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## Using *Lost in Translation* to Prepare Students for the Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Realities of International Business

by Ivan Filby

### Abstract

Over the last 30 years, international business opportunities have become more widespread. This rise in global business opportunities has not gone unnoticed by missiologists, and the development of the Business as Mission (BAM) movement has introduced a new realm of possibilities of linking business and mission. One potential weakness of this model is that international business managers often do not receive any missiological or theological training. It is likely that they receive less prayer support, less in-the-field support, and probably weaker moral accountability. As a result, many may be unaware of the some of the difficulties that they may face on international business assignments.

This paper suggests that if Christian business faculty actively encourage students to explore international business opportunities, then they must sensitize students to some of the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges that they may face on overseas business assignments. The last section of the paper shows how these challenges and realities of international business can be introduced in the classroom through an innovative use of Sofia Coppola's 2003 movie *Lost in Translation*. The final section offers some concluding remarks followed by an appendix presenting a scene-by-scene analysis of *Lost in Translation*.

### Introduction

The last 30 years have seen the rapid globalization of world markets (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006, p. 118) with the result that international business is fast becoming a normal aspect of the manager's duties. Furthermore, the development of international trade blocks such as NAFTA, the EU, and ASEAN, together with the opening up of the Indian and Chinese markets (both mainland and offshore) has led to increasing numbers of managers working in quite unfamiliar cultural settings. Business schools have done well in adapting their course offerings to reflect this new international reality (Wankel & DeFillippi, 2004). It is now common to find colleges and universities offering courses in international business, international marketing, international management, and cross-cultural communication. Moreover, it is not unusual for students to have an international dimension to their business education. In Europe, the Erasmus, Tempus, and Socrates programs have done much to promote the internationalization of business curricula and international student mobility. In the U.S., many colleges and universities allow (and some strategically promote) international student exchanges. Some programs have international travel modules built into their curricula. The result of such initiatives is that a career in international business is now a viable option for many business school graduates (Institute for Career Research, 2005).

The growing opportunities for international travel and trade have not gone unnoticed among missiologists. While there has always been a linking of trade and mission, especially in the practice of tent-making (Hock, 1980; Lewis & World Evangelical Fellowship., 1993; Washburn, 1987), the linking of business and mission has been reformulated through the

Business as Mission movement (Banks, 2000; Bussau & Mask, 2003; Rundle & Steffen, 2003; Ziebell, 1992) where Great Commission Companies offer Christians the opportunity to intentionally create businesses in strategic mission locations including the 10/40 window. These companies seek both to make a profit and win people for Christ.

Along with these new opportunities for business and mission come some new challenges. Traditional mission sending agencies have generally required some theological training, language preparation, and cross-cultural sensitization prior to deploying missionaries in the field. Business professionals, by comparison, are often poorly prepared for some of the international business and cross-cultural challenges that they will face. It is likely that the Christian international business manager receives less prayer support, less theological training, less local support in the host culture, and often weaker moral accountability than the traditional missionary.

After over 20 years of international experience, working in more than 25 countries on five continents, I am concerned that important physical, emotional, and spiritual realities of international business are not adequately discussed in the academy. A number of reasons for the neglect of these issues can be suggested. First, the international business curriculum is already so packed with theory, cases, readings, and exercises that it is difficult for instructors to see where additional content can be added. Second, some instructors might find the practicality of some suggestions too basic to include in classroom discussions. Third, some reason for neglect may be to do with blind spots in our worldviews and theologies. Finally, some instructors might not know how to introduce some of the more sensitive subjects into the classroom environment in a natural and unforced way. Whatever the reason for not addressing these issues, the failure to do so can be very costly to the individual business manager's emotional and spiritual well-being. The better students are prepared to face the realities that they might encounter in the international business world, the more they are likely to maintain their business and Christian integrity.

This paper introduces some of the issues that need to be brought to the attention of international business students. The first three sections introduce literature that explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual realities of international business. The last section shows how the physical, emotional, and spiritual realities of international business can be introduced in the classroom through an innovative use of Sofia Coppola's 2003 movie *Lost in Translation*. The appendix presents a scene-by-scene analysis of *Lost in Translation*.

## Review of the Literature

### Physical Challenges of International Business

#### Jet Lag.

One of the challenges I have faced in teaching international business in the United States is that a significant number of my students have never traveled to another country. In polling students in his classes, it appears that the majority of students that traveled to other countries have engaged in trans-latitude travel (north to Canada or south to Central/Latin America) rather than in trans-meridian travel (west to Asia or east to Europe). Those who have not traveled have no experience of the disorientation that travel can bring. Those who have traveled—but not rapidly over several time zones to strange cultures—have no concept of the additional disorientation that jet lag can bring.

A significant body of research has been conducted into the effects of jet lag. First, research shows that trans-meridian travel across several time zones in a short period of time is significantly more disruptive to the traveler's body clock than trans-latitudinal travel. Research demonstrates that trans-meridian travel detrimentally affects both physical and mental performance (Tapp & Natelson, 1989; Wright, et al., 1983). Chrono-biological research into circadian rhythms (body clocks) shows that decision making skills can be impaired through jet lag (Tapp & Natelson, 1989), a fact that international business travelers need to be cognizant of during complex negotiations.

There is a noteworthy research that can help business travelers minimize the detrimental effects of jet lag. Helpful hints include avoiding caffeine prior to and during travel, avoiding alcohol, doing light exercise when one arrives, staying awake in the new time zone until the normal sleeping time, and considering the use of melatonin. While research is still being conducted in the use of melatonin (Srinivasan, Spence, Pandi-Perumal, Trakht, & Cardinali, 2008; Takahashi, et al., 2000), early results tend to confirm that fast release (sublingual) melatonin is more effective than slow release versions (Arendt, Skene, Middleton, Lockley, & Deacon, 1997). The business traveler who intentionally seeks to minimize the detrimental effects of jet lag is likely to exhibit better performance and remain spiritually healthier.

### **Health.**

A second major physical challenge that may face the international business traveler is staying healthy. Considerable research indicates that long distance air travel can increase the possibility of cross-infection of disease (Spengler & Wilson, 2003). This is particularly the case where there are lower air ventilation rates in the aircraft cabin (Brundrett, 2001). It is advisable for international business travelers to take medical supplies with them during their journey (Deacon & McCulloch, 1990). Ocular irritation is a common problem for air travelers and cabin crew (Lindgren, et al., 2002), so it is advisable for business travelers to include eye drops in their medical kit to help alleviate the symptoms of sore eyes. The simple rule is that it is more difficult for the international business manager to negotiate successfully when his or her body aches.

### **Personal Safety and Security.**

The international business traveler is at risk in a number of situations. There is increased risk of terrorist activities in the world today, and international business travelers must be aware of such risks (Fatehi, 2008; Scotti, 1986). However, international business travelers are more likely to be mugged, drugged, or kidnapped (Wayne & Conde, 2003) than involved in a terrorist incident. There are a number of reasons for this. First, whether the business professionals are from European, African-American, Asian, or Latin backgrounds, they will look distinctly foreign in many parts of the world. Looking different, speaking with different accents, and not being familiar with local costumes, currency, or culture all increase the risks of becoming a target for criminal activity.

