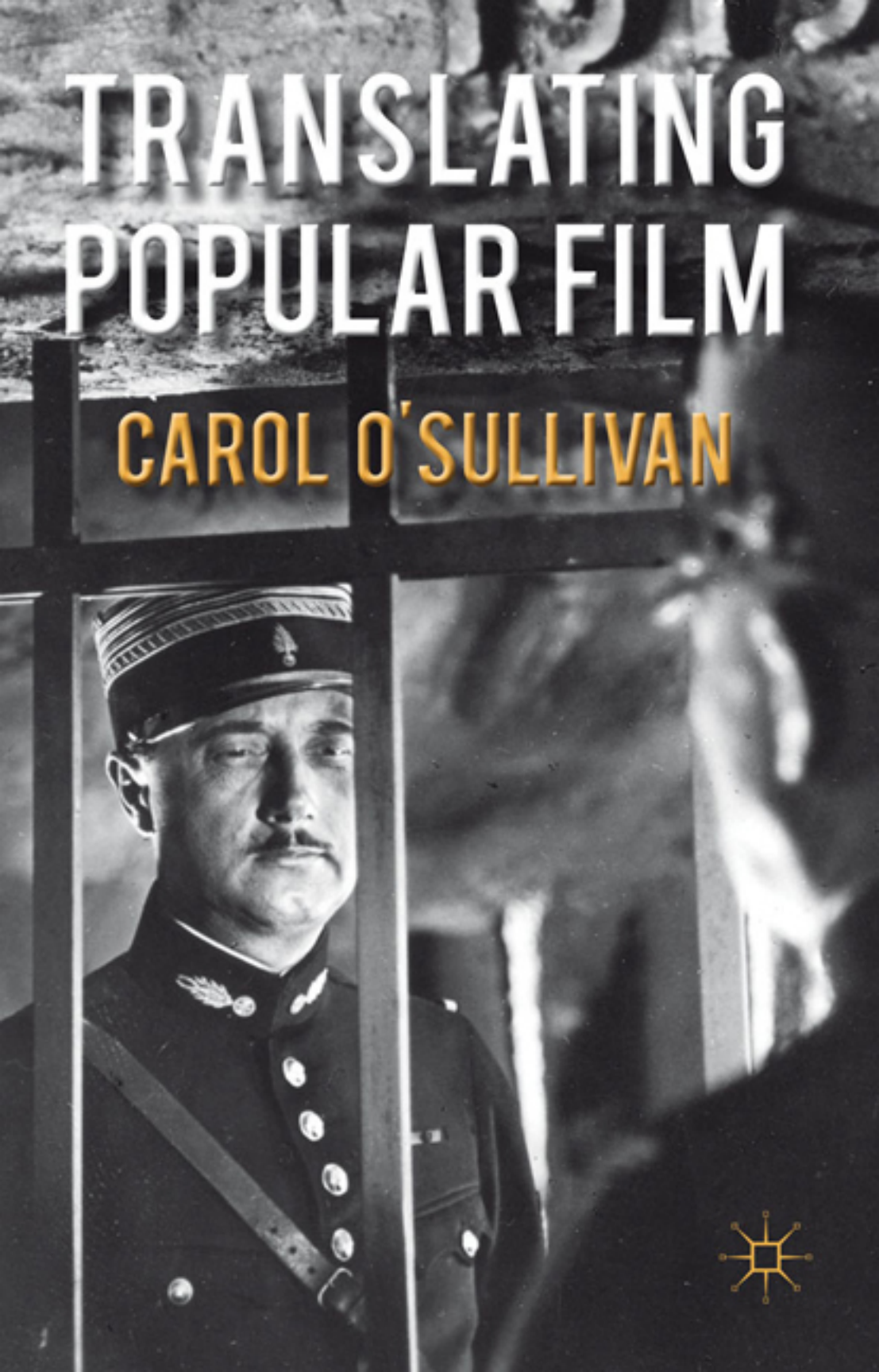
TRANSLATING POPULAR FILM

CAROL O'SULLIVAN



Translating Popular Film

Also by Carol O'Sullivan

THE POWER OF THE PEN: Translation and Censorship in 19th Century Europe (*co-edited with Denise Merkle, Luc van Doorslaer and Michaela Wolf*)

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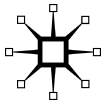

First published 2011 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

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Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN: 978–0–230–57391–8 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

