tells the story of Mickey and Minnie who try to lock their heart-shaped padlock onto the railings.

#### 4.1. *Mumbai Madness*

Analyzing the film *Mumbai Madness* (2014) using Barthes' two-level signification process, one comes to conclusions similar to those pertaining to *Shipped Out* (2017). Traditional music, the Hindi language, and a scene from a day in an autorickshaw taxi are the first images viewers see when watching *Mumbai Madness*, a film rich in symbolism. The story is about an elephant trying to go to an Indian temple using Mickey's taxi. The elephant wears an Indian kurta, a loose knee-length shirt. The taxi is seen going through small streets, with kilims hanging above. As the journey unfolds, the viewers encounter a Bollywood show—where Mickey stops the taxi to participate—, cows in silk saris – Indian women's clothing – dancing traditional dances, a snake charmer holding a pungli and sitting next to the basket where one would expect a snake to appear, spicy curry used as gas for the taxi, Indian motifs and patterns. Mickey, of course, stops every time he sees a cow on the street, as cows are sacred animals in Mumbai. They arrive at a place full of flowers, a symbol of strength and purity in Indian culture. Moreover, there is a temple and elephant sculptures appear all over the place, decorated with a variety of ornaments and caparisons, as represented in Indian history. Elephants are known as animals that some Indian peoples admire, as they are connected to mythological and cultural Hindu beliefs and function as sacred symbols of peace, divinity, and power. Moreover, the elephant featured in the film gives Mickey a small Indian lotus, a flower which is an emblem of Buddhism, a sign of wealth and fortune in India associated with the goddess Laxmi who usually is depicted holding lotus flowers. The lotus that Mickey is given travels in the air, lands on water, blossoms, and a golden three-wheeled flying taxi appears. Mickey rides it and flies away.

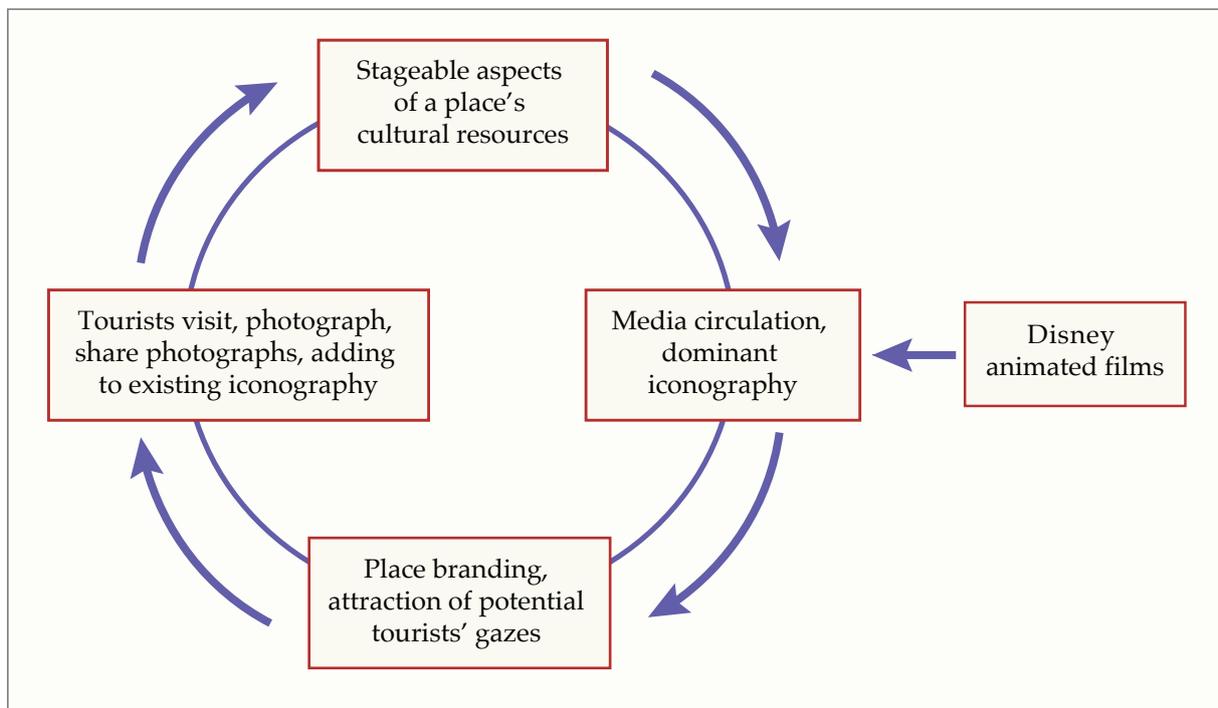
Moving back to Barthes, we might reconsider his example of a front cover from *Paris Match* (a French illustrated weekly magazine, published in July 1955), which shows a young black soldier in French uniform saluting and thus reproducing the myth of France as a multi-ethnic empire. Barthes' argument is that myth works to present bourgeois normality as ahistorical. In the same sense, Indian culture is seen in *Mumbai Madness* (2014) as static, ahistorical, but remote. We are not allowed to see how Indian culture has intermingled with the American way of life in so many ways: from food, dancing, and film to technology and science. David Hesmondalgh (1982) notes that the increase of Indian population in the USA and the recent developments in media technology have long given rise to a demand for Hindi-language films. Bearing this fact in mind, it is interesting to point out that twenty-two years after Hesmondalgh's book, Walt Disney Studios have chosen to mediate only colorfully exotic aspects of Indian