Secondly, activities that are regarded as safe in a home environment may be less so overseas. Taxi travel and hotel room safety are two areas of potential risk. In many Central and Latin American countries (e.g., Mexico, Argentina), taxis circulate in abundance. However, not all taxis are safe. For example, in Mexico it is much safer to get a taxi from a licensed taxi stand rather than to stop one in the street. When arriving at an airport, international business travelers

would be safer if they arrange for hotel cars to pick them up. Third, hotel room occupancy is not without risk (Leggat & Klein, 2001). Nearly all travel organizations urge travelers never to open their hotel doors without looking through the peephole and never to let strangers into their rooms (Florio, 2006).

International business travelers ignore security risks at their own peril. Even though I am a cautious traveler, I have been in some difficult situations. He narrowly escaped a mugging in Mexico City, had various articles stolen from a hotel room in Buenos Aires, avoided pickpockets on a Barcelona train, and prevented his luggage from being stolen on the streets of Rome. Not all business travelers are so fortunate, and it is wise to be cautious.

### **Emotional Challenges of International Business**

Each year students approach me because they are interested in careers in international business. However, when asked why, some of them have shared that they think it would be rather glamorous to travel around the world, stay in fancy hotels, and negotiate significant contracts. It would be disingenuous not to admit that such moments do exist; however, they are not the norm. The reality is far more frequently one of high stress, loneliness, isolation, and significant work pressure.

#### **Culture.**

Students should be made aware of how disorientating it is to land in a completely unfamiliar environment, one in which there are few English language cues. Travelers to countries that don't use the Latin alphabet (e.g., Russia, China, Japan, Thailand, Mongolia) are not able to infer meanings from street signs, menus, or other forms of written documentation. All the shop and street signage is often in an unfamiliar language that looks so very foreign. It is very disorientating not to be able to read addresses, restroom signs, shop names, and menus and not able to ask for directions on the street (Marx, 1999).

Culture shock not only forces travelers to rethink their host culture, but also their native culture. Responses to this aspect of culture shock vary. Sometimes it leads to the reinforcement of an ethnocentric belief in the superiority of one's own culture. At other times culture shock leads to a recognition of some of the shallow or unsavory aspects of one's own native culture (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Significant research has been conducted to help managers overcome culture shock so that they stay the full length of their international assignment (Gregersen & Black, 1990). Other useful research is being conducted into how to effectively manage the cultural re-entry of expatriate managers once they return to their home country (Adler, 1981).

#### **Relationships.**

International business brings with it various types of stress including stress as a result of the disruption of family and marital life. Research shows that relationships are disrupted regardless of whether the spouse stays at home or travels with his or her partner (Espino, Sundstrom, Frick, Jacobs, & Peters, 2002). Trying to communicate across multiple time zones only exacerbates the problems of geographical separation. Research indicates that the type of stress and disruption experienced is dependent upon such factors as the non-traveling spouse's

choice of career (Stephens & Black, 1991), the gender of the non-traveling spouse (Linehan & Walsh, 2001), and the degree of choice given over the international assignment (Suutari & Brewster, 2000).

There can be considerable stress in having a trailing spouse on international business trips (Espino, et al., 2002). Research indicates that trailing spouses, who are more often than not female, can experience severe isolation and a loss of identity and self-esteem, especially if they experience a lack of professional activity or meaningful projects to occupy them during their travels (Furnham, 1989). The literature also suggests that the ability of the international business traveler to do well while traveling with a spouse often has a lot to do with the spouse's predisposition to the employer. The better the predisposition, the more likely the assignment is to be successful (Glanz & van der Sluis, 2001).

Relationship stresses are not the only emotional challenge that the international business traveler may face. All too often international locations are an arena for extra marital affairs (Jackson, 1999). Isolation, loneliness, and stress make the traveler particularly vulnerable to sexual temptation. Christian business travelers will do well to follow Scriptural guidelines to guard their eyes (Psalm 101: 3). As Parsons (1998) points out, extra-marital affairs frequently begin with a casual glance held a little too long. Arturburn, Stoeker, and Yorkey (2000, 2003) encourage their readers to guard their eyes in such situations. This advice is also appropriate when it comes to watching television in hotels in foreign countries. Censorship standards are often much lower in some countries, particularly in northern Europe, where nudity is not uncommon on domestic TV. In addition, hotel chains also make significant revenue from pay-per-view pornographic channels in their rooms (Lubove, 2005). Hotel pay-per-view marketing actively targets the lonely traveler. The safest course of action is to ask the front desk to disable all pay-per-view channels (Arterburn, et al., 2003) and select the channel number required by consulting the viewing card rather than flipping from one channel to another.

Finally, the issues of prostitution need to be addressed. Batstone, in his excellent book on the global slave trade, makes the point that in some countries "Paying for sex has become embedded in social rituals. Businessmen use paid sex as a courtesy in the arrangement of commercial deals; if a firm does not offer its clients sex, it may risk losing them to competitors who will" (2007, p. 62).

The more senior the international businessman becomes (women are less vulnerable to this temptation), the more likely sexual services will be offered to him to sweeten the deal. The Christian businessman needs to be on his guard. Otis (1998) points out that even through spiritual invulnerability is an unattainable goal, the cross-cultural traveler can make himself a more elusive target by cultivating humility, walking in obedience, wearing spiritual armor, maintaining spiritual accountability, and developing faithful prayer support.

## Spiritual Challenges of International Business

### Encountering the Universe Next Door.

International travel exposes the traveler to very different cultural and religious belief systems that can begin to make people more receptive to the spiritual realities around them. All too often Western Christians who have never encountered other religious belief systems in their home countries find this very challenging, primarily because they do not have a firm understanding of their own faith and how to communicate the uniqueness of Christ in a pluralist world (Newbigin, 1989). The danger for many international business travelers is that, having only a superficial theological and missiological grounding, they lack the tools to effectively engage the universe next door (Sire & Gardner, 2005). For some, the encounter with other world religions destroys their sense of the uniqueness of Christ. Others may remain personally committed to Christ but lose their evangelistic zeal in the face of rival claims of other world religions. Others are better prepared and find incarnational ways to bring Christ to the people and locations they visit.

Encountering people of other faiths presents both challenges and opportunities. It certainly challenges travelers to examine their own faith, but also provides the opportunity for witness and interfaith dialogue. International travel underlines the fact that the search for meaning and identity is universal. As Hay correctly notes, humans are hard-wired for a relationship with God (Hay, 1987), and this reality can encourage the Christian businessperson to engage in interfaith dialogue (Siker, 1989). Sadly, however, many of these interfaith dialogues, people of other faiths are all too often viewed as “territory to be taken” rather than “a person in whom God has been at work since birth and probably even before birth” (Zahniser, 2002, p. 149).

However, instead of dismissing the religious views of people met on international assignments, Zahniser emphasizes the need to build deep, vulnerable relationships through which God has the opportunity to work (1994, 2002). Quite wonderfully, the building of these deep relationships that are so central to business success in many parts of the world can also become the vehicle through which the Spirit of God can bring the good news of forgiveness to international business associates.

### Encountering Evil Supernaturalism.

International business travel may also sensitize the businessperson to the realities of evil supernaturalism. Paul Hiebert, in his classic paper *The Flaw of the Excluded Middle* (Hiebert, 1982), notes that his Western worldview trained him to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms and ultimate theological questions in theistic terms. However, his Western worldview completely filtered out the possibility that there could be a middle-level of supernatural activity that could have significant influence on his life events. Missionary discourse is replete with accounts of how this supernatural middle-ground may affect our lives (Hesselgrave, 2005; Koch, 1972) as are some Christian counseling books (Anderson & Park, 1993; Horrobin, 2008). Yet, as Westerners, we live our lives ignorant from this reality (Lewis, 1944).