For Pat and Kate O'Sullivan

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Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. My colleagues Sue Wright, Ian Kemble and Mario Saraceni made possible a sabbatical semester at the University of Portsmouth which enabled me to complete much of the writing, and were endlessly and generously helpful and supportive. My gratitude goes to the Head of the School of Languages and Area Studies for granting the sabbatical, and to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which provided workload relief for final work on the manuscript. Warmest thanks are also due to Sue Harper, Deborah Shaw and other colleagues in the School of Creative Arts, Film and Media for sharing ideas, film titles and responses to work in progress and drafts. Further film titles and responses to the book's concept were kindly suggested by colleagues on the JISC Film-Philosophy mailing list.

I am indebted to Juta Kitching of the University of British Columbia, who very kindly supplied extracts from her translations for *The 13th Warrior* and provided helpful and comprehensive answers to my questions. I am also indebted to Claire Thomson for clarification on Nordic-related issues and for very helpful comments on sections of draft. I had stalwart assistance with research, transcription of sections of dialogue and subtitles from Sophie Dykes, Alice Colombo, Andrea Vimercati and Ludivine Brigano. I am grateful to Geraint Evans for assistance with Spanish-language dialogue, Jan Bolten for assistance with German-language dialogue and Margaret Clarke for assistance with Portuguese.

Two debts must be acknowledged to colleagues without whom the book certainly would not exist in its present form. Robert Smith of Adelphi Books, Southsea, was endlessly generous in sharing his vast knowledge of films and film history, and tireless in hunting down film titles and viewing copies. My friend Samuel Bréan, subtitler and cinephile (in no particular order), was also tremendously generous with time, ideas, constructive criticism and feedback on parts of the draft. It goes without saying that any errors are my own.

I would like to thank Anke Bernau and Bettina Bildhauer, whose 2005 conference at the University of St. Andrews on the 'Medieval Film' prompted me to think about representations of language use on screen. I would also like to thank the editors of a 2007 special issue of

Linguistica Antverpiensia on audiovisual translation and access, where a section of Chapter 4 appeared in an earlier form.

Finally, and indispensably, Gene Rooney, Eoghan Ó Dúill, Ali O'Neil and Niall Brennan, Sharon Tay and James O'Sullivan provided shoulders to lean on, fortifying beverages, suggestions of films to watch and/or sharp elbows at vital junctures.

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Introduction

This project had its genesis in several converging research interests. It developed out of my experience of teaching translation and audiovisual translation, out of a lifelong love of films, out of an interest in storytelling, and out of a belief in the importance of language learning. Gradually, these interests coalesced into two questions: what is the role of foreign languages in storytelling in the cinema? How does this relate to translation?

As this book was in a late stage of preparation, a film was released which seemed to respond to both these questions. The film is Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*. This is a war film, and also a film about war films. Like other films by Tarantino it is densely intertextual and self-consciously constructed. The three main players in the story are the SS Colonel Hans Landa, the irregular army unit of Jewish American soldiers known as the 'Basterds', and the escaped Jewish woman Shosanna Dreyfus, now owner of a cinema in Paris. The film is divided into five chapters, marked by chapter headings, which shift focus from character to character. The film's 147 minutes are packed with typical Tarantino nods to previous Second World War films and to film history in general. The film is multilingual, alternating English and subtitled French and German, with even a smattering of Italian. By filming in several languages *Inglourious Basterds* recalls Second World War films like *The Longest Day* (1962), *Von Ryan's Express* (1965), *Battle of Britain* (1969) and *A Bridge too Far* (1977), but the juxtaposition of languages alone doesn't account for the importance of translation as a theme in the film.

The film opens with French dialogue, subtitled in English. The 'Jew-Hunter' Colonel Hans Landa is genially interrogating a wary French farmer, Perrier Lapadite. Landa's French is exaggeratedly ornate, larded with elaborate syntactic constructions. A farm isn't a farm, but an

'exploitation laitière', and so on. The rhetorical excess of Landa's French is underlined by Lapadite's monosyllabic replies. After several minutes of this, Landa preposterously claims, just as elaborately, that he has 'run out' of French, and asks whether they can continue in English:

> COLONEL LANDA: Monsieur LaPadite, je suis au regret de vous informer que j'ai épuisé l'étendue de mon français. Continuer à le parler si peu convenablement ne ferait que me gêner. Cependant, je crois savoir que vous parlez un anglais tout à fait correct, n'est-ce pas? [Monsieur Lapadite, I regret to inform you I've exhausted the extent of my French. To continue to speak it so inadequately would only embarrass me. However, I've been led to believe you speak English quite well.]
>
> PERRIER: Oui. [Yes.]
>
> COLONEL LANDA: Ma foi, il se trouve que moi aussi. Puisque nous sommes ici chez vous, je vous demande la permission de passer à l'anglais pour le reste de la conversation. [Well, it just so happens, I do as well. This being your house I ask your permission to switch to English for the remainder of the conversation.]
>
> PERRIER: Certainement. [By all means.] [1]

This transparent device to allow a shift to English dialogue is a wink to the many narrative 'excuses' used in order to allow the speaking of English out of context in Hollywood films. But we discover later in the scene that the speaking of English has a second purpose within the context of the film's plot, to lull the Jewish refugees hidden in the farmhouse into a false sense of security. This opening sequence of the film is fully 18 minutes long; much longer than its narrative function would seem to justify. By exaggerating the use of French and then ostentatiously foregrounding the shift into English (which will be followed by a return to French at the end of the scene), the film at once asserts and subverts its membership of an existing film tradition, in which the use of foreign languages is given little importance. Translation (or rather non-translation) is the plot device enabling the massacre of the Dreyfuses to take place and resulting in Shosanna's escape, which sets the plot of the film in motion.

Translation continues to structure the narrative in the rest of the film. In the second chapter, we find the Basterds toying with a German patrol. Raine offers the captured Sergeant Rachtman the services of not one, but two interpreters, the Austrian refugee Wicki and the German

turncoat Hugo Stiglitz. In excellent English, Rachtman refuses to cooperate and is killed. An interpreter is then required to interrogate the terrified Private Butz, who doesn't speak English. Tarantino's camera plays up the three-cornered dialogue between Raine, Butz and the interpreter Wicki, panning rhythmically backwards and forwards between them.

Back in Paris, the conversation between Shosanna and Goebbels at the restaurant is interpreted by Goebbels's interpreter Francesca. Francesca's character is not important for the plot but she is thematically important for one very short scene only a second or two in length. This apparently gratuitous cutaway to a shot of Goebbels and Francesca having sex places her in a long tradition of sexualised screen linguists and interpreters (see e.g. *Le Mépris* (Godard, 1963); *American Gigolo* (Schrader, 1980); *The Pillow Book* (Greenaway, 1996)). The scene is brutal. Even though the shot is very brief it recontextualises Francesca's role. In a film so full of polyglot characters, the interpreter's skills are all but redundant.

It is in the fourth section of the film that the importance of language really comes to the fore. British officer Archie Hicox is picked to lead the Allied mission to bomb the film premiere on the basis of his fluency in German. In the almost agonisingly drawn-out scene at the Louisiane bar, Hicox's German is thoroughly tested. It is his 'accent', both acoustic and gestural, which ultimately lets him down. While ostensibly referencing language-as-plot-point in films such as *The Great Escape* (we remember when Gordon Jackson's character is recaptured because he unthinkingly responds in English to a German officer), the scene is in fact a sly wink to the many Second World War films in which language is treated more cavalierly.

Language is just as important in the film's fifth and final section, where multilingualism breaks down. Raine and two of the Basterds try to infiltrate the film premiere disguised as Italians, despite not speaking a word of Italian. Bridget von Hammersmark's sardonic remark about the poor language skills of the American soldiers is another nod to the linguistic sins of Hollywood. The revelation that, on top of native German, excellent English and superb French, Landa is also fluent in Italian threatens to scupper the whole plot, and it would, except for the fact that, as so often on screen, the code-switcher also switches sides. Landa's departure from the cinema in search of a deal with the Allies finally heralds a break with the film's multilingual theme,[2] as negotiations are conducted from then on in briskly matter-of-fact English. The postponement of this shift into English as the dominant language of the narration is in itself a reference to previous films which either

ignore the claims of other languages on the narration entirely or summarily acknowledge them, only to shift to English at the earliest possible opportunity.

The film's intensely self-conscious code-switching both embodies and reflects on the growing tendency to mix languages in mainstream film. It plays with language as a narrative challenge and as an expressive resource. The film parodies the language management devices of earlier films and flaunts the ways in which foreign languages can contribute to narrative interest, humour, suspense and characterisation. In doing so it makes us think about the ways in which languages have been treated in mainstream cinema in the past. How have films told stories about multilingual situations, and how has that been made manageable for the films' audiences?

