Stereotypes in tourist narrative

Keywords: discourse analysis, narrative, promotion, semiotics, stereotype.

Abstract
The role of stereotypes in the experience of travel and in narratives shaping that experience is one of the major themes in anthropology of tourism which still has not been sufficiently investigated. Stories about places worth seeing and about expeditions which enable tourists to explore these evolve with the development of knowledge, technologies and means of expression. New media do not only modify methods of sending messages, but also shape the language used by the sender. However, the specificity of "digital storytelling" does not change the essence of communications addressed to visitors – universal symbols, myths and archetypes continue to play a crucial role in the construction of narratives. Taking into account three image campaigns, conducted under the slogans: "Polska - Move your imagination", "Feel invited" and "Polska - Come and find your story ", I concentrate on the narratives which attempt to change stereotypes about the country and its residents.

Introduction
The role of stereotypes in the experience of travel and in narratives giving shape to that experience is one of the major themes in anthropology of tourism which still have not been sufficiently investigated \footnote{The present article makes reference mainly to a traditional concept of narration as storytelling. In post-modernism this term has gained new meaning connected with Jean-François Lyotard’s philosophy. Delegitimization of “grand narratives” (ideologies, religions, philosophical systems, etc.) construed from the position of hegemony was one of the consequences of undermining the idea of Cartesian subject. Cf.: J.-F. Lyotard, Kondycja ponowoczesna, Aletheia, 2009.} \[\footnote{\[\text{cf.:} \ e.g. \ Tivers, Rakić, Ed. 2012; MacCabe, Foster 2006; Bruner 2005; Hollinshead 2004\].} The narrative aspect of tourism is linked with “storytelling”, and the concept of sender-narrator transcends the narrow understanding of “being a guide” in the context of either sightseeing or reception of tourism-related texts (written, recorded, based on multimedia). Recognized by researchers, various categories of narrators include people, such as tourists and local residents, as well as objects (souvenirs, treated as travellers’ trophies, props, “evidence” of authentic experience), as well as locations (museums, national parks, castles and palaces, villages or towns, etc.). Various studies discuss narrative styles (storylines, storytellings), immanent to various types of sites and tourist regions, which tend to become preferred ways of interpreting the past as well as material and intangible cultural heritage [Tivers, Rakić, Ed. 2012; Bruner 2005; Hollinshead 2004].

We should begin by defining the relation between narration and discourse as well as language of tourism. Forms of promotion and information in tourism are investigated by studies conducted from various viewpoints and by means of such research methods as contents analysis, linguistic analysis, semiotic analysis, and discourse analysis. Discourse relates to language in use and is treated as a tool for constructing reality and as a record of processes occurring in it \[\footnote{\[\text{cf.:} \ Fairclough, Duszak 2008: 7-29; Graham 2008; van Dijk, Ed. 2001\].} \] Regarding as equivalent to semiosis, which is an irreducible element of social life, discourse includes all of its forms, i.e. language, images, sounds, gestures, body language, etc.
Critical discourse analysis includes semiotic and ideological levels, as well as broader cultural and social context in which specific information functions and is perceived [cf.: e.g. Dann, 1996, 2011, 2012; Hollinshead, 2004; Feighery, 2006; Jaworski, Thurlow, 2010; Yan, Santos 2009; Santos, Belhassen, Caton 2008; Hallet, Kaplan-Weinger, 2010; Owssianowska 2011, 2012]. In his comprehensive study of language/discourse of tourism, Graham Dann [1996, 2011, 2012] discussed the specificity of language used in contemporary tourism as compared with the language of advertising – the main purpose of both is to encourage customers’ decision to take up an activity suggested by the specific message. Language of tourism is expansive and persuasive, this is a language of modernity, promotion and consumerism, designed to transform potential customers into tourists [Dann 1996, p. 2]. Making reference to Roman Jakobson’s model of communication, the British sociologist retraced the process, previously proposed by Dean MacCannell [2002], for constructing attractions and for site sacralisation in language, e.g. guidebooks and brochures [Dann 1996; cf.: Wieczorkiewicz 2008]. Dann characterizes properties of the language or code which may be neutral in terms of ideology, and compares it to discourse, rhetoric and narrative aspect of tourism. Narrative, as an element of discourse, in the present article is understood and investigated, firstly as projection of travel experience, secondly, as intangible resource of critical importance for designing an image for an area encountered by tourists, and thirdly as a tool for shaping and describing relations between mental images of a place and their confrontation with reality during the journey.

The meaning of narrative in tourism – from traditional spoken word to digital stories and special performances

Narratives of a place constitute an element of global discourse where themes connected with tourism merge with topics related to cultural, social and political life, constructing a preferred version of tale about vacation and recreating myths inherent in the experience of travel [Bruner 2005; Dann 2011, 1996; Wieczorkiewicz 2008; Selwyn 1996]. Edward Bruner made a distinction between a holistic approach to narrative and studies focusing specifically on each of the three stages of journey: imagined, actual and extended (remembered), as distinguished by Marc Boyer [as cited in: Przecławski 1997; cf.: Dann 1996]. Bruner draws on hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer, and recognizes pre-tour tellings as “pre-understanding” with which a traveller confronts the world to seek answers for his or her questions [Bruner 2005]. On the other hand, he highlights the dialogic aspect of narratives created upon return (preferring this term rather than “interactivity”) and thereby he emphasizes the very act of re-creating the history of the journey. A tale is reconstructed each time the storyteller goes back to his/her memories, recounting them and trying to lock them in a sequence of events and reflections expressed in a linear structure defined by successive points: beginning and start of plot, elaboration, culmination and ending.

