

Kulturen müssen sich nicht um jeden Preis verstehen und nähern, sie können sich ebenso gut bloß beschnuppern, ohne dass die eine die andere missioniert.

(Hanns-Georg Rodek, Welt online, Du musst verloren gehen, um dich zu finden  
Witzig, weise, wundervoll: Sofia Coppolas zweiter Film "Lost in Translation"+

Lost in Translation (Alternativtitel: Lost in Translation – **Zwischen den Welten**) ist der zweite Spielfilm der Regisseurin Sofia Coppola aus dem Jahr 2003 mit Bill Murray und Scarlett Johansson in den Hauptrollen. Coppola erhielt dafür 2004 einen **Oscar für das Beste Originaldrehbuch**,

Der alternde US-amerikanische Filmstar Bob Harris reist für eine Woche nach Tokio, um dort seine schwindende Popularität für eine Whisky-Werbung zur Verfügung zu stellen. Im gleichen Hotel wohnt die Amerikanerin Charlotte, die junge Ehefrau eines flippigen Boulevard-Fotografen, der von seiner Illustrierten für eine mehrtägige Auftragsarbeit nach Japan geschickt wurde.

In der Hotelbar trifft sie auf Bob Harris, in dessen 25-jährige Ehe es ebenfalls (wie die wortkargen Telefongespräche mit seiner Frau andeuten) an Romantik fehlt. Genau wie sie leidet auch er an Schlaflosigkeit und fühlt sich in Tokio fremd und verloren. Symptomatisch ist der **Dreh** des Whisky-Spots, in dem sich der Titel des Films manifestiert: Der japanische Regisseur gibt Bob ausführliche Anweisungen, wie er sich in dem Take zu verhalten habe, die Dolmetscherin aber fasst diese jeweils in nur einem einzigen, einfachen Satz zusammen. Der eigentliche Inhalt geht also buchstäblich „in der Übersetzung verloren“ (lost in translation).

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What Else Was Lost In Translation  
By MOTOKO RICH  
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IT doesn't take much to figure out that "Lost in Translation," the title of Sofia Coppola's elegiac new film about two lonely American souls in Tokyo, means more than one thing. There is the cultural dislocation felt by Bob Harris (Bill Murray), a washed-up movie actor, and Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson), a young wife trying to find herself. They are also **lost in their marriages, lost in their lives**. Then, of course, there is the simple matter of language.

Bob, who is in town to make a whiskey commercial, doesn't speak Japanese. His director (Yutaka Tadokoro), a histrionic Japanese hipster, doesn't speak English. In one scene, Bob goes on the set and tries to understand the director through a demure interpreter (Akiko Takeshita), who is either unable or (more likely) unwilling to translate everything the director is rattling on about.

Needless to say, Bob is lost. And without subtitles, so is the audience. Here, translated into English, is what the fulmination is really about.

**DIRECTOR** (in Japanese to the interpreter): The translation is very important, O.K.? The translation.

**INTERPRETER**: Yes, of course. I understand.

**DIRECTOR**: **Mr. Bob-san. You are sitting quietly in your study. And then there is a bottle of Suntory whiskey on top of the table. You understand, right? With wholehearted feeling, slowly, look at the camera, tenderly, and as if you are meeting old friends, say the words. As if you are Bogie in "Casablanca," saying, "Cheers to you guys," Suntory time!**

**INTERPRETER**: **He wants you to turn, look in camera. O.K.?**

BOB: That's all he said?

INTERPRETER: Yes, turn to camera.

BOB: Does he want me to, to turn from the right or turn from the left?

INTERPRETER (in very formal Japanese to the director): **He has prepared and is ready. And he wants to know, when the camera rolls, would you prefer that he turn to the left, or would you prefer that he turn to the right? And that is the kind of thing he would like to know, if you don't mind.**

DIRECTOR (very brusquely, and in much more colloquial Japanese): **Either way is fine.** That kind of thing doesn't matter. We don't have time, Bob-san, O.K.? You need to hurry. Raise the tension. Look at the camera. Slowly, with passion. It's passion that we want. Do you understand?

INTERPRETER (In English, to Bob): **Right side. And, uh, with intensity.**

BOB: Is that everything? It seemed like he said quite a bit more than that.

DIRECTOR: What you are talking about is not just whiskey, you know. Do you understand? It's like you are meeting old friends. Softly, tenderly. Gently. Let your feelings boil up. Tension is important! Don't forget.

INTERPRETER (in English, to Bob): Like an old friend, and into the camera.

BOB: O.K.

DIRECTOR: You understand? You love whiskey. It's Suntory time! O.K.?

BOB: O.K.

DIRECTOR: O.K.? O.K., let's roll. Start.

BOB: For relaxing times, make it Suntory time.

DIRECTOR: Cut, cut, cut, cut, cut! (Then in a very male form of Japanese, like a father speaking to a wayward child) Don't try to fool me. Don't pretend you don't understand. Do you even understand what we are trying to do? Suntory is very exclusive. The sound of the words is important. It's an expensive drink. This is No. 1. Now do it again, and you have to feel that this is exclusive. O.K.? This is not an everyday whiskey you know.

INTERPRETER: Could you do it slower and ----

DIRECTOR: With more ecstatic emotion.

INTERPRETER: More intensity.

DIRECTOR (in English): Suntory time! Roll.

BOB: For relaxing times, make it Suntory time.

DIRECTOR: Cut, cut, cut, cut, cut! God, I'm begging you.

In an interview, Ms. Coppola said she wrote the dialogue for the scene in English, and then it was translated into Japanese for Mr. Tadokoro. The scene, she said, came out of her own experience promoting her first feature film, "The Virgin Suicides," in Japan. Whenever she would say something, she said, the interpreter would seemingly speak for much longer. "I would think that she was adding to what I was saying and getting carried away, so I wanted to have that in the scene."

In the scene, Ms. Coppola said, Mr. Murray never did learn what the director was saying. "I like the fact that the American actors don't really know what's going on, just like the characters," she said.

Frankly, it's not clear that even if Bob-san had understood what the director said, it would have helped.

Ms. Coppola said she purposely gave the director "lame directions," adding, "He wasn't supposed to be the best director."

Photos: HAM IN JAPAN -- Bill Murray stars in "Lost in Translation." Mathew Minami, left. (Photo by Yoshio Sato/Focus Features)(pg. 1); BOB-SAN -- Bill Murray plays Bob Harris, a washed-up American actor making commercials in Japan in Sofia Coppola's "Lost in Translation." (Photo by Yoshio Sato/Focus Features)(pg. 12)