Most of the film's main characters move easily between at least two languages, but the fact that only Hans Landa speaks all four of the film's languages means that some interpreting is required. By making translation and the command of language central to the development of the plot, the film foregrounds the extent to which previous films have 'designed out' the need to engage with foreign languages in their narration. This film, one of whose themes is the battle of competing narratives, brings home to us the ways in which cinema asserts the right to tell stories about other language communities, and the sophisticated narrative devices that make this possible.

While critics were swift to point out that *Inglourious Basterds* was a film about the cinema, very few saw fit to mention its treatment of language and translation. This is par for the course. Film criticism has been so preoccupied with the use of language as a metaphor[3] for the communicative conventions and developing style of cinema that it has had little time to spare for considering the role of natural languages on the soundtrack. The national-cinematic paradigm with its assumption of monolingualism has until recently masked the multiplication of languages that, I will argue in this book, is not an occasional anomaly but is intrinsic to cinema. I do not set out to dethrone the notion of 'film language' which has proven critically very productive. Instead I seek to find ways of supplementing existing debates with considerations of the roles of foreign language on screen and the ways in which cinema negotiates Babel.

In a seminal 1985 article in *Screen*, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue that questions of power inevitably lie behind the deployment and translation of languages in film. Textual-filmic uses of languages may also echo wider language-political developments in society. Critics have

been slow to follow up Shohat and Stam's assertion that 'the reality of language difference ... entails consequences for the cinema that have yet to be explored' (Shohat and Stam 1985: 35), but a literature is gradually developing. Scholars of film and of translation have begun to look in increasing numbers at: translation and foreign languages as a theme for cinematic narrative; identity and politics in the use of foreign languages on screen; and the politics of audiovisual translation itself (a necessarily partial list would include Geist 1991; Gottlieb 2004; Dwyer 2005; Sanaker 2005; Williams 2005; Wood 2005; O'Sullivan 2007; Sanaker 2008; Viviani 2008; O'Sullivan 2009; Williams 2009).

What this literature has so far not systematically addressed is the broader formal questions about how film works with and represents foreign languages (Martin 1984: 57).[4] The translational transactions used to manage foreign languages in the cinema and the ways in which foreign language interacts with other signifying codes, including film sound, are still very imperfectly identified or understood. The central argument in this book is that the ways and devices by which film represents and makes manageable foreign languages to the viewer are a form of translation. This book is rooted in concrete devices and tropes which can add to our critical vocabulary of cinema and make us more aware of the ways in which the cinematic linguascape is constructed and managed. Translation is not meant here in a metaphorical sense. The translational transactions looked at in this book involve specific languages, though they do not always involve specific source and target texts. Not all of the languages are identifiable, and not all are 'authentic', but the shift between languages and the overlapping representations of languages constitute what Markus Nornes has referred to as 'experiences of translation'. These experiences of translation have a specificity, even if behind it we find only the false frontage of the Hollywood movie set, which deserves serious analysis. The range of languages involved is extremely broad. I will move between a bi- or multilingual analytic position, which permits certain modes of analysis, and the position occupied by most viewers of subtitled film, which is one of lack of access to the source language. This will permit a very different sort of analysis; both, I hope, are equally important for my argument.

Now a word about terminology. In many ways, this is a taxonomic project. Recognition of the bi- or multilingualism of films will require a different language with which to speak about it. The very term 'foreign language' is difficult. To speak of language as 'foreign' is to other its speakers from the outset. Foreign language is of course a mother tongue to other speakers, unless it is an invented language. To

speak of languages other than English as foreign may result in English functioning as an unmarked norm which is far from the intention here. Instead, the important distinction is one of *access*. 'Foreign language' is used throughout this book to refer not to a specific language, or from the point of view of a single language, but to refer to heterolanguage, in other words any language which is difficult or impossible of comprehension to all or part of a given film's primary target audience in a given communicative context. As this study deals to a large extent with English-language film, the foreign languages in question will often but not always be languages other than English. We will also see examples where English is the foreign language and some intriguing instances of languages being at one and the same time 'foreign' and 'domestic'. Incomprehension can characterise dialect as well as language; dialects too are potentially of interest to this study to the extent to which they are, or are perceived to be, incomprehensible to all or part of a target audience. The subtitling of a film by Ken Loach or Mike Leigh for a domestic British audience, for instance, would invoke questions of language and translation which are germane to the issues discussed in this book.

