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Tourism Discourse and the Representation of Italy:
a Critical Analysis of English Guidebooks

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Tourism and tourism discourse

Tourism is generally thought of as a leisure activity involving the geographical movement of people to destinations, which are not places of residence or work, thus implying their intention to return home after a relatively brief period of time (Urry, 1990). The beginnings of modern tourism can be traced back to the period of the *Grand Tour*, near the end of the 18th century, when young European aristocrats were encouraged to travel for educational purposes (Savelli, 1996). However, it was only after World War II that tourism began to grow rapidly – with mass tourism starting in the 1970s – and since then it has witnessed a dramatic and steady increase in the last 50 years (WTO, 2005). Nowadays, tourism is a global industry but its importance goes beyond its economic impact: indeed, tourism is a very complex phenomenon which involves psychological, social and cultural dimensions and which allows people to be exposed to

different realities. It can be argued that the act of travelling is one of the most important elements in shaping the perceptions of places and people (Przeclawski, 1993).

Although there exists a large number of studies on this complex phenomenon, general reflections about the role of language in tourism are quite recent. The relationship between language and tourism has received some attention from researchers as MacCannell (1976) and Urry (1990), who argue that the tourist establishment constructs and defines the tourist experience by using language to convey specific images of the destination. In this manner, the language is used to inform the tourist about what must be seen and to direct his/her gaze through “an anticipation of intense pleasures” (Urry, 1990: 3). The first comprehensive study on the language of tourism and its influence on the behaviour of people is Graham Dann’s crucial work *The Language of Tourism* (1996); in which the author claims that the tourism industry exploits language to allure and ‘control’ tourists and their experience of the destination. By studying the language of tourism from a sociolinguistic perspective, Dann uncovers the persuasive power of tourism discourse and proposes a new method of classification for the media of tourism based on a three-stage model of the tourist process (pre-, on- and post- trip stages). This model is very useful in that it offers a key to understanding the functions of the language used in tourist promotional materials according to which stage they belong (Dann, 1996: 144).

More recently, the language of tourism has also been studied from the perspective of Language for Special Purposes (LSP) (e.g. Calvi, 2000; Nigro, 2006), with particular emphasis on the creation of specific textual genres and discourse communities (Swales, 1990) and the use of linguistic strategies that are strictly related to the purposes of tourist communication. Widening the scope to the socio-cultural implications of tourism, other studies have also adopted a discourse analysis approach (e.g. Margarito, 2000; Fodde & Denti, 2005) to explore the link between language, text and social relations. In this perspective, tourism discourse is considered a signifying practice, in which social and cultural meanings of places and people are constructed and transmitted.

Other authors, namely Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard, have suggested a different approach to the significance of tourism in society, in various books and articles (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998; Pritchard, 2000; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). They propose a critical analysis of tourism representations, arguing that they cannot be simply explained in terms of economic interests of promotion. These representations must be related to a wider context of social and political processes and to notions of cultural power. In their works, Morgan and Pritchard claim that the cultural meanings constructed and transmitted by tourism industry “represent certain ways of seeing reality, images which both reflect and reinforce

particular relations of power, dominance, and subordination, which characterize the global system.” (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998: 6).

According to their analyses, tourism as a social practice mirrors specific dominant values and its representations manipulate reality to fulfil expectations attributed to potential tourists, thus distorting the interactive reality of tourism experiences. Moreover, as argued by Graham Dann (2001), in this interaction tourists themselves are invited to complete the tourist message by including “their own daydreams and fantasies, all of which, of course, are in turn ideologically framed by surrounding cultural expectations, including social relations and other relations of power.” (Dann, 2001: 8).

Drawing on discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1985, 1993b; Fairclough, 1989, 2003), this thesis aims at linking the above-mentioned perspective to a more accurate study of the role of language in the construction of tourist encounters with the destination culture. Discourse analysis involves investigating texts (i.e. instances of language in use) in order to understand how they create and reproduce social meanings which in turn shape people’s knowledge of the world. In particular, language itself is considered a form of social practice and texts are never discussed in isolation, but rather located within a wider, critical analysis of the surrounding social context. In this regard, Fairclough and Wodak argue that:

Critical Discourse Analysis sees discourse – language in use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 55)

This seems to apply perfectly to tourism discursive events as they both reflect and constitute the tourist experience. They are shaped by social, cultural and economic factors but also shape those factors by directing the ‘gaze’ of the tourist on specific aspects of the destination and suggesting specific interpretative frames. Hence, tourism discourse as a form of social practice can be critically analysed to make human beings aware of the reciprocal influences of language and social structures, even in situations where tolerance and equality are officially respected. Indeed, the aim of critical discourse analysis is specifically that of uncovering feelings of superiority, stereotypes and prejudice that may be involuntarily presupposed, expressed, or signalled in text (van Dijk, 1993a: 119).

1.2. Purpose and methods of the study

The general purpose of this study is to explore the role of tourism discourse in the construction and transmission of cultural meanings through a critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2001) of English tourist guidebooks about Italy. In particular, this research aims at uncovering possible dominant ideologies, which are framed by historical, social or cultural relations between Italy and the home country of the tourist¹.

Italy has always attracted visitors from all over the world; throughout history, it has been a place of pilgrimage, a main stop in the *Grand Tour* and, more recently, a mass tourist destination. In 2005, the *Ente Nazionale Italiano per il Turismo* (ENIT) published a special number of its quarterly magazine dedicated to “cultural tourism in Italy” in which it stated that:

The general conception of the tourist phenomenon and its development in Italy arises mainly out of the numerous journeys undertaken by various kinds of visitors, who, over the years have travelled the length and breadth of our peninsula, starting from the first pilgrims, the Grand Tour, which mainly involved British aristocrats and the German middle-class, to the tourists of today. (ENIT ITALIA, 2005: 60)

¹ The main reference is to Teun Van Dijk’s theory of ideology defined as “a special form of social cognition shared by social groups. Ideologies thus form the basis of the social representations and practices of group members, including their discourse, which at the same time serves as a means of ideological production, reproduction and challenge.” (Van Dijk, 2001b: 12)

As a consequence of this long tradition as a travel destination and tourist attraction, Italy has been perceived, interpreted and described in so many forms of writing that its representations are well rooted in the minds of modern foreign travellers. In addition, the popularity of many places can be said to derive from, and depend on, what Urry (1990) calls “the tourist gaze”. This gaze has been constructed and reinforced through the centuries by non-tourist practices such as literature, magazines, films and television, that created an anticipation of pleasure and fixed specific expectations.

From the same survey carried out by ENIT², it also emerged that the image of Italy as “immersed in an immense sea of artistic heritage” (2005: 60) is still alive in the minds of British people; thus making them expect this heritage to be well preserved and fully valorised. For US citizens, on the other hand, Tuscany is still the only region to be perceived as having its own identity, while more generally the “identity of Italy is firmly linked to the idea of culture” (2005: 79), meaning the collection of traditions, knowledge, customs, art and history. These two examples confirm that, even if it is considered a peculiar phenomenon to contemporary society, tourism is undeniably rooted in the long tradition of travel. When discussing this issue, it is hard to neglect the deep influence of the historical, social and cultural relations that shaped the image of Italy, and

² ENIT ITALIA 2005, *Il Turismo Culturale in Italia/ Cultural Tourism in Italy*.

which could mould modern tourists' expectations and their encounters with the Italian culture.

This study is focused in particular on the image conveyed by guidebooks, as they appear to have great importance in the construction of the socio-cultural relationship between tourists and the host country. The guidebook has always had a key role in the tourist process, its origins as a textual genre date back to the 19th century when the first guidebooks began to provide maps, advice and suggestions for itineraries (Di Mauro, 1982). Nowadays, tourist guidebooks are essential elements for the independent traveller: beside useful travel tips, up-to-date maps and advice on where to stay or to eat, guidebooks give information on the culture, society and history of the destination. They actually present a portrait of the destination through the representation of places and people (Battacharyya, 1997); thus being considered as “culture brokers” (Cohen, 1985), i.e. mediators of the tourist experience. Moreover, even though guidebooks are obviously one of several possible and potential resources that tourists use to mediate their experiences, various studies (Lew 1991; Battacharyya, 1997; McGregor 2000) suggest that they are given a higher value and are perceived to be more reliable than other tourism materials, as they are less promotional in nature.

Given the field of investigation, among the different methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), van Dijk's approach has been chosen as

a framework for the analysis. This approach is based on a triadic relation between discourse, cognition and society, in which ‘cognition’ “involves both personal as well as social cognition, beliefs and goals as well as evaluations and emotions, and many other ‘mental’ or ‘memory’ structures, representations or processes involved in discourse and interaction” (van Dijk, 2001a: 98). In particular, van Dijk focuses on the global and local study of meaning and formal aspects of discourse “as part of a systematic account of how ideological discourse represents ‘us’ versus ‘them’.” (van Dijk, 2001a: 107); thus considering these aspects as instruments through which writers construct desired “mental models” (subjective representations) and social representations. One aspect of particular relevance to this study is the emphasis on text-context relations in which social representations play a main role:

Social actors involved in discourse do not exclusively make use of their individual experiences and strategies; they mainly rely upon collective frames of perceptions, called social representations. These socially shared perceptions form the link between social system and the individual cognitive system and perform the translation, homogenization and coordination between external requirements and subjective experience. (Wodak & Meyer, 2001: 21)

Since discourse takes place within society and can only be understood in the interplay of social situation, action, actor and societal structures, it is

also important to analyse the global and local context of the discourse. The global context is defined by the social, political, cultural and historical structures. The local context, on the other hand, is defined by the “properties of the immediate, interactional situation in which the communicative event takes place” (e.g. aims or knowledge of participants) (van Dijk: 2001a: 108). In this study, for example, English guidebooks as “communicative events” are related to the general phenomenon of tourism and to the interactional role of a mediator in the encounter between tourists and destinations, as well as being a source of information. The analysis of relevant meaning and formal aspects of guidebooks might reveal dominant mental structures, “context models” and “event models” (van Dijk, 2001a: 110), which are used by writers/authors to produce the text and by readers/tourists to understand it. These mental models not only represent personally relevant beliefs and opinions but also social representations such as knowledge (personal, group and cultural), attitudes (socially shared opinions) and ideologies (which form the basis of knowledge and attitudes). In other words, they create the links between discourse and society:

Discourses are like icebergs of which only some specific forms of (contextually relevant) knowledge are expressed, but of which a vast part of presupposed knowledge is part of the shared sociocultural common ground. (van Dijk, 2001a: 114)

Through the study of English guidebooks discourses about Italy, this research aims to uncover the “mental models” and “social representations” shared by writers/authors and possibly by their readers/tourists, while reflecting also on their consequences in the reproduction of power relations, which might shape the image of countries even within the Western world.

1.3. Structure of the thesis

As previously highlighted, by focusing on English guidebooks about Italy, this study aims at exploring the role of tourism discourse in the construction and transmission of ideologically biased representations of tourist destinations.

The first part of the thesis will offer a description of the phenomenon of tourism in general and of tourism discourse in particular. In the second part, it will focus on the analysis of specific linguistic structures, which may reveal the existence of ideologies exploited by guidebook authors to organize their knowledge and attitudes about Italy and its culture, thus influencing the encounter between the tourists and the destination.

In particular, chapter two will present an overview of the origins of tourism and of travel movements towards Italy. A brief history of tourism, with specific reference to Italy, will be outlined in order to provide a global

framework about this complex phenomenon in which historical and intercultural factors are extremely relevant. Particular emphasis will be given to the influence that past travellers and routes have had in the construction of an imagery, which seems to be well established in the mind of the English-speaking tourist. Furthermore, a description of tourism discourse and its textual production will be proposed in order to investigate the role and functions of language in the different existing genres (brochures, advertising, guidebooks, etc).

In chapter three, the features of the guidebook as specific textual genre will be examined in more detail; the focus will be in particular on the description of five well-known contemporary English guidebooks – *Cadogan Guide*, *DK-Eyewitness travel guide*, *Insight Guide*, *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide* – which constitute the corpus³ of the present study. A concise description of the general linguistic features common to the genre will be proposed and particular emphasis will be given to four lexical and rhetorical strategies, which mostly depend on writers’ “mental models” or on more general, socially shared beliefs. The four strategies identified are the use of repeated emotive words, the use of Italian native words, the use of quotations and the use of comparisons. The meanings transmitted by these strategies constitute the kind of information that could influence the

³ The term ‘corpus’ will be used in this thesis with reference to a collection of selected guidebooks and does not imply that the analysis will be carried out following quantitative methods (e.g. computer assisted linguistic analysis of electronic data).

opinions and attitudes of the readers/tourists (i.e. their “mental models”). In addition, the obvious social consequences will be considered.

Each of the four strategies will be analysed separately in four different sections of the chapter dedicated to the results of the study. In the first section, the use of particular emotive words will be examined, with reference to specific lexical choices that evoke pre-existing frames of reference or imageries corresponding to English tourists’ socially and culturally constructed expectations about Italy.

In the second section, another lexical feature will be explored as a specific choice of the writers/authors: the use of Italian native words, which are presented in the text as symbols of the host culture, and which aim to emphasize perceived culture-specific elements.

In the third section, widening the study to the phrastic and textual level, the use of quotations will be analysed as a powerful instrument to lend support to specific perceptions of places. Thus, offering ready-made descriptions and interpretations, quotations are examples of subjective “mental models” whose meaning has become socially shared.

In the fourth section, the use of comparisons will be examined as an attempt of the writers to create analogies between different places or cultures. Indeed, through comparisons, writers can exploit a more general knowledge of the world and even ideologies linked to the concept of the ‘familiar’ as opposed to the ‘exotic’.

Finally, in the last chapter, general conclusions from the results of the analysis will be drawn, taking consideration of their significance and their possible implications in the wider analysis of power and dominance in tourism discourse. Indeed, as mentioned above, by focusing on one of the most visited destinations within the Western world, the aim of this thesis is also to explore how guidebook discourse in particular, and tourism discourse in general, determine the formation of biased social representations of places and people which are generally considered part of the Western dominant society.

2. Tourism and Italy

In the following paragraph, the historical and social context of the phenomenon of tourism will be examined, offering an overview of the origins of the travel movement towards Italy. Moreover, the evolution of foreign tourism in Italy will be explored with particular reference to the literary production, which characterises the various stages of the process. Then, in the final paragraphs, some general features of tourism discourse will be examined, focusing mainly on the specific textual genres of the language of tourism.

2.1. From Travel to tourism¹

The concept of tourism develops within the more general categories of travel and migration and, in fact, it is a phenomenon whose boundaries are not well defined:

Ad una più precisa analisi, infatti, il turismo si presenta come un fenomeno non chiaramente delimitato, ma dai confini incerti, mescolato ed impercettibilmente confuso con altri fenomeni e con altri tipi di ruolo; non

¹ For a theoretical overview on the history of tourism, see Grabun (1989).

c'è sempre un salto netto tra i viaggiatori che sono turisti e quelli che non lo sono (Savelli, 1996: 51-52)²

In relation to Italy, although the first travellers were pilgrims moved by religious purposes, the type of traditional travel that bears more resemblance to modern tourism is the *Grand Tour*, which developed among European aristocracy in the 17th and 18th centuries as the completion of young noblemen's education. Its aims were mainly political, but the journey included also artistic and cultural stops that were planned and prepared a long time ahead of departure. Italy, being the country of Machiavelli and *The Courtesan*, of Palladio and Michelangelo, immediately became an obligatory stop of this initiation journey whose character was “based on the emotionally neutral observation and recording of galleries, museums and high cultural artefacts” (Urry, 1990: 4). However, it is worth noting that the *Grand Tour* never went beyond Naples, thus establishing an itinerary that would remain the same for centuries.

Along with the charm of Italian culture, it was the desire for light, sun and lush vegetation that attracted English, French and German travellers. Although the tour was eminently educational in nature, it is the playful and naturalistic aspects of the journey that clearly emerge from the diaries of these 18th-century travellers (De Seta, 1982: 143). This very prolific literary

² “As a matter of fact, to a more accurate analysis, tourism presents itself not as a well-defined phenomenon but rather as one with hazy boundaries, mixed and slightly confused with other phenomena and other types of role; there is not always a neat division between travellers who are tourists and those who are not”. (My translation)

production gave circulation to accounts and descriptions of the places visited and can be rightly defined as the first form of tourist promotional material. Consequently, at the end of the 18th century the British professional bourgeoisie was pervaded by a common aspiration to travel, inspired by a wide and varied travel literature. Therefore, even though it remained the privilege of a close elite, the *Grand Tour* became a model of behaviour for the middle-classes as well.

Between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the deep political, social and economic changes determined the end of the practice of the *Grand Tour* and contributed in defining the new forms of travelling, which were preludes to modern tourism. Nevertheless, the motivation to culture and to pleasure, already present in the *Grand Tour*, survived and gave birth to the *cultural journey*, undertaken by artists, painters, poets and intellectuals.

It was the Romantic era that signed the triumph of this kind of journey emphasizing the sensibility of the educated traveller who reached an “art of travelling” which would never be exceeded: archaeological knowledge, precise observations and “a more private and passionate experience of beauty and the sublime” (Urry, 1990:4) were its main characteristics. These journeys were based on autonomous artistic and cultural motivations, which expressed the interest of Middle-European populations in the Mediterranean South. Once again, being the cradle of ancient civilizations and of the

Renaissance, Italy remained a favoured destination. Italy represented a metaphor to foreign travellers such as Byron, Goethe, Stendhal and Poe, who had a very strong predisposition to identify any part of the country with the places of the classic mythology. As a consequence, the new, romantic travellers came to visit what De Seta (1982:160) called “il paese ideale”, looking for the things described in classic literature. They made a kind of journey towards the past that seemed to become magically true with the visit to the archaeological sites of Pompei and Herculaneum.

In contrast with the *Grand Tour*, this new type of journey was not organised in precise stops but it was more like wandering. Travellers no longer relied upon a “tutor” belonging to their world, and were now exposed to the unknown. Therefore, they felt the need for new forms of mediation with the social and environmental realities with which they came into contact. The answer to this need arrived at the end of the 18th century when the role of the printed guide emerged as an important support to pleasure travels. The first apt guidebook, published under the name of a German editor’s son, Baedeker, made its appearance to literally guide the traveller during his/her journey and limit the risks. The *Baedeker* obviously drew on the tradition of travel literature and, in fact, it was not addressed to a general public. Its users mainly belonged to a social class that knew perfectly how to use a text that presupposed not only the knowledge of other texts, but also of essential codes and norms of behaviour. Moreover,

they knew exactly how to react to the language of the guide (Di Mauro, 1982: 381).

It was with the introduction of the printed guidebook that the concept of ‘tourism’ began to spread and according to Boyer and Viallon, its origins, both as a term and as behaviour, are undeniably ‘English’:

Il turismo inteso come «divertimento, ozio con l’implicazione di un flusso migratorio», ha una data e un luogo di nascita ben precisi: l’Inghilterra, alla fine del XVIII secolo. (Boyer & Viallon, 1994: 13)³

Thanks to the agricultural, industrial and commercial revolutions, Great Britain was the first country to get out from the *Ancien Regime* and the high-middle class belonging to the industrial capitalism soon replaced the declining aristocracy.

Between 1840 and 1860, the diffusion of travelling (thanks to the evolutions in transport) gave also an input to the publication of the great guidebooks series (along with Baedeker, Murray and Joanne), which aimed at facilitating travellers’ movements reaching their climax at the end of the 19th century. Also in this period, Italy continued to offer the most desired stops: Rome, Florence, and Venice... However, it should be noted that the pages these guidebooks dedicated to Italy, tended to give a very incomplete overall vision of the country. According to Di Mauro (1982: 394), a strong

³ “Tourism defined as ‘entertainment, leisure with the implication of a migratory flux’ has a precise place and date of birth: England at the end of the 18th century”. (My translation)

link remained between the description written by *Grand Tour* travellers and those proposed in 19th-century guides. This is testified for example by the absence of southern regions: beyond Naples, there seemed to exist only Paestum and Sicily, accessible by sea.

