Translating the 'Other' for the Western World for more than a decade: Incredible India! *campaigns*

by Eleonora Federici

ABSTRACT: When we analyse and translate tourist texts promoting or dealing with non-Western destinations we certainly have to take into account the weight of postcolonial discourses in the representation of these places in the tourist field. Many ex-colonies have become popular tourist destinations, while the detritus of post-colonialism have been transformed into tourist sights, including exotic peoples and customs; artefacts; indigenous lifestyles and cultural heritage (Craik). Therefore, if tourism reinforces postcolonial relationships, tourist texts are deeply embedded in colonial discourses. Some scholars have argued that tourism is a form of "leisure imperialism" and represents "the hedonistic face of neocolonialism" (Crick 322). Hall and Tucker have dedicated a volume to the relation between postcolonial thought and tourism referring back to Edward Said's seminal work on Orientalism (1978) and to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), both works which outline the ontological and epistemological distinction that has been made between the Western world and the 'Other'. Encounters with the non-Western have always provided fuel for myths and mythical language and "tourism has developed its own promotional lexicon and repertoire of myths" (Selwyn 136), and as a matter of fact, otherness can be an element that makes a destination worth a visit. Studies have demonstrated how the representation of the 'Other' is closely linked to the popularization of accounts of travels and explorations in imperial lands (Pratt; Spurr), and sadly this representation is still part of tourist place promotion (Hall and Page). It is a fact that tourism plays a central role in transforming collective and individual values through ideas of commoditization (Cohen), which implies that what were once cultural displays of living traditions or cultural texts of lived authenticity become cultural products that meet the needs of commercial tourism, as well as the construction of a supposed heritage. Such a situation leads to the invention of traditions and heritage for external consumption that meet visitors' conceptions of the other (Helu-Thaman; Cronin *et al.*).

A good example of representing a non-Western destination at an international level is the Indian campaign *Incredible India* launched in 2002 for the European, Asian

and Middle East markets (Kant). Undertaken by the Government of India to promote India Tourism all over the world, the campaign was released by Ogilvy and Mather India in media print, internet and television. My analysis wants to outline how the main themes of the campaign (yoga, Ayurveda and other spirituality-related concepts, Indian cultures and culinary traditions and festivals all around the country, the cultural heritage and the natural resources) have been developed through time in order to 'translate' the uniqueness of India for the Western tourist in the last 15 years. The campaign *Incredible India* has been developed and renewed over the past few years and is still ongoing. My analysis will follow two stages: in the first I will deal with linguistic and visual techniques that create a determinate idea of India as a tourist destination, in the second I will compare texts in English with their translation into Italian, and specifically the creation of a campaign aimed at Italian tourists.

KEY WORDS: tourism texts; translation; *Incredible India* campaigns

SELLING PLACES: THE LANGUAGE OF TOURIST PROMOTION

Tourism is a vital source of income in many countries and millions of people are part of the tourist phenomena in one way or another. Tourism is a vast, complex and multifaceted business and is embedded in cultural, political, economic, environmental and technological forces. Its industry provides employment opportunities to professionals dealing with languages, mediators, interpreters and translators. Advertising is a key marketing tool in tourism industries and cannot be underestimated; how tourist texts are written and translated worldwide is important, and to cater for an international audience of various nationalities and cultural backgrounds, tourist texts should take into account market variants in which translation practices play a key role. Tourism is first of all a form of communication (Giacomarra), it is a product which necessitates certain communicative strategies in order to persuade the would-be tourist to choose a precise destination, that is to say to buy a certain tourist product. Therefore, the language of tourism together with a correct and persuasive translation of texts are central elements for the success of tourist communication (Mocini). The last few decades have seen a proliferation of interdisciplinary publications thanks to the establishment of 'Tourism Studies,' a subject which aims to develop a theoretical understanding of tourism by analysing the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction between tourists, business suppliers, host governments and communities in the process of attracting and hosting visitors. The literature on Tourism Studies is growing (Morgan and Pritchard; Dallen and Boyd; Smith; Bielenia Grajewska and Cortes del Rio) and specific studies have been dedicated to advertising in tourism (Smith *et al.*) outlining how any organization involved in tourism business uses advertising in one form or another.