culture, leaving aside India's rapidly increasing economic strength and technological innovation. This oversimplified iconography, which is restricted to highly distinctive, even stereotypical images of India, follows a communication strategy which aims at making a clear distinction among various tourist destinations, so that they are easily recognizable for most audiences. By creating and/or reinforcing certain myths of Otherness, common to certain cultural groups or "interpretive communities" (Fish 1990), the films manage to attract both the cinematic and the tourist gaze.

## 5. The Myth of the Tourist

Within this framework and over a short period of time (from 2013 to 2017), the films discussed above present many different locations hosting unique cultures, encouraging young audiences to engage in a reciprocal relation with each other and/or their own sociocultural attributes, and so in fact negotiating their identity with others (cf. Urry 2000). This kind of image construction regarding a specific culture forms a differentiated cultural matrix for each place featured in the films. Viewers assign meaning according to the values of their own society or the mediated tourist discourse, and, just like tourists, they examine every destination image as a concept, in the way explained by Barthes. They 'read' the signs in the films (a bird wearing a beret, a crowded train, etc.) such that they become forms for the concepts at the second order of signification, connoting 'French-ness,' 'Japanese-ness,' 'Swiss-ness,' 'Italian-ness,' 'Indian-ness,' 'Mexican-ness,' 'Spanish-ness,' 'Russian-ness,' 'Turkishness,' and 'Korean-ness' respectively. Just like tourists, film viewers 'read' "cities, landscapes and cultures as sign systems" (Culler 1981:127).

This procedure is an important factor in the creation or promotion of the location branding of a place, a fundamental step in destination marketing, as it helps future travelers make a clear distinction among places, and tell one location brand from another. After watching the specific films, for example, one can identify classy lifestyle with France, technological advances with Japan, snowy mountains with Switzerland, romantic atmosphere with Italy, Hindu traditions with India, big fiestas with Mexico, passion and adventure with Spain, folk tradition with Russia, and special delights with the eastern cuisine in Turkey. These easily distinguishable brands are shaped, however, according to Jonathan Culler's (1981) "false tourist consciousness" taking into account specific aspects of the history and identity of a place, and excluding others. In essence, this is the cycle of the tourism industry's marketing strategy: selecting specific, stageable aspects of the cultural resources of a place, attracting the gaze of tourists, familiarizing tourists specifically with those mediated aspects, transforming those identifiable aspects into dominant local iconography, disseminating them through mass and new media, and attracting the gaze of potential tour-



**Figure 2.** The circle of tourist industry's marketing strategy.

ists who may visit those destinations, photograph themselves in front of the most well-known spots, upload the photos on their social media accounts, attracting more gazes, and so on so forth, as proposed in Figure 2.

Just like in the case of the films in category A, the tourist myth that is hidden behind the images of the films grouped under category B follows precisely the procedure of formulating the whole identity brand of a place based on a few selected signs, in order to create an identifiable location brand. The iconography of those Disney films is filtered, that is, the signifiers are chosen so as for them to be included in the tourism industry discourse. Moreover, such specific iconography bears a certain ideological weight, as the images shown are meant to satisfy the American wish for holidays in Europe, the Far East, and places such as Mumbai. Four of the destinations depicted in category B are European (Paris, the Swiss Alps, Venice, Pamplona), two of the destinations are regarded as belonging to the Far East (Tokyo, Seoul), while the films discussed also include destinations such as Istanbul, Russia and Mumbai, as well as one American destination: Mexico.