However, it was only thanks to the introduction of paid holidays as a break in the working year, before WWI, that more and more people began to enjoy the travelling experience. The war had a tremendous impact on foreign tourism in Italy and, despite the fact that it doubtless depended on the high devaluation of the Italian currency rather than of its cultural attractions, it gave the country the awareness of the great potential represented by tourism. The creation of the *Ente Nazionale Italiano per il Turismo* (ENIT) in 1919 and the publication of the first edition of *Guide d'Italia* of the *Touring Club Italiano* (TCI), signed the beginning of a tourist policy aimed at improving the receiving structures and at developing promotional actions. Fascism heavily intervened in tourism, as in other sectors of Italian national life, and fostered cooperation between the TCI and the official tourism institutions. This cooperation generally led to an increase in the average level of the tourist promotional campaigns.

It was only after the end of WWII that tourism established itself as a social phenomenon. The increase in people's movements around the world brought about an increase in the publications of the guidebook series as well. It was in this period that this textual genre became that "blinding

instrument” so sharply criticized by Ronald Barthes (1974: 118-121). They were indeed very similar to the ones published in the previous century and they often re-proposed the same contents in a better narrative form but without making any update. For instance, as far as Italy is concerned, these guidebooks described the country as it was in the past, as it should have been but rarely as it was like in the after-war period (Di Mauro, 1982: 398). It is worth addressing the fact that Barthes’ critique on the *Guide Blue* reflected a more general critique on mass tourism, considered very different from the romantic journey. Indeed, parallel to the process of democratisation of travel, which allowed people to enjoy privileges traditionally reserved to the elites, intellectuals showed an attitude of rejection towards the concept of ‘tourist’ as opposed to the concept of ‘traveller’, which was considered to be the only one capable of authentic cultural experiences. The new tourists were described as impersonal, as clients of an industry that made large groups move from a place to another and as slavish followers of the guidebook whose asterisks established what ‘must be seen’ and what was not worth seeing.

However, the transition to the so-called ‘post-industrial’ society with its deep social and economic changes determined a crisis in mass tourism and a consequent modification of its images and structures. Nowadays, the phenomenon of tourism is articulated into multiple ‘tourisms’ answering different motivations and needs. In particular, the cross-cultural relation

with the ‘other’, the ‘different’, which always represented a key issue of travel, has re-conquered a primary role in the tourist experience and has been followed by the creation of new promotional material that aims at alluring the various typologies of modern tourists, exploiting their expectations and moulding their experiences.

2.2. Tourism Discourse

Although the phenomenon of tourism has been studied by various disciplines (sociology, economics, cultural studies, etc.), general reflections about the role of language in tourism promotion are not extensive. Tourism is generally considered a very complex field of research, and this seems to be even truer when we consider the nature of its language, which was created by elaborating different contributions coming from geography, history, art, economics, etc. Moreover, as stated in the previous paragraphs, although it can boast ancient traditions, professionally speaking tourism has developed only recently, namely after WWII.

The relation between language and tourism has received some attention from researchers as MacCannell (1976) and Urry (1990) who argue that the tourist establishment, through the language it uses, constructs and defines the tourist experience and destination images. Although starting

from different premises, they both agree that it is language which informs the tourist about what must be seen before the journey is undertaken, and that language itself constructs the gaze through “an anticipation of intense pleasures” (Urry, 1990: 3). As Boyer and Viallon (1994: 9-10) confirmed in their analysis of tourism communication, it is not so much a place that is inherently touristic but rather it is language that makes it so.

This argument was then developed by Graham Dann (1996) who was one of the first researchers to conduct a comprehensive sociolinguistic analysis about the use of language in tourist texts and to identify the features that characterise tourism as “a language of social control”. He proposed a new method of classification for the media of tourism based on a three-stage model of the tourist process (pre-, on- and post- trip stages) which recognise the functions of the language used in promotional materials and their persuasive power according to the stage they belong to. Guidebooks, for example, exert a different degree of influence in the pre- and on-trip stages. Whereas in the former case they contribute in shaping tourists’ expectations, in the latter they contextualise and mediate tourists’ experiences of the destination (Dann, 1996: 144).

The language of tourism has also been studied from the perspective of LSP. In particular, Maria Vittoria Calvi (2000) argues that, although tourism is a fragmented discipline with an uncertain object of study, on a professional basis, the tourism sector is easily recognisable and its language

can be considered specific of a particular professional field. Seen in this perspective, the language of tourism has both a thematic and a communicative component. The subjects, which contribute to the formation of the thematic component, belong to different professional sectors and range from disciplines like geography, economics, sociology and psychology, to professional activities and structures like hotels, transports, tour operators, advertising. Along with these sectors, Calvi (2000: 44) identifies some lexical areas which are influenced by the definition of the tourist product such as history and arts, gastronomy, handicrafts, entertainment and which give origin to particular ‘languages’ that can be used to create autonomous ‘discourses’. In this regard, Dann (1996: 211) talks about “registers of the language of tourism” whose presence is indicated by a variety of topics or themes within tourism discourse as for example “old talk” (nostalgia tourism), “gastrolingo” (food and drink) and “Greenspeak” (eco-tourism). These registers, as tourism discourse in general, do not necessarily present a lexis marked as ‘tourist’. Due to the diffusion of the travelling experience, the connection between these thematic components and everyday language is very close to the point that most of the terminology is not perceived as technical. However, the specialisation of the discipline and the differentiation of the professional figures made it possible to identify a vast linguistic area that refers to the

tourist establishment and which is characteristic of specific textual productions that will be discussed and analysed in the next paragraph.

As far as the communicative dimension of tourism is concerned, it must be said that in the concept of making tourism itself, there is a reference to communicate, in the sense of relating different populations and cultures. However, the communication that determines the creation of a specific language of tourism, is the one pertaining to the activity of the professional sector. Seen from this perspective, the language of tourism is a language of mediation between the different technical aspects and everyday language, between professionals and potential tourists, and its use can vary according to the purpose of this communication (inform, persuade, etc.).

Calvi (2000) identifies three types or level in tourism communication:

- the *communication between experts*, used to compare research data or to update the operators. It can be used in written texts or during professional meetings such as congresses and exhibitions;

- the *communication between operators and public*, which occurs in different forms, from direct interactions involving the tourist during the fruition of the product, to indirect exchange of information through the use of different media (the press, the internet, the television, etc.). This communication can be addressed to specific receivers;

- the *advertising communication*, created by experts and addressed to the general public. It is considered one of the most interesting from the

linguistic point of view since it is deeply influenced by the elusive nature of the tourist product. The peculiarity of this type of communication derives from the fact that, along with destinations and services, it is also selling expectations and opportunities.

The advertising communication is characterised by the use of varied and different techniques, which also imply a particular use of language. Amongst these techniques, we can identify four groups of strategies (Boyer & Viallon, 1994: 134-135). The first one is the *informative strategy*, which aims at attracting potential tourists through the information given, thus appealing to their thirst for knowledge. The second group is the *seducing strategy*, which exploits the expectations of the receiver pointing at the ‘unique’ aspects of the tourist product. The third is called *aesthetic strategy* because it plays with the artistic sensibility of the receiver exalting the sense of beauty. The fourth and final group is the *pedagogic strategy*, which aims at making the tourist learn how to see and feel without excluding pleasure. The use of these strategies varies according to the organisations and institutions that promote the communication. Generally speaking, public institutions do not aim at commercialising the product, and their messages are persuasive in purpose. However, they do tend to be more informative and descriptive. In contrast, private organisations aim at selling the product and tend to reduce information to the minimum, adopting the techniques that are typical of the advertising industry.

As identified earlier, the communicative dimension is paramount at any level of the tourism process and the textual realisations of the tourism discourse are deeply influenced by the nature of the sender and the receiver, by the aims of the message and by the strategies used to fulfil them. It is worth noting at this point that tourism, despite being defined as “un oggetto assai sfuggente nelle sue origini, nelle sue motivazioni e nelle sue evoluzioni” (Savelli 1996: 24)⁴, pervades the means it uses to the point that it creates specific and immediately identifiable textual forms. Among them, the most interesting are those belonging to the *advertising* communication. These are directed at the general public, the potential tourists, and deal mainly with the description of the tourist ‘product’, namely the tourist destination and its culture.

The following paragraph will focus on these kinds of promotional material, and will describe the characteristics of the most common textual genres produced by the tourism industry to persuade or communicate information to its users.

⁴ “a very ambiguous object in its origins, in its motivations and evolutions.” (My translation)

2.3. Textual genres of the language of tourism

The tourist industry produces a great variety of materials, ranging from literary travel accounts to foreign phrase books, which respond to specific aims depending on the relation between sender and receiver, and the stage in the tourist process.

The characteristic aspects of this tourist production include, along with the use of a specific lexis, the adoption of adequate discursive strategies and compositional schemes, which differ according to the main function of the text. Due to their strong communicative orientation, the following textual genres can be said to be the most specifically ‘tourist’ (see also Boyer & Viallon (1994) and Calvi (2000)):

- ***Advertisements***: since the conative function prevails over the informational one, which is nearly absent, these texts are characterized by a metaphoric language, rich in adjectives, and usually present visual and verbal elements. They can be produced both by private or public organizations.

- ***Brochures and leaflets***: they are mainly propagandistic, their persuasive aim is self-evident and although they include some descriptive sections, these are very limited and their information is often highly stereotypical.

- *Articles in specialised magazines and tourist sections in newspapers*: they combine descriptive discourse and practical information (such as where to eat or sleep) usually collected in distinct columns. These texts are not comprehensive, are highly subjective and do not exclude promotional aims.

- *Tourist guidebooks*: as previously explained, due to historical reasons, this is the most traditional among tourist textual genres and the most closely linked to travel literature. Today there is a diversified offer of guidebooks, which are targeted at different kind of tourists according to the accuracy of the descriptions, the presence of iconographic material, etc. However, they usually share the same structural division into descriptive sections and informative ones, which contains practicalities and other useful tips. While the first three categories are used as pre-trip materials that mainly help potential tourists to choose a destination, guidebooks represent both a pre-trip and on-trip instrument and they can provide tourists with more information about a destination and its attractions either before or during their journey.

In his influential work *The Tourist* (1989), Dean MacCannel proposes a semiotic analysis of tourist attractions defining them “as an empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight and a marker (a piece of information about a sight)” (1989: 41). He argues that usually the first contact a tourist has with a sight is not the sight itself but a representation of

it, which appears in the form of a marker. Since each of the above-mentioned textual genres offers the tourist some kind of representation of the destinations, they can all be considered as “markers”. The marker provides information about a destination and offers a representation of it thus communicating meanings, which may have extreme importance in the encounters between the tourist and the places visited.

Any promotional text produced by the tourist industry can be considered a marker and since most of them are consumed in the pre- and on-trip stage (such as ads, articles, and sometimes even guidebooks), their role in shaping tourist expectations and experiences becomes very relevant. With language, tourism markers first create and then confirm tourists’ expectations and direct their gaze by informing them on what must be seen even before the journey is undertaken. In this regard, although focusing only on guidebooks, Dann (1996: 24) writes:

...travel books and guidebooks reduce the threatening and unknown by providing accounts that acquire greater authority than the reality described, so that their readers assume a “textual attitude” of depending on such sources when confronted by novel or strange experience. (1996: 24)

In other words, in the tourism process “phrase precedes gaze” (Dann, 1996: 21) and if tourism discourse is considered as a signifying practice in which cultural meanings are constructed and transmitted (Fodde & Denti, 2005),

the importance of the contents of that “phrase” becomes fairly evident. Moreover, as Morgan and Pritchard (1998) pointed out, the cultural meanings created by tourism often exploit symbolic values, which are wider than the actual consumption of places themselves:

Just as tourist sites are associated with ‘particular values, historical events and feelings’, so values, feelings and events are used to promote such sites, reinforcing the dominant ideology. (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998: 3)

Seen from this perspective, the tourism industry, which does not always create new representations but rather uses consolidated ones, can be said to contribute to the diffusion of biased images of places and people. Moreover, by continually exploiting the values and feelings associated with them, it often fixes destinations in a timeless gaze. According to Pritchard (2000), the representations created by the tourism industry are by no means neutral but are involved in “a circuit of culture” (Hall, 1997 in Pritchard, 2000: 246), where tourists themselves are a product of particular socio-economic and cultural systems and share knowledge and attitudes, which are in turn ideologically framed.

Various studies have focused on this important aspect of the phenomenon of tourism but only in recent times has it been linked to a more accurate analysis of language in context (Voase, 2000; Dann, 2001). Hence, by focusing on English guidebooks about Italy, the present study aims to be a

contribution to this trend. It will focus in particular on analysing the relationships between guidebook discourse, writers' and tourists' cognition – meaning “both personal as well as social cognition, beliefs and goals, as well as evaluations and emotions, and many other ‘mental’ or ‘memory’ structures, representations or processes involved in discourse and interaction” (van Dijk, 2001a: 98) – and their cultural, social and economic implications.

Following van Dijk's approach to critical discourse analysis, this research will focus on the global and local study of meanings conveyed by specific formal aspects of guidebook discourse to account for the influence of ideologies in the representations of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (van Dijk, 2001a: 107). Formal aspects of discourse will be considered as instruments through which writers/authors construct and transmit desired “mental models” (subjective mental representations) and social representations relying upon socially shared perceptions and expectations.

As demonstrated in the previous paragraphs, the guidebook is undoubtedly the most informative among the textual genre of tourism discourse. In addition, it directly mediates the relationship between tourists and the destination, as well as the relationship between host and guest, thus establishing a very close connection between discourse and society.

It must be emphasised that, as a textual analysis, this study will not take into account the additional and certainly important question of reader

response. However, even though guidebooks are one of several possible and potential sources that may influence tourists in their experience, various studies (Lew 1991; Battacharyya, 1997; McGregor 2000) suggest that they are given a higher value and are perceived to be more reliable than other tourism materials, as they are less promotional in nature.

In the following chapter, a more detailed focus will be placed on the guidebook as a textual genre in tourism discourse, on its powerful role as ‘mediator’ of the tourist experience and on its specific linguistic features.

3. Guidebooks and their role in tourist encounters

Among the promotional materials and the textual genres produced by the tourism industry, the focus of much academic research has concentrated on advertisements, brochures and travel articles. These have been analysed by various disciplines and from varying perspectives. Indeed, their persuasive function makes them especially interesting for the identification of the marketing strategies employed by the tourism industry and their effect on tourism trends.

Guidebooks, on the other hand, have received little attention. As indicated in the previous chapter, they play a different role in the tourist process. They mainly belong to the on-trip stage, in which tourists have already chosen their destination, thus privileging the communicative function rather than the persuasive one. However, it could be suggested that this feature makes guidebooks an interesting object to be critically analysed. One reason could be that they do not usually promote a destination or sell services (or at least this is not their primary objective), they are commonly believed to provide reliable information to which tourists make constant reference in order to mediate their experience of the destination and of its socio-cultural reality.

This ‘mediating’ role played by guidebooks in the tourist process will be discussed in the following paragraphs, which will also offer an

overview of the characteristics of this specific textual genre focusing mainly on its linguistic features.

3.1. Guidebooks as “culture brokers”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the appearance of guidebooks signed the beginning of the tourist era and marked a divide between the way of travelling established by the *Grand Tour* and a new way, more suitable to modern, independent travellers. The aim of the first guidebooks was precisely that of accompanying the tourist during his/her journey by offering a written form of mediation with the local reality of the places visited. In other words, guidebooks gave travellers the impression of being free in their wanderings, but equally ‘protected’ from the foreign environment. As Cronin (2000) notes whilst discussing the origins of this textual genre:

the guide book translated the foreign culture into the mother tongue of the traveller. The traveller no longer had to rely on the oral translation of the guide/interpreter as the guidebook provided written translation. (2000: 86)

This idea is particularly relevant to this argument, as it has important implications. Metaphorically speaking, it presents the destination culture as

a ‘text’ written in a language unknown to the traveller. Furthermore, by suggesting that guidebooks took over the role of the guide/interpreter, it implicitly claims that the language used to fulfil this role is a crucial element in the travelling experience. In summary, through this *translation* process the guidebook mediates the encounter between traveller and destination both at a cultural and linguistic level and by deciding what is relevant and what is not, it constructs particular representations of the destination and transmits them to the readers; thus eventually directing their ‘gaze’ and moulding their perceptions.

In Cohen’s terms, guidebooks can be said to act as “culture brokers” (1985: 14-16), a social role that he originally assigned to tour guides in relation to their communicative function. This role involves three stages, through which the tourist experience is mediated, i.e. the selection of the sights, the provision of information about the selected sights, and their interpretation for the tourist (Bhattacharayya, 1997). The development of these three stages necessarily implies a gain and loss dynamic. In fact, during the selection stage only certain features of the destination are chosen as worthy of attention and thus narratively and linguistically marked (MacCannell, 1976). Moreover, the most important aspects emerge as a result of the interpretation and eventual production processes. The latter, in particular, may offer interesting insights in the cognitive dimension of tourist encounters as it reflects all personally relevant beliefs and opinions

but also socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies (see van Dijk, 2001b) used by guidebook writers/authors to produce the text and by readers/tourists to understand it.

Guidebooks actually shape the image of the destination through both selection and provision of information. However, it is the process of interpretation that is most crucial, having direct implications on the writers/authors' linguistic choices. Interpretation is a combination of contextualization and evaluation. Guidebooks usually provide descriptions that are positive in their evaluative dimension, but when negative meanings are communicated the involvement of the writer, and their "mental models", is greater as they may involve ideological discourses of 'us' versus 'them' (van Dijk, 2001b). According to Hall (1997a) cultural meanings are not given but socially produced, therefore corresponding to the different perceptions of reality shared by the members of a given society or social group. These cultural meanings are constructed and transmitted through social practices among which discourse, the use of language in writing or speaking, has assumed great importance. Therefore, it could be claimed that the cultural meanings created by guidebook discourse in interpreting places and people may have a primary role in the nature of the tourist encounters.

Through a critical analysis of selected texts, the present work will try to investigate which social representations characterise the image of Italy in

English guidebooks and to consider the influence of knowledge and attitudes that may have been ideologically framed by surrounding cultural expectations, including historical relations and other relations of power (Dann, 2001: 8).

Before presenting the selected guidebooks, the following paragraphs will offer an overview of the linguistic features that characterise this specific textual genre. As argued van Dijk:

...in any practical sense, there is no such thing as a ‘complete’ discourse analysis: a ‘full’ analysis of a short passage might take months and fill hundreds of pages. Complete discourse analysis of a large corpus of text or talk, is therefore totally out of the question. (2001a: 99)

For this reason, particular focus will be put on four specific formal structures of guidebook discourse that have been identified as the most appropriate for the analysis proposed in the following chapter.

3.2. Common features

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the increased movements and flows of people across the world brought about an increase in the publication of guidebook series and the adoption of shared characteristics. These

characteristics, marked them as a narrative and textual genre, and are still present in contemporary guidebooks. Common features are identifiable at various levels: from the external appearance to the internal organization of the information, from the use of pictures and maps to peculiar verbal and visual strategies. Guidebooks are quite obviously well recognisable and this is mainly due to their external appearance: they are usually medium-sized so that they can be carried everywhere without difficulty; they present a clear division between informational and descriptive paragraphs; they adopt a user-friendly typeface and offer a number of maps and photographs of the proposed destination.