There are many different types of tourists varying in age, sex, class, ethnicity and chosen means of travelling (organized mass tourism, individual tourism, tourists with

special needs, religious travellers); common motives for travel are leisure, business, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, study-tourism, health tourism, visiting friends and relatives or sports tourism. The attractiveness of a destination is based on many factors, including the existence of natural and man-made attractions or of health and political ties, but also climate, costs, hospitality, transportation. However, the attractiveness of the destination also results from its tourist representation. According to MacCannell, a tourist attraction is interpreted as a sign that represents something (the sight) to someone (the tourist). In his "Introduction" to *Semiotics of Tourism* (1989) the scholar emphasizes the privileged relationship between tourism and semiotics and reveals how semiotic analysis—understood as "the science or doctrine that studies signs and their uses in representation" (Danesi 290; cfr. Eco) becomes a useful tool in the study of tourism in general, and tourism representation in particular (Echtner). Beginning with MacCannell's seminal work *The Tourist* (1999), semiotic interpretations of tourism or tourism-related phenomena have been plentiful (Culler "Semiotics"; Frow; Waterton and Watson). Due to the intangible nature of the tourist experience, signs and symbols assume a decisive importance for both hosts and guests: from souvenirs, to photographs, to travel brochures and advertisements, tourism presents plenty of signs and symbols (Berger). Tourism symbols and activities act as "camouflaged myths and rituals" (Berger 6), oversimplifications of desires and ideas, that reach the masses in filtered form, via a number of cultural outlets for which the tourist ends up consuming a "universe of signs" (Berger 33). The sign provides information about the sight and is the first contact that a sightseer has with this particular destination; the sign is first of all a symbol and stands for the represented object conveying a specific message to the would-be tourist. The tourist text is made of verbal and visual elements which convey a specific theme (or more than one) for the advertised location offering a metaphorical portrait of the place through a precise lexical and iconic choice. The site can be presented in many ways according to its features, as an authentic place where nothing has changed from time immemorial, an adventurous landscape to be explored, a land of fun to forget everyday routine, a space where the tourist can find again his/her peace and 'true' self. Borrowed from other fields and used in Tourism Studies, some terms become controversial, like, for example, the notion of 'authenticity', because "the distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic, the natural and the touristy, is a powerful semiotic operator within tourism" (Culler *Pursuit* 5). Since tourism motivates and shapes the production of narratives around destinations, places are not shown as they are but as they should be in order to appeal to tourists. The destination image becomes a site of visual and verbal texts associated in the tourist's mind with a particular place—prior to his/her visit—and acts as a framework for the perception of the tourist's experience at the destination. Films, newspaper and magazine articles, postcards, travel guides and brochures, travel narratives and photographs, are all symbols of a representative system (Bruner; Jenkins) and are part of the pre- and post- travel experience. Studies have been dedicated to the destination image and its conceptualization (Echtner and Ritchie) and the perceptions connected to it. Destinations are tailored according to tangible attributes (for example, the climate) and psychological characteristics (personal values and motivations). Images play an important role in convincing people to visit a certain place, they act as stimuli in the

reader's mind, and as Kress and van Leeuwen have outlined, modality (the reliability of images) and salience (the degrees to which the elements are used to attract the viewer's attention) are central elements in the construction of a tourist text. Visual texts are central in tourist promotion and images are made of cultural elements tailored for the consumer, with certain cultural aspects emphasized according to the readers' expectations. Through images and words tourist texts describe other places and cultures. The text aims, therefore, to introduce new places and experiences (whether it be a city, a country, a type of food, local habits) to readers with little or no existing knowledge of them. In many cases tourism texts 'domesticate' the 'Other'; they render far-away places and people more familiar and less unknown to the would-be visitor. The multifaceted nature of tourist texts is clear when we look at the different textual typologies which are: 1) descriptive, as they present a place by outlining its characteristics, its positive aspects and qualities, and its distinctive natural and cultural features; 2) persuasive, as the main aim is to convince tourists to choose that particular destination; 3) prescriptive, as they suggest how to reach the place and the various itineraries to follow once there; 4) narrative, as they narrate the past events and present myths that make the place unique, the stories of public figures and historical characters that have brought the country fame, and also folkloristic tales and first-hand accounts of local people.

