

What happens if you get drawn in a romance that is doomed to fail? I have found myself in this situation couple of times, caught in desperation. Exploring this very theme, the movie **Lost in Translation** by Sofia Coppola is the focus point of this amateurly-written essay.

This writing was actually prompted by my dear friends **Mattia** and **Luca**. In a respectful manner, they both made me realize that I sometimes lose myself in translation as a non-native English speaker. Kudos to them. I will evade giving events from the movie; instead, I will give my reflections. Although it would make me happy to benefit others, these reviews are mainly for myself.

Our movie revolves around two characters: Bob Harris (Bill Murray) and Charlotta (Scarlett Johansson). Both characters are in different parts of their lives. Bob is an actor with his career going downhill. He is around his fifties undergoing a midlife crisis with a dull marriage. Whereas Charlotta, a recent philosophy graduate, struggles with the meaning of life and what to do in the next chapter of her life. Therefore, it is fair to assume they are different phases in life.



Figure 1: Bob and Charlotta meets

The movie does not intersect their paths right away, it first gives insights into what our characters have been through. Their personal traits and the dynamics of relationships to their significant others, and the gloomy environments they go through portrayed first. Finally, they meet through a stroke of luck: Bob unable to sleep because of insomnia and tries to soothe himself with a booze. They encounter at hotel's bar. This orchestration makes the movie natural.

Although our characters are divided by age, profession, life experience and other things, they have some crucial problem in common that sparks their relation: Emotional unsatisfaction from their significant others. What they seek for from their partners is affection, attention and thoughtfulness. They try to tacitly reflect this to their partners but to no avail (Bob's phone call in bathtub, Charlotta's champagne talk with her husband). This condition channels them in an emotional reciprocation with each other. United by the same need and problem they form a very strong bond in a short period of time. However, unfortunately or fortunately, their relationship is doomed to fail. They are both married and have a temporary chance to share the same physical space.

One interesting coincidence is that Bill Murray himself at the time of the movie was an actor far from the zenith of his career as character Bob does. Another noteworthy point is the selection of the country. It could be shot in different countries (Egypt, Mongolia, Turkey etc.) where the characters would still be isolated from the societal circles. However, I contend that having chosen Japan as the shooting location made this movie peculiar in some sense. The serenity, tranquillity, peace, and naivety in Japanese culture and precepts funnels out attention into psychological states of the characters rather than outside world.



Figure 2: Loneliness is one of the bedrock themes in the movie

There are some attributions/hints to the movie name as well. Two remarkable one among them are the 1) quarrel with the director during the shooting of Bob's whisky endorsement 2) Bob's conversation with a Japanese elder in hospital.

Until the ending scene movie always maintains both the emotional and sexual tension between our characters. Sometimes there exists awkward moments between them during greetings or goodbyes. This shows they are still questioning and not decisive about the "situationship".



Figure 2: An awkward moment in their 'situationship'

In the final scene, Bob whispers some magical words to Charlotta. Viewers do not hear an audible sound. It is a part left out to audience. What is being said is open to speculations. However, what is crystal clear is that this exchange it relieves both of them. It could be an admission of the hopeless situation they are facing. Another point of hiding whisper could be director's intention to show that we viewers are third person and therefore an outsider to their relationship after all.



Figure 3: Before leaving for good, Bob whispers some relieving words to Charlotta

All in all, this is a great movie about some concepts such as relationships, human's need to be understood, midlife crisis etc. I found some parts resonating/echoing with my thoughts and experiences. I would suggest watching this in a calm and neutral mood.

Enes Duran