Beside these formal characteristics, guidebooks also share common textual and linguistic features, which distinguish them from other tourist texts. Any reader would recognize the following excerpt as belonging to a guidebook:

Duck around the corner into Via dei Tribunali and to the left in Piazza San Gaetano you'll come across **Chiesa di San Lorenzo Maggiore**. The interior of the church, begun in the 13th century, is French Gothic. (*Lonely Planet*, 2004: 593)

This means that there exists a narrative structure and a particular use of language, which is common to this specific textual genre and which allows readers to identify it.

From the above excerpt, it is also possible to highlight other interesting features. The use of the imperative, for example, is extremely common in guidebooks as they do not simply signal ‘what’ must be seen, but often suggest ‘how’ something must be seen or approached. In this regard, Graham Dann (1996: 79-84) argues that the imperative mood is an example of the “social control” exercised by the language of tourism. Additionally, he recognises its relevance in guidebooks where, beside the imperative, star- and asterisk-codes or even words such as “interesting”, “unmissable”, “worth” (in contrast to their opposites) are used to trace an itinerary into the ‘must’ sights, thus excluding what can be by-passed.

As mentioned above, since guidebooks share the mediating function, which once belonged to tour guides (Battacharyya, 1997), they have to adopt a number of linguistic strategies in order to maintain communication links with their reader. Therefore, the pronoun “you” is frequently employed along with a rather colloquial language and a conversational style, which aims at addressing the tourist in a direct way and making him/her feel at home. In this regard, another useful and rather interesting communicative strategy is represented by the writer’s involvement. Often, guidebook authors advance personal hypotheses, employ value judgments or use emotive registers through specific linguistic choices, ironic comments or rhetorical questions. This involvement becomes especially relevant when guidebook authors and readers belong to the same society or

culture as they usually share the same knowledge, attitude and even ideologies. For this reason, in order to highlight the links between structures of guidebook discourse and the sociocultural dimensions of the tourist encounter, the focus of this thesis will be on four specific linguistic strategies, in which writers' involvement may influence the opinions and attitudes of readers/tourists and have more profound social consequences.

At the lexical level, two strategies have been identified. On the one hand, there is the use of specific emotive words, which rather than referring to specific attributes of the destination, appeal to tourists' expectations about it or about the tourist experience in general (e.g. undiscovered, romantic, authentic, etc). Discussing about advertising, Gold and Gold (1994: 77 in Dann, 1996: 174) argue that these words "are drawn from the shared language of the audience and the advertiser, and moulded by the latter to suit the needs of the former". The second strategy, on the other hand, consists in the use of words belonging to the language of the destination, which are used mainly to confer an exotic flavour to the text and to provide local colour. Dann (1996: 184) points out that its most frequent applications can be found in culture-specific fields. It is worth noting that foreign words can be used without any explanation, thus immersing the tourist in the local culture, or can be accompanied by a translation or a comment, thus giving the reader the instruments to understand it.

At the phrastic and textual level, quotations of famous travel writers and contemporary authors appear to play a crucial role in guidebook representations, as they give support to the information given in terms of either prestige or discredit. Their role in the text varies according to whether quotations are inserted in the actual descriptions of a sight or are presented in separated boxes as added information. However, in both cases, they represent a link with a particular and often subjective description and are able to recall specific imageries in the tourist.

The last linguistic strategy that will be analysed is the use of comparisons by means of simile and metaphor (Dann, 1996: 17). Comparison is a powerful instrument in the representational process as they can be employed in opposite ways depending on the aim of the writer. They can reduce the gap between the destination culture and that of the tourist or increase it by stressing distance in space and time. As proposed by Margarito (2000: 29) in her study of the stereotype in French tourist guides, a way of uncovering the role of comparisons in a text is by investigating the geographical location of these objects and their negative or positive value. This approach is particularly useful in revealing the influence of imageries associated to other places and people in the tourist world.

Through the analysis of these strategies, as used in the selected guidebooks described below, it will be possible to uncover the “underlying meaning structures” which “have a more direct and explicit link with ethnic

knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies that we assume to be controlled in discursive dominance.” (van Dijk, 1993a: 103).

3.3. The selected guidebooks

The market for travel guidebooks is segmented into different customer profiles and is strictly related to the needs, values and sociocultural situation of the target audience. Some guides are addressed to an educated readership; others tend to be more appealing to backpackers or are dedicated mainly towards tourists interested in the artistic and natural heritage of the chosen destination.

However, a general but useful classification that can be suggested, is the one based on the principal functions carried out by guidebooks during the stages of a trip. In this regard, three large groups are identifiable:

1. Guidebooks for planning the trip (offering information and suggestions);
2. Guidebooks that “hold tourists by hand” (telling them where to go, etc.);
3. Guidebooks for further reading (providing interesting details, anecdotes, etc.).

This classification has been useful in exploring the market of guidebooks without getting lost; especially, in identifying the most representative guidebooks amongst the ones about Italy. Indeed, many contemporary guidebooks tend to imitate both in shape and content some well-known series. Therefore, during the phase of corpus selection, the focus has been directed on ‘the original’ ones, in order to have at least a representative guidebook for each group. The only exception is second group that being very heterogeneous, due to the different textual realizations of its function, required more than a single example.

The final selection includes the following guidebooks: the *Insight Guide* (henceforth IG), the *Lonely Planet* (henceforth LP), the *Rough Guide* (henceforth RG), the *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide* (henceforth DK) and the *Cadogan Guide* (henceforth CG). They were all published between 2002 and 2004, and are available in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia but they can be easily found in Italian bookstores as well. They are comprehensive guides covering a wide variety of information, so that they can be defined as cultural/practical guides (Fodde & Denti, 2005) providing many insights into the history and customs of the destination, as well as useful tips and practicalities. Despite the fact that they belong to the same textual genre, the selected guidebooks are quite different from one another, depending on their addressed audience and on the organisation of the information given. Their contents can vary in quantity and quality

according to the group to which the guidebook belongs. In addition, they can be organised differently within the text. Guidebooks such as *Lonely Planet* offer practical information as to where to eat or sleep in paragraphs usually put before or after those dedicated to the description of the sights. In contrast, other guidebooks such as the *Insight Guide* put these practicalities in a special section at the end of the guidebook. It must be said at this point that, for the purpose of this study, the paragraphs or sections dedicated to these practical information have not been considered in the analysis.

3.3.1. The *Insight Guides*

As written in its back cover, the IG is rich in “evocative photography” and it is, at the same time, “an inspiring background read” thus presenting itself as a good instrument for trip planning. Indeed, the IG dedicates its initial hundred pages to topics such as Italian history, politics and society providing the reader with some tips on the unmissable sights; particularly interesting is the section about “Famous Travellers” in which the myth of the journey to Italy, as an initiation journey, appears to anticipate the guide approach to the country.

Italy has long been a “paradise of exiles”, a haven for visitors in search of classical heritage and humanity, sunlight and passion. As Dr Johnson declared, “A man who has not been to Italy is always conscious of an

inferiority”, a sentiment still shared by many travellers more than 200 years later. (IG: 17)

You could follow the path of generations of travellers who, with Dante and Ariosto in hand, toured the cities of Lombardy, the Veneto, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. (IG: 127)

The IG is clearly divided into three parts. The first part, as stated above, deals with history and some “typical” Italian features (the Italian look, the Italian cuisine, etc.). The second part is called “places” and its peculiarity is that important cities like Venice, Milan and Rome are described in separate sections from the ones dedicated to the regions to which they belong. This characteristic confirms the guidebook’s decision to approach Italy in a “classical” way, i.e. through main stops in its major cities with brief tours in their surrounding areas. The third and last part gathers “travel tips” such as “where to stay” and “where to eat” and other useful information for the traveller along with a brief section on language and suggested further readings.

3.3.2. The *Lonely Planet*

The first guidebook of the second group, i.e. those which hold tourists by hand, is the *Lonely Planet*. Although originally planned to satisfy any kind of taste, it is one of the most used guides among the low budget, independent travellers. LP is a guide which attempts to describe places and

sights also paying attention to socio-economic aspects or environmental problems. It has a concise, rather informal style though rich in value judgements:

Few sights tempt visitors further south towards **Lecco**, a largely industrial centre where Milanese writer Alessandro Manzoni famously set his epic novel *I Promessi Sposi*. (LP: 283)

You know as soon as you arrive in Monte Sant’Angelo that it is important. You know because of the hustlers moving, pushing everything from car-parking space to kitsch religious souvenirs. However, these rouges have been operating for centuries, for as long as pilgrims have been coming to this isolated mountain town overlooking the south coast of the Gargano. (LP: 652)

As far as the internal organisation is concerned, the LP presents ten introductory sections (Highlights, Getting Started, Itineraries, The Authors, Snapshot, History, The Culture, Environment, Italian artistic tradition, Food and Drink) which precede the actual description of the Italian regions. The decision to begin with “Rome and Lazio” in this guide is peculiar. In fact, instead of the classic perspective from North to South, LP seems to offer the possibility to explore Italy starting from the middle of the country. The guide ends with a “Directory” containing practical information; three chapters dedicated respectively to Transport, Health and Language and a small glossary of useful terms. Coloured pictures can be found in the six

initial pages and in further eight pages distributed at different intervals throughout the guide. However, the maps are black and white and usually follow the region introductory paragraph.

3.3.3. The *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide*

The use of colour is exactly what marks the difference between the previous guidebook and the *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide*, which is renowned for its great pictures and coloured maps and for the cutaways and floor plans of major sights. The DK begins with a general introduction to the country and its history, which is followed by five chapters, dedicated to as many geographical areas (Northeast Italy, Northwest Italy, Central Italy, Rome and Lazio, Southern Italy). The information given is rather succinct but is integrated by a great number of photographs and plans, with the attention being mainly focused on the artistic heritage, as well as on natural beauties:

Rising above the heart of the city, the richly decorated Duomo – Santa Maria del Fiore – and its orange-tiled dome have become Florence’s most famous symbols. (DK: 272)

This vast park, inaugurated in 1922, has a rich landscape of high peaks, rivers, lakes and forests, and is one of Europe’s most important nature reserves. (DK: 490)

Specific sections are dedicated to well-known monuments or buildings and to national parks and naturalistic areas.

3.3.4. The *Rough Guide*

This guidebook can be considered as lying in between the second and the third group since it guides tourists through their itinerary, offering longer descriptions of the sights, sometimes even indulging in comments and anecdotes. However, like the LP, this guide is written in a colloquial language and often recurs to irony as a rhetorical strategy to present peculiar or ‘negative’ aspects.

The villages wedged along the shoreline are far more workday than those of the rest of the lake, and **Lecco**, at its foot, is a frantic commercial centre. You almost certainly won’t want to stay in Lecco, but its public transport connections are good and there are some challenging hikes in the nearby mountains. (RG: 214)

The area [Emilia-Romagna] has grown wheat since Roman times, and nowadays its industry and agribusiness are among Italy’s most advanced – there are currently more pigs than people in the Po Valley. (RG: 409)

The internal organisation presents a full-colour introduction, a chapter called “basics” which contains a variety of practical information for the traveller and seventeen chapters dedicated to the Italian regions, from Piedmont to Sardinia. The guide ends with two sections dedicated

respectively to history, art and architecture, and to language. All the maps are black-and-white as well as the pictures, excluding the ones in the introduction.

3.3.5. The *Cadogan Guide*

The last guidebook belongs to the third group and is an example of the “classical” guide in the sense that it is more closely linked to the tradition of travel literature. The CG is addressed to a cultivated audience that loves literature, history and the arts, so that literary and historical texts are privileged references, and quotations often precede descriptive paragraphs. The descriptions and comments given by the two authors reflect a literary narrative style, as it can be seen from the following examples:

...the shores close in around the **Lago di Lecco**, a brooding fjord where mountains plunge down into the water, entwined in rushing streams and waterfalls and carved with shadowy abysses – landscapes that so enchanted Leonardo da Vinci when he visited Lecco [...] that he used them as a background in his *Virgin of the Rocks* and *The Virgin and St Anne*. (CG: 271)

That **Monte Sant’Angelo** is a special place becomes evident even before you arrive. The trip up from Manfredonia passes through an uncanny landscape of chalky cliffs dotted with caves, ancient agricultural terraces, and a strange clarity in the light and air. After much twisting and grinding

of gears, you arrive at a quiet, whitewashed city, a maze of steps and tunnels. (CG: 939)

As far as the internal organisation is concerned, the CG presents six introductory chapters, which are dedicated to “geography”, “history” “art and architecture”, specific “topics” (*Bella Figura*; *Commedia dell’Arte*; Pasta; etc.), “Italian culture” and “food and drink”. The proper guide begins with two sections entitled “travel” and “practical A-Z”, which give the reader all the useful information about formalities, transport, etc. The chapters dedicated to Italian regions, ordered from North to South, follow these two sections. The guide ends with a “reference” chapter containing a glossary of historical terms, a little vocabulary, some suggestions for further reading and a coloured touring atlas. The only coloured pictures are at the beginning of the guide, whilst black-and-white maps of major cities and regions are scattered throughout the text.

Through these concise descriptions, this section has attempted to demonstrate how the selected guidebooks are quite different from each other by briefly presenting the heterogeneity of their readership and usage. Indeed, through the analysis of this corpus of English guidebooks, one of the purposes of this study is to explore whether the difference in authorship and readership is reflected also in the “mental models” used to construct and transmit the image of Italy and its culture.

4. The analysis of guidebook discourse

When tourists encounter a destination and its culture, they have already a frame of reference based on previous knowledge, experiences and expectations, which they use to make sense of the world and to give meaning to aspects of and events in life (Goffman, 1974). These frames of reference depend on historical and cultural factors but also on information sources such as literature, magazines, films and television which certainly play an important role in the perception of the ‘other’ in contemporary world. The tourism industry contributes as well to the creation of these frames but it must be said that, in its attempt to confirm tourists’ expectations about a destination, tourism often exploits an imagery that is already present in the mind of potential tourists. In other words, contrary to what it seems, tourism discourse does not always create new representations but rather falls on previously established ones. In this regard, Pritchard argues that:

It would be a mistake to see the formation of representations as linear or one-way – in the ‘circuit of representation’ tourists are not passive recipients of marketed images but are themselves products of particular socio-economic and cultural systems and share common ontologies with the tourism marketers. (2000: 258)

Hence, the meanings transmitted by tourism discourse can be said to be related to writers' and readers' mental models, and their underlying ethnic stereotypes or prejudices, which are in turn related to the interests and expectations of the social group to which they belong. Different researchers (Cohen, 1993; Battacharyya, 1997; Pritchard, 2000; Ateljevic & Doorne, 2002) have concentrated on this issue focusing in particular on the touristic image of developing or Third World destinations; their studies revealed that ideologically biased representations have been constructed and transmitted by tourism marketers in order to make those destinations appealing to the Western tourist, thus perpetrating a form of "Orientalism" (Said, 1978). However, few authors have further investigated these results by turning their attention also to destinations within the Western world: the process of representing the 'other' is actually inherent to any tourist experience and the nature of tourism promotion can produce orientalized visions even of realities which are geographically and culturally close to the 'home country' of the tourist, as is the case for Italy. In this perspective, the tourist image of a destination, defined as "the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or a group might have of a particular place" (Bandyopadhyay & Morais, 2005: 1006-1007) and transmitted by tourist texts such as guidebooks, becomes an important element in the social construction of that place by foreign visitors.

The structures of guidebook discourse identified in the previous chapter (namely, the use of specific emotive words, native words, quotations and comparisons) will be analysed in detail to show how they are linked to particular social representations. In order to explore the image of Italy in English guidebooks, each structure will be separately described as a strategy used by guidebook authors to control the mental models of potential tourists.

In the following section, the use of emotive words will be analysed also in order to identify the topics or semantic macrostructures of English guidebook discourse about Italy. These topics emphasize particular global meanings, thus influencing other aspects of discourse as well as readers' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs (van Dijk, 2001a: 107).

4.1. Emotive words and tourists' expectations about Italy

This section focuses on particular lexical choices, namely emotive words, made by the authors and common to the corpus of English guidebooks. They have been called 'keywords' using a terminology borrowed from Dann (1996), meaning words that do not refer to attributes of the destination but rather correspond to specific values, feelings and expectations of the potential tourist. In this regard, also Cohen (1989: 32-

34) argues that tourism discourse often attempts to present destinations as an alternative to mass tourism and to portray attractions as ‘authentic’ thus placing great emphasis on particular emotive words or sentences.

The analysis of the emotive words used to present Italy in English guidebooks provides interesting information about the image of the country abroad and may reveal to what extent it is influenced by biased social representations such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. The focus of this section is exactly that of studying the relations between specific lexical choices and the mental models and social representations shared by guidebook authors and their readers. The close analysis of the selected guidebooks actually reveals the presence of recurring emotive words such as “traditional”, “romantic”, as well as “wild”, “remote” and “fashionable”, which are associated to different mental representations of the country.

After identifying the emotive words which occur in each and all the selected guidebooks, they were grouped into signifying themes or topics, which constitute the global meanings about Italy as produced by guidebook authors. These topics will be considered as the result of a selection made by guidebook authors in their mental models or in their more general, socially shared beliefs and which may directly influence the mental models of the readers as well as other aspects of discourse (van Dijk, 2001a: 103). This theoretical framework has been followed as well in the study of the other

structures of guidebook discourse (namely native words, quotations and comparisons) which will be dealt with in the following sections.

The keywords were identified through a comparison between the selected guidebooks and were grouped into three topics, which seem to constitute the dominant discourse around Italy in English guidebooks. The first topic is linked to the fascination of Italy's past image, the one created during the *Grand Tour* which is full of romance and picturesque natural scenery; the second one refers to promises of adventure in alleged 'undiscovered' places where life has remained untouched by modernity and mass tourism; the last topic is linked to Italy's 'brand' image, that of a modern European country and an economic power which hosts the most famous fashion and design industries in the world. It must be said, however, that the theme concerning modern Italy is not predominant in the discourse and is often used to confirm the other two. In the following excerpt, for example, the words "modern" and "industrialized" seem to be in opposition with and to give emphasis to what is presented as the real attractions of Italy for an English-speaking tourist:

Italy is perhaps Europe's most complex and alluring destination. It is a modern, industrialized nation, but it is also, to an equal degree, a Mediterranean country, with a Southern European sensibility. (RG: VI)

The existence of a modern image, which cannot be denied, no matter how ambiguous and complex, seems to require an effort by guidebook authors to reassure the readers that their expectations will be equally fulfilled since “at its heart” Italy has preserved its real nature, as it is shown in this sentence:

The ambiguity of its modern image is also fascinating: since World War II Italy has climbed into the top ten world economies, yet at its heart it retains many of the customs, traditions and regional allegiances of its agricultural heritage. (DK: 17)

Guidebook authors seem to feel the need to assure the reader that, although Italy may appear at a first glance as a developed and modern country, the expectations about centuries-old traditions and picturesque landscapes will not be disappointed. This strategy has the resulting effect of creating the appearance of a country which is at the same time near and far away from the tourists’ everyday world. Italy is a modern nation, with all the conveniences of a Western country, but it is also and above all an ‘exotic’ destination with a ‘Mediterranean sensibility’, a feature that, among others, makes it different from other European countries:

Italy has always seemed somewhat removed from the rest of Europe: physically by mountains and sea, spiritually by virtue of the Pope. (IG: 15)

From this brief overview it is clear that the topics linked to feelings of romanticism and love for traditions dominate over the one related to more up-to-date issues, such as fashion and design: this means that the social representation of Italy in English guidebooks strongly depends on historical events and cultural factors which assigned the country values and feelings that are well-established in the mind of the potential tourist and which guidebooks tend to exploit and confirm also through the use of repeated emotive words.