The first chapter situates the question of foreign language on film within the context of audiovisual translation studies and introduces Meir Sternberg's (1981) model of linguistic representation and Rainer Grutman's notion of heterolingualism. Sternberg proposes that representations of foreign languages in narrative can be classified along a cline between vehicular matching and linguistic homogenisation, or avoided through referential restriction. I show how Sternberg's model can be usefully applied and adapted to account for linguistic representations on screen.

Against the backdrop of cinema as 'universal language', in the second chapter I discuss a series of cinematic devices, including the translating dissolve, the homogenising shift, narrative framing and ironic duplication of subtitled dialogue. I argue that these are manifestations of the dream of the instantaneity and redundancy of translation, which can be read as a response to the problems of linguistic otherness raised by the advent of sound.

The third chapter draws on the work of Michel Chion to look at foreign languages as marked elements of a film's dialogue track. Though Chion does not explicitly address the question of heterolingualism, his categories of theatrical, textual and emanation speech provide a working model for treatments of foreign language on screen. His categories of 'causal' listening, 'semantic' listening and 'reduced' listening offer a way of

understanding how spectators might be expected to process the different treatments of foreign languages on screen, and thus how filmmakers and scriptwriters design the delivery of heterolingual dialogue. Asking whether we can really talk about 'untranslated' film dialogue, I look at *mise en scène*, diegetic interpreting and voiceover as modes of translation which facilitate foreign speech on screen while avoiding or minimising the use of subtitles.

In Chapter 4 I look in detail at subtitling and its role in the rise of multilingual films. I discuss the presentation of subtitling as an ethical representational choice and seek to problematise this through two case studies. First I analyse a small selection of six films which were entirely subtitled for their domestic audience: *Incubus* (1965), *Sebastiane* (1976), *Men With Guns* (1997), *Passion of the Christ* (2004), *Apocalypto* (2006) and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006). The films are pseudosubtitled, in other words the direction of translation is reversed relative to the on-screen 'translation' taking place (the scripts were written in English and translated into the foreign language, to be resubtitled in English on screen). This already puts into question the ethics of this linguistic strategy. A quantitative analysis of the subtitles suggests that the availability of subtitling as a mode of translation will influence script design, resulting on the one hand in dialogue-heavy scripts and on the other hand as almost dialogue-free cinema of spectacle. The second case study looks at Native American languages on screen and show how subtitles may become part of a set of mimetic clichés. The ethical representational choice in the age of subtitling may in fact be a refusal to subtitle.

Chapter 5 interrogates the textual status of subtitles in the framework of Genette's notion of the paratext. The unstable status of subtitles problematises Genette's distinction between the epitextual and the peritextual. It goes on to look at ways in which subtitling in popular film can become textual, through: formal innovation and play in subtitling; the use of subtitling as an intertextual device; the physical relationship of subtitles to film; and the blurring of the line between subtitles and the diegesis through metaleptic effects which cross boundaries of narrative framing. Subtitling in popular film may become a metadiscourse on subtitling itself. The final section of the chapter discusses how subtitles become narrational, being deployed or withheld in order to underpin effects of focalisation and identification.

The final chapter looks at multilingual films as a problem for screen translators. How does one translate a multilingual film text into what is traditionally expected to be a monolingual product? The usual

pattern is that the multilingual film tends to become monolingual. I look at the problems of conveying meaningful language shift through dubbing and/or subtitling in *Le Mépris*, *The Yakuza* (Pollack, 1974) and *Kameradschaft* (Pabst, 1931). However, we can also note a contrary tendency in recent international distribution, which is to benefit from the cultural capital of subtitles by partly subtitling a foreign-language film and partly dubbing it. In this case monolingual film texts are becoming multilingual in translation. The example of *Haute tension/High tension* (Aja, 2003) is discussed. I conclude by linking this new development in audiovisual translation to the fashionable multilingual aesthetic prevalent in popular 'anglophone' film.