Scripture reveals that evil supernatural forces can inflict disease (Luke: 13:16), perform miracles (Revelations 16:14), be worshipped (Revelations 9:20), bring torment (1 Samuel 16:

14), deceive (1 Kings 22: 21-24), and hinder prayer (Daniel 10:20). Nevertheless, despite these numerous Biblical examples of the activity of evil supernaturalism, the Western worldview makes them sound unbelievable. Indeed as Boyd points out, most Westerners are culturally conditioned to dismiss talk about non-physical beings...as superstitions. Such concepts seem on the same level as science fiction. Even modern Christians, who on the authority of scripture theoretically accept the existence of such invisible beings, (often find such accounts)... incredible. (Boyd, 1997, p. 10)

Scripture indicates a structuring of this middle-level evil. Ephesians 6: 12 and Matthew 12:25-29 reveal a hierarchical organizing; other scriptures indicate that there may also be a territorial structuring. For example, the legion of evil spirits tormenting the demon-possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes begged Jesus not to drive them from the area (Mark 5:10- emphasis added). The angelic visitor who came in answer to Daniel's prayers explained that the Prince of Persia delayed him for 21 days until the angel Michael came to help (Daniel 10: 1-12).

This hypothesis that there may be at least some level of geographical structuring in this middle level of evil supernaturalism has been discussed by a number of writers (Lowe, 1998; McAll, 1996; Wagner, 1991). In particular, Lowe offers a very balanced approach and urges the reader to avoid developing an "overextended middle" in which far too much attention is given to evil supernaturalism (Lowe, 1998, p. 110). If such geographical organizing exists, then Christian international business travelers must be particularly on their guard as they travel from one region to another. Temptations that are easily defeated in one's home spiritual environment may seem more overwhelming in a new and unfamiliar spiritual environment where different or more authoritative evil supernatural forces may be at work. People such as international business managers on overseas assignments are in spiritually vulnerable situations. They may be tired and disoriented, isolated from community support structures and under pressure to secure a contract. Such a combination of factors often makes the international business manager an easy target for spiritual attack.

### Discussion

The movie *Lost in translation* can be used in three ways in the classroom. First, can be used to illustrate general international business issues. Secondly, selected scenes can be used to show the physical, emotional and spiritual challenges of international business discussed in the previous section of this paper. Finally, it can be paused after every scene so that the instructor can discuss the international business aspects that each scene exemplifies. This section covers these first two approaches while a scene-by-scene analysis of the movie is presented in the appendix to illustrate the third approach.

*Lost in Translation* was written and directed by Sofia Coppola for Bill Murray, who plays Bob Harris, a middle aged and fading film star, who goes to Tokyo to film a whisky advertisement. *Lost in Translation* won the 2003 Oscar for *Best Writing, Original Screenplay* and was nominated for *Best Actor in a Leading Role* (Bill Murray), *Best Director* (Sofia Coppola), and *Best Picture*. The other main protagonist is Charlotte (played by Scarlett Johansson), who is accompanying her husband, John (Giovanni Ribisi), a commercial photographer on assignment in Tokyo. Both Bob and Charlotte appear to be disillusioned in their marriages, and the movie explores their developing relationship against the backdrop of bustling Tokyo.



### Using *Lost in Translation* to Illustrate General International Business Issues

The movie raises some significant issues:

- The pressure international business can put on marriage, both when the spouse travels and when he or she remains at home,
- Prostitution and international business,
- The problems of cultural adjustment and international business,
- Health, fatigue, and international business,

Many instructors may not have the classroom time available to use *Lost in Translation* in an extensive way. Nevertheless, it might still be possible for them to incorporate the material to illustrate general international business issues. What follows are some examples of scenes that the instructor might like to use. The appendix provides a brief description of each scene, and it may be helpful to refer to it during the following discussion.

One good illustration is found in scene 10 where Harris is welcomed at his hotel by a group of four Japanese hosts. This scene provides an excellent illustration of Hofstede's Individualism-Collectivism dimension (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Japan, as a collectivist society, sends four people to welcome one person (Bob Harris) from the U.S., an individualistic society. Had Harris been from a collectivist society, he more than likely would have traveled with an entourage. Had he been arriving in an individualistic society, he probably would have been met by only one person. The scene can also be used to raise discussion on the appropriate manner in which to give and receive business cards. In this scene, unbeknownst to Harris, he is quite rude to the Japanese. He does not examine each card to confer on the giver appropriate face. Instead, he does what he has always done in the U.S. and just piles the business cards up in his hands. Students need to be aware that business card protocol is often a sensitive issue in many parts of the world (Martin & Chaney, 2006).

Using the appropriate formality to address people is also important in developing rapport and in giving face in certain cultures. In scene 29, Harris is addressed as "Mr. Bob-san." In the Japanese naming system, Harris is being treated with respect, shown by the addition of the word "san" after his name. In Japan, a very polite society, knowing how to address someone correctly is of extreme importance and getting it wrong can appear rude or result in a loss of face. In ascription cultures, it is advisable to show great respect when speaking with others. It is particularly important for visitors from more informal cultures, such as those from the United States, not to address people by their first names as this can be very disrespectful.

The issue of language appears in several scenes. In scene 14, Harris is greeted by a hotel employee: "Mr. Harris, Pleased to welcome." In many international hotels the level of employee English is good (Blue & Harun, 2002). However, this is not always the case (Hunter, 2007), especially with back-of-house staff. Even among front-of-house staff, English vocabulary is sometimes limited to hotel issues. Business travelers should not simply assume that hotel staff has understood their requests, especially if these requests have significant business implications. In scene 11, Harris uses two puns linking the length of his welcome meeting to the height and nature of his Japanese hosts. Research shows that both humor (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999) and irony (DeVoss, et al., 2002) should be avoided in cross-cultural settings as they are typically not understood and can cause confusion or offense. Even professional interpreters typically do not translate humor because its meaning does not easily translate from culture to culture.

Scenes 30 and 31 illustrate the difficulties of using interpreters in international business negotiations. In scene 30, the interpreter does not translate the majority of the director's instructions to Harris, leaving Harris bewildered asking "Is that all he said?" Language barriers are often significant in international business, and working with interpreters is often very costly (Feely & Harzing, 2003) and not always easy (Filby, et al., 1984). During important negotiations it is advisable for the international business managers to hire their own interpreters. To rely on the host's interpreters may give the host a significant advantage in the negotiations. Interpreters should be chosen who are knowledgeable and experienced in the industry that is the focus on the negotiations. This will help to avoid some common blunders that can happen when words and meanings are incorrectly translated (deliberately or otherwise) in international business negotiations (Ricks, 2006).

Body language significantly differs from country to country (Ferraro, 2002). This is illustrated in two elevator scenes in the movie. The first, scene 13, shows tall Bob Harris standing in an elevator with shorter Japanese men. Their attire is different, and they even look in different directions. Harris looks up at the moving floor number indicators above the elevator door. In contrast, the Japanese business men politely look down. Scene 27 shows Harris once again in an elevator. This time the scene shows a little Japanese girl peeking at Harris, only to be instructed by her father to look straight ahead. This illustrates Japan's neutral (non expressive) business culture (Trompenaars, 1994). Research shows that the Japanese typically give very little direct eye contact (McCarthy, et al., 2006) and look down as a sign of respect.