In the following paragraphs, a separate and detailed description will be given of the three different topics and of the “local meaning” (van Dijk, 2001) expressed by some specific lexical choices.

4.1.1. A journey into the past

MacCannell argues that “for moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles” (1989: 3). Hence, the view of a destination as timeless and immutable to changes is related to a search for authenticity that does no longer belong to our industrialized and urbanized world and that needs to be found elsewhere. The first group of keywords (i.e. emotive words) identified is linked precisely to nostalgic perceptions of the past as the

repository of lost values: these words emphasize Italy’s cultural and historic heritage and portray the country as temporally distant from the rest of Europe and the modern world in general. Keywords such as “medieval”, “traditional”, “genuine”, have been found in all the guidebooks; they create an appearance of “time stood still” by giving readers the impression that this is a destination that has been successful in preserving its traditions and customs and remaining unchanged.

Table 1. keywords which signal temporal distance

Medieval

Traditional

Timeless (atmosphere)

Genuine

Romantic

Fairy-tale (castles)

Magical

Unchanged

In particular, the analysis of the corpus revealed that guidebook discourse around Italy provides evidence of a common set of representations linked to a romantic imagery; it seems that for the English-speaking tourists a romantic narrative pertaining to Italy is crucial for their expectations. In this particular case, tourists seem to come to Italy expecting medieval romance, eternal Mediterranean sun, and a living museum of

romantic ruins: this imagery has been shaped by the vast literary production of the 19th century in which *Grand Tour* travellers and Romantic authors (James, Stendhal, Byron, Shelley) portrayed the country according to the tastes of their time focusing on those aspects that best reflected their romantic sensibility. Given the influence of this literature on tourism (Towner, 2002), these portraits and descriptions have come to represent a precious material for the marketing of Italy and have become part of the mental models potential tourists have about this country. The excerpts below provide a useful example of how this discursive strategy is carried out also by resembling guidebooks' language to the one used in the accounts of romantic travellers:

Sparkling green meadows lie beneath great swathes of woodlands; hills and gorges are defended by fairy-tale castles. (CG: 113)

The lovely cloister, north of the church, is an attractive, flower-filled haven of calm. (DK: 147)

Guidebook authors seem to have chosen to maintain the appearance of Italy as fixed in a 'timeless gaze' by giving readers the idea that this is a destination that has preserved its past for them to experience the same feelings as those famous travellers:

Visitors on the Grand Tour were beguiled by the ruins bathed in moonlight or haunted by the sense of a lost civilization. (IG: 153)

This is particularly evident when guidebook authors suggest the best way of ‘gazing’ at a site in order to obtain the desired effect; these suggestions often respond to an aesthetic canon established in the narratives created at the end of the 19th century and for this reason, tourism discourse constitutes what Stuart Hall (1997b) defines a key moment in representation, as it promotes the sharing of meanings that encourage identical ways of understanding the world:

These wonderfully well-preserved Republican temples are at their best in moonlight, standing in their grassy enclave beside the Tiber sheltered by umbrella pines. During the day, they look less romantic, stranded in a sea of traffic. (DK: 423)

Another word contributing to this topic, although it cannot be defined “emotive”, is the omnipresent adverb “still”: tourists can “still” see or feel or experience what famous travellers have seen/felt/experienced because “The allure of Italy still draws in this landscape of the senses” (IG: 17). Indeed, everything seems to have been preserved for them:

Yet little of the essential fabric of Venice has altered in 200 years. The city’s sounds are **still** those of footsteps and the cries of boatmen. (DK: 81)
(My emphasis)

Moreover, places seem to have retained their “genuine local atmosphere” and their “authentic” appearance exclusively for the advantage of the modern tourist:

...Trastevere retains islands of genuine local atmosphere. Hidden corners remain untouched and provide snap-happy visitors with picturesque photo opportunities of laundry hanging out to dry or old-timers chatting outside their front doors. (IG: 159)

This constructed ‘temporal distance’ from the modern world is particularly evident when guidebooks deal with the Italian periphery¹ as opposed to its most famous attractions: English guidebooks offer a view of these areas as disconnected and frozen in time, an image which is conveyed by sentences like “rural places, where time can seem to have stopped in the fifteenth century” (RG: 815), “the medieval hilltop towns here remain as they’ve always been” (LP: 573) or “peasants still farm this unchanging land as their ancestors did, using techniques unchanged for centuries” (DK: 680).

Town and objects, as well as daily activities seem to be dominated by “a quiet, timeless atmosphere” (RG: 931) and even people become dependent things of the past to the point that they are even said to resemble their ancestors in their external appearance, as it is suggested by the following excerpt:

¹ For in-depth discussions on the issue of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ in tourism and Western culture, see Cohen (1996), Seaton (2000) and Nash & Martin (2003).

Quite possibly that native will bear more than a slight resemblance to the figures in the 15th-century frescoes of the local *duomo* – in these regions the past is always present. (IG: 171)

By emphasizing this presumed immutability and this strong link with the past, Italy's periphery becomes the repository of the authentic Italian culture, of something that has not been contaminated by external factors to the point that “no other regions so clearly reveal the contradictory nature of Italy and the Italians” (LP: 646).

In conclusion, in the attempt to confirm tourists' expectations, specific words and sentences are used in guidebooks to transmit the idea that authentic Italian culture only exists in the past and as such, it must be seen before it is transformed by modernity and loses its distinctiveness.

4.1.2. A journey into the unknown

In order to meet this request for authenticity, guidebook discourse does also rely on the promise of discovery and adventure experiences implicit in the idea of travel. This promise is often based on notions of enchantment derived from an alleged geographical distance of the destination from the world of the tourist. In this sense, guidebooks' representations of Italy seem

to draw on specific mental models that combine romantic visions of the past with every tourist's dream of becoming a 'traveller'.

Table 2. Keywords which signal geographical distance

Unspoilt
Virgin (landscape)
Remote
Isolated
Unknown
Untamed (countryside)
Backwoods (Italy)
Untraveled
Wild

The emphasis here is obviously on the representation of natural beauties and of some corners of the country as unique and undiscovered places, which have not succumbed to mass tourism. "Virgin" landscapes, "unspoilt" beaches and "isolated" valleys are a few examples of the way in which guidebook discourse transform the tourist into a traveller; they apparently reveal alternative itineraries or glimpses into a secret world also by inserting explicit comments such as "better still it remains relatively unexplored." (LP: 218)

Keywords such as "untraveled", "wild" and "remote" give the readers the sensation of an area that is physically distant from the world

they live in and tell them stories of a “virgin” country and of promises of exciting discovery experiences in an “obscure and remote land” still unknown by mass tourism.

As showed by the following examples, also in this case emotive words used to describe the Italian periphery play an important role in the transmission of specific cultural meanings. Their use in sentences like “so few foreigners – so few northern Italians, even – visit these remote and sunbaked regions” (IG: 301) and the emphasis on the presence of “virgin” (DK: 500), “lonely, Wild West landscapes” (CG: 913) and “wild beauty” (LP: 573), create the illusion of a destination that is waiting to be discovered as, indeed, these regions were “long ignored by most travellers” (IG: 293). As a consequence, visitors are not simply invited to visit these peripheral areas, but rather to “venture” (LP: 646 - IG: 301) into them, a linguistic choice that has the function of inviting the tourist to take a risk and go “off the beaten tracks”.

Southern Italy in particular is offered to tourists as a destination within the destination and, for this reason, the North/South divide is taken to extremes and becomes an opposition between Europe and Africa as it will shown in the section dedicated to the study of comparisons (§ 4.4.). It suffice to say here that the *Mezzogiorno* is depicted using a language which aims at highlighting its spatial and cultural distance from the rest of Italy and Europe in general and relies heavily on attitudes and ideologies

connected with a shortage of information about the culture of the ‘other’ (Santos, 2004). If we move to other regions of the Italian periphery the same approach can be found in the emphasis given to the existence of legends and rituals. This can be observed in sentences like “legends of witches persist as do strange fertility rites and rituals celebrating the changing seasons” (DK: 485), “the tradition of witches and wizards is all too believable” (LP: 573) and “legends of werewolves and witches abound” (RG: 815) which contribute to reinforce a biased representation of those places as “remote” from the modern world.

4.1.3. A journey into the present

The third and last topic groups keywords related to particular views of sociocultural development. They seem to provide a description of Italy’s up-to-date image that mainly depends on guidebook authors’ mental representations about it as a product of the Italian national brand. The words used to describe modern Italy seem to be aimed at reminding readers that, after all, they are travelling in the mother country of “fashion and design”:

Italy has a reputation for inspired car and motorbike design, from exclusive Ferraris to basic Vespa scooters. (IG: 91)

Table 3. Keywords linked to the present

Fashionable
Sophisticated
Cosmopolitan (lure)
Modern
Developed
Keeping pace with
Industrialization
Unappealing

The emotive words constituting this theme can be divided into two groups: on the one hand there are the positive ones, and on the other the negative ones. Even though this topic may seem to mark a difference from the previous two, in fact it reinforces the ‘classical’ image of Italy since the positive effects of modernity are presented as an exception rather than the rule. Indeed, they only concern big cities like Milan, the undeniable symbol of Italian brand image:

Milan is certainly atypical, devoid of the usual Italian daydreams and living-museum mustiness. Like Naples, it lives for the present, and as one of Europe’s major financial centres and a capital of fashion, Milan dresses in a well-tailored, cosmopolitan three-piece suit. (CG: 194)

Major cities are obviously the central subject of positive emotive words such as “fashionable”, “sophisticated” above all in relation to events and

entertainment offered to the foreign tourist. As expected, keywords as “modern”, “ever-changing” and “keeping pace with” are used to promote leisure activities in urban areas and include also one of the main sources of attraction in travelling abroad, i.e. shopping (Dann, 1996: 175):

This chic and busy metropolis offers plenty of opportunities for cultural activities, gastronomic adventures, designer-fashion shopping or just strolling about... (DK: 188)

However, when cities are not associated with fashion and cultural verve they become immediately “unappealing” and expressions as “industrialization” and “commercial growth” are used to denounce the negative effects that urbanization has brought in otherwise “virgin” areas that now are “not worth a long stay” or “not an encouraging stop in itself” (RG: 912).

In other words, while it may seem that this theme presents Italy’s current situation, in fact it emphasizes the divide between romantic perceptions and modern experiences:

Urbino remains one of the few hill towns left in Italy not ringed by the **unsavoury intrusions of modernity**. The original old city remains almost completely ‘unimproved’, perched at the top of its two picks. (IG: 291) (My emphasis)

This promotional strategy – often used in tourism discourse – provides readers with a destination that has something for everyone: big metropolis for those in search of modern entertainments; virgin landscapes for those looking for adventure and discovery; ancient ruins, and old villages for the ones who want to follow the footstep of famous travellers.

4.1.4. Final considerations

The analysis shows that historical, social and cultural relations, which are shared by guidebook authors and their readers, ideologically frame the three topics described above. They present a biased and fragmented representation of Italy through the use of emotive words and sentences that exploits a well-established imagery as well as tourists' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs on this country. In other words, in guidebook discourse, Italy is what modern English tourists expect to see and experience; it becomes what guidebook authors and readers want it to be. In this regard, it can be said that the first 'tourists' as well as 19th-century travel literature fixated the country in a 'gaze' that eventually created specific social representations about Italy. This gaze mainly highlighted the beautiful, the romantic and the traditional and its representations still shape the mental models of both tourists and guidebook

authors. The latter, in particular, influenced by these representations and by tourism promotional strategies, aim at confirming them through specific choices in meaning which are then realized in discursive structures.

In other words, tourists do not look for the authentic modern Italy and for this reason their quest for authenticity does not lead to an effective intercultural encounter. As commented by McGregor:

Instead they pursue a romantic, primitive ‘authenticity’, the exotic Other of the Western imagination, which could best be found through adherence to the experiences and gazes induced by their guidebooks. (2000: 46)

This process of ‘othering’ which differentiates Italy from the world of the tourist not only reinforces stereotypical images and prejudice but spreads ideologically biased representations about its culture and people. Further evidence will be given in the following analyses of local meanings through the study of the use of native words, quotations and comparisons in the selected English guidebooks.

4.2. Native words and culture-specific aspects

Guidebooks have been defined “culture brokers” due to their social role of mediating the encounter between the destination and tourists. By translating the foreign culture into their language, guidebooks provide them with a framework for interpreting their travelling experiences and for managing the contact with customs and habits of local people. In particular, since the cultural aspects of a given society are always linked to a specific lexis, it is quite predictable that guidebooks will employ native words to construct and transmit their image of the destination culture.

The focus of this section is exactly that of identifying the features that better represent the *Italianità* in the eye of guidebook authors and tourists through the study of the local meaning of Italian words in the corpus of English guidebooks about Italy.

It is worth saying that the use of native words in tourist texts may depend on different communication strategies. Boyer and Viallon (1994: 83), for example, recognize their use especially when the sender of the tourist message is concerned with foreign countries – as is the case here – and underline their role in providing local colour and in flattering the pseudo-linguistic ability of the reader. The use of native words and expressions in the language of tourism has been widely discussed also by Dann (1996: 183) who claims that the most frequent application of this

strategy is in gastronomy, a domain that is closely linked to the culture of a destination and obviously comes with its own language. Calvi (2000: 51), on the other hand, claims that although their occurrence is sporadic, the presence of native words in tourist texts draws attention on the multicultural dimension of tourism discourse and on the contribution of different traditions, not only at a thematic but also at a linguistic level. Moreover, she argues that this multicultural dimension is responsible for the significant amount of “traditional terms” used despite the existence of their international equivalents. Referring in particular to foreign destinations, she adds that:

la descrizione di itinerari in paesi stranieri, infatti, comporta l’uso sia pur moderato, di termini riferiti alle varie realtà locali, soprattutto in campi quali il tipo di alloggio, i trasporti, l’artigianato, ecc. (Calvi, 2000: 60)².

Given the mediating role carried out by guidebooks, the use of native words in these texts can be compared to the one of “cultural words” as defined by Peter Newmark who, talking about translation and culture, notes that:

Most ‘cultural’ words are easy to detect, since they are associated with a particular language and cannot be literally translated, but many cultural customs are described in ordinary language where literal translation would

² “The description of itineraries in foreign countries implies a reasonable use of words related to the different local realities, above all in such domains as accommodation, transports, handicrafts, etc.” (My translation)

distort the meaning and a translation may include an appropriate descriptive-functional equivalent. (Newmark, 1988: 95)

Although Newmark's comment does not refer specifically to tourism discourse, it is quite relevant to the present study as it raises an important question: how are cultural words and cultural customs identified and transmitted in tourist texts?

Since the guidebook seems to be the textual genre of tourism discourse in which the multicultural dimension exerts the strongest influence, the use of words and phrases belonging to the host culture needs to be discussed more thoroughly. These words and phrases are the result of a selection made by guidebook authors who aim at emphasizing certain aspects and at conveying meanings about them.

The existing studies about the issue had focused mainly on specific domains belonging to what Newmark (1998: 95) calls "material culture", and on promotional texts such as travel articles and brochures (Calvi, 2000), while the use of native words in guidebooks has not been sufficiently investigated.

The analysis of the selected guidebooks reveals that the use of Italian words is even more interesting than it might seem at a first glance: considered in a cross-cultural perspective, these words define and portray the *Italianità* in the eye of guidebook authors and may have some effects on readers' expectations and actual perceptions of the Italian culture. Italian

words abound in those domains as art and music, gastronomy, etc but are used also when guidebook authors describe features they consider peculiar to Italian society and above all when talking about Italian people and their attitudes. In fact, very specific socio-cultural aspects emerged in guidebooks as being associated to Italy and Italians and, despite the widely acknowledged laudatory dimension of tourist discourse, they are often accompanied by negative comments or critiques. This means that the use of native words to define a behaviour or a personal trait does not depend on the same purposes which determine their use in other domains: native words still offer a touch of local colour but are related to other important issues as the representation of the ‘other’ and the perception of cultural difference. It can be said that particular ideologies shared by guidebook authors and their readers are at play above all in the sense of “representing the relations between themselves and the Others essentially in terms of us versus *them*, in which we are associated with positive properties and they are associated with bad properties.” (van Dijk, 1995: 18).

Before focusing on the results of the analysis, some comments will be made on the use of different translation procedures adopted by guidebook authors to deal with native words and related to different communication strategies. According to Newmark (1988: 96), one of the possible translation procedures when dealing with “cultural words” is transference, which offers local colour and atmosphere, and “enables the

readership (some of whom may be more or less familiar with the SL) to identify the referent – a name or a concept – in other texts”. Newmark claims that transference is not particularly advisable as it emphasizes the culture and not the message thus making comprehension difficult. However, in the case of tourism discourse, transference may probably represent a perfect strategy since in tourist texts words are often used as a means to appeal the potential tourist’s imagination. In this regard, Dann (1996: 184) talks about an “occasional poetic treatment” of language in tourist text referring in particular to alliteration, the use of familiar expressions in unusual context and the use of words which hold a fascination in themselves but are quite unfamiliar to readers. English guidebooks about Italy present various instances of Italian words chosen for this purpose as can be observed in the following example, taken from a section of the *Cadogan Guide*:

If you’re bringing your own *bambini*, they’ll receive a warm welcome everywhere. (CG: 78)

Here the word *bambini* is used without any translation and even if the context helps the readers understand it (the heading of the paragraph reads ‘Children’), the function can be said to be eminently ‘poetic’ as it transmits a meaning that could not be communicated by using the English equivalent,

i.e. the love for children as a characteristic feature of Italian people (something that is explicitly commented in the other guidebooks as well).

In general, this special choice of vocabulary is aimed at striking the eye and sustaining the memory of the reader in relation to peculiar features of the Italian culture. However, the translation procedure adopted to cope with the native word can create different relations between guidebook authors and readers. In the domain of gastronomy for example, if the authors choose to use the name of a dish without translating or explaining it (see the excerpt below), they decide to rely on the linguistic abilities and background knowledge of the reader thus establishing a relation between equals and giving the reader the status of ‘traveller’ (Dann, 1996: 183):

Sadly, the indulgent dessert of *zabaglione* is rarely available at any but the most upmarket places. (RG: 40)

On the other hand, the authors may choose to spell out the ingredients of the foreign dish adopting a solution that Newmark calls “componential analysis” (1988: 96) and which is based on using a component common to the source language and the target language to which the author adds the extra contextual distinguishing components, as shown by the following example:

Sicily is still noted for its sorbets and sumptuous sweets, including *cassata siciliana*, sweet sponge filled with ricotta cheese or pistachio cream, decorated with almond paste, and candied fruit. (IG: 97)

This solution is obviously more informative than the previous one but puts the author in a dominant position: since readers already know that guidebook authors have a wider and better knowledge of the destination, this strategy may lead them to rely heavily on the guidebook not only as a source of practical information but also as a means for interpreting the contacts with the hosting culture. The problem is that, when the Italian word used belongs to the field of social culture, i.e. peculiar habits or customs, the ‘distinguishing components’ may be the result of a personal interpretation of the author or of a shared mental model which reflect specific socio-cultural ideologies. The analysis of the corpus of English guidebooks showed that, in the domains belonging to material culture, different strategies are used to cope with Italian words depending on the international diffusion of the Italian food or item in question; however, in those domains such as social customs and habits, the voice of the authors seems to become more authoritative thus privileging the ‘componential’ procedure or the explanatory gloss.

Drawing on this consideration, the following paragraphs will show how Italian words are used in guidebooks to construct and transmit a particular representation of the Italian culture – apparently shared by

authors and readers – in which the material elements belonging to the national ‘brand’ image are prized at the expense of those pertaining to the Italian social dimension. Focus will be placed firstly on the ‘neutral’ use of Italian words in fields belonging to the so-called material culture such as art and music, gastronomy, etc., and secondly on the more interesting or ‘biased’ uses which regard Italian social culture.