My analysis focuses on the *Incredible India* campaign launched in 2002 for the European, Asian and Middle East markets (Kant). The campaign has since been developed and renewed and is still ongoing. Undertaken by the Government of India to promote tourism to India from all over the world, the campaign was released by Ogilvy and Mather India and involved adverts in in print media, on the internet and on television, aimed at promoting a non-Western destination in a Western context, and thus at framing the destination for a Western audience. The corpus analysed here is comprised of the adverts from three campaigns from the years 2002, 2004 and 2008, including a total of 60 images, some of which are still accessible through the website (*Incredible India*), as well as 20 catalogues designed for the Italian market sent to me by the India Tourism Office in Milan. Choosing from a wide spectrum of images across time, this analysis aims to provide a comparison across a long period of time, looking specifically at whether the representation of India in the Italian language merely reproduces the visual and verbal messages of the original campaign in English or whether changes were thought necessary. I conducted a critical semiotic analysis of the representation of India considering denotative and connotative meanings, intertextual references, and exploring how different themes were expressed through visual tropes and discursive genres.

TRANSLATING THE OTHER

When we analyse and translate tourist texts promoting or dealing with non-Western destinations we must take into account the weight of postcolonial discourses in the representation of places in the tourist field. The concept of postcolonialism, which for
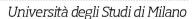
much of the 1990s has informed cultural theorizing, has deeply influenced Tourism Studies and, as Hall and Tucker underline,

> Studies of Tourism in the less developed countries, concerns over identity and representation, and theorising over the nature and implications of the cultural, political and economic encounters that are intrinsic to the tourist experience, have increasingly led to reference to postcolonial discourse. (1)

Many ex-colonies have become popular tourist destinations, while the detritus of post-colonialism have been transformed into tourist attractions, including exotic peoples and customs, artefacts, indigenous lifestyles and cultural heritage (Craik). Therefore, if tourism reinforces postcolonial relationships, tourist texts are deeply embedded in colonial discourses and tourism can be seen as a form of "leisure imperialism" that represents "the hedonistic face of neocolonialism" (Crick 322). Hall and Tucker have made an important contribution to this debate with their work on the relation between postcolonial thought and tourism referring back to Edward Said's seminal work on Orientalism (1978) and to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), both of which outlined the ontological and epistemological distinction that has been made between the Western world and the 'Other.' Encounters with the non-Western have always provided fuel for myths and mythical language and "tourism has developed its own promotional lexicon and repertoire of myths" (Selwyn 136) because otherness can be an element that makes a destination worth a visit. Studies have demonstrated how the representation of the 'Other' is closely linked to the popularization of accounts of travels and explorations in imperial lands (Pratt; Spurr), and sadly this representation is still part of tourist place promotion (Hall and Page). It is a fact that tourism plays a central role in transforming collective and individual values through ideas of commoditization (Cohen), which implies that what were once cultural displays of living traditions or cultural texts of lived authenticity become cultural products that meet the needs of commercial tourism. Such a situation leads to the invention of traditions and heritage for external consumption that can meet the visitors' conceptions of the other (Helu-Thaman; Cronin *et al.*). However, studies on tourism from emerging regions that seek to deconstruct Eurocentric viewpoints have outlined many differences which would also be important in translating practices (Cohen and Cohen "Mobilities Approach," "Beyond Eurocentrism"). Some scholars have specifically referred to India (Bandyopadhyay) outlining how tourism texts are still intended for a Western reader representing India as timeless, poor, a site of exotic/erotic women and effeminate men.

In 2002 the government of India defined its vision for the development of the tourism sector as a major engine for economic growth. They decided to create a brand based on India's unique civilization, heritage and culture in its different States. India was different than any other part of the world and should be advertised as such; however, this was not an easy task due to the country's rich geographical, historical and cultural tapestry, a veritable mosaic of different languages/cultures. The campaign *Incredible India* was one of the results of the socio-economic changes linked to economic reforms. If the term "Incredible" sought to convey the depth and intensity of the Indian experience indicating something extraordinary and memorable, the logo with the

exclamation mark "!ndia" visualized an innovative idea about the destination. The first task was to create an attractive and functional website that readers worldwide could access. The website is still functional today: www.incredibleindia.org. The print media campaign, on which my analysis focuses, was integrated with the website, adding images and information on the destination via the virtual medium. Through this campaign India acquired a global visibility not only as a tourist destination but as a country; its image and position on the international stage changed because of the efficacy of the message and representation conveyed by the campaign. There have been various analyses of the campaign (Dwivedi; Harish; Kerrigan *et al.*; Venkatachalam and Venkateswaran), which have focused on a variety of aspects such as the re-inscription of colonial images in order to privilege Western desires, the promotion of India as a unitary Hindu nation erasing the Muslim presence, a simplified reinforcement of colonial stereotypes, an example of nation branding constructed by narratives and tropes which already constitute the sense of the Indian nation, an "authoritative discursive elaboration of Indianness across potential lucrative spaces in global markets" (Edwards and Ramamurthy 328). Using traditional and interactive media—print, outdoor and the internet—India was positioned as a unique and vibrant destination for international tourists.