The movie also illustrates the Japanese concern with uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). Scenes 24 and 52 illustrate Japan's fascination with automation (Porter, 1990). In scene 24, we see Harris's bedroom curtains automatically opening. In scene 52, Harris struggles with the automatic programming of his exercise machine. Automation, whether of curtains, exercise machines, metro trains, or even the wonderful Japanese automatic toilets all serve to filter out human error and reduce uncertainty.

### **Using *Lost in Translation* to Illustrate Physical Realities of International Business**

In scenes 19 and 20, jet-lagged Harris lies wide-awake in his hotel room at 4.20 a.m. In scene 21, a fax arrives from Harris's wife in the middle of the night. She obviously had not thought through the time difference between the U.S. and Tokyo. In scene 7, Harris is seen rubbing his sore eyes during a taxi ride through downtown Tokyo, which can be used to lead into a discussion of international travel health.

*Lost in Translation* shows some potentially high-risk situations. The first, in scene 3, shows Harris riding in the back of a taxi/hotel car. In scenes 44-46, Harris receives a knock at the door, looks through the security peephole, but still opens the door to a woman he does not know. These scenes provide a starting point for discussing personal safety issues.

Other personal safety issues are less obvious to travelers. While Tokyo looks foreign to Harris, Harris stands out as a foreigner to the Japanese. Scene 13 show Harris standing tall in an elevator surrounded by shorter Japanese men. He is dressed differently. His cultural mannerism is different – he looks up at the illuminated floor numbers above the elevator door, the Japanese men politely look downwards. International business travelers need to face the reality that looking foreign increases the risk of theft and mugging.

### **Using *Lost in Translation* to Illustrate Emotional Realities of International Business**

It is very disorientating to land in a country in which there are few language or cultural clues from which to accurately infer meaning. Scene 7 depicts this reality well. Here Harris is being driven through downtown Tokyo. All the shop and street signage is in Japanese, and it looks so very foreign, which creates emotional stress for the traveler.

Research shows that relationships can be disrupted regardless of whether the spouse stays at home (as in Harris's case) or the spouse travels with his or her partner (as in Charlotte's case). The movie explores these issues well. Harris's relationship with his wife is revealed in two faxes he receives from home. In scene 12, Harris receives a fax informing him that he had forgotten his son's birthday. Scene 21 shows another fax arriving at 4.20 a.m. asking Harris to select the type of shelves he wants in his study at home. His facial expression, shown in scene 22, indicates he is not pleased to receive what he considers such a trivial fax in the middle of his night. Trying to communicate across multiple time zones only exacerbates the problems of geographical separation.

The movie also explores the stresses of bringing a trailing spouse on international business trips. Scenes 23 and 37 illustrate this well. In scene 23, Charlotte, a relatively new wife, is discovering that John, her photographer husband, is not all that she had hoped for in a husband. It is the middle of the night, and she is awake. She wants to talk, but John has to work the next day and tells her to go to sleep. He continues snoring. The theme is picked up in scene 37 in which Charlotte calls her friend Lauren in the U.S. Charlotte tells her friend that John has begun to use hair products and that she no longer knows whom she married. Charlotte wants to talk about all of these concerns, but in the middle of her flow of words, Lauren puts her on hold to receive a call on her other line. When Lauren returns to the telephone, the moment has passed, and Charlotte ends the call.

The movie highlights the morally dangerous ground the international business traveler can easily enter. Scene 17 shows Harris in the hotel bar, where the atmosphere is potentially intimate, and the music exacerbates the traveler's loneliness. In scenes 28 and 50, Harris and Charlotte glance at each other a little too long. Scene 43 shows Harris sitting in his hotel room flipping through TV channels. Scenes 45 and 46 expose the role that prostitution can sometime play in international business dealings as Harris's Japanese host hires an expensive prostitute to visit Harris's room. In the movie, Coppola handles this scene well, showing Harris's embarrassment at having been offered such a "gift." It also shows the cultural difficulty Harris finds himself in. He wants to refuse the gift, but does not want to offend the giver such that the giver loses face. The viewer can see Harris's struggle.

### **Using *Lost in Translation* to Illustrate Spiritual Realities of International Business**

*Lost in Translation* raises some important spiritual issues. As the movie progresses, we see Charlotte going through typical stages of culture shock. We know from scenes 23 and 36 that Charlotte is struggling in her relationship with husband. She is lonely and isolated. During the same period of time, she is distancing herself from the superficiality of her own culture (scenes 53 and 55) and embracing Japanese culture. In scene 39, Charlotte is seen putting Japanese decorations in her hotel room. Scene 38 shows her holding her hair to give it a *feathered* Japanese look, curious to see how she would look if she were more Japanese. The juxtaposition of scenes 55 and 56 highlight this cultural struggle she is undergoing. In scene 55, she is struck

by the shallowness of an American actress who believes she has a lot in common with Keanu Reeves because “We both have two dogs and we both live in LA so we have all these different things in common. So you know we both really like Mexican food and yoga and karate.” This is contrasted with the beauty, depth and gracefulness of Japanese culture illustrated in the flower arranging shown in the following scene.

This re-evaluation of the home and host cultures is a common phase of culture shock. Culture shock not only forces us to rethink the host culture, but also our own culture. Responses vary. Sometimes it leads to reinforcing an ethnocentric belief in the superiority of our own culture. At other times it can lead us to recognize some of the shallow or unsavory aspects of our own culture (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Ward, et al., 2001). Significant research has been conducted to help managers overcome culture shock so that they stay the full length of their international assignment (Gregersen & Black, 1990). Other useful research is being conducted into how to effectively manage the cultural re-entry of expatriate managers once they return to their home country (Adler, 1981).

With Charlotte, however, we see her search for meaning and significance entwined in the acculturation process. In her desire to find meaning for her life, she explores the religions of the host culture. In scene 35, she visits a Buddhist temple and hears the monks chanting in prayer. In the following scene (36), we learn that she has experimented with ikebana, but, as she tells her friend Lauren, she did not feel anything. In scene 54, the audience can see that her spiritual journey is taking her more into Eastern mysticism. The narrator of the talking book she is listening to reads

Did you ever wonder what your purpose in life is? This book is about finding your soul’s purpose or destiny. Every soul has a path, but sometimes that path is not clear. The inner map theory is about how each soul begins with an imprint, all compacted into a pattern that has been selected by your soul before you’ve even gotten here. (scene 54)

### Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how *Lost in Translation* can be used to illustrate some of the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges that the international business traveler may encounter. It shows how the movie can facilitate classroom discussion of issues rarely talked about in international business courses: marital stress, safety, loneliness, isolation, and the role of prostitution in the business transaction, especially in some Far Eastern countries. Building on the work of Hiebert (1982), the paper suggests that our typical Western worldview is insensitive to middle-level evil supernaturalism that Scripture suggests is both hierarchically and geographically organized. If some type of spiritual territoriality does exist, then it is likely that the international business traveler frequently moves between different dominions of evil supernaturalism and therefore must be particularly on guard against the schemes of the enemy. This is particularly so because temptations that the international business traveler finds little difficulty in resisting in his or her home environment may seem far more compelling in a new spiritual and cultural environment where perhaps different or more authoritative evil is at work.

