

A painting of a man in 18th-century attire, wearing a large grey bowler hat and a white coat over a red waistcoat and white cravat, looking out over a landscape. In the foreground, there are classical statues and ruins. In the background, Mount Vesuvius is visible. The painting is used as a background for the title.

JOURNEY TO ITALY: Mass Tourism, the Victorian Age, & the Modern Novel

December 11, 2020

Tourist Gaze

- “The “tourist gaze” is explained by sociologist John Urry as the set of expectations that tourists place on local populations when they participate in **heritage tourism**, in the search for having an “**authentic**” **experience**. In response to tourist expectations and often cultural and racial stereotypes, local populations reflect back the “gaze” of the expectations of tourists in order to benefit financially.
- This gaze is often described as a destructive process, in which often important local cultural expressions are reduced to commodities, and these traditions fall out of favor with local populations. They can also be destructive in that local populations become consumed by an economic process which values certain cultural expressions over others, and cultural themes that cannot be easily commodified fall out of favor and can be eventually lost.
- Because of the importance of tourist capital in many local societies, indigenous peoples are placed in a dynamic where cultural “authenticity” becomes something very tangible and necessary to achieve economic success. This “reconstruction of ethnicity” becomes important, because locals tend to act out cultural patterns and behaviors that they believe would satisfy tourists most. The local populations play on stereotypes that Westerners have on their cultures and seek to perform them as best they can to satisfy the consumer demand.
- The power that the “tourist gaze” has in supporting ethnic pride and identity can also be used to destroy ethnic pride and identity, in the cases where tourist expectations do not align with the everyday reality of local populations.” (Wikipedia)

Tourist Gaze, Urry (1990)

- “The ‘tourist gaze’ is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned and learnt ‘ways of seeing’ (Berger, 1972). It is a vision constructed through mobile images and representational technologies.” 2
- Tourist gazes “are constructed through difference.” 2-3
- “Tourist gazes are structured according to class, gender, ethnicity and age.” 3
- There is in it “a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of **landscape** or townscape [...] People linger over such a gaze, which is then often **visually objectified** or captured through photographs, postcards, films, models and so on.” 4
- “The gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs.” 5
- “All over the world the unsung armies of semioticians, the tourists, are fanning out in search of the signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs.” 5
- “To be a tourist is one of the characteristics of the ‘modern’ experience.” 5
- “Images generated through different tourist gazes come to constitute a **closed self-perpetuating system of illusions.**” 8

Tourist Gaze, Urry

- “All tourists, for MacCannell, embody a quest for authenticity, and this quest is a modern version of the **universal human concern with the sacred.**” 10
 - Dean MacCannell was one of the first theorists of ‘tourism studies’, publishing *The Tourist* in 1976.

Tourist Gaze, Urry (And this course)

- “There was a visualisation of the travel experience, or the development of the ‘gaze’, aided and assisted by the growth of guidebooks which promoted new ways of seeing (see Adler, 1989). **The character of the tour itself shifted, from the earlier ‘classical Grand Tour’ based on the emotionally neutral observation and recording of galleries, museums and high-cultural artefacts, to the nineteenth-century ‘romantic Grand Tour’ which saw the emergence of ‘scenic tourism’ and a much more private and passionate experience of beauty and the sublime (see Towner, 1985).**” 5
- “In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was a **shift in values connected with the developing Romantic movement**. Emphasis was placed upon the intensity of emotion and sensation, on poetic mystery rather than intellectual clarity and on individual hedonistic expression (Feifer, 1985). The high priests of Romanticism were the Shelleys, Byron, Coleridge, Keats and the Wordsworths (Bate, 1991). Romanticism suggested that one could feel emotions towards the natural world and scenery. **Individual pleasures were to be derived from appreciating impressive physical sights.** Romanticism implied that those living in newly emerging industrial towns would benefit from spending short periods away from them, viewing or experiencing nature.” 36

Tourist Gaze, Urry (And this course)