New digital technologies provide options for storytellers to supplement their accounts with photos, films, music, voices of nature, street sounds, etc. Additionally, the possibility to send “live” messages, even during a trip, via mobile phones, tablets, notebooks and other mobile devices contributes to blurring the boundaries between the stages of actual and extended journey. Digital photography and documenting a trip by means of blogs, in social media, such as Facebook, Flicker or Instagram, contribute to different approach to a travel album created this way [Urry, Larsen 2011]. Pictures become an element of daily life lived in the virtual world of acquaintances and friends, favourite websites and “imagined communities” (Maffesoli). Therefore, travel stories are adjusted to the specific phenomenon of cyber culture, including Augmented Reality (AR), and it is more and more common, not only for young people, to see the world from the viewpoint of software applications and tools.
available for communicating and sharing one’s experiences with others. Digital storytelling is also used in marketing, because in today’s world when people are exposed to deluge of information it is only a well told story, surprising and/or evoking emotional response that can attract listeners’ attention and be remembered by them.

As it was mentioned earlier, narrative is not only related to projection of travel experience. Today, narratives are recognized as one of the intangible assets of a site, besides its image, identity, atmosphere, genius loci, and life style of the locals, etc. [Richards, Wilson 2007, p. 18; cf.: Tivers, Rakić 2012]. Tales of current and past events have always shaped the memory of the fates of people connected with a given place. In the times of growing mobility and globalization, the attention to local heritage encourages efforts to elaborate and record narratives of individuals and groups whose voices were never heard before. Local stories are not only preserved by the art of storytelling, which is being revived now. Virtual reconstructions of historical sites, for example former industrial neighbourhoods, recorded memories (audio, written, illustrated, etc.) recreate daily life of old communities which no longer exist. Computer visualizations create thematic routes, trails inspired by art, music, cinema, literature (e.g. music, film or biographic routes, dark tourism) leading along modern streets or past modern buildings and enriching the experience of travellers and semiosphere of the place [Les Roberts, Ed., 2012].

The concept of narrative, as suggested by McCabe and Foster, “makes it possible for us to get away from the conviction that tourism is an engagement exclusively regulated by that which is visual” [McCabe, Foster 2006]. The above statement is not designed to depreciate the importance of visual input as much as it adds value to the role of other senses and aspects of travel experience. According to Kevin Meethan research of tourism has, for too long, focused on identifying values and significance inherent to natural heritage and cultural assets and on relations between tourists’ expectations and discourse concentrating on their motivations and behaviours [Meethan 2006]. As a result of this one-sided approach, space is treated as a passive element of reality affected by various impacts, individual and institutional, exerted by visitors, hosts, authorities, promoters, and investors. Research drawing on Michel Foucault’s concepts, most of all aims at deconstructing the prevailing outlook(s), narratives contained in guidebooks, brochures and other sources of official discourse addressing travellers. This is obviously a reference to the book by John Urry, for the first time published in 1990, and recently re-edited to include updates, supplements and input of another author, Jonas Larsen, who previously focused e.g. on the phenomenon of taking photographs as a touristic ritual [cf.: Larsen 2005]. The chapter of The Tourist Gaze 3.0 [Urry, Larsen 2011] entitled Performances contains a reference to Erving Goffman’s works, whereby the authors expand the concept of tourist gaze to account for corporeality and theatrical nature of social interactions, because, they claim: “there are many similarities
between the paradigms of gaze and performance and they should dance together rather than look at each other from a distance” [Urry, Larsen 2011, p. 189]. Hence, research focusing on narrative development of space is expanded to include the category of performance [cf.: e.g. Urry, Larsen 2011; Crouch, Desforges 2003; Edensor 2001, 2004; Meethan 2006], which makes it possible to highlight the role of individual as a mover, and the manner in which tourists themselves engage in perceiving the site and crating a story about it. Isolated, subjective accounts make up a polyphonic tale, (meta)narratives constituting projection of travel experience. Attention to individual’s actions, his/her autonomy and capacity for self-reflection as well as the knowledge of mechanisms impacting cognitive processes may allow questioning the controlling power of discourse.