My corpus is made up of tourist texts covering several aspects of India and its culture, from nature to eco-tourism, gastronomy, history, folklore and religion with the theme of spirituality that underpinned the entire campaign as the essence of Indian culture. Looking at the materials three major themes are visible both in the English and Italian texts:

 1. personal wellness
 2. the natural beauty of the destination
 3. the cultural diversity reflected in the variety of India's geography, history and society.

THEME 1. PERSONAL WELLNESS

The 2002 campaign is made of spectacular landscapes, iconic architecture and spiritual practices like yoga. It focuses on the longstanding trope of India as a spiritual destination, a theme that was again reiterated in the 2004 campaign that focused on spiritual tourism, and in the most recent campaign that continues to propose India as 'the' world's spiritual destination. Images of natural and secluded landscapes offer the background for Western women practising traditional Indian medical therapies. In one of the ads, for example, a Western woman in yoga position is lifted up on a blue river with the Himalaya mountains in the background; the verbal text refers to a Westernized idea of yoga and meditation connected to British culture translating the Eastern practice into a Western thought: "Wordsworth searched for a 'happy stillness of mind.' Many around the world are getting their daily dose of bliss through meditation. Only focused concentration and isolated environment the Indian Himalayas. Sheer bliss for your mind, body, soul."

All the texts taken into consideration utilize the verbal techniques of the language of tourism with key adjectives, keywords, metaphorical expressions and lexical choices connected to specific semantic fields, and visual techniques; for example, in the text entitled "Walk with the Buddha" the visual choice immediately strikes the reader; the colourful page, red, orange and yellow shows the image of a big Buddha in friendly surroundings. Verbally the tourist is involved through the use of the imperative tense and the invitation to an action through the verb "to walk" presented in a metaphorical sense. The headline "It's your karma which has brought you here!" uses a culturally-bound term, "karma," that highlights the spirituality of this land, inserting a word which has become common in the Western world and is understood by the foreigner. However, for a tourist who is unaware of this term the advertiser adds an explanation: "the search for peace, tranquillity and joy ends here, in this land of Buddha." The treatment of the foreign word to be sold to the Western consumer is couched in domestic terms and simultaneously appeals to a specific segment of the tourist market. The choice of adjectives with positive connotations from a specific semantic field conveys the idea of a land where the tourist can become a sort of pilgrim looking for his own spiritual and physical well-being. In the same text the advertiser has inserted another technique of the language of tourism, the *testimony*, through a quotation attributed to Albert Einstein:

> Buddhism has the characteristics of what would be expected in a cosmic religion for the future: it transcends a personal God, avoids dogmas and theology; it covers both the natural & spiritual, and is based on a religious sense aspiring from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity.

The voice of an authoritative source serves as supplementary information on the place. The testimony—which comes from a Western man—merges with the destination and offers a scientific glimpse on a different religion.

The text presents a standardized image of Indian people and landscapes and communicates the diversity and exoticism of the place in a manner that is tailored for the Western tourist. The translation into Italian of this text would not present difficulties both from a linguistic and cultural point of view, and it could be quite literal. Indeed, the main theme—India as a place of self–discovery—works well in both the Italian and English-speaking cultural context. The idea transmitted is that for the Western tourist India is a spiritual destination that transforms the visitor; it is the place of wellness and regeneration. Thus the proposed image is a romanticized view of India as a spiritual place or a treasure trove of 'Oriental' wisdom. Though this campaign was not translated into Italian, more recent posters and catalogues that were dwell on the idea of India as a place that heals the body, mind and soul, with detailed explanations of traditional therapies like aromatherapy, Unani and Siddha. Many texts in English and Italian focus on the connection between India, spirituality and health-care outlining the many choices that are available to the tourist. A key example is that of the posters on Ayurveda, where the images used are the same in the materials for both Anglophone and Italian speaking tourists. Often the visual is literally divided into two distinct parts, either from a vertical or horizontal angle, where one presents a beautiful Western young woman undergoing Ayurveda therapy and the other is made of a beautiful Indian

landscape (often the Himalayas or Kerala with its canals). The verbal message in English is more creative and makes use of metaphors and rhetorical strategies, seen clearly in the following example:

> What time weakens, nature can strengthen. It can add years to life. It can ease stress of modern living. And it can even improve immunity. It's the 'science of life,' and as old as mankind. It uses self-knowledge and self-care to bring harmony to your mind, body and soul—with secrets gathered from leaves, flowers, roots, oils and stones. Ayurveda will nourish you. Much like Incredible India.

