

Media and Teenagers: The image of Paris through the Series *Miraculous* and *Emily in Paris*

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Abstract

Media representations significantly influence the image of tourism destinations and shape potential tourists' perceptions and travel motivations. Television series and animated productions increasingly serve as powerful promotional tools that contribute to destination branding and the promotion of particular lifestyles. This study examines the portrayal of Paris in the television series *Emily in Paris* and the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* and explores their potential influence on the perception of the French capital among teenagers. The research is based on a qualitative content analysis of selected episodes from both series, focusing on the representation of Parisian landmarks, cultural elements, lifestyles, and recurring themes associated with the city. In addition, a reflexive interpretation from the perspective of a teenager was employed to examine how young viewers may perceive and emotionally engage with these media representations. The findings reveal that both series construct a highly positive and romanticized image of Paris, emphasizing iconic attractions, fashion, culture, adventure, friendship, and urban lifestyles. While *Emily in Paris* presents Paris as a glamorous and fashionable destination, *Miraculous* portrays it as a vibrant setting for adventure and personal growth. These representations contribute to the construction of an attractive destination image that may encourage interest in visiting Paris among young audiences. The study highlights the importance of visual media in shaping tourism imaginaries and demonstrates how fictional narratives can influence teenagers' perceptions of real-world destinations.

Keywords: media, social media, social impact, young tourists, Paris, cartoons, series, reflexive thinking

1. Introduction

The relationship between media and tourism has become increasingly important in contemporary society, where visual content plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of places and influencing travel decisions (Gibson & Connell, 2025). Popular culture, characterized by its widespread appeal, accessibility, and commercial nature, can influence travel behaviour by fostering emotional connections between audiences and the places, characters, and narratives portrayed in films, television series, and literature, thereby motivating visits to related destinations (Ludberg et al., 2024). Films, television series, animated productions, cartoons and social media platforms contribute to the construction of

destination images by presenting specific narratives, cultural attractions, and other attractive visual representations of places. As a result, cartoons and series often function as indirect marketing tools that promote destinations to global audiences and stimulate tourism demand.

What contributes to destination image? The image of a destination is shaped by a wide range of factors (Wang et al., 2023). The concept of destination image refers to the complex collection of beliefs, impressions, emotions, and perceptions that individuals associate with a particular place, and according to Wang et al. (2023), the emergence of electronic media, virtual reality, digital technologies, and big data has significantly altered the processes and determinants involved in destination image formation, making tourists' travel behaviour increasingly complex and dynamic. According to tourism scholars, destination images are formed through various information sources, including personal experience, word-of-mouth communication, traditional media, and digital media (Wang et al., 2023). Among these sources, visual media have become particularly important because they enable viewers to experience destinations imaginatively before physically visiting them.

Paris is one of the world's most popular tourism destinations also for teenagers and has long been represented in literature, film, television, and popular culture. Often portrayed as the city of romance, fashion, art, and culture, Paris holds a leading position in the global tourism imagination. Contemporary television productions continue to reinforce and reinterpret these images for new generations of viewers. Two examples are the Netflix series *Emily in Paris* and the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*. Although intended for different audiences, both productions use Paris not merely as a setting but as a fundamental element of their narratives. *Emily in Paris* presents the French capital through themes of fashion, luxury, gastronomy, romance, and urban lifestyle, offering viewers a glamorous and idealized representation of the city. In contrast, *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* introduces younger audiences to Paris through stories of friendship, adventure, personal growth, and heroism, while simultaneously showcasing famous landmarks and recognizable urban spaces. Both series contribute to constructing specific images of Paris that may influence how young viewers perceive the destination. Teenagers represent a particularly important audience for film tourism because they are highly exposed to visual media and frequently develop perceptions of destinations through fictional narratives before acquiring direct travel experience. Understanding how media portrayals shape their impressions can therefore contribute to a better understanding of destination image formation among younger generations.

The aim of this study is to examine how Paris is represented in *Emily in Paris* and *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* and to explore how these representations may be perceived by teenagers. Through content analysis and reflexive interpretation, the study seeks to identify dominant themes, visual elements, and destination attributes associated with Paris and to evaluate their potential influence on young audiences' perceptions of the city.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach combining content analysis with reflexive interpretation. The purpose of the research is to identify and examine representations of Paris in the television series *Emily in Paris* and the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* and to explore how these representations may contribute to the formation of destination images among teenagers.