Drawing on the Scriptural concept that people are body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5: 23), the paper suggests that international business travelers will both perform better in their jobs as well as be more able to resist temptation and live for Christ if they recognize the nature of the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges that they may face. We seek to overcome jet-lag quickly because that enables us to do a better job and helps us to be more alert to the schemes of

our spiritual enemies. We seek to build strong marriages by openly discussing with our spouses the complexity and challenges that international assignments bring to them. In so doing we are better able to handle the stress international assignments give and avoid giving the enemy even a foothold in our lives (Ephesians 4:27).

While we need to be wary, international business travel presents fabulous opportunities to share our faith. As Christian business travelers, we have the opportunity to be real salt and real light in a complex, pluralist, and fallen world. We shine through accomplishing our international assignments in such a way that God is glorified. We shine by allowing Christ to express his love through us. We shine by resisting the influence of this middle level of evil supernaturalism, and we shine as we bear witness to the transforming power of Christ in our lives. The more effectively Christian business instructors are able to prepare students for the very real physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges that they will most likely encounter in their international assignments, the better we can help them to display the splendor of the Lord in their work.

## Appendix: *Lost in Translation* Scene-by-Scene Analysis

Scene	Time	Scene Description and Observations
1	0.00-0.54	<p>Opening Scene of Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson) resting on a hotel bed in her underwear.</p> <p><i>I recommend that this scene be skipped over as it adds nothing to the discussion and might be unhelpful for some students.</i></p>
2	0.55-1.09	<p>Movie title <i>Lost in Translation</i> is shown against black background. Tokyo Airport announcements can be heard.</p> <p><i>Many U.S. students have never flown outside the U.S. It is useful to point out that airport announcement protocols differ substantially from one country to another. In Europe, for example, there is a growing trend of having no airport announcements at all in an effort to cut down on the noise pollution in airports. Copenhagen airport is an excellent example of this trend. In these quiet environments, passengers who have come to rely on oral announcements can easily miss their flights if they are not careful. It is also helpful to alert students to that fact that traveling to and from non-English speaking airports is invariably more stressful than travel within the U.S., even more so where airport announcements are made on poor public address systems or in unfamiliar English accents.</i></p>
3	1.10-1.30	<p>Bob Harris (Bill Murray) is riding through downtown Tokyo in the back of a taxi.</p> <p><i>Taxi travel differs considerably from one country to another. In many Central and Latin American countries (e.g., Mexico, Argentina), taxis circulate in abundance. However, not all taxis are safe. In Mexico, for example, it is prudent to get a taxi from a licensed taxi stand rather than just stop one in the street. Better still, it is always safer to arrange a hotel car for transfer from the airport and to one's destinations. International business travelers ignore security risks at their own peril. Unfortunately, kidnapping is commonplace in some Latin American and Far Eastern countries.</i></p>
4	1.31-1.54	<p>Scene of downtown Tokyo city lights. All of the writing is in Japanese.</p> <p><i>Students should be made aware of how disorientating it is to land in a completely unfamiliar environment, in which there are few English language cues. Travelers to countries using non-Latin alphabets (e.g., Russia, China, Japan, Thailand, Mongolia) are not able to infer meanings from street signs, menus, or other forms of written documentation. It is very disorientating not to be able to read addresses,</i></p>

*restroom signs, shop names, or menus or be able to ask for directions on the street.*

- 5      *Pause 1.55*      The camera picks out a McDonald's restaurant.
- Among the foreignness of Tokyo, something familiar is seen— McDonald's! It is worth pointing out that American tourist and business travelers are often looked down upon for choosing to eat familiar American style food rather than try local cuisine. It is all too easy to offend a local host by not even trying local cuisine.*
- Before traveling to another country, the international business person should do some research on eating habits and menus. Sometimes, what is viewed as the most delicious food in one county is regarded as the cheap-cut in another. For example, if a Taiwanese gentleman serves his guest a fish head, he is honoring the guest with the most delicious and expensive part of the fish. In contrast, in the United Kingdom fish heads are typically just thrown away by the fishmonger. Also, seating protocols differ widely from one location to another. In Western cultures, the honored guest is seated at or near the head of the table. In Chinese banquets, for example, the guest of honor is seated facing the door. Inappropriately seating guests can result in the host losing face and business traveler losing business!*
- 6      *1.56-2.05*      Bill Murray sees his photograph on a billboard. He is advertising a bottle of whisky.
- International travel affords us the opportunity to look at ourselves from new angles. When we are embedded in the normal, day-to-day routines of our own culture, we tend to take many things for granted. Our sense of ontological security is sustained through the routinization of events (Willmott, 1986). Travel is one of the ways that these routines can be disrupted and can provide opportunities for the type of genuine reflection (Giddens, 1984, 1993) that can be both disturbing and liberating.*
- 7      *2.06-2.09*      Bill Murray rubs his eyes.
- Research consistently shows that transmeridian travel (east-west) across several times zones in a short period of time causes significant disruption to the traveler's body clock, detrimentally affecting both physical and mental performance (Tapp & Natelson, 1989; Waterhouse, Reilly, & Atkinson, 2000; Wright, et al., 1983). Chronobiological research into circadian rhythms shows that decision-making skills can be impaired through jet lag, a fact that international business travelers need to be cognizant of during complex negotiations.*
- There is a noteworthy research being conducted in the use of melatonin to lessen the effects of jet lag), early results tend to confirm that fast*

*release (sublingual) melatonin is more effective than slow release versions (Arendt, et al., 1997).*

*It is also worth suggesting that students take eye drops with them when they travel because eye infections are a fairly common problem for long distance travelers.*

- 8      2.10-2.19      The camera picks out a hypnotic looking billboard sign.
- As melatonin has hypnotic properties (Herxheimer & Waterhouse, 2003; Reilly, Atkinson, & Waterhouse, 1997) and does not appear to be an effective treatment for jet lag with all travelers, it is worthwhile offering other practical advice for transmeridian travel. Published medical advice recommends that travelers should try to stay awake during daylight after westward travel and retire to bed only when it gets dark. After rapid eastward travel across multiple time zones, travelers should avoid bright light early in the morning and be outdoors as much as possible in the afternoon (Herxheimer & Waterhouse, 2003).*
- 9      2.20-2.41      Bob Harris arrives at his Tokyo hotel and is greeted by a party of four people.
- This scene provides an excellent illustration of Hofstede's Individualism-Collectivism dimension (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). In Japan, a collectivist society, four people are sent to welcome one person (Bob Harris) from the U.S., an individualistic society. Had Harris been from a collectivist society, he more than likely would have traveled with an entourage. Had he been arriving in an individualistic society, he would more than likely have been met by only one person.*
- 10     2.42-2.57      Bob Harris receives business cards and gifts from his hosts.
- This scene can be used to raise discussion on the appropriate manner in which to give and receive business cards. In this scene, unbeknownst to Harris, he is quite rude to the Japanese because he does not examine each card to confer on the giver appropriate face. Instead, he does what he has always done in the U.S. and just piles the business cards up in his hands. Students need to be aware that business card protocol is often a sensitive issue in many parts of the world (Martin & Chaney, 2006). In Japan, for example, it is important to carefully read the business card, giving appropriate respect to the giver*
- 11     2.52-2.58      Bob Harris uses a pun "short and sweet" to link the short conversation he has just had to the height of his Japanese hosts. In addition, he employs irony when he tells his hosts to "get some sleep, will you?" It is, in fact, Harris who is in need of sleep.
- Research shows that both humor (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999) and irony (DeVoss, Jaskin, & Hayden, 2002) should be avoided in cross-cultural*