4.2.1. Material Culture – Art and Music

Since Italy and the Italians have dominated the field of art and music for many centuries, it was predictable that guidebooks would present a great amount of Italian words in these domains. Sometimes, explicit comments are made on the international use of the Italian words belonging to these domains, thus emphasizing the role Italian culture played in the past centuries:

It was a Venetian printer, Ottaviano Petrucci, who invented a method of printing music with movable type in 1501 – an industry that the Italian printers monopolized for years (which is why we play *allegro* and not *schnell*). (CG: 54)

The IG and the CG are the guides which display the larger amount of Italian words. In addition, the DK presents many Italian words in the domains of art and music since, as mentioned in chapter 3 (§ 3.3.3.), this guidebook is specifically addressed to those tourists interested in the artistic heritage of a country. The majority of the Italian words belonging to art and music are used without any translation, as they are well known also in the English-speaking world:

Themes for the weightier *opera seria* were largely drawn from mythology, while the lighter *opera buffa* had stock scenes that... (DK: 33)

All had learned their craft from late Renaissance Italy, where the *commedia dell'arte* had created a fashion that spread across the continent. (CG: 43)

However, whenever the authors think the reader may not be familiar with a particular Italian word, they provide them with some further information, as shown in the following examples:

Gaetano Donizetti developed *bel canto* singing, a style stressing fine tone and ornamentation... (DK: 33)

The highlights of the Galleria d'Arte Moderna are the wonderful paintings of the *Macchiaioli* (spot-makers), who were a group of Tuscan artists with a style very similar to that of French impressionists. (DK: 293)

In general, it can be said that the use of native words in these fields is mainly related to the informative function of guidebooks and offers readers the possibility to improve their knowledge about the destination culture.

4.2.1.1 Gastronomy

For many people, food and drink are the most sensitive expression of national culture and play such an important role in the marketing of destinations that some countries are even promoted gastronomically to outsiders (Dann, 1996: 236). Italy is obviously one of them, and Italian cuisine is so renowned around the world that its food has long become a mark of *Italianità*. It does not come as a surprise, then, that guidebooks present a great amount of Italian words belonging to this domain. All the selected guidebooks have a special section dedicated to the Italian cuisine, normally in the introductory chapter, and numerous references to Italian food and produce are scattered throughout the guides. Although each guidebook recognizes the differences between the various regional cuisines, only the DK makes it explicit, preferring to insert special illustrated sections, entitled “Regional Food”, at the beginning of the chapters dedicated to the five Italian areas (Northeast, Northwest, Centre, Rome & Lazio and South).

However, the analysis of the actual use of Italian words in this domain has to take into account that English guidebooks highlight the strong link between food and culture in Italy and emphasize the relation between Italian people and food as a distinguishing Italian trait:

Perhaps the most striking thing about eating in Italy is **how deeply embedded in the culture** it really is. (RG: 37)

There are those who eat to live and those who live to eat, **and then there are the Italians**, for whom food has an almost religious significance... (CG: 58)

Through the use of these phrases, guidebooks exploit the international fame of the Italian cuisine and present the gastronomic experience as an opportunity for the tourist to encounter something ‘authentically’ Italian:

To eat and drink in Italy is to be **thrust into the heart of Italian life**. (LP: 67)

The widely recognized quest for authenticity associated with tourism is extended to the search for the ‘gastronomically pure’ (Cohen & Avieli, 2004: 770) which obviously comes with its own vocabulary, hence the presence of so many Italian words belonging to the domain of gastronomy.

Moreover, due to its worldwide diffusion, many visitors may think of being familiar with Italian food and this may prevent them from

experiencing it once in Italy; therefore, guidebooks also try to create ‘new’ expectations in potential tourists by widening their culinary horizons and transforming Italian food into a real tourist attraction. The general aim is that of tempting people “to travel to those places of culinary origin in order to discover and experience the real gustatory sensations for themselves” (Dann, 1996: 237): English guidebooks do it by adopting an ‘exoticizing’ strategy through which the Italian cuisine becomes ‘unknown’ thanks to the foreign language:

What comes as a surprise to many visitors is the **tremendous regional diversity** at the table; often next to **nothing on the menu looks familiar**, once dishes are disguised by their local or dialect name. (CG: 59)

However, since the guidebooks’ role is mainly that of mediating between the tourist and the local culture, they have also to act as ‘culinary brokers’ (Cohen & Aveli, 2004: 772) explaining the dishes and making recommendations. As noted by Newmark (1988: 97) “food terms are subject to the widest variety of translation procedures” depending mainly on the consistency for the text: to this regard, transference usually answers guidebook authors need to emphasize the Italian culture, even though other strategies are used as well. A good example is given by the use of the word *antipasti*: in the following excerpt, the ‘fascination’ held by the Italian word

alone would not be relevant as it occurs in the chapter dedicated to “Food & Drink”, in which the function is clearly informative:

Traditionally the meal starts with **antipasto** (literally “before the meal”), a course generally served only in ristoranti and consisting of various cold cuts of meat, seafood and various cold vegetable dishes. (RG: 39)

As we can see, the RG opted for a literal translation in brackets followed by an accurate gloss, which explains the potential tourist what to expect from this course thus fulfilling its role of ‘culinary broker’. Some guidebooks, however, go beyond the informative comment and produce examples of what Dann (1996: 237) calls ‘gastrolingo’, the register of food and drink in the language of tourism, as exemplified by the paragraph below:

You can begin with a platter of *antipasti* – the appetizers Italians do so brilliantly, ranging from warm seafood delicacies to raw ham, salami in 100 varieties, lovely vegetables, savoury toasts, olive, pâté and much much more. (CG: 58)

Here the use of the word *antipasti* gives the authors the opportunity to express their personal opinion about this course which is explicitly marked as an Italian speciality: the adverb “brilliantly” – but also the adjectives “lovely”, “savoury” and the final repetition of “much” – testify the “cultivated sense of awe” which, according to Dann (1996: 237), pervades

some “gastrologues, especially when the item in question is an object of quasi-cultic veneration”. As far as the CG is concerned, it must be said that this expressive language is not limited to the domain of gastronomy and characterizes the style of this guide as a whole.

Generally speaking, the aim of guidebook authors with reference to food is to motivate readers to experience the Italian cuisine *in situ*, as it is highly plausible that they have already had some contacts with it at home. For this reason, comments about food are always positive and the most common strategy adopted is the use of the original names of the Italian dishes followed by an indication of the main ingredient as in “*risotto alla Milanese*, seasoned with saffron” (IG: 100) or by a brief description of the recipe, as in “*Ossobuco* is shin of veal with marrow bone in a tomato and wine sauce” (DK: 174).

The analysis showed also that when literal translation is used in the text – excluding tourist’s glossaries – its function is not informative but rather conative, as it aims at creating a particular reaction in the reader. A good example of this strategy can be found in the following excerpt:

...during your travels you’ll find the same mixture of flour and water turned into broad *pappardelle* and narrow *linguini* (‘tiny tongues’), stuffed delights such as ravioli and tortellini, and regional specialities such as Puglian *orecchiette* (‘little ears’). Other inviting forms, among the 400 or so known shapes, include *vermicelli* (‘little worms’), *lumaconi* (‘slugs’), *bavette* (‘dribbles’) and *strozzapreti* (‘priest-chokers’). (CG: 48)

The various shapes of Italian pasta, once translated into English, become images and fantasies in the mind of the readers who may be tempted to try them during the journey even just out of curiosity. The LP in a special box about eating in Italy, provides another interesting example of this strategy:

You should *fare la scarpetta* (make a shoe) with your bread and wipe plates clean of sauces – a sign you’ve really enjoyed the meal and one that won’t go unnoticed. (LP: 75)

LP authors are addressing those tourists who will be “lucky enough to eat in an Italian home” and by doing a literal translation of the Italian colloquial expression *fare la scarpetta* they invite readers to try this very peculiar Italian habit and, at the same time, offer them a glimpse into the ‘authentic’ Italy as opposed to the ‘tourist’ one.

All the above examples show how English guidebooks use Italian words in gastronomy both as a promotional strategy to catch readers’ attention, tempting their imagination, and as an informational one, in order to mediate tourists encounter with the Italian cuisine. In the following paragraphs, on the other hand, it will be shown how native words can be also instrumental to other purposes and how their use is involved in the mental models about Italian culture shared by guidebook authors and their readers/tourists.

4.2.2. Social culture - Politics

In the field of social culture, particular attention is dedicated towards Italian politics, linked above all to crime and corruption: the *Mafia* is obviously mentioned by all the guidebooks of the corpus as a main problem for the Italian State as well as political bribery. Recent events are often referred to using their Italian names:

...what Italians called *tangentopoli*, or ‘bribe city’. (CG: 31)

the rest of Italy was rocked by the Tangentopoli (‘kickback city’) scandal (LP: 39)

Another important feature of Italian politics and national identity as perceived by the English guidebooks is the ‘North-South divide’. The two areas of the country are often described using a structure of opposites: on the one hand, the industrialized and progressive north and, on the other, the agrarian and conservative south. Some guidebooks go even further and explain the social consequences of this economic and cultural division through the use of Italian words as in the example below:

Southerners, termed *meridionali*, often encounter prejudice, with northerners resenting “subsidising” the south through taxation. (IG: 83)

All the English guidebooks selected for this study use the word *Mezzogiorno* to refer to the South of Italy, but the analysis revealed that in the majority of cases the aim is that of appealing the tourists' imagination by highlighting its relation with the ancestral themes of tourist promotion, that is 'sun, sand and sea' (the so-called 'three-S strategy'). The following examples show how guidebooks try to use the Italian word as a tourist "marker" of the Italian South:

For centuries, Naples has dominated the Italian South – the *Mezzogiorno*, or land of the midday sun. (DK: 467)

The Italian South – the *Mezzogiorno* ('Noonday') – is one of the extremities of Europe, poised in a calm sea between the Balkans and the Sahara. (CG: 842)

Presiding over all this is Naples, the one true metropolis of the *Mezzogiorno* (literally 'midday', the evocative name for Italy's sunny south)... (LP: 587)

This strategy is even more evident in the IG, which exploits the fascination of the Italian word in order to convey a sense of adventure and discovery and to introduce its readers to this fairly 'unknown' part of Italy:

To discover one of Europe's most interesting regions, venture beyond Naples and Sicily into the *Mezzogiorno*. (IG: 301)

After this introductory sentence, the guidebook literally constructs the meaning of the word and transmits it to the readers thanks to the use of such statements as “few foreigners – so few northern Italians, even – visit these remote and sunbaked regions” and descriptions like “it is a romantic land of castles and churches; vast, wheat-covered plains and misty mountains” (IG: 301) which aim at appealing the reader’s imagination.

On the other hand, the RG is the only guidebook that does not make any attempt to find an alluring gloss for the word or to use it as an ‘evocative name’ for the South of Italy; the reason for this choice seems to be related to the fact that this guide is not interested in encouraging readers to visit the region. The authors advice them to bear “in mind that’s a difficult and not especially rewarding area to travel through” (RG: 847), that the cities of Puglia “have little that’s characteristic enough to warrant long stays” (RG: 911) and above all the authors get to the heart of the matter by saying that “Calabria and Basilicata represent the quintessence of the *Mezzogiorno*. Underdeveloped and – owing to emigration – sparsely populated” (RG: 955).

All the above considerations about the *Mezzogiorno* have relevant consequences in the representation of Italy as a tourist destination and will be explored more thoroughly in the following sections. It suffice to say here that the representations of these peripheral areas as opposed to the centre,

namely all the well-known Italian sights and attractions, are influenced by specific ideologies which convey particular cultural meanings.

4.2.2.1. Leisure

In tourism discourse, it is very important to promote destinations in a way that makes them seem different from the reality in which potential tourists usually live. It is quite obvious that leisure activities in the host country will be a privileged subject matter and will probably be referred to in the local language. However, as far as Italy is concerned, whenever an Italian word is used to indicate one of these activities it is always followed by a comment about the Italian lifestyle, as shown in the example below:

For many, to miss *la settimana Bianca* (literally ‘white week’) in January or February would be as unthinkable as working in August. (LP: 44)

This comment reinforces a statement made by the LP authors a few pages earlier, in which they claim that Italy is a country where “work is something done elsewhere” (LP: 41). Even if this may be a promotional strategy to present the country as a ‘holiday-land’ where people spend their days relaxing and having fun, the excerpt above seem to transmit the idea that conformity rules over Italians’ leisure time and the way they spend it.

As far as sport is concerned, football is perceived as a symbol of the Italian nation, to the point that the RG claims that “it’s one of the best introduction to modern Italian culture” (RG: xi) hence something that should not be missed:

If you are interested in the game, it would be a shame to leave Italy without attending a *partita* or football match; *calcio* is the national sport and is followed fanatically by millions of Italians. (RG: 50)

As a consequence, tourists may consider a football match as something worth experiencing as part of the national folklore: it may be true that football is a “followed fanatically” and that it’s a “national obsession” (IG: 77) but guidebooks seem to use it in relation to Italian culture in general, exploiting the Italian word to highlight what they consider Italy’s most characterizing traits. The following example summarizes all this:

The national love affair with *il calcio* encapsulates many aspect of Italian life. It’s all about passion, fashion (check out the team strip or the centre forward’s latest tattoo) and above all controversy. (LP: 44)

As in the excerpt above, here too the word *calcio* is used without translation so that, in Cohen’s terms, it becomes a marker, a symbol of what is perceived as ‘typically’ or ‘stereotypically’ Italian. The IG even argues that “As any Italian knows, football and politics are often conflated” (IG: 77) so,

although the guide is not using the Italian word, the association between sports and politics made by the authors reveals a vision of Italian society similar to the one offered by the LP.

4.2.2.2 Habits and behaviours

One of the most interesting results which has emerged from the analysis of the corpus of English guidebooks has been that Italian words are used also when dealing with aspect of society and attitudes considered peculiar to Italy and the Italians; in the majority of cases, these words are accompanied by a translation or explanation in order to make them clear to the reader. Some of these words can have the specific aim of helping visitors in their contact with the locals; this can be observed in the following example, where the author is giving instructions to cope with the difference in greeting people according to familiarity:

Reserve *ciao* (hello or goodbye) for friends your age or younger, and greet older people with *piacere* (pleased to meet you), *buon giorno* (good day) or *buona sera* (good evening) and on parting, say *arrivederci* (goodbye).
(DK: 20)

However, the function of the Italian words in this domain is mainly expressive as it allows the authors to transmit their perception of what is ‘typical’ of the Italian society.

In this sense, one of the most recurring concepts is that of the “evening stroll”, presented as a marker of “the single national characteristic of embracing life to the full” (RG: v):

the daily domestic ritual of the collective evening stroll or *passeggiata* – a sociable affair celebrated by young and old alike in every town and village across the country. (RG: v)

Being described as a “ritual” that is “celebrated” all over the country, this habit seems to acquire a religious significance. Moreover, as with other Italian habits, guidebooks link it to the “obsession with clothes and image” (see below) so that it becomes a “parade”:

The essence of Italian sociability is the *passeggiata*, the evening parade or dating ritual, with pauses for preening, chatting, flirting and gossiping. (IG: 77)

The reason why the English guidebooks highlight this social aspect can be related to the north European fascination for the outdoor Mediterranean life, which has been for centuries a motive for travelling towards the south.

In relation to the concept of the “evening parade” and to a general perception about Italian society, one of the most interesting uses of Italian words that emerged from the analysis of the domain of social culture is the expression “*bella figura*” that acquires a completely Italian meaning. This expression appears in three of the five guidebooks, even though the associated idea of considering the appearance more important than the substance is expressed also in the remaining two. Guidebooks’ statements about this Italian feature are quite negative:

Nothing is ever quite as it seems here, and part of the reason for this is the obsession with making a good impression – ‘*fare una bella figura*’ – a singular Italian trait. You notice it almost immediately: not only are many Italians immaculate fashion victims [...], but they always seem to be modelling their spiffy threads – posing, gesturing, playing to an audience when they have one. (CG: 42)

The perception of Italian people as obsessed with making a good impression is confirmed also by the RG, which puts the emphasis above all on physical fitness and the love for fashion:

the notion of staying fit has lately been absorbed into the general obsession with *bella figura* (looking good), especially when it offers the opportunity to wear the flashiest designer gear. (RG: 50)

As shown by the above excerpts, the concept of “*bella figura*” is associated mainly to aspects such as superficiality and conformity and is always presented as a general truth that applies to the whole of Italian society. The emphasis given to this feature culminates in explicit comments and value judgments about Italians in general:

Bella figura pleases the eye but irritates just about everything else. Fashionable conformity spreads from clothing to opinions, especially in the provinces; Italians remain the masters of empty flattery, and will say anything to please. (CG: 42)

The LP deals with the concept of *bella figura* in a section called “The national psyche” associating it to other social aspects perceived as peculiar to Italy:

... a nation for which *furberia* (cunning) is a much-vaunted quality. To put one over on somebody marks you as a winner and this, to an Italian, is important. The maintaining of *la bella figura* (face) lies at the heart of much social behaviour. (LP: 41)

The authors use the Italian word *furberia* followed by its English translation, but the cultural meaning he is trying to construct is expressed by the other two sentences, where the word finds its actual definition. The image that emerges from the LP is the same transmitted by the other guidebooks: Italians’ behaviour is not perceived as spontaneous but as

intentionally aimed at having success in every sector of society and at ‘maintaining the face’ even at the expenses of others.

4.2.2.3. Family

The family, an institution on which, according to the LP (41) “Italians continue to depend” is another aspect of the Italian society, which is perceived as so peculiar or ‘typical’ that some Italian words are needed to present it. According to the corpus of English guidebooks, even the Italian family does not remain untouched by the so-called obsession with ‘maintaining the face’, as exemplified in the excerpt below:

Staying together for the sake of appearances, *separati in casa*, is a civilized compromise: the couple live under the same roof but lead separate lives. (IG: 86)

However, the belief in the institution of the family is generally perceived to be strong above all due to the ‘loving affair’ many Italians have with their mothers and which is associated to other issues such as food and tradition:

...every Italian believes that Italian food is the best in the world and that *mamma’s* is always the perfect example (RG: 36)

...food has an almost religious significance, unfathomably linked with love, *la mamma*, and tradition. (CG: 58)

The role of the mother in the Italian society is not simply attested by the English guidebooks by the use of the word *mamma* without any translation but it is also commented and evaluated as shown by the following excerpt:

While the family remains the bedrock of traditional Italian society, *mammismo*, the cult of the mother, is its cornerstone. (IG: 85)

In particular, Italian men are the chosen target of the most ironic and derisive statements regarding this obsession with the mother:

Italian men actually constitute an *esercito di mammoni* (army of mummy's boy)... And even after the big move, one in three continue to see *la mamma* every day. (LP: 42)

Young Italian women, on the other hand, are perceived to be distancing themselves from what is presented as the long-established model of the Italian mother:

At least in the urban north, the stereotype of the roly-poly Italian *mamma*, with one eye on the baby and the other on the pasta, is losing its appeal. (IG: 86)

In spite of that, the general image conveyed by the English guidebooks analysed is that of a highly traditional society in which family and domestic rituals are very resistive to external changes; in this sense the final words of the DK section “a portrait of Italy” are very representative:

...Italy appears unchanged to foreign visitors. Its ability to keep its regional identities and traditional values allows it to ride out any changes virtually unscathed. (DK: 21)

4.2.3. Final considerations

The use of Italian words in guidebooks reveals interesting information on how guidebook authors construct and transmit cultural meanings about a destination: the analysis of the corpus showed that, apart from those domains in which native words represent practical information for the tourist, e.g. history, gastronomy, or those related with the artistic heritage of the destination, any other use of an Italian word or expression is aimed at highlighting and commenting on aspects of the Italian society and attitudes of its members.