1
Mimesis and Film Languages

This is a book about storytelling. It is a book about the role of language in how we tell stories about other times, places and cultures. Storytellers construct narratives about other peoples and eras, in the process re-encoding the languages of their characters in the language of their audience. Filmmakers, who stage scenes featuring other peoples and eras, must also take into account the languages of their characters and their audience. In an important sense, filmmaker-storytellers are translators.

To see filmmakers in this sense as translators is to take a rather unusual approach to the relationship between audiovisual texts and translation, so it may be worth beginning by outlining what we usually mean when we talk about 'audiovisual translation'.

Audiovisual translation: an overview

When we think of translation in relation to film, we probably think first of subtitling, dubbing and perhaps voiceover. These are the three most common ways of translating the language of a source film or television programme for exhibition and distribution abroad. Which mode is used depends largely on which country you are in and which exhibition environment is involved (cinema, television, DVD). These three modes may or may not be, strictly speaking, translational. Roman Jakobson (1959) distinguishes between 'intralingual' translation (rewording within the same language); 'interlingual' translation (translation between natural languages, what we usually think of as translation); and 'intersemiotic' translation, which translates between sign systems and includes practices like ekphrasis and adaptation.

Subtitling is 'a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen', which seeks to

convey 'the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information [...] on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)' (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 8). Unless otherwise specified, 'subtitling' will be understood in this book to refer to interlingual subtitling or 'diagonal' translation (Gottlieb 1994) which translates not only from the oral to the written but also from one language into another. It should not be confused with intralingual subtitles or subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH subtitles, also known as 'captioning') which is for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers. Subtitling is the commonly used mode of audiovisual translation in smaller European language communities such as the Netherlands, Greece and the Nordic countries. English-speaking countries tend to import relatively few audiovisual products from abroad, but what is imported is usually subtitled.

Dubbing and voiceover both come under the broad heading of 'revoicing'. In dubbing, a source language dialogue track is replaced by a target language dialogue track. Dubbing also involves lip-synchronisation for speakers who appear in a medium or close-up shot. Dubbing too can be interlingual (between languages) or intralingual (within one language). When a dialogue track is revoiced in the same language it can be referred to as post-synchronisation or looping. Post-synchronisation is a standard intralingual practice for films not shot with direct sound, or where the quality of on-set recorded sound is compromised.[1] When the post-synchronisation is interlingual, we usually call it dubbing. Dubbing has historically been the preferred mode of audiovisual translation in larger European language communities including France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

Voiceover, sometimes called half-dubbing, occurs when a script is translated or adapted for one or two voices and broadcast approximately in synchrony with the source dialogue track. In English-speaking countries this usually involves documentary or interview material (Gambier 2003a). The source dialogue track is overlaid, rather than replaced, by the new dialogue track. In voiceover the original voice-sound is either eliminated or, more commonly, turned down to a low level of audibility after a few seconds. Voiceover has also historically been a standard method of audiovisual translation for feature films and television in Russia, Poland and some other Eastern European countries (see e.g. Glaser 1991).

These are the three main forms of audiovisual translation as they apply to cinema and television. They are broken down in turn into

subcategories in the developing research area of audiovisual translation studies (AVTS). In a 2003 survey Yves Gambier identifies the 'dominant types' of audiovisual translation as 'interlingual subtitling, dubbing, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, voice-over, free commentary, simultaneous (or sight) translation, and multilingual production' (Gambier 2003a: 172). The growing recognition of the need for facilitating access to audiovisual media to all viewers has also resulted in the inclusion of SDH subtitling, in-vision signing for the deaf and hard of hearing, and audiodescription for the blind and partially sighted, under the broad umbrella of audiovisual translation.

Not all forms of audiovisual translation pass through writing. Simultaneous or consecutive interpreting in the cinema has a long history going back to the French *bonimenteurs*, the Japanese *benshi* and the other interpreters who provided narration in the silent period and in some countries long after (Nornes 2007: 109–122; Scheppler 2008). Hamid Naficy recounts similar exhibition practices in Iran from the *dilmaj* of the silent period to the spontaneous student interpreters of his own childhood (1996: 11–12). Today simultaneous interpreting may be provided for film festival screenings where there is no time to prepare subtitles (Russo 2005: 1–3).