- “The ‘**romantic gaze**’, which is much more obviously auratic [than the tourist gaze], concerned with the more elitist – and solitary – appreciation of magnificent scenery, an appreciation which requires considerable cultural capital, especially if particular objects also signify literary texts. [...] Historically, the ‘romantic gaze’ developed with the formation of picturesque tourism in late eighteenth-century England.” 100
- “The tourist gaze, even the romantic gaze, implies that tourists are folded into a **world of texts, images and representational technologies when gazing upon landscapes.**” 100
- “**The typical tourist experience is to see *named scenes* through a *frame*,** such as the hotel window, the car windscreen or the window of the coach.” 112

Tourist Gaze (A few takeaways)

- The tourist gaze is essentially a modern mode of gazing.
- It is a gaze that is constructed through textual discourse rather than the act of seeing.
- It is constructed through difference.
- There is a power differential implicit between gazer and gazee.
- The (economic) power of the gaze can reconstruct landscapes according to the artificial expectations of tourists who have learned to expect that which comes down to them textually through travel discourse (literature, guidebooks, etc.).
- The Romantic gaze is intimately bound up with the Tourist gaze and expectations of that which is personally possible through travel (transformation) and that which externally available through travel (solitude, authenticity, static culture, etc.).

Tourist Gaze (A Discussion)

- In groups:
 - Consider **what is required** for a person to see the world through a ‘tourist gaze’ rather than some other gaze.
 - Write down three requirements for a tourist’s gaze to be in place. (For example, the person must have a preconceived notion of the place in view.)
 - Based on those three requirements, find an example from James or Forster of a person seeing a landscape, townscape, or people through the gaze of a tourist.
 - Consider what repercussions there are (or may be) for the landscape, townscape, or people within the frame of the tourist gaze in question.



A Room with a View

Chapters 12-16

- What happened in these chapters?
- What happened of import in these chapters?

Chapters 12-16

- Alone:
 - What is the most important thing, in your opinion, that happens in this section and why?
 - Why is it *interesting* that this is the most important thing? That is, why does it matter that we consider what you've highlighted as crucial?
- In groups:
 - What role does Italy play in this part of the novel (in Great Britain)? Define Italy's role as you see it *explicitly*. Be rigorous. Provide at least one example.



Discussion Questions

PP. 97-99:

1. GROUP 1: What role does the concept of 'view' play in this section, especially as it relates to past discussion of 'view' in the book?
2. GROUP 2: What role does literature play in this section? How does literature in this section relate to other types of literature, and its role, in previous sections of the novel?
3. GROUP 3: What role does Italy play in this section? How is Italy's role in Miss Lavish' novel similar to or difference from Italy's role in Forster's novel? What do you make of this similarity/difference?



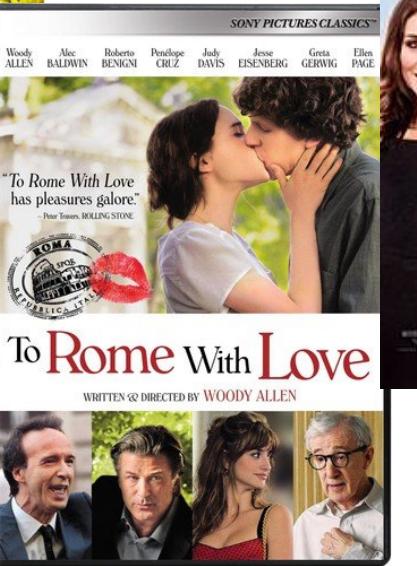
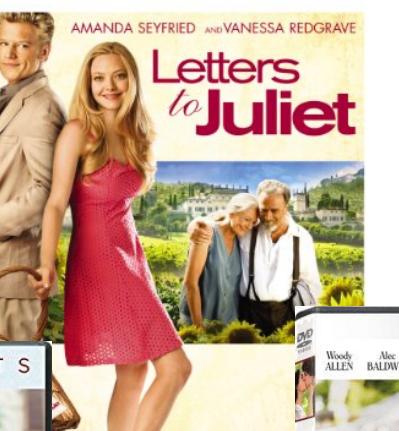
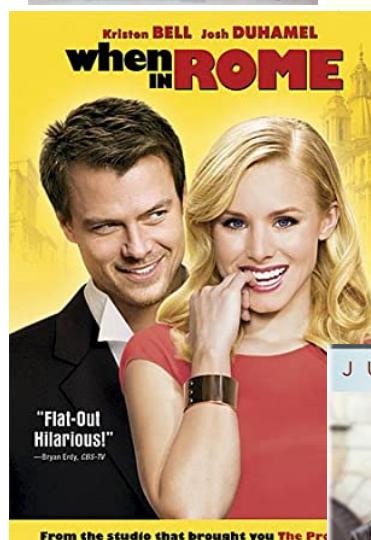
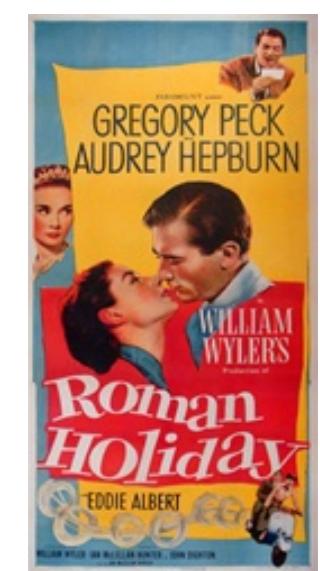
The World is
Her Oyster