The way the viewers of the films 'read' the myths presented in them is crucial here. With respect to Barthes' three types of reading of the myth as described in *Mythologies*, children, the vast audience of cartoon animated films, might "focus on the empty signifier" (Barthes 1993: 128), and perceive a simple system of signification. If this is the case, then all those scenes of Mickey traveling as a tourist or wandering as a

local in foreign settings are just examples of tourist experiences, and of other cultures respectively. If the viewers perceive the “full signifier” (128) – that is, its meaning and form – and realize the distortion involved, then the deception is clear: Mickey’s tourist wanderings are seen as an alibi, an oversimplification of the ‘Other’s’ habits, rituals, and historic narratives, an act of transforming values and dynamic traditions into static, laughable scenes, offered to the audience’s as much as to a tourist’s gaze. If, in the end, the film viewers grasp Barthes’ mythical signifier, then it would become obvious for them that those films try to naturalize tourism, and present it as a human need. Tourist myths then, seen as values, naturalize tourism, distorting its intention (be it social, historical, or economic) into a natural justification. To this end, the plot of the films in category A revolves around a specific myth: the motivated myth of tourists wandering in authentic cultural settings, formed by a mixture of pre-selected signs, while, in fact, the tourism industry commodifies the cultures of both hosts and guests (cf. Selwyn 1996). This wandering is promoted as essential for humans (see, for example, the film *On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends* (1956), where tourism is seen as an important human need, in order for one to escape everyday routine, or the film *Shipped Out* (2017), where tourism is seen as a search for authenticity one cannot find in their homeland). The films in category B are meant to be seen as open windows to the Other’s cultural setting and way of life (empty signifier), filtered and legitimized (full signifier), naturalizing the need for cinematic escapelands from the everyday routine (mythical signifier) and underlying the need for visiting and discovering the portrayed destinations as future tourists.

## 6. The Animation Industry and its Myths

In order to fully grasp the interrelation between the tourist and the animation industry, it is necessary to outline the cartoon myth, apart from that of the tourist. The form of animated films, their denotation, is structured upon the movement of the drawn images we see on screen. The connotation of such films stems from the ideas and meanings they suggest (for example, their comments on tourist practices in the case of the films discussed in this paper). Animation films, however, just like all kinds of still and moving images, include myths that conceal certain ideologies. Disney is the most well-known example of an animation universe propagating such myths. The American way of life and consumerism form the basis of this ideological framework, as stated above.

In animation, just like in any image, one can search for Barthes’ *studium* and *punctum*. The *studium* includes the fragments of reality presented in images. The *punctum* refers to the photography’s indication of human mortality—something or someone ‘has been’ and will not appear again—that may cause a sentimental wound to some of the viewers. The *studium* refers to knowledge, while the *punctum* refers to sentiment,

feeling, and imagination. Eric Jenkins (2013) proposes a punctum unique to animated films. Animation's punctum demonstrates, in his view, the potential existence of life in imagination. In this sense, one might say that myth in animation films is connected to a simulated reality set in the imagination of the viewers, which is, therefore, untouched by social motives. Indeed, it is not merely the case that Disney films encourage consumerist behavior but rather that "they are a direct commercial appeal, a demonstration of the potential desirability of being a consumer" (Jenkins 2013:590).