Role of stereotypes in tourist narrative

Stereotype is an indispensable element of the cognitive process, both in linguistics and in social psychology defined as a specific method of processing information, or as specific knowledge resource [Quasthoff 1998]. Stereotypes constitute mental constructs rooted in language and acting as an “unconscious filter” through which we perceive that which is strange, other and unknown. In psychology or sociology the concept relates mainly to individuals and groups, while in linguistics, understood in a broader way, it relates to opinions about various phenomena and objects [Chlebda 1998; Bartmiński 1998]. Communicated in course of socialization process, stereotypes are spread and reinforced by mass media, works of art, advertisements, literature, guidebooks, course books, films, computer games, etc. On the one hand they prove useful as they make it possible to quickly figure out the situation, find the right answer, solution or adequate mode of behaviour. On the other hand it is emphasized that they frequently misrepresent the reality and can contribute to prejudices and stigmatization (although empirical studies show only moderate relationship between stereotypes, prejudices and the phenomenon of discrimination [cf.: Macrae et al. 1999]). The concept of stereotype was first defined in the book entitled Public Opinion by Walter Lippman, published in 1922. Since then the phenomenon has been investigated by researchers specializing in various disciplines, and focusing on e.g. linguistic picture of the world, perception of reality, education, interpersonal and intercultural communication.

Analysis of stereotypes and their role in contacts between visitors and hosts is one of the main themes in anthropological research of tourism (besides problems related to authenticity of experience and tourist imagination). Two competing approaches are discussed by Magdalena Banaszkiewicz: “The first one represents the well-know saying that ‘travel broadens the mind’, makes it possible to overcome negative preconceptions and encourages intercultural dialogue. (…) Those representing the opposite view try to prove that because the host-tourist relation is characterized by a significant lack of authenticity, we cannot talk here about a true encounter, but only about role playing which even further reinforces the stereotypical perception” [Banaszkiewicz 2012, p. 31-32]. In the case of travel experience stereotypes play a specific role due to the fact that tourists abandon, for a time, their regular environment, pace of life and safe routines and enter a space which is foreign to them, full of signs and symbols connected with the local culture. An army of “anonymous semioticians” as Jonathan Culler called them, tourists roam the world looking for that which is different from the reality known to them and that which is typical for the visited region and its inhabitants [Culler 1981; Owskinowa, Turystyka w służbie stereotypów, electronic doc.]. What is the role of stereotypes in creating representations of people and places, in constructing images of otherness and difference, which result from membership in a given group defined by such factors as place of origin, nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, social class, education, profession, disability?
Stereotype which presents one group in favourable light, as a rule attributes negative qualities to others, including one’s own group [Quasthoff 1998, s. 20]. Stereotypes contain evaluation of other groups (heterostereotype) and self-assessment of one’s own community (autostereotype). They also operate as self-fulfilling prophecy if we adopt a manner of conduct or self-presentation confirming others’ preconceptions about us (meta-stereotype), whether these are true or not. Accordingly, in order to meet tourists’ expectations, locals promote their history, traditions, old rituals, dances, and costumes, giving up information about modernization and cultural changes in their country and daily life style [Yan, Santos 2009]. There is no coincidence in the choice of scenography, props or actors in the world depicted in tourism advertisements; hence it is significant who is presented by a description or photo and in what way, who has been omitted, what can be perceived from the characters, body language and costumes shown in a film, brochure or guidebook [cf.: Wieczorkiewicz 2008; Dann 2011; Owsianowska, Turystyka w służbie stereotypów, electronic doc.]. Discussing the “status of touristic utopia” Anna Wieczorkiewicz says: “That which in daily life or at work is polluted, disturbed, distorted or impaired (natural environment, interpersonal relations in families, groups of neighbours, working teams; intercultural and international relations), during ‘holiday utopia’ receives a pure form. Emphasis is placed on the beauty of landscapes and the beauty of human body. (...) Tourists on vacation create a kind of happy commune. They relax on the beach or at hotel swimming pools, sunbathe, do sports, eat and drink. Local people (shown in images less frequently than holiday makers) tend to perform other activities, such as traditional dances and games. They provide entertainment and constitute a vital element of picturesque landscapes; most importantly they are a sight to be watched. At times they are given the role of servants, in the strict sense: they work in bars, hotels, restaurants, or manufacture and sell local goods. Lack of symmetry in these relations can be illustrated with the scene: a smiling waiter standing next to a tourist seated at the table. Roles played by locals include those of seducing and providing intermediary services.” [Wieczorkiewicz 2008, p. 244-245]. Local people, presented as one of the “attractions” of the visited area, also appear in holiday stories.

The stereotype of tourist is worth mentioning here, though without in-depth discussion about the opposition “tourist vs. traveller” [cf.: e.g. essays posted at post-turysta.pl]. Nonetheless we should remember that criticism of mass tourism (including the types of alternative tourism which have been absorbed by travel industry) includes both touristic practices and theories formulated from the latter half of the 20th century. Based on Daniel Boorstin’s essay, there emerged a cliché idea of tourist as a passive hedonist, participant of package tours, superficially acquainting themselves with must-see attractions, as opposed to an active traveller, and the notion of “travelling” seen as a work-like affair involving great deal of effort. This idea is “so widespread that it becomes a part of problem rather than analytical reflection concerning mass tourism”, aptly noted MacCannell [2002, p. 162]. Understanding of the phenomenon of travel in the 21st century can be facilitated by concepts proposed by authors who try to show relation between preconceptions and expectations anchored in touristic discourse as well as actual experiences explored by researchers by means of (participant) observation, analysis of tourist’s stories, as well as in-depth interviews, blogs, diaries, reports, and discussion boards.