A crucial element here is semantic uniqueness; the 'protected status' words acquire in specialized subject domains means that every term signals a concept. The repetition of the word "self" emphasizes the focus on the individual seen as interested in his own physical and mental health. The concepts of nature and health are connected to time, knowledge and science together with the representation of India as a spiritual place for both mind and body: the rich culture of the past is interlaced with the present and modern-day wellness. The geographic entity is built up through a historical narrative that creates a perfect stage for a drama about the individual self. This is feasible because India is full of stories of mysteries and, at the same time, it is a place of ancient knowledge and a land full of natural elements that can heal body and mind. The lexical choice of substantives and adjectives clarifies this idea and the use of the modal "can" reinforces the notion of a country full of possibilities for the tourist. The insertion of the pronoun "it" repeated in short sharp sentences builds a sense of anticipation as the reader waits for what is revealed at the end: Ayurveda. In this way heritage values are at the centre of the ad and they are related to modern medicine through the use of specific terms such as "immunity" and "science of life." Both verbal and visual techniques involve the reader directly with the insertion of a photo and the use of possessives; Ayurveda is explained to the Western tourist connecting it with notions that are more familiar to him and the Western idea of wellness. Compared to the English text the text in Italian is more explanatory and descriptive and refers to the history of Ayurveda and its philosophy. Ayurveda is compared to traditional Western medicine and similarities and differences are outlined. It focuses on Ayurveda as an alternative medical treatment:

> L'India è oggi l'esempio di una civiltà antica che risale a quasi 5000 anni fa. La sua unicità deriva da tradizioni antiche e radicate che ne fanno tuttora la culla di pratiche sempre più apprezzate e diffuse quali lo Yoga, la Naturopatia e l'Ayurveda. L'Ayurveda è senza alcun dubbio un metodo particolarmente efficace nel ringiovanimento e viene considerato un sistema di medicina alternativa basato sulla naturopatia per trattamenti sintomatici e preventivi. È particolarmente riconosciuto come un ottimo antidoto contro la stanchezza fisica, mentale e spirituale, conseguenza dello stress della società moderna e del suo stile di vita. L'Ayurveda, il cui obiettivo da secoli è il raggiungimento di una totale armonia fisica e psichica, si basa sull'analisi degli umori corporei al fine di ritrovare il giusto equilibrio. Infatti, non cura soltanto le parti carenti dell'organismo, ma agisce sull'intero sistema.

For the Italian reader Ayurveda is presented as an ancient Indian tradition that is part of a unique cultural richness. The emphasis is on ancient Indian civilization and on the positive aspects of Indian culture, such as a positive and less stressful lifestyle. Once again India is portrayed as a timeless place where natural secrets will bring the Western

tourist back to a condition of youth and serenity. The register of *old talk* or nostalgia (Dann) is used to create an image of a destination where ordinary time ceases to exist. The campaign depicts India as a timeless situation and thus a *strangerhood* perspective has been chosen, that presents the proposed location as a place where the way of life is totally different from the tourist's own. India is represented as a magical almost non-existent place out-of-time where the tourist can become a different self or discover another self. At the same time the ad reinforces a notion of India as a place of well-being knowledge, a competence acquired through centuries also thanks to natural properties of the land which are unique.