Nor does audiovisual translation stop there. Adaptations or intersemiotic translation of books, plays or graphic novels to film have been considered under the heading of translation by many scholars (Dusi 2006; Hutcheon 2006: 16–17). The film remake can be considered another mode of interlingual film translation (Wills 1998; Grindstaff 2002), where film becomes the product of as well as the source material for translation. Translation might offer a useful heading under which to consider the rescoring and/or recutting of foreign-language films for import into the US by distributors such as Miramax – an example not merely of dubbing or subtitling a film but altering it at the level of internal cohesion and narrative. In the early sound era, before dubbing and subtitling were established as the principal modes of screen translation, simultaneous 'remakes' on an industrial scale were used to meet the needs of Hollywood's foreign-language markets (Vincendeau 1988; Ďurovičová 1992; Rossholm 2006). Films were shot back-to-back on the same set, often with bilingual leads playing roles in more than one language while the supporting cast varied from version to version. Ginette Vincendeau has called this process 'dubbing the body of the actor' (1988: 34); instead of importing a voice to match an existing body, the voice (in the form of the national language) is prioritised, and

a body brought in to provide it. The practice of multilingual production proved too expensive and cumbersome to be viable and the studios soon switched to dubbing and subtitling.[2]

The audiovisual translation landscape is thus a complex one. Still, all of these forms of translation are essentially of the same order. The translational relationship obtaining is that between a source text (a feature film, television programme and so on) and a target text (the dubbed, subtitled, remade or voiced-over film or programme). A film or television programme is considered as a source text which undergoes translation, and a clearly identifiable 'translatum' or translated product results.

The question of which translation method is preferable, subtitling or dubbing, has been energetically debated. One factor is cost. Dubbing takes longer, requires a more elaborate infrastructure and is much more expensive. A recent report into audiovisual translation in Europe suggests that dubbing a film for theatrical release costs between nine and twenty times as much as subtitling it.[3] Another factor is audience literacy. Unlike voiceover and dubbing, subtitling requires a literate audience. The biggest factor, however, appears to be habit (Gambier 2006: 268; Nornes 2007: 191).

In a series of provocative articles in the *New York Times* in 1960, the film critic Bosley Crowther was greeted with objections and acclamations when he advocated dubbing over subtitling for foreign films distributed in the US. Crowther argued that subtitling restricted good films to limited audiences and suggested that more investment in dubbing technology and voice talent would produce dubbing of a standard which could enhance even the best films (Crowther 1960a, 1960b, 1960c). A few voices were raised in support, but the responses suggested that many viewers had invested too much faith in the prestige of subtitling to contemplate enjoyment of dubbed films.[4] Similar debates are played out weekly on the Internet Movie Database and on message boards for *otaku* communities, home cinema enthusiasts and other interest groups. As a rule, these audiences still strongly assert their investment in subtitling. The advent of DVD technology incorporating multiple translations on a single disc has tended to make the question one of individual choice, but it has also raised viewers' awareness of the issues involved in audiovisual translation. The opportunity to compare dubbed and subtitled versions – which will naturally be very different – has prompted further debate.

Many filmmakers have strong feelings about audiovisual translation. For Jean Renoir, dubbing was 'une monstruosité … une espèce de

défi aux lois humaines et divines [a monstrosity, a kind of challenge to human and divine law]' (Renoir 1974: 47). For some cinephiles, even subtitles are problematic, because of the way they 'mangent l'écran [eat the screen]', to quote the French subtitler Bernard Eisenschitz (1999: 30). Jim Jarmusch remembers Henri Langlois screening unsubtitled foreign-language films at the Cinémathèque in Paris – a practice which Jarmusch has continued in his own film viewing (Rosenbaum 2001a: 125).[5] As a director for whom acting and actors are of primary importance, Jarmusch argues that acting is not primarily a verbal art, and that watching a film without understanding the words can allow a viewer to focus on the kernel of emotional meaning. But Langlois and Jarmusch are extreme cases. As a rule, audiences for 'art film' and its derivatives manifest 'not simply a preference for but the absolute exigency of the subtitled print' (Betz 2001: 5; cf. Butler 1971: 120–121).

Audiovisual translation beyond source and target text

All the above categories of AVT share a common assumption. They are conventionally operations carried out upon a pre-existing or source text to produce a second text which can be categorised as a translation. A similar relationship obtains, for instance, between a film's script and its published translation. The implication is that the film text is not touched by translation until such time as it comes to be extended to an audience beyond its own national borders – in other words, at the point of distribution rather than that of production.