Difficulties in assessing the role of stereotypes in tourism and travel narratives, in addition to the very realities of touring, are strictly connected with the academic approach, involving analyzing or ignoring problematic topics and/or unpopular issues, e.g. those irrelevant in terms of economy, or risky from the point of view of privileged groups [Alejziak 2008]. These controversies contributed to the directions of explorations defined within the so-called “new tourism research” [Tribe 2005]. Critics of well-known theories of tourism, developed in the latter half of the 20th century (e.g. MacCannell’s concepts), accuse them of ethnocentrism and arbitrariness, generalization and universalization of experiences.
of western middle class tourist. This issue is related to a broader phenomenon of cultural hegemony and asymmetry in relations between representatives of countries in the so-called Global South and Global North, which is discussed in the framework of post-colonial theory [cf.: Edensor 2001; d’Hauteserre 2005; Caton, Santos 2009; Dann 2011; post-turysta.pl]. Moreover, travel for centuries was a domain of men and because of women’s absence in the public sphere descriptions of travel experience were incomplete due to the lack of analyses conducted from their viewpoint [cf.: e.g. Pritchard et al., 2004; Aitichison 2001; Goodson, Phillimore, ed. 2004; Tribe 2005; Ateljevic et al, ed. 2007; cf.: Owsianowska, Turystyka w służbie stereotypów, electronic doc., 2012; Banaszkiewicz, 2010]. As a result of social and political changes as well as those affecting customs in Western European countries, female travellers today can express their opinions of the world, overcome stereotypes which they encounter in contact with other people and which they find deeply rooted in their own worldview. Their narratives related to trips, sometimes taken on their own or with other women, spontaneously or in organized groups, contain research material which allows making comparisons, identifying similarities and differences resulting not only from gender but also from the combined effect of various other factors.

An optimistic approach to tourism, or as he calls it, the most superficial “contact” between cultures, is presented by Geert Hofstede: ‘Apart from everything else, [tourism] breaks the barrier of isolation between various cultural groups and makes one aware that there are people who behave and think in different ways. A seed planted in one’s mind may bear fruit. Some tourists start learning the language and history of the country which they have visited and they want go back to. Hosts learn the languages of visitors to promote their services. People, who normally would not even meet, become friends. From the viewpoint of intercultural contacts, opportunities created by tourism greatly surpass all of its weaknesses” [Hofstede 2000, p. 312]. When they set off, tourists do not only become part of the global and local market. They join the process of interpreting, re-interpreting and creating a reality, talking about a site at every stage of the journey. The knowledge of stereotypes, the way they emerge, their mechanisms and functions, make it possible to better understand the cultural context which serves as a reference for those participating in interactions related to tourism, including visitors, hosts, cultural mediators and agents, employees of the sector. Identifying and mitigating negative stereotypes is significant not only in tourism, but for any cognitive activity in general, therefore the need to eliminate stereotypical thinking relates to and transcends the reality of travelling.

Object and scope of analysis

Launched in March 2011 during ITB in Berlin, the image campaign for Poland had been initiated a year earlier during the cruise of “Chopin”, and was conducted under the slogan “Polska. Move your imagination” (within the project “Let’s Promote Poland Together”). It included a performance during the trade fairs opening ceremony and a number of events in public spaces of Berlin, a series of animations where characters, modelled after vinyl toys, assumed the shape of “cosmic creatures” (P,O,L,E,N), a series of short films presenting the largest cities and Mazury Lake District (“It happened in...”), a presentation at the website of the Polish Tourist Organization (“Poland likes it!”). The subsequent part of the project consisted of commercials in the series called “Feel invited”, and at present the so-called “fairy-tale campaign” is conducted under the slogan “Polska – Come and find your story”.

Further in this article I will focus on reviewing the following elements of selected campaigns (accessible at www.polska.travel):
Other people’s stories have always greatly impacted traveller’s experiences. Hence the campaigns in question use the idea of recommendation: “The persons shown in the commercials are having a great time in Poland, and their impressions make up their unique stories. They have already found lovely and enchanting places in Poland, where childhood dreams can come true and one can, for a while, turn into a princess or a knight. Now every visitor to Poland can enjoy this opportunity, as well. The message is simple – these stories are still happening. Experience them in Poland” [cf. Brief for “Polska - Come and find your story”; “Polska by Kate’]. Stories about notable attractions and trips which evolve together with new technologies and means of expression. New media do not only modify the method of communicating a message but also shape the language used by senders. Yet, their specificity does not change the essence of messages addressed to tourists: universal symbols, myths and archetypes continue to play a significant part in constructing stories of the land in which tourists’ dreams come true. Anna Wieczorkiewicz writes: “Myth, basically, is expressed in the form of narrative, and mythology is a group of narratives motivating culturally significant undertakings. Yet myth is also the reverse of ritual. Ritual acts out a myth and updates its meanings. (...) It is possible to use advertised designs for holiday experiences in a similar manner” [Wieczorkiewicz 2008, p. 247]. If we compare the selected narrative strategies of the image campaigns with Graham Dann’s concept discussed in the final sub-section, we can notice these designs evoke a few major motivations for travel, with the recurring: romantic desire for adventure, regeneration, transgression as well as safety associated with carelessness of childhood, hedonism and striving for happiness, sun, beach, play and fantasy, fairytale-like and magical atmosphere.