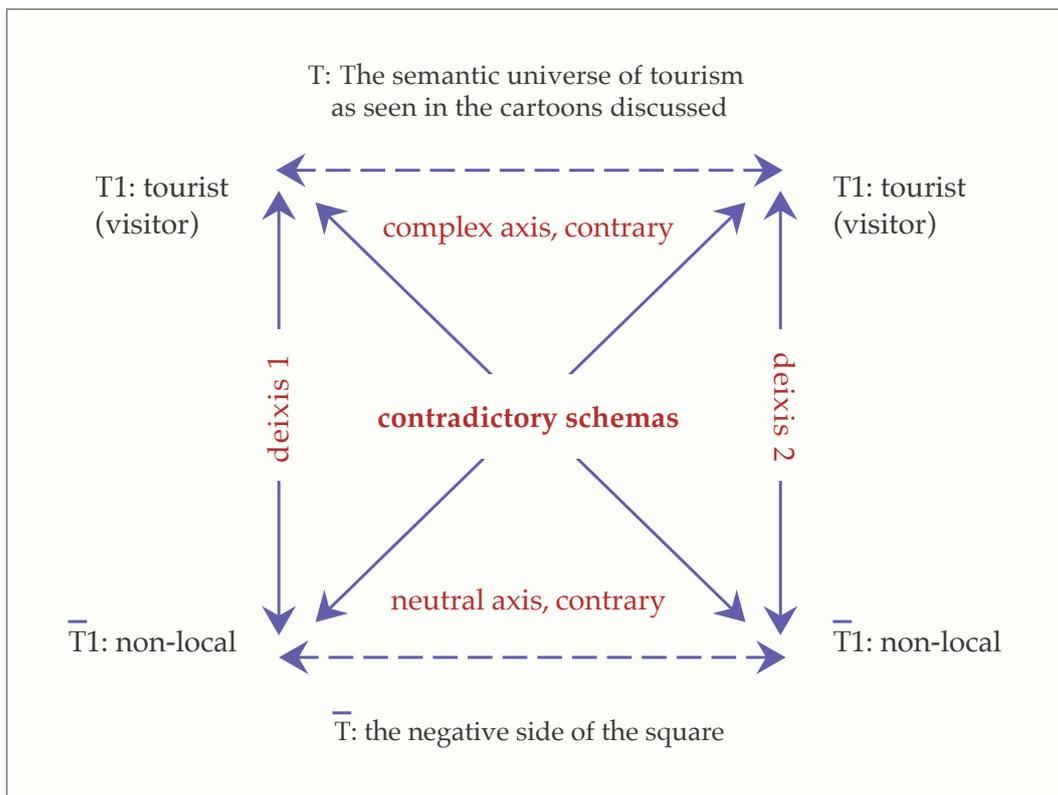
This imaginative simulated reality that animated films display might explain the fact that, despite Mickey's malleable identity – featuring in some films an American tourist and in others as a native Indian, a Japanese or European citizen, etc. – his ideological function does not change: he is still children's trustworthy friend who can magically transfer to various places, bearing variable identities, and he, therefore, never seems estranged.

## 7. Tourist Contradictions in Disney Films: The Semiotic Square

In this section, I will use Greimas' semiotic square (Greimas and Courtés 1979) in an attempt to reaffirm the elementary structure of signification in the animation films discussed. There are a number of contradictions that could be used in this square with reference to each film, such as 'touristy' versus 'natural,' or 'staged experience' versus 'self-exploration.' This analysis, however, focuses on the contradiction between 'tourist/visitor' and 'local inhabitant/exotic Other' (see Figure 3).

The Greimas square offers a heuristic, structuralist mechanism for the semiotic analysis of the aforementioned films and their mediation of tourism, and cannot be regarded as a holistic approach. The basic contrasting semes or the binary opposition in the square shown in Figure 2 are the hyponyms 'tourist' and 'local inhabitant.' These are actually the basic criteria for listing the films under category A or B, as mentioned above. These disjunctive relationships reveal a strong tourist dichotomy, namely, the 'inauthentic' versus the (staged) 'authentic,' or the 'invented' versus the 'genuine but dynamic' tradition. Schema 2 contradicts schema 1. As deixis 1 suggests, T1 implies negative T1, so the term 'tourist' implies a 'non-local,' a 'foreigner.' A tourist can be defined as a non-local inhabitant but not the other way around. Undoubtedly, as Greimas and Courtés note (1979), there is no 'objective' content, as the placement of each seme in the square depends on the knowledge and interpretation of the researcher.

Similarly, if multiple squares were drawn (for example, social, economic, individual, etc.), their hierarchy would depend on the author's individual choices, as well as on the collective values they are raised into, by a specific society and culture. The types of connections and the homologies and balances created when squares overlap, as well as the



**Figure 3.** The use of the Greimas Square for the interpretation of the tourist phenomenon as portrayed in Disney short animation films.

compatibilities and conflicts of the various deixes and schemata are culturally defined and heavily influenced by certain types of gazes (Western, Eastern, European, American, etc.), which exclude certain aspects—such as the less recognizable or less attractive ones—and simplify the richness of tourist experience. In the semiotic square, the upper left-hand corner hosts notions that can be prescribed, while the upper right-hand corner can rather be seen as a space for interdictions. Tourism is a contemporary prescription, then, against the noise and frenzy of everyday life, while locality and by extension nationality are strict notions acquired by birth and difficult to attain otherwise.