*settings as they are typically not understood and can cause confusion and offense. Even professional interpreters typically do not translate humor because its meaning does not easily translate from culture to culture.*

- 12      2.59-3.12      Bob Harris is given a fax from his wife that tells him that he “forgot Adam’s birthday! I’m sure he’ll understand. Have a good trip, Lynn.”  
*International business travel is disruptive to family life (Espino, et al., 2002). The type of stress and disruption experienced is dependent upon such factors as the non-traveling spouse’s choice of careers (Stephens & Black, 1991), the gender of the non-traveling spouse (Linehan & Walsh, 2001), and the degree of choice given over the international assignment (Suutari & Brewster, 2000).*
- 13      3.13 -3.18      Tall Bob Harris stands in an elevator with short Japanese men. The Japanese men look downwards while Harris looks up at the elevator floor numbers.  
*Body language differs significantly from country to country (Ferraro, 2002). Research shows that the Japanese typically give very little direct eye contact (McCarthy, Lee, Itakura, & Muir, 2006) and look down as a sign of respect.*
- 14      3.19 -3.34      Bob Harris is greeted by hotel employees. One employee says, “Mr. Harris, Pleased to welcome.”  
*In many international hotels, the level of employee English is good (Blue & Harun, 2002). However, this is not always the case (Hunter, 2007) , especially with back-of-house staff. Even among front-of-house staff, English vocabulary is sometimes limited to hotel issues. Travelers should not simply assume hotel staff has understood their requests, especially if there are significant business implications.*
- 15      3.39-3.452      A Japanese hotel manager bows in traditional Japanese manner to Bob Harris. Harris returns the bow.  
*Considerable research has been conducted into the extent to which an international business person should attempt to adapt to the culture of the host society. Research evidence suggests that those who pursue a “moderate adaptation” strategy are more successful in winning business than those who pursue a “no adaptation” or a “substantial adaption” strategy (Francis, 1991). The “no adaptation” strategy is often regarded as insensitive while “substantial adaptation” is seen as inauthentic.*

- 16      3.53-405      Bob Harris sits in his hotel room watching television. European chamber music can be heard from the TV.
- Hotel rooms often desensitize us to local culture. Semiotically, they are often designed to make the guest feel at home (Siguaw & Enz, 1999) and comfortable (Frow, 1997). Apart from minimalistic local artwork, it is often difficult for travelers to identify which country they are in by examining the interior of a hotel room. This cultural isolation can inhibit the guest from engaging in the culinary and cultural realities of the host country.*
- 17      4.06- 4.33      Bob Harris sits in the hotel bar. A Caucasian woman sings “I’m in your arms and you are kissing me.” The hotel bar has a few couples; it is mainly occupied by men.
- Hotels are designed to promote particular forms of social networking (Urry, 2003). Travelers are often displaced and lonely. It is therefore no surprise that hotel architecture, services, and marketing often all seek to draw guests to connect in the hotel bar (Teare, 1993). In some countries (e.g., Ireland) the pub and hotel bar are central to local social networking. The Christian international business traveler should be aware that meeting in a bar is not seen as morally problematic in many countries.*
- 18      4.33-5.16      Bob Harris is still in the hotel bar. Two loud American businessmen ask him why he is in Tokyo. Harris is dishonest, telling them that he is visiting friends.
- While not wanting to be cynical, it is good to advise students that not everything they hear from their international business partners is necessarily true. Even in the United States, research indicates that lying is become more prevalent (McConnon, 2007). In some cultures it is regarded as completely ethical to distort any item to one’s advantage (Blackman, 1997). Furthermore, what are regarded as ethical business practices differ considerably from culture to culture (Christie, Kwon, Stoeberl, & Baumhart, 2003). The international business manager needs to be on his or her guard.*
- 19      5.17-5.23      The bedside clock reads 4:20 in the morning. Harris is awake, suffering from jet lag.
- See scene 7 (above).*
- 20      5.18-5.30      Harris resigns himself to the fact that he will not sleep.
- See scene 7 (above).*

- 21      5.31-5.51      A fax from Harris’s wife begins printing on his hotel room facsimile machine. The message reads, “You didn’t tell me which shelves you want in your study. Please pick one out and let me know. I’m having lots of quality time with the construction crew. Hope you are having fun there. Love, Lydia.”
- International business brings with it various types of stress (Striker, Dimberg, & Liese, 2000), including stress as a result of the disruption of family life (Striker, et al., 1999). Communication across time zones only acerbates potential points of conflict.*
- 22      5.52- 6.05      Harris’s facial expression suggests that he finds the fax trivial.
- Harris is obviously annoyed that his wife had not considered time zone differences when sending her fax. While the fax was sent from the U.S. in the early afternoon, time zone differences meant it was received very early in the morning in Tokyo. Harris is particularly annoyed that the fax concerned a relatively unimportant (at least to him) domestic issue. Managing time zones is not just a domestic problem. As firms and workgroup members become more spatially and globally distributed, communication becomes more complex (Hinds & Kiesler, 2002).*
- 23      6.06-6.56      This scene introduces the audience to the second main protagonist—Charlotte. The scene opens with her sitting on a hotel windowsill gazing out over Tokyo at night. She hears her husband, John, snoring in bed. She asks if he is awake and calls his name, but he tells her to “go to sleep.” He continues to snore. At the close of the scene, she has an unhappy and perplexed look on her face.
- There can be considerable stress in having a trailing spouse on international business trips (Espino, et al., 2002), and this scene illustrates this. John has to work the next day and wants to sleep. Charlotte feels alone in Tokyo and wants to talk. They are a relatively newly married couple, and she is discovering that John is not all that she had hoped for in a husband. This experience of work-family conflict or family-work conflict is not uncommon, and both are correlated with burnout both for those on international assignments as well as those who only work domestically (Westman, et al., 2008).*
- 24      6.57-7.12      Harris’s bedroom curtains open automatically.
- The scene illustrates a number of differences in national culture. It illustrates differences in a culture’s attitude to technology, and particularly Japan’s fascination with automation (Porter, 1990). The scene can also be used to talk about Trompenaars’ dimensions of time (Trompenaars, 1993) and Hofstede’s uncertainty avoidance dimension (Hofstede, 1980). The automatic opening of the curtains reflects Japan’s sequential use of time in which time is seen as a thin line of events that*

- take place one after another. Punctuality is stressed, and time is regarded as an important commodity. The automatic opening emphasizes that it is time to get up and the best use of the time available. That the curtains open automatically also illustrates the Japanese concern to avoid uncertainty. The more automated a process can be made, the less human involvement is needed and therefore the fewer errors are likely to be made.*
- 25      7.13-7.36      This scene shows Harris trying to take a shower. The shower is obviously designed for shorter Japanese people. Harris has to squat down to get his head under the shower.
- Understanding personal hygiene differences in other countries is part of cross-cultural intelligence (Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006) because cultures differ significantly in terms of what is regarded as clean and dirty in relation to bodily functions (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).*
- 26      7.36-8.02      John gets a phone call and has to leave for work. Charlotte is left all alone in the hotel room.
- While the majority of accompanying spouses are women (Tung, 1998), some useful research has been conducted into the reverse situation where the woman is the expatriate manager, and the trailing spouse is male (Jane, Olga, & Mary, 1992; Mayrhofer & Scullion, 2002).*
- 27      8.03 8.12      In a crowded elevator, a little girl glances up at Harris. Her father, who is standing behind her, redirects her attention frontwards.
- The instructor can use this scene to illustrate cultural differences in politeness (Hoenig, 1985). Research suggests that different cultures handle small space environments, such as elevators, very differently (Hirschauer, 2005). A wise business person, especially from expressive cultures such as the U.S., should be careful to observe local elevator customs so as not to appear rude.*
- 28      8.13-8.30      Harris and Charlotte smile at each other in lift.
- When in unfamiliar cultural territory, we tend to hook up with people from similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Breaking out of our cultural comfort zones is always challenging (Volet & Ang, 1998). Firms that positively seek out workers with values that support integration tend to be better at identifying and preparing workers more suitable for overseas assignments (Fish, 1999).*
- It is significant to note that Harris and Charlotte glance at each other just a little too long. Parsons (1998) makes the point that marital affairs often begin with a glance held just a little too long. Arturburn encourages us to guard our eyes in such situations (Arterburn, et al.,*