Narratives of a modern, unique and inspiring country or how can stereotypes be overcome?

The method of constructing a story and its ideological context can be investigated through discourse analysis which makes it possible to identify hidden aspects of the promotional message, not always obvious to addresses [cf.: Owsianowska 2011]. Modernity versus tradition, this is one of the major oppositions utilized in promotion related to tourism, which is reflected by components of the image campaigns in question. Presentation of Poland as a modern, inspiring and surprising country was the goal of those organizing 2011 ITB opening ceremony. A stereoscopic show, prepared for that occasion, combined computer animation and dancing performance; the audience was engaged by means of dice which could be used to turn on multimedia spectacle. Such facts as presidency in the EU, and co-organization of EURO 2012 were utilized to draw attention, overcome stereotypes and change the image of the country. Designers of the advertisements highlight the fact that

(2) Presentation “Poland likes it!”
(3) “Polska – Move your imagination”, i.e. a series of films promoting Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk, Poznań, Wrocław, Mazury District and Łódź
(4) “Feel invited”, invitation to Poland for all tourists, and commercials addressing specific groups of customers (segment), such as those interested in business tourism (“Events in Polska”); agritourism and slow tourism (“Farm break in Poland”); active and extreme tourism (“Active holidays in Poland”), urban tours (“City break in Poland”)
(5) “Polska – Come and find your story”, commercials and billboards promoting all provinces of Poland, addressing residents of Poland, and selected countries in Europe as well as Asia (China, Japan, India).
Poland is a modern country, showing its architecture (sky-scrappers, office buildings, bridges, etc.), luxury interiors (hotels, restaurants, business centres, etc.), level of informatization (e.g. wi-fi in cafes, trains), life style of contemporary Poles (participation in cultural events, fashion – these are just examples).

Narrative in short films for the series “Polska – Move your imagination” is constructed around specific associations between attributes, places and visitors (youth – Warszawa, love – Kraków, liberty – Gdańska, music – Wrocław, creativity – Poznań, friendship – Mazury, passions – Łódź) [cf.: Owsianowska 2011]. Accordingly, Warszawa is mainly a city of clubs, and enjoyable carnival atmosphere. Modern office buildings and symbols such as Palace of Culture and Science, Royal Castle and Sigismund’s Column provide backdrop for stories about meetings, dancing, music and youth. Kraków is a refined, romantic and magical place, a stage for a love story happening amidst the landmarks of the city (e.g. the Town Square, Wawel Castle, Slowacki Theatre). In Gdańsk a senior couple from Denmark with walking poles, stroll around the beach (where they can see children playing and a group of young men doing kite-surfing) and next to the shipyard bringing back memory of the latest history of Poland and Europe. Feeling of safety, peace and happiness accompanies the moments spent in the picturesque places (Mariacka Str.). The commercials promoting Wrocław and Poznań show these cities from the viewpoint of visitors’ personal and professional interests. Visitors’ attention is drawn to opportunities such as participation in cultural events (concert, jazz festival), and possibility to achieve business goals (business negotiations and signing a contract). The world of Mazury District appears like the Garden of Eden, sanctuary of unpolluted nature, a place where people cultivate friendship, family ties and peaceful life, far from the humdrum and rush of urban societies, traps of consumerism and erosion of interpersonal relations. The final episode, made in the convention of old black-and-white cinema in the post-industrial scenery of Łódź, shows a young Spanish man, aspiring to study at the Film School, compiling photo documentation of signs and symbols of the city and the whole country. The result of his passionate search is a series of pictures laid out in the shape of Poland. The authors of the commercial put the camera in the hands of a foreigner and in a way step aside; this convention makes it possible for them to show dynamics and contradictions of Polish social reality, traditional and modern, through the eyes of the stranger [Owsianowska 2011].

The project “Polska – Come and find your story”, inspired by fairytales, is designed to evoke positive emotions by bringing back enjoyable childhood associations. The campaign uses motives which “make reference to archetypes and symbols and contribute to our images of ourselves and our lives” [Brief]. Scenes from billboards can be associated with popular fairytales, literature and films, and they suggest “unusual adventures”, “uniqueness”, “diversity”, “extraordinary atmosphere”, “promise of a trip which does not only take you to an interesting country but also deep into your own self”, “beautiful and amazing places”, “enchantment”, “invitation for a trip and for finding your own history”: “Poland is the land of such opportunities, because all of its aspects, past and present, are one of the kind and can be an inspiration. Each region stands for a different tale, legend and opportunities. Artistic arrangement of photographs shows that in Poland there are places, where holidays will be unforgettable and will be kept in memory for your whole life and will stay in your heart just like fairy tales remembered from your childhood” [Brief]. Choice of such story about a place is one of the popular narrative strategies in tourism: a desire to return to the carefree and playful land appears as a recurring motive of looking for the “lost paradise” in numerous myths [Selwyn 2006]. Nostalgia is frequently indicated by many authors as one of the main reasons for travelling (“nostalgia industry” is in fact Dann’s term for tourism industry).