If one draws a semiotic square inspired by *Hawaiian Holiday* (1937), the term 'nature' could replace the term 'local,' while the term 'culture' would stand in for the term 'tourism,' indicating that, in contrast to nature, tourism is actually a cultural, socially-defined activity. If one were to use the same methodological tool for the interpretation of *Shipped Out* (2017), the two contradictory terms would be 'tourist packages' versus 'travelling alone.' Of course, each film should be studied within its own historical setting. As *Hawaiian Holiday* was produced in 1937 and *Shipped Out* eighty years later in 2017 it is evident that the travelers of the 1930s were worried about different aspects of tourism than those of the 21<sup>st</sup> century who have already experienced

the all-inclusive tourism option. There are many researchers who have pointed out the difference between the highly energetic traveler of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary almost passive tourist. Unfortunately, due to length restrictions, these kinds of historical considerations cannot be discussed in this paper.

According to Culler, “the distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic, the natural and the touristy, is a powerful semiotic operator within tourism” (1981:128). The same distinction seems to become apparent through the Disney films explored in this study, as the films in category A present the staged, touristy experience while the films in category B show the presumed everyday practices of the ‘exotic’ Other, stereotypically stressing the uniqueness of each destination through native language, traditional music – and in some cases even local instruments, like the sitar, the bansuri and the shehnai in *Mumbai Madness* (2014), the yayli tambur in *Turkish Delights* (2016), and the flamenco guitar in *Al Rojo Vivo* (2015) – through folk dancing and clothing, iconic landmarks, and other cultural resources, signs and symbolisms, all carefully selected so as to be included in the tourist discourse. Following MacCannell (1973) and Culler (1981), even the ‘real thing,’ therefore, appears to be ‘marked’ as authentic, semiotically articulated, and enriched with connotations of ‘French-ness,’ ‘Japanese-ness,’ ‘Swiss-ness,’ ‘Italian-ness,’ ‘Indian-ness,’ ‘Mexican-ness,’ ‘Spanish-ness,’ ‘Russian-ness,’ ‘Turkish-ness,’ or ‘Korean-ness,’ as stated above. Thus, even in cartoon animated films mediation marks the authentic, codes it into clichéd versions of cultural spectacles, and then offers it to future tourists. The moment film viewers become on-site tourists they would “measure up [...] the thing to the criterion of the preformed symbolic complex” (Percy 1975:47). It is the ritual of the contemporary and future tourist first to experience the sign and then, if ever, the site itself, co-creating tourist experiences and meaning. This co-creation of meaning might take the form of tourist selfies on social media accounts, richer texts in tourist blogs, or even personal websites. Whatever form it assumes, the input of tourists finds its way into the cycle of the marketing strategy of tourism industry, adding new images to the tourist discourse or reinforcing the existing dominant iconography.

Following MacCannell, Culler (1981) makes some interesting remarks concerning the value of the tourist code in recent societies as a widespread modern consensus, a systematized knowledge of the world, a stabilizing force in Western society. Each society creates a series of signs and mediating its landscapes, monuments, lifestyle, traditions and contemporary practices as a series of spectacles helps one understand the world. These animated tourist experiences, narrated by a trustworthy friend such as Mickey Mouse, may also help young audiences shape their tourist ‘habitus,’ (Bourdieu 1996 [1984]) the ‘smallest common culture’ required in Baudrillard’s (1999) consumer society, one that would guide them through their future tourist gazing, be it physical, corporeal, imaginative or virtual. Mediating and disseminating images of various destinations through animation films expand, therefore, Urry’s (2008) ‘economy of signs,’

the variety of which was evident in the analysis of the Disney films discussed in this paper: Images of global tourist sites, of global icons (like Notre-Dame), of iconic types (like the global beach or cruise trip), of railway transportation (implying mass tourism), vernacular icons (like Hula dancing), etc.

## 8. Conclusion

The visualization of the experience of traveling has inspired many academic writings, from Judith Adler's (1989) ideas regarding the origins of sightseeing to Urry's (1990) notion of the construction and authorization of 'the tourist gaze,' as well as Mark Neumann's (1999) 'culturally created spectacles' and Scarles' (2004) 'imaginative voyagers' and 'embodied visualities,' which could be applied to digital web and social media images or even to recent distant, virtual tourist wanderings which saw a tremendous increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gazing at tourist photography has given rise to such notions, which also apply in the case of film and animated tourist stories, since the mechanisms of identification in these media are even stronger and the sense of familiarity with the film's protagonists carefully choreographed.

This paper has underlined the importance of portraying tourist practices through cartoon animated films, especially in the case of those film productions which are seen worldwide and are highly influencing for young gazes such as Disney cartoons. It has become clear that Disney films try to foreground the uniqueness of specific destinations in order to co-create, along with young and other gazes, the puzzle of world tourism. At the same time, such films promote tourist practices and reinforce the myth of tourism as a natural activity, masking the ideological input of the tourist and the cartoon industry.

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