The World is Her Oyster

- I asked previously what role Italy plays in this section set in Great Britain.
- One role it plays is that of ‘transformative space’ for Lucy:
 - “That day she had seemed a typical tourist—shrill, crude, and gaunt with travel. But Italy worked some marvel in her. It gave her light, and—which he held more precious—it gave her shadow. Soon he detected in her a wonderful reticence. She was like a woman of Leonardo da Vinci’s, whom we love not so much for herself as for the things that she will not tell us. The things are assuredly not of this life; no woman of Leonardo’s could have anything so vulgar as a “story.” She did develop most wonderfully day by day.” 53
 - “But, in Italy, where any one who chooses may warm himself in equality, as in the sun, this conception of life vanished. Her senses expanded; she felt that there was no one whom she might not get to like, that social barriers were irremovable, doubtless, but not particularly high. You jump over them just as you jump into a peasant’s olive-yard in the Apennines, and he is glad to see you. She returned with new eyes.” 67-68
 - “For Italy was offering her the most priceless of all possessions—her own soul.”68
 - “Yes, but she is purging off the Honeychurch taint.” [...] “Italy has done it.” 75

The World is Her Oyster

- This essay discusses how the sorts of stories that are told about Italy in the novels we are reading, continue to be stories told about Italy in Hollywood today.
- Namely, in romantic travel films, Italy plays the role of facilitator of Anglo-American white women's transformation or salvation. It saves them from the trap of industrialized and hyper-modern urban life. It saves them from a non-romantic and thus ultimately unfulfilling life.
- Interestingly, the heroines are often not only romantically entangled in the sense of 'love' but also in the sense of artistic sensibility. That is, their stories are romantic, in part, because of their artistic sensibilities and attitudes towards 'seeing' and 'experiencing' the world.
 - In this sense, we see how complex the idea of 'Romance' as handed down to us from the Romantics is.
- The essay points out that these white women are able to be saved and transformed at the expense of the people and places of their travel.
 - The "narrative groundwork" is laid, "in which the land, building structures, and inhabitants must all relate to the white female protagonist's goal of alleviating personal crisis." 12
 - "The protagonists rediscover an authentic self that was presumed lost to the requirements of neoliberal femininity in the United States, ultimately through an engagement with the inhabitants of the tourist space who by necessity are reduced to racial cliché in their role as cultural rehabilitators." 12-13



Reading Questions

CHAPTER XVII: LYING TO CECIL

- Why does Cecil's opinion of Lucy change (in the way Lucy wanted it changed) in the moment that she leaves him? Forster says it has to do with the relationship between desire and loss, but I suspect there is more and it relates to Cecil seeing her as a 'living woman' (106).
- Were you surprised by how Cecil responded to Lucy? If you were, then let this be a reminder that literature becomes much more nuanced in the 19th century and certainly it does by the 20th century. We shouldn't look anymore for black and white characters, we shouldn't look for black and white morality. Modernism is about nuance, uncertainty, multitudinous truths.
- Based on the questions I posed about Charlotte in Chapter 11, I wonder what you make of the final paragraph if this chapter? How did Charlotte come to be the person she is today? How are she and Lucy similar in this moment?