Being a place that restores body and mind, India is advertised as a destination for medical tourism. Indeed, some posters are examples of the register of *health tourism* (Dann). These texts focus on the idea of India as a place of healthcare and outline both high-tech healing and alternative medicine. In recent years, in fact, patients from the United Kingdom have been travelling to India for medical treatment because of the deficiency in their health-care system. If on the one hand some thoughts should be given to the ethics of medical tourism (Meghani) it is undoubtable that health care has become a profitable enterprise and that India has been marketed as an efficient and cost-effective medical destination. The *Spasprech* (Dann) is immediately recognizable:

> With modern diagnostic and treatment facilities, experienced surgeons, one of the largest pharmaceutical industries in the world, and a tradition of caring, India provides word-class healthcare facilities at a fraction (sometimes as low as 10%) of world cost, with comparable success rates and service levels. A national Accreditation Board for Hospital has been established to monitor safety and hygiene norms. Several modern hospitals have been set up by surgeons and physicians with decades of experience in the USA, the UK and Europe. The Indian Government issues an "M" visa for patients and "MX" visa for those accompanying them, facilitating your trip to India for medical treatment. Last year, about 200,000 foreigners chose to undergo medical and dental treatment in India.

If the previous text utilizes health jargon connected to alternative medicine, here the copy-writer has inserted medical lexicon but through a common scientific language understandable by any reader. The aim of the text is to make this message clear to everyone reading the tourist ad. The use of positive adjectives to portray the Indian care system, its facilities and professionals by relating them to Western standards are united together with the appeal of a lower cost for healthcare. In order to support the idea of an equal standard of hygiene and health services the copy-writer has inserted an authoritative source, the National Accreditation Board for hospitals, the statutory body responsible for ensuring healthcare standards. In addition to this the text affirms that many of the doctors have studied and trained in the Western world, i.e. in Europe and the US. Furthermore, the ad presents some legal terms that introduce the problems of being treated in a foreign country. Compared to the previous ad this one utilizes a clear and straightforward language, a concise syntactical structure and a register that is similar to that of documents or reports. The language is precise and the figures inspire trust. The visual elements present two pictures of women, one is a doctor, the other one is a would-be tourist sitting in a yoga position; both are Westerners. These images stand for an Eastern technique of meditation, yoga, in parallel with an idea of the Western health care system. The exotic is minimized reducing it to a Westernized archetype and

at the same time the images are closely linked to the verbal structure which emphasizes the supposed higher quality of the Western medical system. The text in Italian differs from the English version but outlines the same elements: assuring the would-be patient of the medical and pharmaceutical competence of the Indian staff in hospitals, highlighting the quality of treatment and aftercare and, most importantly, underlining the low cost of the service:

> Salute, un approccio olistico.
> Il paziente prima di tutto!
> Questo è il motto del servizio sanitario indiano. Molti ospedali sono in grado di fornire pacchetti che includono volo, trasferimento, trattamenti, hotel e vacanze pre e post-operatorie.
> Medical tips: il costo medio di un intervento è circa un quinto del costo sostenuto nei paesi occidentali. L'industria farmaceutica è tra le più sviluppate del pianeta. L'India esporta farmaci in altri 180 paesi. Il personale medico parla perfettamente inglese. In molti ospedali è possibile ricorrere a interpreti per superare le barriere linguistiche.
> Servizio di ricevimento personalizzato: una navetta da e per l'aeroporto è a disposizione per ogni paziente.

The information has been adapted for an Italian reader, probably less keen than a British one to choose India for medical treatment. As a matter of fact, the focus on language and communication is central because it is thought to be an important matter for a non-English speaker.

THEME 2. THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE DESTINATION

This theme is narrated presenting similar images and places in order to attract Anglophone and Italian tourists and the images chosen are of the Himalayas mountains, the countries islands and coasts, and the canals of Kerala.

The rhetorics of advertising is manifest and the message is usually identified with keywords, a chain of adjectives that portray the advertised place as a site of natural beauty, as in the following example:

> Rat race, stress, corporate friction. Rise above it all. Grand. Magnificent. Challenging. Humbling. Majestic. Splendid. The Himalayas. The world's youngest mountain system (about 80 million years old) is also its longest (over 2,500 km from east to west, and 250 to 425 km from north to south) and highest, being home to all of the world's 'eight-thousander peaks' (none of the other mountain ranges have peaks higher than 7000 mt. above sea level). For Indians though the Himalayas are much more than just a mountain range. Our ancient wisdom originated here, our Gods are believed to dwell here, our great epics were composed there, and our holiest river, the Ganges, starts its long journey to the sea from here. Like the soul and spirit of our country, the appeal of the Indian Himalayas is universal—always relevant. Eternal.