What fairytales, literary or film storylines were suggested by designers of the campaign? Snow White and happy child-dwarfs, in the background houses, part of a church and fountain, and beer gardens in Wrocław; Kraków’s Town Square at night,
a man is running out from the Cloth Hall with a slipper in his hand, and a fleeing woman – Cinderella is getting into a carriage; Warsaw’s Old Town at night and a young couple dancing with the Siren in the background; the castle in Moszna, in front of it Snow White is standing and leaning against her bike, and eating an apple (in another version, promoting Opolskie Province there is Cinderella during a cycling trip); part of the hotel in Arłamów, table with a vase of roses and candles, and a dancing couple, the Beauty and the Beast, and in the background the outline of the Bieszczady mountains; Old Town, literary allusion (The Magician of Lublin), atmosphere of fun, dressed up figures on stilts, fire shows, juggling, a rabbit jumping out of a hat; illuminated building of Manufaktura in Łódź and cafeterias with people sitting inside, a young woman – Cinderella, sitting on a bench, and a man kneeling in front putting a slipper on her foot, shopping boxes and bags scattered all around; the Long Market at night, a man and a woman, or Romeo and Juliette; Kraków-Częstochowa Upland, a man is climbing up, on top of the rock - a woman with long braid, in the background ruins of the castle in Ogrodzieniec; a smiling woman in a witch hat serving heart-shaped ginger cookies to children; a young happy man wearing a pirate bandana on his head in a photo of a sailboat in marina; fisherman swimming in a lake, near him a woman – gold fish (or – in another version of the region’s promotion – Siren sitting on the pier).

The above description shows that viewers are free to (re-)interpret the impressions based on fairy-tales, stories or film. What is important is the very reference to the world of fairy tales, magic and fantasy. Images depict a reality within frames, “sanctified”, hence – distinctive from what is usual, a sacred sphere [MacCannell 2002; Wieczorkiewicz 2008]. Nature is pure, streets are clean and shiny; there are no random people (if any, they are at a distance, in the crowd which does not interfere with the foreground). Perfectly arranged, refined surroundings, lighting, flowers and other ornaments blend with attractions used as symbols for a given region. Theatrical metaphor – stage, decorations, actors and performance – all these are a reference to Goffman’s concept, and encouragement for tourists to join the show, the romantic and exciting adventure. In addition to characters made up in the style of fairytales, literary fiction or films, in some posters we can also see individuals playing roles of tourists, as observers, with cameras in their hands (Lubelskie). According to Roland Barthes’ concept, the meaning of a photo or sketch is “anchored” in words which accompany graphic elements. Based on a caption, comment or slogan the viewer understands the context and chooses from among potential meanings, and decoding of information does not only involve denotation (of that which is depicted by the photo, e.g. a physical object, person), but also connotation (symbolic and cultural understanding of the image, e.g. as representing tradition of the nation). In the campaign discussed here, messages are interpreted through the references to fairytales.

The subsequent part of the article focuses on the portrayal of individuals participating in tourism-related interactions (obviously, a vast majority of them are travellers, less frequently hosts; sometimes it is not clear who is presented, because those on the beach or in a cafe may be both visitors and locals). Another aspect to be discussed is the scenery, in which people appear in selected productions, related to assets of the place and to the promoted types of activity (e.g. nature and wild landscapes in the case of active and extreme tourism, urban areas for city tours, usually involving sightseeing, walks, or more demanding forms such as jogging or cycling).

In the promotional series “Feel invited” travellers are narrators, they make a film, an account of their trip. A girl, who wants to “chill out” during her visit to Poland talks about her stay at an agritourist farm, travels with backpack, by train and bus, watches animals, learns about traditions, savours regional dishes, picks “authentic” souvenirs [“Farm break in Poland”]. A business woman spends her time at meetings, but also enjoys cultural events, entertainment (theatre, disco, etc.), as well as active tourism [“Events in Poland”]. A couple taking a motorbike tour of the country visits attractions in the major cities of Poland, has fun
during concerts and at music clubs, etc. [“City break in Poland”]. A man, who comes here to “lash out” and regenerate his strength enjoys various forms of active and extreme tourism (off-road, quads, rafting, climbing, cycling, paragliding, etc.) [“Active holidays in Poland”]

The last commercial in this series, connected directly with EURO 2012, differs from the others with background music and style. We can see Warsaw along a running route, while accompanying a man and a woman who came here on business and go jogging (with elements of parkour).

Taking into account the campaigns discussed here we can identify and compare ways of depicting males and females, reconstruct both model trips and social roles attributed to each gender. Again, the series “Feel invited” shows the greatest changes: the depicted characters and narrators in the commercials include a lone backpacker and businesswomen, females competing not only professionally but also physically (climbing, jogging in Warsaw, etc.). In these examples active and dynamic approach, linked with passion, liberty, action, creativity, business and professionalism, is not reserved mainly for men, which in fact could to a greater extent be seen in the films for “Polska – Move your imagination” [cf.: Owsianowska 2011]. How can the “fairy tale campaign” be assessed in this context?