2.2 Data Collection

The research material consists of selected episodes from *Emily in Paris* and *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*. Episodes were selected based on the prominence of Parisian settings and the visibility of cultural, social, and tourism-related elements associated with the city. Particular attention was paid to scenes featuring famous landmarks, public spaces, cultural symbols, lifestyle representations, and interactions that contribute to the construction of Paris as a tourism destination.

2.3 Content Analysis

A qualitative content analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes and patterns in the representation of Paris. The analysis focused on four main categories:

1. Parisian landmarks and urban spaces, including monuments, streets, parks, bridges, and other recognizable locations.
2. Cultural and lifestyle representations, including fashion, gastronomy, art, social interactions, and everyday life.
3. Emotional and symbolic associations, including romance, adventure, elegance, creativity, and personal development.
4. Destination attractiveness, including elements that may motivate viewers to visit Paris.

The selected episodes were viewed multiple times, and relevant scenes were coded according to these categories. Emerging themes were then compared across both series to identify similarities and differences in their portrayal of Paris.

2.4 Reflexive Interpretation

To complement the content analysis, a reflexive interpretation was conducted from the perspective of a teenager as a representative member of the target audience. This approach involved critically reflecting on how a young viewer might perceive, interpret, and emotionally respond to the representations of Paris presented in the two series.

The reflexive process considered questions such as: What image of Paris is created through the narrative and visual elements? Which aspects of the city appear most attractive to teenagers? How might these representations influence a teenager's desire to learn more about or visit Paris? Through this interpretive lens, the study examined the potential impact of media portrayals on the construction of tourism imaginaries and destination perceptions.

2.5 Limitations

The study is limited by its qualitative nature and the subjective character of reflexive interpretation. The findings do not claim to represent the perceptions of all teenagers but rather provide insight into how media representations of Paris may be interpreted by members of this audience group. Future research could complement these findings through surveys, interviews, or focus groups involving teenage viewers.

3. Results

Results are presented in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Content Analysis and Interpretation

Category	Emily in Paris	Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir	Interpretation from a Teenager's Perspective
Parisian Landmarks	Eiffel Tower, Seine, cafés, luxury districts frequently featured	Eiffel Tower, Louvre, Notre-Dame, Paris streets integrated into adventures	Paris appears instantly recognizable, attractive, and worth visiting.
Fashion and Style	Central element of the narrative; luxury brands and stylish lifestyles	Present through characters' appearance but less dominant	Paris is perceived as a fashionable and trendy city.
Culture and Heritage	Gastronomy, art, architecture, cultural events	Historical monuments and cultural symbols appear in the background	Teenagers associate Paris with culture and history while still seeing it as modern and exciting.
Romance	Strong emphasis on romantic relationships and emotions	Limited romantic elements; focus on friendship and teamwork	Paris is imagined as a romantic destination, especially by viewers of <i>Emily in Paris</i> .
Adventure	Social and professional challenges of the protagonist	Superhero missions and constant action	Paris is perceived as exciting and full of opportunities and experiences.
Social Life	Cafés, restaurants, social gatherings, networking	School life, friendships, family interactions	Teenagers can easily identify with the social aspects of life in Paris.
Safety and	Mostly idealized	Conflicts exist but are	The city appears

Reality	representation with few negative aspects	resolved positively	welcoming, safe, and appealing.
Overall Destination Image	Glamorous, sophisticated, luxurious	Dynamic, youthful, adventurous	Together, both series create a highly positive and idealized image of Paris.

4. Discussion

The content analysis demonstrates that both series construct Paris as an exceptionally attractive tourism destination, although through different narrative approaches. *Emily in Paris* emphasizes glamour, fashion, romance, and luxury, creating an image of Paris as a sophisticated destination associated with elegance and lifestyle aspirations. In contrast, *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* presents Paris as a city of adventure, friendship, and personal growth, making it particularly appealing to younger audiences.

From a teenager's perspective, the most influential elements are likely to be the visual attractiveness of the city, the recognizable landmarks, and the exciting experiences associated with the characters. The analysis suggests that young viewers may develop a romanticized perception of Paris, seeing it as a place where culture, friendship, adventure, and personal dreams converge. Consequently, both series contribute to strengthening Paris's image as a desirable destination and may stimulate interest in visiting the city in the future.