These aspects belong to the present and modern image of the country and they are usually presented as distinguishing features of the host culture as opposed to the one of the tourist, thus being inserted in a discourse of ‘us’

versus ‘them’ which is ideologically framed (van Dijk, 2001a: 107). As noted by Bhattacharyya (1997: 375), the language used in guidebooks tends to present particular representations as the sole legitimate ones so that it may heavily influence readers’ mental models. Indeed, the risk is that tourists use these representations as a framework to interpret their encounter with the Italian culture, thus favouring the diffusion of generalizations and stereotypes.

4.3. Quotations as ready-made representations

In his analysis of the language of tourism, Dann (1996: 176) argues that destinations “can be promoted by a writer’s direct references to rich, famous and even infamous personalities” or “by specifically alluding to their loyal sons and daughters, expatriate residents or renowned repeat visitors”. In particular, Dann claims that in the hands of travel writer this form of testimony can be moulded to praise or criticize particular aspects of the destination. In other words, tourism texts exploit the connection between touristic places and well-known characters in order to transmit and support specific representations of those places. As far as Italy is concerned, the following excerpt gives a perfect example of how this strategy works:

Stendhal staggered around its [Florence] streets in a perpetual stupor of delight; the Brownings sighted over its idyllic charms; and E.M. Forster’s *Room with a View* portrayed it as the great southern antidote to the sterility of Anglo-Saxon life. (RG: 466)

This form of intertextuality, which answers a specific communicative purpose, is particularly evident in guidebooks; as stated in chapter two (§ 2.1.), the guidebook is the most traditional among tourist textual genres and the most closely linked to travel literature. In this regard, Towner (2002) notes that:

It is the visitor's Michelin, Insight or Rough Guide, advising them [tourists] on what to see and how to see it, that focus the main connection between literature, tourism and the Grand Tour. (2002: 236)

What is interesting in the above statement is that it suggests that the connection between literature and tourism is given precisely by guidebook's influence on the tourist gaze, which is exerted through the use of language as a means of social control (Dann, 1996).

In this sense, among the forms of testimony used in guidebooks, quotations represent a powerful instrument to lend support to specific representations of the destination and its culture. Quotations offer ready-made descriptions and interpretations of places and people that, by being de-contextualized, may lose their subjectivity and be presented as a general truth. In this regard, in her analysis of French guidebooks, Margarito (2000: 24-26) points out that quotations share some typical features of the stereotype: they give a cultural object (place, person, etc.) a stable or conventional definition, they are often repetitive and redundant and, above all, they fix language in a given formula. This means that the use of quotations in guidebooks can contribute to fix the representation of places or sites without change or development or to transmit prejudices about people and their culture.

Starting from this consideration and given the importance of quotations in the construction of tourist representations, the focus has been

on investigating the corpus to see which quotations are used to describe Italy and eventually to question their function in the text. For this reason, three kinds of quotations were taken into consideration:

1. Explicit quotations, as the one in the following excerpt:

In his travelogue, *Sea and Sardinia*, DH Lawrence wrote that Sardinia was “left outside of time and history.” (DK: 529)

2. Quotations not signalled by inverted commas but integrated in the text, as in:

According to the writer Ennio Flaiano, being Italian is a profession – except that it doesn’t require much studying: one just inherits it.

(IG: 83)

3. Implicit quotations, which link a specific author and his/her work to a particular site:

Carlo Levi (1912-75) drew attention to their living conditions in his book *Christ stopped at Eboli*, comparing the Sassi to Dante’s *Inferno*. (DK: 503)

As expected, the selected guidebooks use a great number of quotations to introduce Italy and its attractions and to give authority and support to representations or value judgments expressed by guidebook authors. There are quotations from original documents but only few of them include a source – author and work – while the majority present only the author’s name within the sentence. In particular, the analysis of the corpus reveals

that quotations are mostly attributed to Romantic travellers, something that Towner (2002: 233) justifies by saying that “the Romantic era created its own heroes and heroines and they rapidly became assimilated into the tourist’s world”. Moreover, the analysis has confirmed the observations made in the previous section: English guidebooks seem to privilege specific representations which are associated to an image of Italy as anchored to the past. In this image, modernity seems to have mainly negative effects as it deprives the country of some of the allure and fascination that inspired so many travellers and their literary works.

The analysis shows also the presence of quotations from classic authors, which undeniably had a strong influence on the journeys of *Grand Tour* and Romantic travellers across Italy. However, these quotations mainly occur in the guidebooks’ sections dedicated to the Italian periphery, a feature that will be discussed in detail in a specific paragraph (§ 4.3.2.). As far as famous Italian authors are concerned, they are well represented across the guidebooks as ‘famous sons and daughters’ of their cities or regions but are rarely quoted; on the other hand, quotations from contemporary personalities (both foreign and Italian) are often used to express value judgments in relation to socio-cultural aspects of modern Italy (politics, economy, etc.) and of its brand image (fashion and design).

In the following paragraphs, the result of the analysis will be described in detail, focusing on three different groups of quotations and their function in the texts.

4.3.1. Quotations from travel literature

As a main tourist destination in the past two centuries, Italy inspired and filled the pages of so many literary works that their influence on tourists' expectations and on contemporary representations is highly predictable. In particular, the analysis shows that the majority of quotations used by guidebook authors in the corpus are attributed to travellers who visited Italy in the 19th (Stendhal, Byron, Keats, Douglas, etc.) and early 20th centuries (Henry James, Lawrence, etc.) thus confirming that this period and its literary production were key moments in the representation of Italy in the English-speaking world. Quotations from these authors are often used to allure and attract the reader highlighting the 'values and feelings' connected to a romantic perception of and dreamy expectations about the destination, as exemplified by the following excerpt:

Henry James's words will also strike a chord: "One grows irresistibly and tenderly fond of the unanalysable loveableness of Italy ... the whole place keeps playing such everlasting tunes on one's imagination". (IG: 21)

In the majority of cases, quotations are used to create a continuum between past and present travellers, thus offering the reader a pre-established range of feelings and emotions, which characterized the experiences of those who had the privilege to discover and praise the beauties of Italy. This is confirmed also by the reference to less known visitors who left a written testimony of their travel to Italy: quotations attributed to these visitors are used to communicate to the reader that ‘the Italian dream’ is available to anyone and can be ‘savoured’ even by people with common sensibility:

Frederick Faber, a visitor to Pisa in 1843, praised ‘the voluptuous silent poetry which Italy engenders’. (IG: 19)

This link between past travellers, their literary works and modern tourism is often mentioned in guidebooks and the influence of literature in shaping the image of some Italian places is explicitly admitted, as is the case in the following paragraph, taken from the *Rough Guide* introduction to the Italian Lakes:

“One can’t describe the beauty of the Italian lakes, nor would one try if one could.” Henry James’s sentiment has not stopped generations of writers trying just that in pages of purple prose. British and German Romantic poets also enthused about the area, and *in doing so implanted them firmly in northern European imaginations*. (RG: 199) (My emphasis)

As a discursive strategy, the reference to well-known authors and the insertion of their quotations allow guidebook's authors to give testimony of the beauty of a place but also to draw on a number of symbols created by past events and representations. English guidebooks, hence, exploit the link between famous writers and particular Italian places by direct allusion to their symbolic meaning:

Years later, as Stendhal, he wrote in *La Chartreuse de Parme* that the blue-green waters of the lake and grandeur of the Alps made it the most beautiful place in the world. (LP: 278)

The calm green waters of Orta hold a magical isle, illuminated on summer nights like a golden fairy-tale castle. [...] this is a lake 'made to the measurement of man'. Nietzsche, who never fell in love, did so on its soft green shore. (CG: 249)

Astonishment, romanticism and entrancement are also communicated by means of quotations when guidebooks deal with Italian cities like Rome, Venice, Florence, etc. that were main stops in the journeys of nineteenth-century travellers. As expected, the descriptions of these cities are particularly rich in quotations from famous writers so that the reader seems to be invited to look at those places as through the eyes and feelings of these past travellers:

In Rome, Emile Zola (1840-1902) succumbed to the melancholy beauty of the Colosseum: ‘a world where one loses oneself amidst death-like silence and solitude’. (IG: 19)

...the thoughts of Henry James are as true as they were a century ago: ‘Dear old Venice has lost her complexion, her figure, her reputation, her self respect; and yet, with it all, has so puzzlingly not lost a shred of her distinction’. (LP: 322)

In this regard, Dann (1996: 78) notes that the use of testimony “is not simply restricted to ways of luring potential visitors to destinations. It can also be found as an authenticating device at a touristic site”. In this sense, quotations from famous writers are often used to confirm value judgements shared by guidebook authors about particular places or experiences:

Ruskin described the view from the Campanile, completed in the twelfth century, as “one of the most notable scenes in this wide world”, a verdict you can taste yourself... (RG: 330)

...the road from Messina winds up to a town that is the essence of Sicily. “It is the greatest work of art and nature!” exclaimed Goethe in *Italian Journeys*. (IG: 339)

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the English guidebooks of the corpus tend to fix Italy to its past representations often by criticizing the effect of modernity on its attractions. The analysis shows that quotations are

sometimes used for this purpose, thus emphasizing the contrast between an ‘ideal past’ and a ‘troubled present’. This strategy can be observed in the following excerpts:

Wordsworth thought it “a treasure which the earth keeps to itself”, though what he would think of the place now is anyone’s guess: the lake is still surrounded by abundant vegetation but it can get very busy... (RG: 207)

The beaches are broad and sandy ...but this once-tranquil little place has lost just about all of the character it could claim in 1926, when D.H. Lawrence holed up there to write *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. (RG: 136)

However, the use of quotations as a means of expressing value judgements about the effect of modernity on Italian attractions is balanced by those quotations that are used to transmit timeless representations of places and of the sensorial experiences they continue to offer:

Garda-fan Goethe described Torbole as ‘a wonder of nature, an enchanting sight’, and indeed the village still retains much of its original fishing-village charm. (LP: 287)

Camogli was the “saltiest, roughest, most piratical little place”, according to Dickens when he visited in 1884... the crumbling arcades of the harbour and the dark flight of steps into the town centre still have the “smell of fish, and seaweed, and old rope” that Dickens relished. (RG: 138)

In general, the quotations discussed in this paragraph refer to specific descriptions of or impressions about places of the country which share a symbolic representation, made of romantic feelings and nostalgic views of the past. In the following paragraph it will be shown how, moving farther away in time and quoting from the works that inspired Romantic travellers themselves, English guidebooks succeed in drawing on a different symbolism and in transmitting different cultural representations of less touristic areas of Italy.

4.3.2. Quotations from Classic writers

Among the sources of quotations used in the corpus of English guidebooks, the Latin classics seem to play an important role. It is worth mentioning at this point that from the 16th century onwards, classical texts were central to European elite education and culture and, thanks to their revival in the Renaissance, they represented the main literary influence on the first *Grand Tourists*. Italy in particular was seen as the cradle of ancient civilizations, the “heart of the classical world” (Towner, 2000: 232) and was explored following the descriptions of classic authors such as Horace, Livy, Virgil, etc. The presence of quotations from these writers in English contemporary

guidebooks is very interesting and marks the path of the long tradition of literary influences on travel and tourism to and across Italy.

Latin authors or historical figures are usually mentioned in the corpus of English guidebooks to explain the origin of some toponyms or appellative cliché, as exemplified in the following excerpts:

According to Virgil, Gaeta was named after Aeneas's wet nurse Caieta, who was allegedly buried here. (IG: 455)

Emperor Augustus nicknamed Aosta the "Rome of the Alps", and it is the Arch of Augustus that guards the main entrance to the city (IG: 230).

Classic authors are used also to express value judgments about specific places thus 'authenticating' them and making them worth a visit: as expected, this happens above all in those sections dedicated to areas of Italy in which the classical world has left a mark that has not been replaced by the narratives of the Romantic period. These areas are mainly those of the Italian South, as can be observed in the examples below:

Taken by the unearthly beauty of the place, Ovid declared that here 'Nature decks herself in all her varied hues', and the rolling hills around Enna are filled with a profusion of flowers in the springtime. (LP: 755)

The eerie echo of footsteps in the corridor [Cumae] recalls Virgil's description of "a cavern perforated a hundred times, having a hundred mouths with rushing voices carrying the response of the Sybil" (IG: 313)

Although the use of these quotations may seem quite obvious due to the importance of Roman and Greek history in these areas, as a matter of fact their presence in the text depends also on guidebook authors' decision to transmit specific representations and to offer the reader the opportunity to literally travel into the past and to experience feelings of adventure and discovery without the inconveniences of mass tourism.

The analysis showed that quotations from Classic writers usually characterize those areas which belong to what has been defined the Italian periphery as opposed to its well-known centre (§ 4.1.1). However, the choice of Classic quotations to accompany the description of these peripheral areas – namely the Italian South – is not determined by the absence of travel literature about them. As noted by Mozzillo (1986: 89):

Nei primi decenni dell'Ottocento conoscere il Sud è una sorta di impegno che ogni viaggiatore figlio del suo tempo deve assolvere. [...] Ma se Beyle è un viaggiatore immaginario, non lo saranno Lenormant, Gregorovius, Gissing e Douglas nonché un folto plotone di 'minori' (se tali si possono definire Seume, Ramage, De Custine, Lear...) che spesso trascurano Napoli per addentrarsi nel Mezzogiorno... (1986: 89)³

³ In the first decades of the Eighteenth century exploring the South was a sort of engagement that any travellers of the time had to perform. [...] Although Beyle was an imaginary traveller, others like Lenormant, Gregorovius, Gissing and Douglas were real

In spite of this literary production, these areas are considered ‘off the beaten track’, places that remained at the margins of the more famous travel literature mentioned above. By turning to the Classics to give testimony of their beauties and allure, guidebook authors transmit representations which emphasize a supposed temporal distance from the modern world. Recurring statements, such as the ones proposed below, support this interpretation and show how, by quoting from the Classics, English guidebooks exploit a different imagery and symbolism based on ancient myth and heroes and on feelings which are far from those produced by mass tourism:

In the peace and the wave-song of the pristine Apulian sands, you could lie dreaming for many months, lost in reveries on the passage of so many heroes through these parts. (IG: 329)

Wandering among the ruins [at Saepinum], and looking out over the green fields to the mountains beyond, you get some inkling of what it must have been like to be Italy’s first Grand Tourists. (RG: 816)

travellers just as a the group of ‘minors’ (if we can define ‘minors’ such figures as Seume, Ramage, De Custine, Lear...) who often disregarded Naples to break into the Mezzogiorno...” (My translation)

4.3.3. Quotations from Italian or contemporary writers

The last group of quotations identified in the analysis is related to Italian or foreign contemporary writers. As far as Italian famous writers are concerned, they are often mentioned in the corpus of English guidebooks in relation to specific places where they were born, they lived or died – for example, Manzoni and Lecco, Dante and Ravenna, etc. On the other hand, quotations from contemporary Italian writers, mainly journalists, are usually aimed at making comments upon Italian history or the Italians in general, as it is shown in the following excerpt:

According to Sergio Romano, a political journalist on *La Stampa*, “Italy is a constellation of large families, whether ideological, political, professional or criminal – the Church, the business community, the trade unions, the professions, state bureaucracies and the Mafia.” (IG: 73)

One of the most mentioned writers, although not always quoted, is Luigi Barzini, one-time correspondent for the *Corriere della Sera* in London and author of a book entitled *The Italians*. As stated by the *Lonely Planet*, “Barzini pulls no punches in his assessment of his fellow Italians, their icons and their foibles past and present” (LP: 38), while the *Insight Guide* reports various quotations from Barzini’s book among which the following

statement, used to introduce the section dedicated to *The Italians*, is particularly significant:

“Southerners tend to make money in order to rule, northerners to rule in order to make money”, declared the writer Luigi Barzini. (IG: 83)

Italian political figures are also quoted with the purpose of introducing comments or expressing value judgement on some aspect of Italian society or culture and on Italian public behaviours:

... Berlusconi was able to crow: “The law is equal for everyone but I’m more equal than the rest!”. The opposition is in disarray and many Italians raise their eyes to the heavens in despair. (LP: 25)

“In Italy there are no angels nor devils, only average sinners,” said Giulio Andreotti, seven-time premier. This tolerant Roman Catholic society is nurtured on the concept of original sin, universal temptation and redemption, so penitence can erase sins, including crimes. (IG: 85)

Sometimes, foreign political personalities are quoted in relation to the instability of the Italian political system, as shown in the following excerpt:

Foreign governments often take more notice of Agnelli than they do of Italy’s elected leaders: as Henry Kissinger once said, Gianni Agnelli “is the permanent establishment”. (RG: 68)

As far as foreign contemporary authors are concerned, in the majority of cases their quotations are used to criticize or comment on particular socio-cultural aspects of Italian society, among which – as exemplified below – religion occupies a primary position together with the love for food:

Jonathan Keates describes the Italian attitude to religion as “a lackadaisical Catholicism taken out of mothballs at christenings, first communion, wedding and funerals; the religion of photo-opportunity.” (IG: 74)

“In Rome people spend most of their time having lunch. And they do it very well – Rome is unquestionably the lunch capital of the world” Fran Lebowitz, *Metropolitan Life*, 1978. (CG: 58)

Finally, as stated in the analysis of the use of Italian words (§ 4.2.2.2.), English guidebooks put the stress on a supposed Italian conformity and obsession with *la bella figura*, which are presented as cornerstones of Italian lifestyle. The same emphasis is given through quotations as in the following comment about the Italian routine:

Commenting on the cloying social packaging of Italian life, novelist and long-term Italian resident Tim Parks says: “Cappuccino until ten, then espresso; *aperitivo* after twelve; your pasta, your meat, your *dolce* in bright packaging; light white wine, strong red wine, *prosecco*; baptism, first communion, marriage, funeral.” (IG: 77)

In general, in the guidebooks analysed in this study, all the quotations attributed to contemporary writers are used only in relation to Italy as a

modern nation with its own political and socio-cultural identity and on the living habits of Italian people. These quotations seem to express mainly negative statements about the present and since they are used out of their context, they become an instrument in the hand of guidebook authors to offer partial views of the Italians and of Italy's current situation.

4.3.4. Final Considerations

The identification and analysis of the quotations used in the selected guidebooks seem to confirm that tourism discourse around Italy tends to separate its modern image from its tourist image. On the one hand, guidebook authors allure readers with visions of romantic ruins, virgin landscapes and moving experiences, or captivate them by using the words of famous travel writers and classic authors. On the other hand, guidebook authors 'warn' tourists of the existence of a 'modern Italy', which is often defined as ambiguous and complex, and above all they warn them of the alleged characteristic features of the Italians and their social behaviour.

The use of quotations in guidebooks may depend on a promotional strategy, which aims at 'authenticating' the destination. However, as quotations also contribute and support specific shared ideologies about Italy they acquire a primary role in guidebook discourse. As showed in the

analysis presented in this section, quotations support mental representations of romance, tradition or discovery but are also used to express value judgements about the current socio-cultural aspects of Italian life. In particular, through their particular use, guidebook authors seem to aim at highlighting the desired and the expected, drawing on shared knowledge and attitudes. However, at the same time, quotations are used to express critiques about those aspects of society which would inevitably remind tourists of the fact that they are not travelling in a self-imagined world.

Hence, quotations can be said to be another strategy which contributes to the ideologically framed discourse about ‘us’ versus ‘them’ engaged by guidebooks. Italy and Italians are described in positive terms only when they are linked to notions of romance and tradition, while they are criticized in their contemporary social aspects also through the use of quotations of well-known writers/journalists.