- 2000, 2003). Others emphasize the importance of recognizing how sin may gain a foothold in our lives (Dennis & Jeffcoat, 2002). It is important to emphasize that the international business traveler is in a potentially vulnerable state and should plan to avoid situations and activities that could lead to sexual sin.
- 29      8.31-8.53      The Japanese Director of a TV commercial that Harris is about to record approaches Harris and addresses him as “Mr. Bob-san.”
- In the Japanese naming system, Harris is being treated with respect, as shown by the addition of the word “san” after his name. In Japan, a very polite society, knowing how to address someone correctly is extremely important, and getting it wrong can appear rude or result in a loss of face. In ascription cultures, it is advisable to show great respect when speaking with others. It is particularly important for visitors from more informal cultures to avoid addressing people by their first names, as this can be very disrespectful.*
- 30      8.54-9.30      The Japanese director refers to Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, but this reference is not picked up by Harris’s interpreter who simply tells Harris that the director wants you “to turn and look in camera.” Harris is mystified because the director speaks for a long time, but the interpreter summarizes his comments in just one sentence. Harris therefore asks the interpreter “Is that all he said”?
- Language barriers are often significant in international business, and working with interpreters is often very costly (Feely & Harzing, 2003) and not always easy (Filby, Mackenzie-Williams, & Partop, 1984). It is advisable for business travelers to use their own interpreters rather than rely on the host firm to provide them, as this may give the host firm a competitive advantage in the negotiations. The international business manager should select translators who are knowledgeable and experienced in their industry (Ricks, 2006).*
- 31      9.31-10.45      Harris is now in a studio recording a whisky commercial. The director gives him long instructions in Japanese, which the interpreter summarizes very briefly. Harris looks bewildered and again asks the interpreter “is that everything? It seems like he said quite a bit more than that.”
- See scene 30 (above).*
- 32      10.46-12.00      The director (through the interpreter) asks Harris to “do it slower and with more intensity.” Harris does not understand what he is being asked to do.
- See scene 30 (above).*
- 33      12.01-12.07      Charlotte examines a large map of the Tokyo subway system.

*It is always useful to buy a map of the city being visited. This not only helps with orientation but also should enable business people to plan their days more effectively to avoid arriving late for meetings. Late arrival is very much frowned upon in the Far East.*

- 34      12.08-12.15      Charlotte is riding on a crowded metro train. She glances at a young man reading *manga*. A full page sketch of a nude character is clearly visible to her and other passengers.

*The international business person should be on the lookout for cultural artifacts that may penetrate the host culture's values. However, some caution is needed. In Japan, manga is one contemporary art form that typically addresses issues such as humor, nudity, romance, gender roles and violence (Brenner, 2007). The Christian business person, however, should be made aware that manga content can be sexually graphic and violent. In their research of contemporary manga art, Perper and Cornig (2002) note that manga contains scenes of heterosexual courtship and consummation, homosexuality, sadomasochism, incest, bestiality, transvestitism, and violent rape.*

- 35      12.15-13.09      Charlotte visits a Buddhist temple. The experience has a deep impact on her.

*International business travel makes one very aware of the claims of other world religions. The Christian business person who wants to advance the Great Commission on his or her travels will do well to have thought through how to present Christ effectively in a pluralist world (Hesselgrave, 1978; Newbigin, 1978, 1989).*

- 36      13.11-14.03      Charlotte calls her friend Lauren in the U.S. She tells Lauren about her visit to the Buddhist temple and about her attempts at *ikebana*. She then begins to explain that John has begun to use hair products and that she doesn't "know who she married." Charlotte wants to talk about her concerns but Lauren puts her on hold. When Lauren returns to the telephone the moment has passed, and Charlotte ends the call.

*Charlotte is feeling increasingly isolated. Even her attempts to discuss her feelings with her good friend are thwarted. What is interesting to note is that her isolation is leading her to explore spiritual issues. Finney's excellent work on how people find faith today suggests that this exploration is quite common (Finney, 1992). What is sad, of course, is that she does not consider the Church in any part of this spiritual quest. Part of the reason for this is that she is exploring Eastern religions as part of her acculturation process. On an encouraging note, the scene also shows how travel can make people more willing to enter into spiritual discussions, particularly if these discussions are centered on the felt need of the individual.*

- 37      14.03-14.24      Charlotte feels very isolated, cut-off from her husband, who is absorbed in his work, and isolated from her friends back home, who are busy with their own lives. Charlotte weeps and gathers herself.
- The trailing spouse, who is more often than not female, can suffer severe isolation and loss of identity, especially if she experiences a lack of professional activity or a meaningful project to occupy herself (Furnham, 1989). Research indicates that the ability of an international business traveler to do well while traveling with a spouse often has a lot to do with the spouse's predisposition to the employing organization. The better the predisposition, the more likely the assignment is to be successful (Glanz & van der Sluis, 2001).*
- 38      14.25-14.45      This is a well-observed scene. Charlotte puts on lipstick and then holds her hair in a very typical Japanese “feathered” hairstyle.
- The adoption of a Japanese hairstyle is a visual expression of the process of acculturation that most travelers go through when they come into contact with a new culture. We often ask ourselves what we need to do to be acceptable in our host culture and what we need to do to fit in (Roccas, Horenczyk, & Schwartz, 2000).*
- 39      14.46-15.14      Charlotte puts up Japanese flowers in her hotel room.
- The scene shows the acculturation process that Charlotte is undergoing. The flowers indicate that she is beginning to assimilate her new culture (Sam & Berry, 2006).*
- 40      15.15-15.41      John talks to Charlotte about his recent photo shoot of a band. He describes the band as “skinny and nerdy” but notes that they were made to look tough by wearing Keith Richard clothing.
- The scene reminds us that our choice of clothing is an important part of the way we construct our identities. The acculturation process challenges us to think about our fashion choice and the identity we want to construct (Davis, 1992).*
- 41      15.42-15.54      Charlotte puts on a scarf and asks John if he thinks it looks okay. John is packing his photography case and neither pays attention to Charlotte nor offers any constructive advice.
- John shows us that he carefully examines the subjects of his photo shoot, paying careful attention to their fashion sense. When his wife asks him a fashion question about her scarf, he hardly looks at her and expresses no opinions. Obviously John is distracted by his work preparation, but his indifference to his wife does not help them work through their marriage difficulties. She is feeling isolated and alone. When she is looking for support (symbolized by her asking for comments about her scarf), no support is forthcoming from her husband. John seems more caught up in*

*his work than with his wife. These pressures and tensions between the international business person and the trailing spouse are not uncommon at all.*