CHAPTER XVIII: LYING TO MR. BEEBE, MRS. HONEYCHURCH, FREDDY, AND THE SERVANTS

- What do you make of this chapter title? I am particularly interested in how it relates to the title of Chapter VI.
- Stop and really meditate on the bottom of 109 when Mr. Beebe begins to talk about 'romance' and Romance'. He says so many meaningful things and he says it in completely the wrong moment when neither of his interlocutors is listening and when no conversation can begin that might unfurl the many important ideas packed in here.
 - What is the difference between romance and Romance?
 - Why do young people in 1908 say romance is dead and what do they mean by 'romance' when they say it is dead?
 - What do you think romance/Romance means in 1908?
 - What does the idea of the view in an exotic land have to do with romance/Romance here?
 - Why does he say they want the pension Keats?
 - And what does all of this have to do with the ways we have treated romance/Romance in this course?
- On p. 116, there is a list of things Mr. Beebe discusses in order to discuss 'indifferently'. Like his previously important remarks that are sandwiched in an importune moment for conversation or reflection, so is this list. Yet it strikes me as important: "He conversed on indifferent topics: the Emersons' need of a housekeeper; servants; Italian servants; novels about Italy; novels with a purpose; could literature influence life?" What strikes you as meaningful about this list?
- Darkness seems to be a theme of this chapter, one which I don't remember seeing before. What do you make of this?

Reading Questions

CHAPTER XIX: LYING TO MR. EMERSON

- What is Mrs. Honeychurch's speech in reference to Mission and Duty and Work about on page 120?
- What do you make of Mrs. Honeychurch comparing Lucy to Miss Bartlett on that same page? What does it mean especially after the speech she's made that I reference in the previous question?
- The motif of darkness and light continues in this chapter. Continue your consideration of its various meanings for Forster. When does the darkness encroach? When does it finally disappear?

CHAPTER XX: THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

- You know I want you to consider the name of this chapter. We have been playing a lot with the idea of the medieval vs. the modern or new in this book. We have also increasingly seen an opposition between darkness and light. Darkness was pulled away in the last chapter and I asked you to consider what that means. Now I wonder what the end of Cecil, and now the end of darkness, has to do with the end of the Middle Ages?
- Mr. Beebe had been quite intrigued by Lucy, had seen some sort of magic promise in here. It is similar in a way to that which Winterbourne saw in Daisy Miller. How do Mr. Beebe's and Winterbourne's final assessments of Lucy and Daisy compare? (Forster 109). What is it the women do that make them arrive at this similar final conclusion?
- Once again Charlotte comes up in the final chapter and once again we are made to wonder just what kind of person she is and what her intentions truly were (130). How much of 'truth' did she see and understand without revealing it? And if she did understand, why did she act as if she understood nothing?
 - What is the 'incredible solution that came into Lucy's mind'? What do you think of Charlotte, finally? What she witting or unwitting? Does it matter?
 - What do you make of the (incidentally it is grammatically incorrect) Italian refrain and its final solution that frames and gives a sort of melody to the final scene? What do you make of the fact that 'the cabman drove away singing'?
 - "Signorino, domani faremo uno giro" (Young man, tomorrow we will go for a ride.)
 - "Lascia, prego, lascia. Siamo sposati." (Leave us, please, leave us. We are married.)
 - "Excuse me, ma'am."
 - What do you think of the reference to the singing cabman in the final lines. "The song of Phaethon announced passion requited, love attained."? I am disturbed by this line for a number of reasons, what about you?