On the one hand characters such as princesses, princes or knights evoke traditional gender roles, yet, given the assumption that these tales are only used as an inspiration, those sending and receiving the message can freely create and interpret the stories. Besides the scenes complying with role models where females, or princesses adopt a passive and expectant approach (expressed with timidly bowed head and averted gaze), there are also playful paraphrases of original stories, challenging the stereotypes (e.g. an attractive witch serving heart-shaped ginger cookies to children in the poster promoting Świętokrzyskie Province; long-haired woman providing help to a climbing man, in the advertisement for Śląskie Province).

Notably, local residents are not seen in any of the posters created for the campaign “Polska – Come and find your story”, even though they may be there, among passers-by or guests of cafeterias. Idealized places are depicted in similar ways: typical images for urban tourism show night time, illuminated houses, starry sky, the Moon and crowded restaurants; for tours taking place in the natural environment – scenic views (the Sun, space, greenery, etc.). In the case of the aforementioned films created for “Polska – Move your imagination”, representatives of hosts and employees of tourism sector include e.g. a helpful waiter; friendly and beautiful girls; hospitable and accommodating residents-intermediaries (e.g. a man, wearing folk costume, and selling souvenirs, droshky driver); young, talented and creative engineers; young and attractive hostess (who can be seen not only in a traditional kitchen but also in a carpenter’s workshop performing a typically male job) [Owsianowska 2011]. The commercial opening the campaign “Feel invited” makes a reference to local residents: “How many Poles does it take to convince you to come to Poland?” Then tourists are invited to major places by e.g. crowds participating in cultural and sports events (guitarists in Wroclaw, football fans in Warsaw; actors taking part in a festival of street theatres in Kraków); a lonely girl standing at a pier; a couple in a canoe; a group of scouts, a man running away from bison. Local residents get together to celebrate special occasions, just like in the subsequent stories of trips to Poland told by three women and two men (travelling along: a backpacker, a business woman, a fan of extreme sports and a couple during a motorcycle tour). Poles are represented e.g. by an owner of an agritourist farm who is also a guide to the world of nature; a housewife cooking “perogy”; a female highlander selling souvenirs at Krupówki. Hospitality, friendliness and invitation to celebrate important events together (watching games, enjoying discos, festivals, etc.) – this is how the residents are shown, and these aspects reappear in a film prepared for “Polska – Come and find your story”.

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Selected narrative strategies by reference to G. Dann’s concepts

Graham Dann [1996], taking into account four major theoretical perspectives to research of tourism – authenticity, strangehood, play and conflict – defines for each of these a semantic field for travel experience. For tourists seeking authenticity and treating travel as a way to break away from daily routines, as a kind of ritual, expedition towards sacrum, these are such expressions as: “typical”, “authentic”, “genuine”, “real”, and “original”. Contact with that which is strange, new and unusual, and which can be discovered while experiencing an adventure, is described by such words as: “pure”, “fascinating”, “picturesque”, “primitive”, “simple”, “natural”, “other”, “exotic”, “timeless”, “unchanged”, “traditional” etc. According to the perspective recognizing travel as a type of play, game, form of recreation, the aspects of authenticity and affirmation lose their importance. “Pseudo-events”, staged shows, or thematic parks, from the start designed for entertainment, perfectly match the experience for which realities of the local life, indigenous people and their customs are not as significant. Finally, in the conflict perspective, mainly linked with orientalism, according to Dann greater importance is attached to publications recognized as more credible than tour operator’s catalogue. Therefore the atmosphere of magic is created mainly by reference to non-fiction. Personal accounts from trips made by artists or writers are a more successful encouragement to follow in their footsteps than euphoric holiday brochures whose contents are not entirely devoid of ideology [Hollinshead 2004].

Alternatively, distinction of discourses can be based on the main motivations for travel: Romanticism,Regression, Rebirth (3R), Happiness, Hedonism, Heliocentrism (3H), Fun, Fantasy, Fairytales (3F) and Sea, Sex, Socialization (3S) [Dann, 1996, p. 101-134]. It seems that presented tellings mainly relate to experience of male tourist (this is a descriptive rather than evaluating statement). Travelling models, defined by reference to male rationality, as well as men’s way of perceiving the world and other people, have undoubtedly been deeply-rooted in studies elaborated as a result of research of tourism since the 1990s, which has been mentioned before.

Discourse of romanticism recreates one of the essential dichotomies of modernism, juxtaposing “civilized” and “primitive”, urban and rural, modern and traditional areas. The idyllic image of the countryside is a response to needs resulting from experiencing negative effects of technological changes, urbanization, and high speed of daily life. Hence, in opposition to urban life, the promotional language of tourism creates an oasis of pure nature, bucolic atmosphere, islands of tranquillity, peace, harmony, cultivated traditions, interpersonal ties, and love of life (cf.: Mazury). Regression, return to emotions and scenery of childhood, symbolized by Mother Nature, is an attempt to rediscover the atmosphere of “the good old days”. The myths of the Golden Age, Poseidon (the ocean) or Olympus (the mountain) are reflected in contemporary narratives promoting ecotourism, rural tourism and agritourism (cf.: “Farm break in Poland”). A chance for “rebirth”, overcoming limitations and fears, or transgression, this according to Dann is a reference to the situation of child striving for independence, and at the same time seeking safety associated with maternal care. Travel as a form of rebirth and adventure as a way of testing oneself in contact with wildlife – these are opportunities for growth which can be used as a result of temporary separation from home, family and friends.