5. Teenager's Reflexive Interpretation

I often find myself wondering why social networks exert such a powerful influence on our perception of the world. They affect everyone: older people, those in middle age, and even the youngest inhabitants of this planet. I frequently hear my grandmother watching the news on television, only for the broadcast to be interrupted by advertisements for various ointments and creams. Before I even fully register that a commercial has begun, my grandmother is already sitting at the computer, asking me for help because she does not know how to order that particular cream online by herself. My mother often reads advertisements that present different places as perfect summer destinations, and, unsurprisingly, those are the places our family ends up visiting next. The youngest children love watching cartoons and animated films, yet all these shows must be set somewhere. Most often, they take place in cities which, due to the popularity of a particular cartoon, become highly attractive and wellknown tourist destinations. Many places that are now considered major tourist hotspots might never have gained such recognition without the support of social media, cartoons, advertisements, and films. And now, everyone wants to visit them. I can confirm this from my own experience, because as a child I loved spending time watching my thenfavourite cartoon — Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir. The cartoon told the story of two superheroes — Ladybug and Cat Noir — who protected the inhabitants of their city from the villain Hawk Moth. He wanted

to obtain their Miraculouses (pieces of jewellery that granted their wearers special powers or abilities) in order to fulfil his own wish. The story took place in Paris. I began watching Miraculous around the third grade. The show was extremely engaging, never dull, and constantly filled with action, which is why I continued watching it more and more. I spent a great deal of time in front of the screen. The cartoon subtly showcased various parts of Paris, presenting the city in an exceptionally appealing way. It frequently displayed the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the main square, macarons, croissants — portraying Paris in the most beautiful possible light. Without even realizing it, I began to like Paris more and more. I could even say that the city became dear to my heart, despite the fact that I had never visited it. At first, I did not care about it at all, but later I grew fond of it, and eventually I even went to my parents, begging them to buy plane tickets to Paris. Because the cartoon depicted Paris as a beautiful, peaceful, and safe city without any crime, I could not believe my parents, who had already visited Paris, when they repeatedly told me “no.” In their opinion, Paris was nothing special. They also explained how expensive everything was, but I could not accept that, since the cartoon had shown the complete opposite. As a result, I did not succeed in convincing them to take a trip to the French capital.

Five years passed, and my mother had to travel to Paris for work. By that time, I was older. Many people would assume that my desire to visit Paris had faded, but as I grew older, my wish to travel there only intensified. And then the moment I had been waiting for finally arrived. I began packing everything necessary for the trip to France, and before I knew it, I was already on the plane to Paris. I was incredibly excited and wanted to visit every part of the city that had appeared in the cartoon. Watching Miraculous had given me the impression that I knew Paris like the back of my hand, and I was convinced that I could navigate the city without Google Maps or any physical map. However, once I arrived, I realized that my expectations had been completely wrong. The city was not clean, police officers were stationed everywhere because of potential crime, and cafés and shops were extremely expensive. Even the Eiffel Tower was not particularly impressive. At that moment, I began to reflect. How could a cartoon have created such an idealized image of a city in my mind? Simply by watching it — without ever visiting the real place — I had wanted to rank Paris among my three favourite destinations in the world. But after actually visiting it, I realized that my parents, who had already been there, had been right all along. I understood then that the cartoon had essentially been a large advertisement for Paris, and that I must be careful about what I believe and how quickly I accept something as true. I also realized that I should make an effort to listen to and trust my parents, because they have experienced and seen far more than I have. After the trip, I must admit that Paris is worth visiting, but I certainly would not rank it among the most beautiful or affordable holiday destinations. We should place less trust in social media, which presents cities and advertises them in a manner very similar to Miraculous.