4.4. Comparisons: familiarity vs strangeness

As we have seen in the previous section, through the use of quotations, guidebook authors exploit an existing imagery associated specifically to Italian sites and people by past and sometimes present literary descriptions which are now well established in specific social representations about Italy. This section, on the other hand, will consider how guidebook authors exploit readers' mental models of other places in the world, in terms of knowledge, attitude and ideologies, in order to construct and transmit specific images of the destination. This aspect will be studied through the analysis of a specific structure of guidebook discourse: the use of comparisons.

Although it is not the object of this analysis, it must be said that comparisons are also used in guidebooks with a mainly persuasive function especially in their introductory chapters. As previously stated, these chapters are more similar to other promotional texts as they aim at alluring the reader and making them choose the described destination. For example, in the following excerpt, the culinary metaphor associates the great variety and abundance of food, an item that is linked worldwide to Italy's brand image to the wonders Italy has to offer in terms of tourist attractions:

Italy is a movable feast of endless courses. No matter how much you gorge yourself into its splendours, you always feel you haven't made it past the antipasti. Few countries offer such variety and few visitors leave without a fervent desire to return. (LP: 3)

Other guidebooks decided to exploit the strong link between Italy and the classic cultures and myth thus emphasizing the 'feminine' seductive charm of Italy and its attractions, as it happens in the *Insight Guide*:

Italy, like the sorceress Circe, tantalisingly beautiful and at the same time treacherous, has attracted kings, scholars, saints, poets and curious travellers for centuries. (IG: 15)

In some cases, guidebook authors even apply to a completely different imagery, as for example the *Cadogan guide* which compares Italy to a Christmas stocking; such an image recalls the familiar picture of a 'boot-shaped' country but evokes in addition positive feelings of surprise, expected or unexpected gifts and so on:

Italy dangles from the centre of Western Europe like a Christmas stocking, stuffed to the brim with marvels... (CG: 2)

These examples above show how, by means of comparisons, guidebook authors exploit the encyclopaedic knowledge of potential tourists and transfer to the destination the meanings associated to other cultural objects

thus creating expectations and making promises. It is worth saying that, since guidebooks are mainly informative texts, the most interesting comparisons used to construct the representation of Italy are those which associate specific aspects of the destination (sites, people, etc.) to other touristic sites or cultures. By drawing different places together, comparisons make the reader aware of their differences or similarities and allow guidebook authors to select what aspects will be focused upon as ‘familiar’ or ‘strange’, and to a certain extent how travellers will gaze upon these aspects.

Dann (1996: 172) argues that comparisons, by means of simile and metaphors, are used by tourism discourse in order to manage the unfamiliar; drawing on Cohen (1972), Dann claims that since tourism is a strategy for framing and interpreting cultural differences, the main function of a comparison is that of allowing the reader to refer back to a familiar reality and face the new experience having a reliable frame of reference in mind. However, as we will see in the following paragraphs, the analysis of the English guidebooks about Italy shows that the choice of the comparing object and the cultural meanings associated to it are very important in the construction of specific representations. These representations may belong to a discourse of familiarity but may also intentionally convey a discourse of ‘strangeness’ (term used by Cohen, 1972: 165 and quoted in Dann 1996: 12) which seem to obey to an overall strategy common to the five

guidebooks. In this regard, Margarito (2000: 29-32) establishes a typology of comparisons according to the localization of the terms of the comparison, the relation of analogy established between those terms (e.g. historical or symbolic meaning) and the positive or negative value communicated by the choice of the comparing object.

By following this classification, the comparisons created by the authors of the English guidebooks has been identified and grouped mainly according to the localization of the comparing object. As expected, the first term of the comparison is always a place in Italy, whereas the comparing object may be located within the destination, in the home-country of the readers/tourists or in other countries. Quite interestingly, the analysis shows that major Italian art cities and well-known sights are more often the comparing rather than the compared object; this fact confirms that their image is so well-grounded in the mind of the potential tourist that guidebooks use these cities as a frame of reference for the representation of ‘minor’ sights as in the case in the following example:

Mellow old Saluzzo, the *‘little Siena of the Alps’* was the capital of ...
(CG: 139)

This kind of comparisons create a close relationship between its terms; by virtually taking the reader away, towards the farthest object of comparison, guidebook authors invite him/her to transfer the cultural meanings

associated to Siena to the lesser known Saluzzo. In the same way, guidebook authors may use comparisons to establish connections with famous foreign tourist sights or with the home reality of the reader always within a discourse of familiarity. However, a very interesting aspect which emerges from the analysis is that comparisons may also be used to emphasize the ‘strangeness’ of specific areas as opposed to what is perceived as the ‘classic image’ of Italy; in this cases the focus is on particular historical and socio-cultural aspects which link them to allegedly ‘exotic’ destinations. For this reason, comparisons seem to be very important in the construction and transmission of cultural representations and their use in guidebooks anticipate the ‘gaze’ of the tourist and his/her experience at the destination by proposing ready-made frames of reference.

4.4.1. Comparisons and the discourse of familiarity

As stated above (§ 4.4.), the analysis has shown that Italian famous sights are used in guidebooks mainly as comparing objects, thus transferring their historical or symbolic meaning and evocative value to other places in Italy which share with them some characteristic features. Comparisons may be used to reassure readers on the artistic value of a lesser-known site or to draw their attention on specific aspects of the socio-cultural environment of

the place by simply mentioning a famous counterpart with which they are more familiar as potential tourists. For example, in the excerpts below, only the interpretative work of the readers, based on their background knowledge, will complete the meaning of the analogies created between two Italian cities:

Lecce Baroque style ... earned the city the name of *Florence of the South*.
(DK: 496)

Bold, entrepreneurial Catania once earned the title *Milan of the South*...
(LP: 740)

The kinds of comparisons exemplified are rarely a creation of guidebook authors but always have a positive value: Rome, Venice, Florence, Siena, etc. are exploited also by Italian tourism industry to transfer to other sites, the values and feelings associated to these cities. What is different in English guidebooks is that a greater degree of mediation is needed in the case of specific monuments or peculiar landscapes that have a significance which may not be immediately perceived by the foreign tourists and for which guidebook author create original, *ad-hoc* comparisons for their readers. Here is an examples regarding the Mole Antonelliana and its meaning for the city of Turin:

This building is the *Turin equivalent of the Eiffel Tower* in Paris... (DK: 216)

In the comparison, the importance of the building both as a symbol of Turin and as an unmistakable presence in the skyline of the city is effectively communicated without the need for further explanations. However, in their effort to find familiar or well-established images to be compared to specific Italian sites, guidebook authors also create comparisons which, although may seem plausible to an English-speaking reader, are decidedly improbable for an Italian one. This reveals the great importance of a shared background knowledge between the sender and the receiver in the interpretation of the tourist message. The following excerpt perfectly exemplifies this concept:

Easily the most spectacular of the ravine towns is Laterza ... situated on the *Puglian equivalent of the Grand Canyon*, complete with buzzards and kites. (RG: 939)

The analysis shows that the same observations is valid for comparisons created by guidebook's authors when dealing with Italian cities in which urban development and industrialization seem to overshadow the artistic and natural heritage. In these cases, however, the comparing object always belongs to the domestic realities of the British or American readers and does not seem to convey particularly inviting images:

Biella was *Italy's little Manchester*, and to these days, its mills supply the big design houses in Milan and Florence with their wool... (CG: 127)

Milan's smog is almost *as legendary as London's*. (LP: 239)

Detroit without the degradation ... Turin makes a rather unexpected 'Gateway to Italy'. (CG: 96)

As tourism is based on the expectation of pleasure derived from experiences different from everyday-life (Urry, 1990), these kind of comparisons express a negative value associated to the consequences of industrialization in the modern world and confirm that in English guidebooks about Italy, the discourse of modernity is mainly oriented at denouncing the 'unappealing' effects of commercial growth on this otherwise 'romantic' and 'unique' destination. In this regard, some references to Disneyland (one of the symbols of the massification of leisure) were also found and used in comparisons which obviously transmit meanings of 'artificiality' as opposed to the quest for 'authenticity' typical of tourism experiences and even more so of the independent traveller addressed by the guidebooks:

You can balk at the bogusness of the thing, and *it does feel like Disneyland*, but it actually conjures up a picture of life in a fifteen-century castle ... (RG: 77)

The result is a sincere if slightly nutty extravaganza, *a Disneyland of piety...* (CG: 130)

As we have seen, the above-mentioned comparisons associate Italian sites to ‘familiar’ images in the mind of the potential tourist and have the function of giving them a frame of reference to evaluate their experience based on something they already know about Italy or about their home country. However, the analysis reveals also the presence of another group of comparisons which seems to be more homogeneous than the one described above, as they all aim at emphasizing the ‘different’ and the ‘unexpected’ and are related to particular areas that for the English-speaking tourists are often ‘terra incognita’. In the following paragraph we will see how guidebook authors, through the use of comparisons, may construct a biased representation of Italy and transmit a fragmented vision of its cultural identity only to the advantage of a touristic strategy which aims at creating destinations that have something for anyone.

4.4.2 Comparisons and the discourse of ‘strangeness’

As we have seen, due to mainly historical reasons, English-speaking tourists share an ‘image’ of Italy which consists of medieval hilltop-towns, spectacular mountain sceneries, fascinating art cities and gentle rolling hills

covered in vineyards and olive groves. This image is exploited by guidebook authors whenever possible to construct their representations. But what happens when places and sights do not correspond to it? Are they acknowledged their diversity? Moreover, if so, are they considered ‘Italian’ all the same? The analysis of comparisons in the corpus of English guidebooks has tried to answer these questions and revealed that the representations of those places focus mainly on particular historical and socio-cultural aspects, which link them to other countries and cultures. It is worth saying that we are talking about areas of Italy which are quite unknown or less frequented by foreign tourists. Hence, in the construction of their representations, guidebook authors probably aim also at making them interesting to the eyes of the reader by emphasizing differences from the above mentioned image of Italy. In this attempt, comparisons are a strategy which strengthen the cultural distance of these areas from the so-called ‘real Italy’ whose identity turns to be associated only to the central regions like Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia Romagna. This strategy is exemplified in the following excerpts:

The region’s position against the French and Swiss Alps has helped forge an identity for Piedmont that is quite *separate from that of the rest of Italy*.
(LP: 203)

... *there are no less “Italian” regions than Piemonte and Valle D’Aosta, in the extreme northwest of the country.* (RG: 65)

As expected, the border regions to the North (Piedmont, Valle D’Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia) are presented as culturally distant, having “more in common with northern European neighbours than with the rest of Italy” (RG: 159) or being “closer in both location and spirit to Germany and France” (DK: 18). The descriptions of their sights also evoke a sensation of ‘strangeness’ due to the emphasis given to their different cultural heritage:

In spirit and appearance, it [Trieste] is central European. More *like Ljubljana in Slovenia* than anywhere else in the region... (RG: 379)

The strangely un-Italian feeling common in Friuli-Venezia Giulia is no more evident than in Gorizia... (LP: 382)

Going south, and excluding the ‘typically’ Italian regions, the comparing objects become even more ‘exotic’ and Naples, in its role of “true metropolis of the Mezzogiorno” (LP: 587) establishes the connection between the Italian South and the cultures of the Mediterranean:

... Naples has at least *as much in common with Casablanca in Marocco or Egypt’s Alexandria* on the other side of the Mediterranean as with fellow European ports such as Genoa, Marseilles or Barcellona. (LP: 588)

This connection becomes even more explicit in the representations of Calabria and Basilicata which seem “a very distant region from the emphatically European north” (RG: 955) and above all in the representations of Puglia and some of its rural centres which are geographically and spiritually associated to Greece and North Africa:

In southern Italy the landscape, architecture, dialects, food and even the appearance of people, have *closer affinities with the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa* than with Europe (DK: 18)

There’s a geographical diversity to Puglia that can be very attractive. The very southern tip, the Salentine Peninsula, is rocky and dry, *more Greek than Italian...* (RG: 911)

[Peschici] Whitewashed houses *reminiscent of Greek island villages* line cobbled alleyways... (LP: 655)

The representations of the two islands of Sicily and Sardinia are also scattered with comparisons that highlights their geographical and cultural distance from the country proper. These two regions are generally presented in guidebooks as ‘a world away’ from mainland Italy and as a consequence, as totally removed from Europe:

Coming from the Italian mainland, it's easy to spot that Sicily has a different feel, that socially and culturally you *are* all but out of Europe. (RG: 997)

There are also numerous examples of comparisons which by associating specific sights to the Arab and North African world, also communicate symbolic meanings and connotations usually linked to the latter, as shown in the following excerpts:

... Palermo's Vucciria is *more souk than market*. (DK: 507)

[Trapani] ... it is easy to be charmed by *the laid-back Moorish atmosphere* of what is, essentially, a large Arab fishing village. (LP: 763)

In addition, Sardinian cities and atmosphere are associated to North Africa as well as to Spain, sometimes even through the use of comparisons created by D.H. Lawrence himself. These comparisons always highlight their distance from mainland Italy:

Viewing Cagliari from the sea ... D.H. Lawrence *compared it to Jerusalem*: "...strange and rather wonderful, *not a bit like Italy*". (RG: 1071)

...the place [Iglesias] *retains an Iberian feel*, with chatter in the air, deep summer heat... and that touch of decay you find *in many a Spanish town*. (LP: 783)

The old core of Cagliari has an appealing *North African character*. (DK: 535)

This profusion of examples gives the idea of the great emphasis given by guidebook authors to the transmission of ‘different’ imageries linked to areas of Italy that do not correspond to what can be defined the ‘dominant’ one. These different imageries are borrowed from other destinations, which had contacts with Italy during its long history: by means of comparisons, guidebook authors exploit the values and symbolic meanings associated to those often ‘exotic’ destinations and transfer them to the above-mentioned Italian regions.

4.4.3 Final considerations

The analysis of comparisons in the corpus of English guidebooks revealed the presence of a specific strategy through which representations of places are proposed to the reader specifically by means of comparisons. By making reference to a shared knowledge or imagery about other places, guidebook authors construct readers’ experience of the destination. Comparisons are not used to present famous sights, as tourists recognize them as ‘essentially’ Italian whereas the remaining parts of the country are

represented by highlighting differences from Italy and similarities with other places, as if they were struggling to find their own tourist identity.

Comparisons have been divided into two groups. On the one hand, in the first group, we have described those comparisons which associate Italian sites to a familiar imagery shared by guidebook authors and potential tourists, linked to equally or more famous Italian and foreign sites. By comparing Caserta to Versailles (LP: 609 – CG: 903), Asti's Palio to Siena's one (RG: 89) or Piazza di Spagna to Time Square (IG: 145) guidebook authors evoke familiar realities and their associated positive or negative symbolic meaning.

In the second group, on the other hand, we have analysed comparisons which are created specifically by guidebook authors to convey different representations appealing to a wider knowledge of the world and to the love for the 'exotic', that is ideologically framed by cultural and historical relations and which characterizes the dominant figure of the Western tourist (Pritchard, 2000). By comparing the regions of northern Italy to northern European countries and those of Southern Italy to Greece, Northern Africa or the Middle East, guidebook authors seem to confirm that for the English-speaking tourist the image of Italy reduces itself to few famous art cities and the typical Tuscan's landscapes which overshadows the rest of the country consequently marked as 'different'. This was also the result of a survey carried out by ENIT in 2005 and which revealed that for

US tourists in particular ‘Italy means Tuscany’, the only region to be perceived as having its own identity. Indeed, as it has emerged from the analysis above, the other parts of the country seem to be struggling in search of a tourist identity. This identity, not being allowed to consider itself Italian, has to be Slovenian, Tyrolese, French or Austrian as far as the Northern regions are concerned and Greek, Spanish or North African for the Southern ones.

5. Conclusions

Before drawing the overall conclusions of the analysis carried out in the previous chapter, it can be useful to make some reference to the premise which constituted the basis for this study.

The phenomenon of tourism has been often linked to concepts of power and dominance performed by the tourism industry on people and destinations. However, this complex field of research is far from being fully explored and in this regard Pritchard (2000) suggests that:

The cultural power of tourism and the discourse of tourism imagery, as evidenced by the oppositional nature of representations, their mythical qualities and timelessness, demand more attention. Similarly, just as these cultural issues deserve examination, so too do historical perspectives, as these have shaped contemporary realities but rarely figure in analysis of tourism processes. (Pritchard, 2000: 257)

As shown in the first chapters, various studies (e.g. Lew, 1991; Battacharayya, 1997; Santos, 2004) have proposed different analyses of tourism representations but few of them have focused on the role of discourse, defined as the use of language as social practice, in the reproduction of dominant ideologies. In particular, these studies have concentrated mainly on the so-called Third World destinations, which seem

to answer in a more immediate way to “Western desire for an exotic ‘other’.” (Cohen 1995: 377).

In this thesis, however, the focus has been on the relations between tourism and one of the most often visited destinations within the Western world, i.e. Italy. In order to question the representations of the country as constructed and transmitted in tourism discourse, the guidebook has been chosen among the different tourist textual genres. Hence, five contemporary English guidebooks have been selected (§ 3.3.) to form the corpus for the study. A Critical Discourse Analysis approach has been adopted since, as argued by van Dijk:

The critical and practical relevance of such analyses is that in situations where tolerance, equal rights and the rule of law are officially respected, discourse may subtly signal that this is not the case. Even moderate feelings of superiority, stereotypes, prejudice, and de facto relations of social inequality may be involuntarily presupposed, expressed, or signalled in text and talk. (van Dijk, 1993a: 119)

Among the different methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2001), focus has been placed on van Dijk’s method, as his reliance on socio-cognitive theories to explain phenomena of social reality seemed particularly appropriate for tourism. This is a profoundly complex phenomenon indeed, in which psychological, social, historical and cultural factors are intertwined. According to van Dijk (2001a: 116), the participants

involved in discourse make use of their individual knowledge, attitudes and experiences, as well as of socially shared frames of perceptions, called social representations. These representations are divided into “context models” defined by the situation in which the communicative event occurs, and “event models”, defined by the knowledge and opinions participants have about the event. In the case of the present study, the “context model” is given by the relationship between tourism and Italy, in general, and by the nature of the guidebook as an informative textual genre, in particular. “Event models”, on the other hand, are given by the ways in which guidebook authors represent their subject, i.e. Italy, and how they may influence the mental models of the reader. Socially shared representations are expressed through these models, which thus form the basis for the production and understanding of discourse, especially of its meanings.

Drawing on this theoretical framework, the second chapter of this study has explored the general context of foreign tourism in Italy, focusing in particular on relevant historical and cultural factors. It was interesting to note how past representations seem still to exert some influences on the perceived image of Italy abroad as opposed to its modern representations. Following on from this aspect, the domain of tourism discourse and its specific textual genres (namely advertisements, brochures and leaflets, travel articles and tourist guidebooks) were examined in greater detail, focusing in particular on their different communicative functions.

To better explain the reasons for the choice of guidebook discourse as the object of the analysis, in chapter three a detailed description of the genre and its role in the tourist process was given. Guidebooks have been defined as “culture brokers” and mediators between the tourists and the destination (Battacharyya, 1997). Due to their interpretative role, they offer interesting insights into the cognitive dimension of tourist encounters. Indeed, they may reflect all personally relevant beliefs and opinions but also socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies (see van Dijk, 2001b), which are used by guidebook authors to produce the text and by readers/tourists to understand it. These characteristic features make guidebooks suitable for critical analyses that aim at exploring social representations in tourism.