First of all, the list of adjectives is anticipated by a sentence which is directly intended for the reader through an invitation to "rise" above the negative aspects of his/her ordinary life and enjoy the magnificence of these mountains. The first words are associated with the workplace and a job in a specific area, probably management: "Rat race, stress, corporate friction." The text begins with alliteration, the use of the second person pronoun is personal and aims to include all the readers in the statement or, at

least, is directly aimed at those dealing with stress at work. The cleverness of the text is that it positions the reader as opposed to Indians but then it includes him/her with the use of the adjective "our" so that visitors and inhabitants of the place become one entity. The tourist is invited to discover Indian culture and the pronoun is used in an inclusive sense, intended to include the person being spoken to as a means of creating a sense of solidarity with the customer while projecting an image of a place that is highly personal. The copy-writer wants to represent an interaction with the reader. The Himalayas are presented through the language of *eco-tourism* or *greenspeak* (Dann 238) as a promise of unspoilt and undisturbed nature, so far away as to seem sacred. Superlatives are followed by figures that add information and comparative forms that give a more detailed account of the site and invite people to visit it. The use of personal pronouns plays with the reader, who is initially made to feel detached from the inhabitants but is later invited to join them with the repetition of the possessive "our." Natural beauty is connected to history, religion and culture.

There is not an Italian text focusing on the Himalayas but sea and mountain destinations have been put together in a different text which drastically summarizes and generalizes the English one:

> Se invece cercate la grandiosità della montagna, non c'è posto al mondo che possa offrirvi cime più imponenti, come l'Himalaya, e nei mesi estivi, più gradevole refrigerio contro il caldo della pianura. Montagne per sciare, per fare roccia ed escursioni.

The Italian text is concise and mainly hints at sport activities offered by the Himalayas.

India is marked as a country radically different from Western life, with its natural landscape, flora and fauna being an important part of this. However, the wilderness of the destination is tamed by the idea of civilization as in the following example where, while emphasizing India's millennial civilization, the verbal text uses an ironic register in order to deconstruct the binary of the Western 'civilized' world vs Oriental 'primitive' one:

> Even the world's oldest civilization has a wild side. From the front seat of a jeep, watch them strut across our jungles. See them flaunt feathers. Lope across grasslands. Trumpet along dust clouds or prowl about in stripes. The ladies and gentlemen of our forests will ensure that you'd always run out of film. But never out of gasps. Incredible India.

The exotic setting is presented as a spectacle to be watched and carried back home with pictures. The tourist is involved in a timeless scene that he/she can appreciate as a spectator, at a safe distance from the wild life of the jungle; the foreign here is symbolized by the Bengal tiger and is experienced in a controlled way. This idea is reinforced through language; the "wild side" is only a part of the "world's oldest civilization." The binary opposition of adjectives supports the notion of India as an ancient cradle of civilization where the tourist can still discover something untamed and unique. Tigers, elephants and other animals act as "ladies and gentlemen" on a natural stage set for the tourist. The promise is of total harmony with nature, experiencing the magic of the jungle presented through imperative verbs of action and adventure. The visual elements made up of colourful animals present the fauna of India as a trait of its

uniqueness, in some cases using an ironic register like in the following headline: "Not all Indians are polite, hospitable and vegetarian" correlated by the image of the Bengal tiger in the wilderness. The visual is here used as a texture of the verbal, the sentence is decoded in its pun thanks to the picture; the connotation of the message is clear. However, even though the sentence intends to be humorous, it nevertheless perpetuates stereotypes about Indians who are depicted as "polite, hospitable and vegetarian" so if on one hand the use of irony is a creative device to deconstruct orientalist representations of India, on the other it ends up reinforcing them.
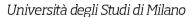
The Italian version presents the same image of the Bengal tiger but the humour has been culturally adapted to an Italian reader: it does not focus on politeness, hospitality and being vegeterian (probably the stereotyped vision of an Indian for a British), but on the stereotype of cows in the streets and tricky monkeys. The text has a descriptive and informative part about a specific project, however the representation is still tailored for a Western reader:

> L'immagine tradizionale è quella delle vacche sacre che vagano lungo le strade e delle scimmie che saltano tra i tetti delle case. Ma in tutto il paese potretre vedere gli animali più splendidi nelle riserve, protetti e circondati dal loro habitat, in molti casi si tratta di specie rare o in pericolo di estinzione.
> Il Progetto Tigre, nato venti anni fa, ha individuato le maggiori zone abitate dalle tigre, ne ha fatte aree protette e ha favorito la riproduzione di queste magnifiche belve.