- 42     15.55-16.04     Charlotte lights a cigarette. John is exasperated and asks her to “please stop smoking.” She indicates that she will, but not at the moment.
- This exchange is an indication of the stress and irritability John and Charlotte are beginning to experience with each other. The trip to Japan is not turning out as they had hoped, and unresolved issues and frustrations are beginning to surface. Research suggests that such tensions are not uncommon (Furnham, 1989).*
- 43     16.05-16.49     Harris returns to his room and flips through TV channels. He sees U.S. movies dubbed into Japanese as well as some Japanese TV shows.
- The Christian businessman should be very wary of flicking through TV channels in foreign countries. First, on domestic TV, censorship standards are often much lower, particularly in northern Europe where nudity is not uncommon on domestic TV. Hotel chains also make significant revenue from pay-per-view pornographic channels (Lubove, 2005). The safest course of action is to ask the hotel’s front desk to disable all pay-per-view channels (Arterburn, et al., 2003) and select the channel number required by consulting the viewing card rather than flipping from one channel to another.*
- 44     16.50-16.59     There is a knock on Harris’s door. He looks through the peephole to see who it is and opens the door.
- All travelers in hotels are vulnerable to theft or bodily attack. The advice always given by the hotel industry is never to open one’s hotel door without looking through the peephole, and never to let strangers into the room (Florio, 2006).*
- 45     19.00-19.21     An elegantly dressed young woman stands at the door and tells Harris that “Mr. Kazu sends premium fantasy.” Harris lets her into the room.
- The woman is a prostitute who has been contracted by Harris’s host to provide him with sexual services. She is a “premium fantasy,” indicating that her services are very expensive and her services are intended to show Harris how much he is appreciated by his host. Prostitution is one of the ethical challenges that international businessmen often encounter (McNeil & Pedigo, 2001). Indeed, as Batstone (2007) has pointed out, paying for sex for business clients has become an embedded business ritual in many Far Eastern countries. Not providing such services may even result in the loss of lucrative contracts.*



- 46      19.22-18.04      Harris is taken aback that his guest is a prostitute. When he discovers this, he wants her to leave as soon as possible. The situation, however, is delicate. Harris does not want Mr. Kazu to lose face and therefore tells the woman to “tell Mr. Kazu we had a blast.”
- This is a humorous scene, but also a sad one. The international business person, especially men, must always be on their guard in environments in which sexual services are sometimes part of the business transaction. Scripture exhorts us to “be alert and of sober mind” because “your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8 TNIV).*
- 47      18.50-19.30      Charlotte walks through downtown Tokyo with an umbrella. She sees huge digital images of dinosaurs walking across the front of buildings.
- This scene once again shows the Japanese fascination with technology. American business people are often taken aback at how advanced other countries (such as Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan) are in their use of technology. Instructors teaching international marketing might also point out the way in which the Japanese use sophisticated digital media in their advertising.*
- 48      19.30-20.56      Harris is told that he has received a request from Tanabe Mori—“the Johnny Carson of Japan,” to appear on Mori’s show. Harris responds by saying “I’m surprised and honored but I think I need to check with my agent. I believe I may have a previous commitment.” He calls his agent and tells him “I’ve got to get out of here as soon as I can.” The agent persuades him to stay.
- Even though Harris does not want to do this interview, his initial response is culturally appropriate. He expresses that he is honored to receive the invitation, but gives a face-saving response indicating that he believes he has a prior appointment. If he had simply said he did not want to do the interview, then his host would have lost face and this would have had a detrimental impact on their working relationship.*
- 49      20.57-23.33      Harris is back in the studio recording the whisky advertisement. He tells the director that his glass contains iced tea, not whisky. The director asks him to play the scene in the style of the “Lat Pack” (Rat Pack) and “Loger Moore” (Roger Moore).
- The scene shows the limited knowledge that many internationals have of America. Often all that is known of America is the images portrayed by Hollywood, or from what they know of American foreign policy. As Sardar and Davies (2002) note, it is little wonder that people hate America if this is all they know of it.*

- 50      23.34-24.24      Charlotte and Bob look at each other across the hotel bar. “Scarborough Fair” is being sung in the background.  
*It is worth noting that the hotel bar has a romantic atmosphere. “Scarborough Fair” is being sung by the session band, including lyrics about a lost true love. Bob and Charlotte look at each other again and an increased level of intimacy is reached between these two lonely people.*
- 51      24.48-25.04      John and Charlotte sit with Japanese hosts in a hotel bar. John asks some very basic questions about Japanese religion and culture.  
*John unwittingly discloses that he did no research on Japanese culture prior to his business trip. His questions are of the most basic nature; questions that would have been addressed in any basic guidebook. A better approach would have been for him to have done some preliminary research so that his questions could have been more insightful. In such a way, he could have gained face instead of losing it.*
- 52      25.05-26.14      Harris struggles with an automated treadmill that will not stop and injures himself while trying to get off the machine.  
*A humorous scene that again displays the Japanese fascination with technology and automation. See scene 24 (above).*
- 53      26.15-28.10      John and Charlotte walk arm-in-arm through the hotel lobby. They meet a female movie star who describes John as her favorite photographer. John flirts with her in front of Charlotte. The movie star tells John to call her and informs him that she is registered under the name of Evelyn Waugh. When the actor leaves, Charlotte points out that Evelyn Waugh was a man. John retorts that not everyone went to Yale.  
*Culture shock not only forces us to rethink the host culture, but also our own culture. Sometimes this analysis can lead to a reinforcement of ethnocentric beliefs in the superiority of our own culture. At other times, it may cause us to recognize some of the shallow or unsavory aspects of our own culture (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Ward, et al., 2001). Significant research has been conducted on how to help managers overcome culture shock so that they stay the full length of their international assignment (Gregersen & Black, 1990). Other useful research is being conducted into how to effectively manage the cultural re-entry of expatriate managers once they return to their home country (Adler, 1981).*
- 54      28.11-28.32      Charlotte listens to a talking book on the purpose of life. The narrator asks “did you ever wonder what your purpose in life is? This book is about finding your soul’s purpose or destiny. Every soul has a path but sometimes that path is not clear. The inner map theory is about how each

soul begins with an imprint, all compacted into a pattern that has been selected by your soul before you've even gotten here.”

*As part of the acculturation process, we are often exposed to new religious ideas. This can be challenging even for Christians, especially if they have not given any great consideration to how to proclaim Christ in a pluralist world (Newbigin, 1989).*

- 55      28.33      Charlotte overhears the press conference given by the actress she met earlier (scene 53). The actress tells the press that she has much in common with Keanu Reeves: “We both have two dogs, and we both live in L.A. so we have all these different things in common. So you know we both really like Mexican food and yoga and karate.” Charlotte is struck by the shallowness of the actress and of U.S. culture.

*See scene 56 (below).*

- 56      29.11-20.38      Charlotte wanders into a flower arranging class in the hotel. The cultural shallowness of the previous scene is juxtaposed with the beauty and grace of this Japanese art.

*The juxtaposition of scenes 55 and 56 is interesting and powerful; in scene 55, Charlotte is struck by the superficiality of her own culture, and this is contrasted with the depth and beauty of the flower arranging in scene 56. Managing the effects of culture shock is difficult (Guy & Patton, 1996). A common response is to overstate the negative aspects. The new and unknown culture, by comparison, looks more sophisticated. The two scenes together clearly show this process at work in Charlotte's life.*

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