As mentioned above, for the purpose of this study, five contemporary English guidebooks about Italy were selected and investigated in order to uncover knowledge and attitudes shared by authors and readers. Indeed, the critical analysis of guidebook discourse may reveal whether these knowledge and attitudes have been ideologically framed by surrounding cultural expectations, including historical and other power relations. As argued by van Dijk:

Discourse may be seen as a semantic iceberg, of which only a few meanings are expressed on the surface of text and talk, whereas others meanings remain implicit knowledge stored in mental models. With our

knowledge of the world, however, we are usually able to infer such implicit meanings from the meanings that are actually expressed. (van Dijk, 1993b: 109)

The first step for the analysis consisted precisely in the identification of specific discourse structures in which the involvement of guidebook authors and their mental models could be considered prominent, thus influencing the opinions and attitudes of readers/tourists. These structures, which regard specific linguistic choices, were identified both at the lexical and phrastic levels of discourse and are precisely the following: the use of emotive words, the use of native words, the use of quotations and the use of comparisons.

Following van Dijk's methodology, the analysis commenced with the study of specific emotive words, common to the five selected guidebooks, which provided also the topics or semantic macrostructures of the discourse about Italy. The first topic refers to imageries linked to an 'unchangeable past' and is mainly related to mental models that consider it as the repository of lost values. Representations of Italy that mainly highlight the beautiful, the romantic and the traditional are negotiated and transmitted by tourism discourse. Italy's cultural and historic heritage is emphasised and the country is portrayed as temporally distant from the rest of Europe and the modern world in general. Through the use of such words

as “timeless”, “genuine” and “unchanged”, guidebook authors convey the idea that authentic Italian culture only exists in the past.

The second topic is linked to promises of discovery and adventure experiences implicit in the act of travelling itself. Although Italy cannot be considered an adventurous destination, the use of expressions such as “virgin landscapes”, “remote regions” and “isolated villages” show the existence of mental models which aim at emphasizing an alleged geographical distance of the destination from the world of the tourist. This is particularly evident in the representations of the Italian ‘periphery’, i.e. lesser-known areas, which are constructed through an opposition with the well-known ‘centre’, i.e. famous art cities and tourist resorts.

The last topic is related to Italian contemporary reality and guidebook authors’ mental models associated with it. Emotive words such as “fashionable”, “modern” and “cosmopolitan” are used only in relation to specific urban areas and what they have to offer in terms of entertainment for the tourist. Therefore, the positive effects of modernity are presented as an exception rather than the rule: indeed, in many cases, modernity is said to interfere with the beauties of the cultural and artistic heritage, thus reinforcing the global meaning of the other topics.

The analysis showed that these semantic macrostructures exert a strong influence on other structures of guidebook discourse. In particular, the study of the use of Italian native words revealed interesting information

on how guidebook authors perceive and transmit culture-specific meanings about a destination. Apart from those native words used to allure the reader or provide information about aspects belonging to the ‘material culture’, i.e. Italian well-known artistic and cultural heritage, any other use of an Italian word or expression seems to be aimed at highlighting and commenting on contemporary Italian ‘social culture’ and on particular behaviours of the Italians. These aspects are usually presented as distinguishing features of the host society as opposed to the one of the tourist, thus accounting for how ideological discourse represents ‘us’ versus ‘them’. In many cases, comments have a negative value and since guidebook authors tend to present them as the sole legitimate interpretation, they could possibly influence tourists’ mental models and their encounter with the Italian culture, thus favouring the diffusion of generalisations and stereotypes.

The analysis of the use of quotations seemed to confirm also that guidebook discourse around Italy still tends to separate its ‘tourist image’ from its ‘real image’ – i.e. the “ideal country” from the “real country” (De Seta, 1982: 160). Quotations are used to authenticate the destination, but they also contribute to the transmission of specific representations of Italy. As showed in the chapter four, quotations support mental models linked to romance, tradition or discovery but are also employed to express value judgements about the current socio-cultural aspects of Italian life. In particular, through their specific use, guidebook authors aim at highlighting

the ‘desired’ and the ‘expected’, while expressing their critiques about specific aspects of contemporary reality. Therefore, quotations, as well as native words, are discourse structures which highly depend on the mental models shared by guidebooks authors. By negatively portraying those aspects of Italian society, they offer biased representations of the country thus giving evidence for the cultural power of tourism discourse.

The last part of the analysis concerned the use of comparisons. By making reference to shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies about different places, guidebook authors construct tourists’ experiences of Italy specifically by means of comparisons. The study showed that comparisons are employed to associate Italian sites to a familiar imagery, which is shared by guidebook authors and their readers and mainly involves other famous Italian or foreign sites. Other comparisons, on the other hand, are used to associate Italian sites to ‘exotic’ places, thus appealing to specific dominant ideologies concerning the ‘other’. In particular, while famous sights are easily recognized by tourists as ‘essentially’ Italian, the analysis shows that guidebook authors present the ‘periphery’ by highlighting its differences through comparisons with other countries perceived as ‘exotic’. Indeed, the peripheral areas of the country seem to be struggling in the search for a tourist identity which, not being allowed to consider itself Italian, has to be Slovenian, Tyrolese, French or Austrian as far as the Northern regions are concerned and Greek, Spanish or North African for the Southern ones.

In summary, the study highlighted that historical, social and cultural relations, which are shared by guidebook authors and their readers, ideologically frame the topics and some specific discursive structures. Guidebook authors present a biased and fragmented representation of Italy through the use of words and sentences that exploit a well-established imagery as well as tourists' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs on the country and its society. Guidebook discourse transforms Italy into what modern tourists expect to see and to experience. Italy becomes what guidebook authors want it to be and, in this sense, it goes through a process of 'othering' which differentiates it from the world of the tourist by reinforcing stereotypical representations. These representations seem to confirm that the English-speaking tourist recognise Italy only in regard to a well-known 'centre', namely famous art cities and landscapes. Moreover, guidebook authors define this 'centre' marking the differences between "what belongs and what does not or is Other" (Hall, 1997: 258), thus enacting a further process of 'othering' within the destination itself.

The global and local meanings communicated through the above-mentioned discursive structures give coherence to guidebook discourse about Italy and are generally based on shared ideologies about the dominant position of English tourists in their contacts with the destination.

Thus meanings of discourse may be related to mental models and (through models or directly) with underlying ethnic stereotypes or prejudices, which are in turn related to the goals, interests, privileges, and socio-political dominance of the group to which the speakers/writers belong. (van Dijk, 1993a: 119)

Guidebook authors allure their readers with visions of romantic ruins, virgin landscapes and moving experiences or captivate them by using the words of famous travel writers and Classic authors. However, at the same time, they warn potential tourists of the existence of a “modern Italy”, which is often defined as ambiguous and complex, and above all they warn them of the alleged characteristic features of the Italians and their “negative” social behaviours.

This critical discourse analysis of guidebook discourse showed that tourism is a dominant discourse. It may influence such socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies by constructing and transmitting concrete mental models about the destination and its culture. Moreover, it does affect the formation of opinions and interpretations. In conclusion, this study showed that particular discourse structures used in guidebooks, such as the ones described in the analysis, may determine specific mental processes in the readers and facilitate the formation of biased social representations about places and people even within the Western world.

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APPENDIX¹

¹ This section includes the copies of the front and back covers of the selected English guidebooks analysed in the study.

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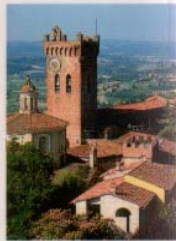


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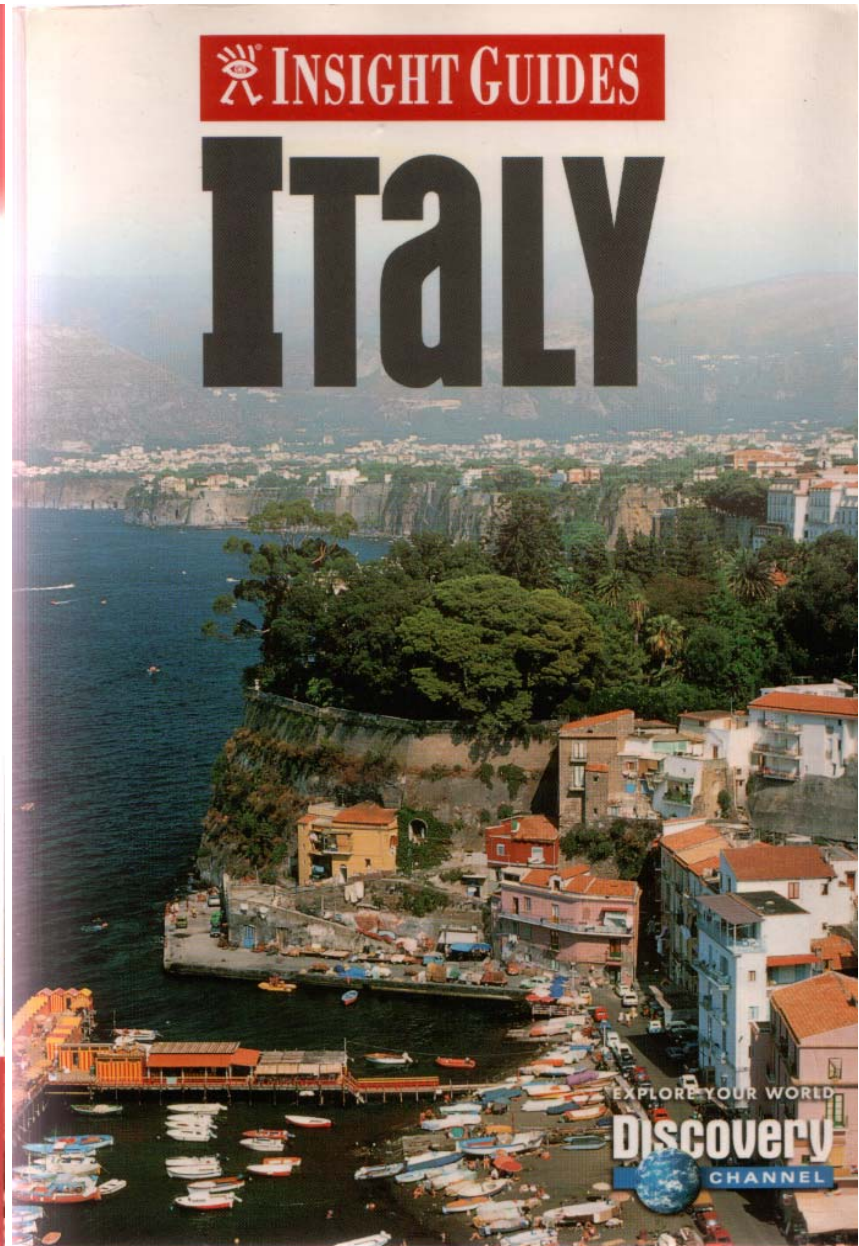
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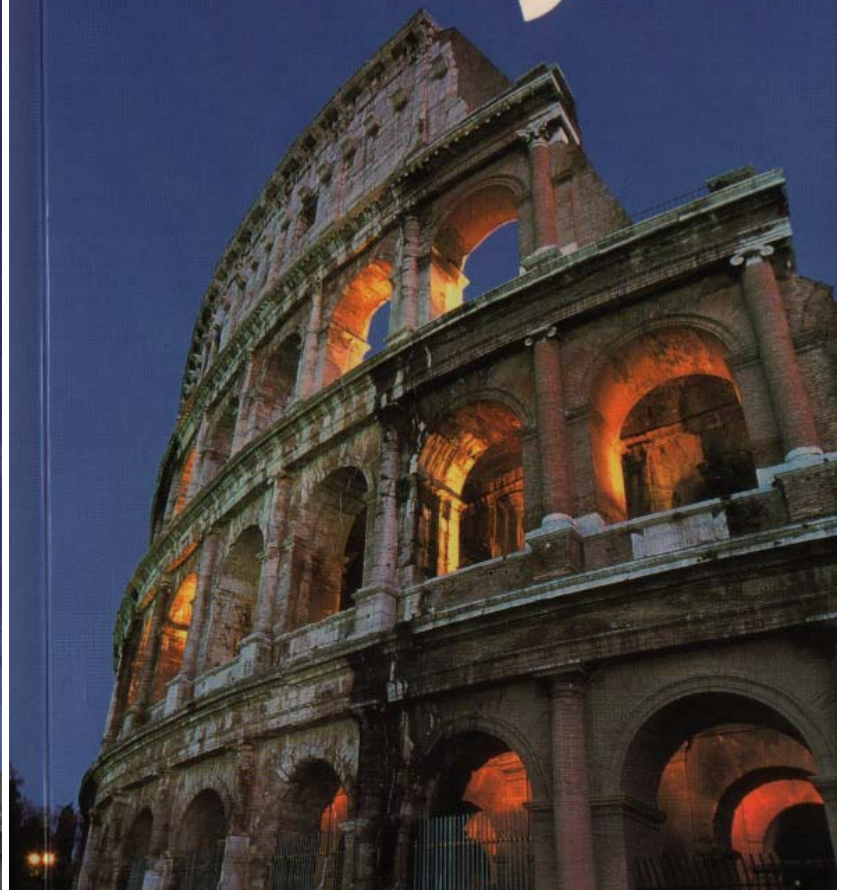
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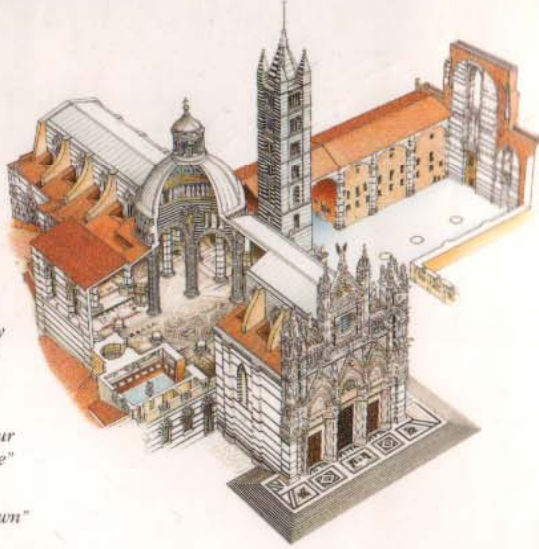
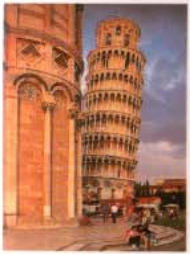


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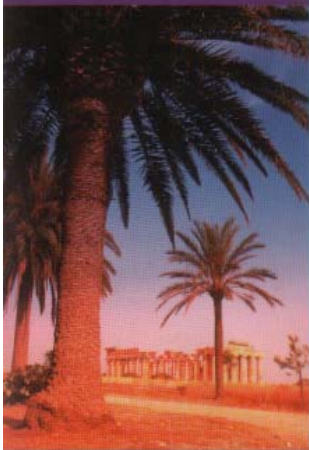


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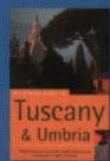
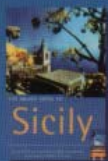
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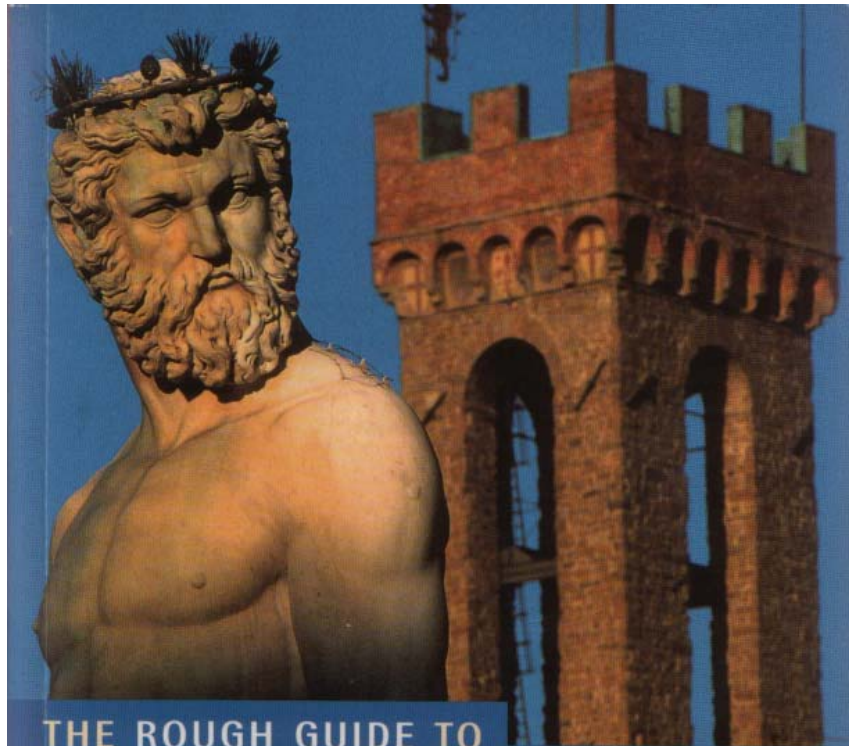
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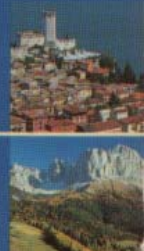


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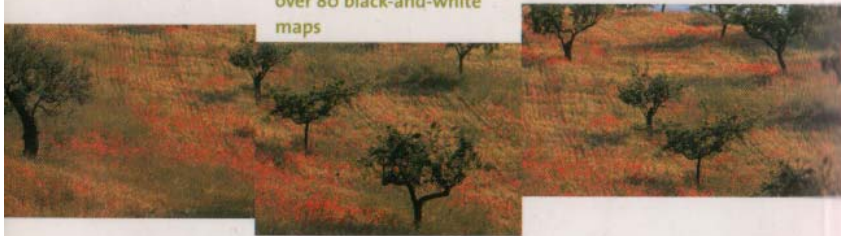
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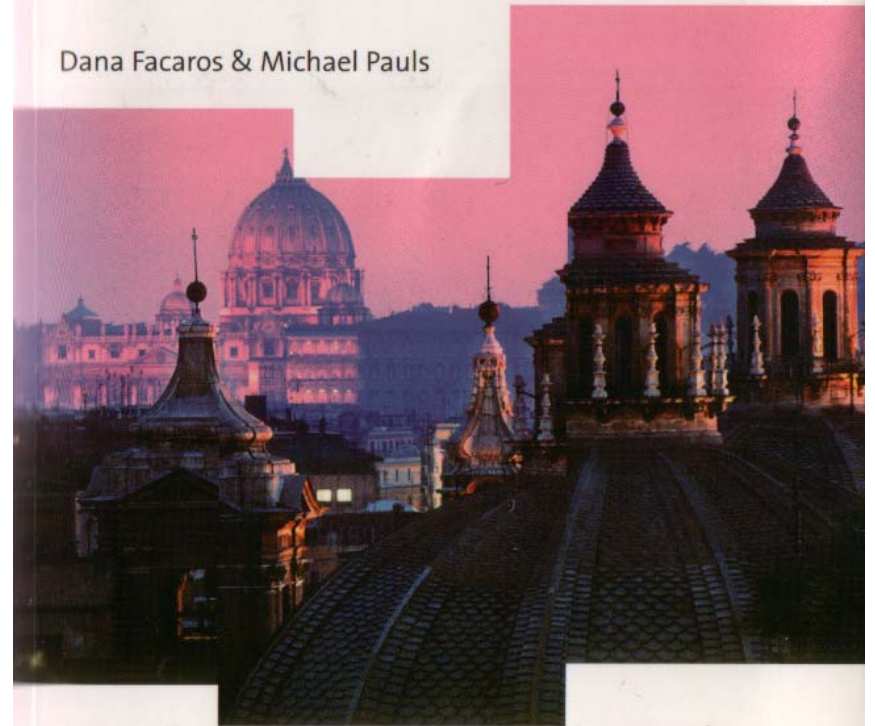
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