In accordance with this concept, happiness relates mainly to a situation when journey is an opportunity for tourists to satisfy their narcissist need to be in the centre of attention, thanks to people who entertain them, take care of them and ensure their comfort and satisfaction (e.g. services of their hosts, spa treatment, hospitality, cf.: series “Feel invited”). Pleasure is a state of mind connected with an escape from routines towards sensual gratification ensured not only by diverse activities, eating, drinking, and sex but also by
thoughts of fulfilling desires, anticipations, promise of dreams come true, which provide motivation for setting off and are found in promotional messages. Heliocentrism does not only relate to vacation on the beach and sunbathing. Dann emphasizes that the sun is (almost) always present in travel photographs, it brings in the sense of well being, joy, ecstasy (which is also confirmed by conclusions from the present analysis).

Fun and fantasy are related to the need for carefree leisure, inversion, breaking with behaviours typical for daily routines, discipline, professional responsibilities, conventions (e.g. “I’m going to Poland to go crazy...”, cf.: “Active holidays in Poland”). Reference to childhood brings other parallels. Holidays are also an opportunity to return to the ideal land of safety and enjoyment, and at times to a kind of anomy, suspending ethical norms for the time of fun, going for risky behaviours which otherwise a given person would not undertake for fear of possible consequences. Authenticity of attractions is in this case of minor importance, what counts is the possibility to find oneself in the world of magic, known from mass media, literature, romance stories, and fairytales.

Coastal landscape and juxtaposition of the sea (mother’s womb, swimming/bathing as an act of surrendering into protective arms) and the limitless horizon, allows to contrast the boundaries of domestic space with the liberating and creative situation of being on the road: unknown versus known, the need for adventure and exploration versus the need for safety and stability (cf.: e.g. “Farm break in Poland” and “Active holidays in Poland” in the series “Feel invited”). The promoted places are frequently equated with woman, and references to eroticism are one of the main methods to draw attention: beauty, smile, body language seduce the viewers, and evoke positive associations which are automatically transferred to the advertised object. The final aspect is related to socialization, the process which starts at birth and introduces the child to social interactions. Media disseminating information about tourism and travels themselves, according to Dann, contribute to socialization of an individual (tourist as a child, controlled and socialized by the language of tourism is the central concept in the approach proposed by the British sociologist).

Conclusion

Narratives connected with travel are not only an indispensable element of constructing individual and group identity as well as identity of the place, but they also play important part in the process of contemplating, remembering and disseminating tourist experience [Tivers, Rakić 2012, p. 1]. As a result of technological progress, there is a wealth of forms and means of expression, yet the well-tested narrative strategies continue to be used as they refer to universal human needs and motivations for travel. The applied types of discourse make reference to the romantic desire for adventure, transgression, feeling of safety associated with carefree childhood, regeneration, wish to achieve happiness and pleasure, fun and fantasy, and mythical, fairytale-lake, magical atmosphere. The review of recent image campaigns shows promotional activities most of all designed to undermine the existing stereotypes and to reinforce and spread the new image of Poland and its population.

Storytelling has also become one of the significant intangible resources of tourism, an asset on its own terms and an element contributing to the uniqueness of sightseeing. Narratives constitute a projection of travel experience, long before the actual journey, and the group of narrators grows year by year coinciding with the increasing number of travellers and their stories, and the more and more informed and diverse initiatives taken by representatives of tourist destinations. Narrative allows transcending that which is visual, and this is undoubtedly a sign of the times of the dominating pictorial culture and multitude of information where it is more and more difficult to identify what is interesting, valuable and worth remembering. A good tale is to provide help. Specialists in narrative marketing eagerly
quote a saying of Hopi Indians: „The one who tells the stories rules the world” [cf.: Mistewicz 2011]. Yet for anthropology of tourism it is more important to conduct discourse analysis to reveal those aspects of communications which are not always obvious for addressees and to identify what can be expressed by seemingly neutral words. Because there is no doubt who “rules” tourist imagination.

References


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Stereotypy w narracji turystycznej

Słowa kluczowe: analiza dyskursu, narracja, promocja, semiotyka, stereotyp.

Streszczenie
Rola stereotypów w doświadczeniu podróży i kształtujących je narracjach to jeden z najważniejszych i wciąż niedostatecznie opracowanych tematów w antropologii turystyki. Historie o miejscach wartych zobaczenia i wyprawach, dzięki którym można je poznać, ewoluują wraz z rozwojem wiedzy, technologii i środków wyrazu. Nowe media nie tylko modyfikują sposób przekazywania wiadomości, ale również kształtują język, jakim posługują się nadawcy. Specyfika „cyfrowych opowiadań” nie zmienia jednak istoty komunikatów kierowanych do odwiedzających – w budowaniu narracji szczególną rolę odgrywają uniwersalne symbole, mity i archetypy. Wśród strategii narracyjnych, zastosowanych w analizowanych elementach kampanii wizerunkowych, prowadzonych pod hasłami „Polska – Move your imagination”, „Feel invited” i „Polska – Come and find your story”, wyekspонowane są te, które zmierzają do zmiany stereotypów o kraju i jego mieszkańcach.