A few years later, I came across the series Emily in Paris. At first glance, I liked it very much and began watching it. It also contained many plot twists and quickly became one of my favourite shows. Every afternoon after school, I would rush to the couch, prepare some snacks, turn on Netflix, and start watching my new favourite series. In less than a month, I had already finished it. Because I had become accustomed to spending my free time after

school watching the show, I felt extremely bored once it ended. I did not know what to do with myself, none of my friends were available, so I lay down on the couch again, but this time not to watch television. Out of sheer boredom, to my own surprise, I began to think. While thinking, I remembered Miraculous and how desperately I had wanted to visit Paris because the cartoon had made the city seem so enchanting. Then I realized that Emily in Paris had once again increased my interest and desire to return to Paris. At that moment, I finally understood that all series, cartoons, films, and advertisements operate on the same principle. They present an interesting story or a character, often a superhero, who lives in a particular city. And because the show becomes popular, the city itself becomes a tourist attraction.

This does not apply only to Paris. There are many other films and similar works that choose a city, whether already touristy or not, as the setting for their story. And this does not apply only to cities; the same principle applies to makeup, toys, electronic devices, and so on. Many people want to buy a certain perfume simply because a famous actress or singer wore it in a commercial. Therefore, we must be careful not to be too naive and try to think with our own minds, rather than merely following trends and everything that capitalism presents to us.

(Reflexive writing of a 14-year old from Slovenia)

6. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the important role of visual media in shaping destination images and tourism imaginaries among young audiences. Through the content analysis of *Emily in Paris* and *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*, it became evident that both series construct a highly positive, in a way ideal image of Paris, despite addressing different target audiences and employing different narrative strategies. The analysis revealed that Paris is consistently represented through recognizable landmarks, cultural heritage, fashion, romance, and adventure. These findings support previous research on film-induced and television-induced tourism, which suggests that media representations influence viewers' perceptions of destinations by emphasizing attractive and memorable elements while minimizing less appealing aspects. In both series, Paris functions not merely as a backdrop but as an active component of the narrative, contributing significantly to the atmosphere and identity of the story.

The representation of Paris in *Emily in Paris* is characterized by glamour, elegance, luxury, and romance. The city is portrayed as a place where professional success, personal fulfillment, and social opportunities intersect. This representation supports and enhances long-established stereotypes of Paris as the global capital of fashion, style, and romance. Such portrayals may encourage viewers to associate the city with aspirational lifestyles and desirable travel experiences.

In contrast, *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* presents Paris through the lens of adventure, friendship, and personal development. Although the series is primarily aimed at

younger audiences, it similarly highlights iconic landmarks and attractive urban spaces. The city is depicted as vibrant, safe, and dynamic, providing a setting where extraordinary events occur while maintaining a strong connection to everyday teenage life.

The reflexive interpretation suggests that teenagers are likely to perceive Paris as a city where dreams, adventure, culture, and social relationships coexist. The visual prominence of landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, together with recurring themes of friendship, romance, creativity, and success, contributes to the formation of a tourism imaginary that is both emotionally appealing and easily recognizable. Consequently, the city becomes more than a geographical location; it transforms into a symbolic space associated with positive emotions and desirable experiences.

At the same time, the analysis indicates that both series offer highly selective and idealized representations of Paris. Everyday challenges of urban life, social inequalities, overcrowding, and other less attractive aspects of the city are largely absent. The study therefore highlights the growing importance of media as a form of destination marketing.

7. Conclusion

This study explored the representation of Paris in the television series *Emily in Paris* and the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* through qualitative content analysis and reflexive interpretation from the perspective of a teenager. The findings demonstrate that both series contribute to the construction of a highly attractive and predominantly positive image of Paris, emphasizing cultural heritage, iconic landmarks, fashion, romance, adventure, and social interaction. Although the two series differ in genre, narrative structure, and intended audience, they share a common tendency to portray Paris as an exceptional and desirable destination. *Emily in Paris* presents the city as glamorous, sophisticated, and romantic, while *Miraculous* portrays it as dynamic, youthful, and adventurous. Together, these representations reinforce Paris's global image as one of the world's most attractive tourism destinations.

The reflexive interpretation suggests that teenage viewers may develop emotional connections with the city through the experiences of fictional characters and the repeated exposure to visually attractive urban landscapes. Such representations can influence destination image formation and stimulate interest in visiting Paris in the future. Future research could therefore expand upon these findings by conducting empirical studies with teenage viewers, including surveys, interviews, or focus groups, in order to examine how media representations influence actual travel intentions and destination choices.

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Artificial intelligence has been used for translation and proofreading.