THEME 3. THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY REFLECTED IN THE VARIETY OF INDIA'S GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND SOCIETY

This theme is evident in the 2004 campaign entitled "The Colours of India" and focused on the different Indian cultures together with the various culinary traditions and festivals all around the country. The campaign emphasized India's diverse cultural spectrum featuring breathtaking images and colour-based headlines such as "Coffee Brown" and "Red Hot." A range of images are overlaid with phrases that play on color. It was launched globally in 71 leading newspapers and magazines and it managed to make a powerful visual impact on the viewer. What initially strikes the viewer is that in this campaign places are not recognizable, there are no landmarks which can be deciphered by the viewer, nor any allusions to the geographical area which is advertised. The effect of this is to minimize India's geographical variety, with the destination still seeming "a stage for Western experiences" (Edwards and Ramamurthy). These ads thus continue to play on binary oppositions between Western and Eastern and frame the country through a Western gaze. For example, in the poster "Coffee Brown" an Indian man with a red turban is smiling at the viewer, the verbal text reports "28 States, 22 languages, 1,652 dialects, 340 days of sunlight. A very warm welcome." The ad aligns color (brown) with food and drink, deploying the familiar trope that assimilates black people with 'exotic' commodities such as cocoa or coffee (Ramamurthy). The multicultural aspect of the destination is emphasized by a list of quantities which frame diversity and the strict relation between verbal and visual text offers to the would-be tourist an exotic experience

while suggesting modernity and security, two important issues for a Western tourist.

The three themes were further developed in the 2007 campaign accompanied by events in various places in Europe to support Indian tourism like, "India Now," a three-month long campaign designed to showcase India's accelerating economy and ever-evolving culture organized from July to September 2007 in London, which featured events, activities and festivals across the capital dedicated to Indian art, film, food, theatre, music and fashion. As part of the campaign, buses and taxis along the main routes in London advertised *Incredible India*. Another event took place in Cannes the same year and this special campaign was designed to appeal to a global film crowd at the International Film Festival at Cannes. Large outdoor posters showed off India's diverse and picturesque sights—from the golden beaches of Kerala to the Tiger reserves of Madhya Pradesh—with cinematographic-themed headlines such as "Location for Hire" in French. Cinema and especially Bollywood movies have also influenced the representation of India as a tourist destination with posters alluding to song sequences and dance numbers following the so-called 'movie-induced tourism' (Josiam *et al.*). The 2007 International Tourism Bourse in Berlin ran a joint campaign that saw *Incredible India* images decorating the whole city through the use of billboards, 3D installations and graphic art.
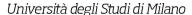
In 2008 the focus of the campaign became even more Westernized, based on the experience of visitors to India who decided to make India their home. Western people were portrayed to advertise the destination with the idea of a cultural assimilation as one of the verbal texts makes clear:

> It takes a special bond with the country and its people to give up everything you know and set up home, take roots in India. These are the people who've truly embraced the culture and assimilated it into their being. As opposed to those who've simply being bitten by the India bug. Staying back is prompted by a decision that will change their lives forever. It is not a mere whim or adventure. It is commitment of a lifetime.

India is no longer only a tourist destination but a new home, a place where a second life can begin; India becomes the motherland, implying, as Geary suggests, the controversial issue of 'Motherland India.' Here the representation of Indian people, before offered as 'timeless' like their landscape (mainly peasant women handpicking fruits or plants and fishermen or, in alternative, dancers), are here totally erased and replaced by Western people who have elected India as their home. Once again India becomes a site for personal wellness, natural beauty to be explored and cultural diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis of the campaign *Incredible India* has shown that the production of tourist texts starts from the awareness that all representations are filtered through cultural schemas and represented for a specific target market. Advertising a country means advertising a nation and a national identity through words and images that are

connected to previously acquired conceptions and values. As De Cillia *et al.* outline, "national identities—conceived as specific forms of social identities—are discursively, by means of language and other semiotic resources, produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed" (153). Texts are constructed that showcase India's rich and diverse cultural legacy, spiritual heritage, natural beauty and multicultural aspects within a framework that is comprehensible to the Western tourist. However, in either English or in Italian, India remains 'incredible' for the Western tourist. It is translated *ad hoc* in both languages for the would-be visitor looking for an undiscovered 'Other.' It is, therefore, an incredible India rendered credible for non-Indian tourists.

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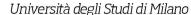
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