But simple source text–target text relationships by no means exhaust the range of screen translational relationships. Translation is also a thematic preoccupation for the cinema, as Michael Cronin has shown in *Translation Goes to the Movies* (2008). Translation may have a role to play at any stage of a film's production. A film script may need to be translated 'internally', for international co-production and/or casting. Here the translation brief becomes all-important. When John Boorman was seeking authorisation from the Brazilian government to shoot *The Emerald Forest* (1985) in Brazil, a Portuguese translation of the script was required for Concine, the authorising government department. The film involved a climactic scene, shot partly at a Brazilian dam and partly with scale models, of a dam breaking. Boorman was advised that the translation should contain 'a few changes' to conceal the scene on the grounds that permission to shoot at the dam would otherwise be denied due to its implicit criticism of Brazilian engineering (Boorman 1985: 38). The changes were presumably made, because funding was

successfully obtained. By contrast, an incorrectly translated script compromised the shooting of Boorman's *Hell in the Pacific* (1968). Boorman describes the collaborative process of creating the film's bilingual script. An American airman and a Japanese naval officer, played by Lee Marvin and Toshiro Mifune, find themselves marooned on an uninhabited South Pacific island during the Second World War. With no language in common, the characters speak English and Japanese respectively throughout the film.[6] The script was developed collaboratively by Boorman and two scriptwriters, one Japanese, one British:

> I would sketch out a scene and give it to each writer. They would work on it from the aspect of their character and then pass it back. Translators rendered it back and forth in the two languages, and gradually a script grew where each character behaved according to his background. (ibid.: 58)

In the course of this script development, the Japanese scriptwriter Shobal Hashimoto produced a version of the script rewritten as a broad comedy. This was set aside as inappropriate and eventually an agreed-upon script was sent to Mifune. When shooting began and questions were raised about Mifune's peculiar performance, it was discovered that he had inadvertently been sent the comic Japanese script – something that Boorman was not in a position to realise until the problem script was translated back into English. This embarrassing incident irrevocably strained the relationship between the director and his Japanese star and they fought 'like cat and dog' for the rest of the shoot (ibid.: 59–61).[7]

Where a film's cast and crew are international there may need to be interpreters on set. The potential for cross-cultural misunderstanding has dogged many a foreign shoot, including *Shōgun* (Martin 1980) and Sofia Coppola's 2004 *Lost in Translation* (which itself comments ironically on the difficulties of polyglot film sets) (Grove 2003). The challenges of on-set interpreting are gently satirised in Woody Allen's *Hollywood Ending* (2002), in which a washed-up American director, played by Allen, inexplicably becomes blind during the shooting of the film which is to relaunch his career. The director plots with his Chinese cinematographer's interpreter to conceal his blindness and continue shooting. When the cinematographer's frustration at the director's eccentric decision-making leads him to refuse to work with his interpreter, the desperate director suggests firing the cinematographer and keeping the interpreter. The comedy of this sequence inheres in the unlikeliness of privileging the on-set interpreter, a service worker, over

the cinematographer, who is an artist and whose contribution is central to the look of the final film. The comedy underpins, however, some very practical realities of filmmaking. Translators and interpreters play key roles in the film industry in the development of movie scripts, interviews and festival appearances, as well as in dubbing and subtitling, as described by Nornes in *Cinema Babel* (2007).

With the notion of film translation so heavily engaged on so many fronts, it may seem foolhardy to seek to expand the parameters of film and screen translation further. If we speak of the 'translation' of reality into fiction or film, we are drawing on a long-established metaphorical tradition. Proust famously likened writing to decoding or translation. George Steiner has asserted that 'translation is ... implicit in every act of communication' (1992: xii). Domenico Jervolino goes so far as to say that 'to speak is already to translate (even when one is speaking one's own native language or when one is speaking to oneself)' (quoted in Kearney 2006: xv). The concept of translation has recently proven very attractive to cultural theorists, attracted by the polyvalency of the translation metaphor. There would seem to be a danger in too profuse a deployment of the notion of translation, which risks emptying it of significance as a critical category. The translation scholar Harish Trivedi (2007) has been particularly vocal in his objections to a concept of translation divorced from language transfer. Still, I would like to argue here for the relevance of the concept of translation to filmic mimesis and narration.

More and more, audiovisual translators are emphasising the importance of being aware of how a film signifies narratologically when undertaking a translation of it (see e.g. Remael 2004; Taylor 2006; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007). But translation enters the picture even before a film is subtitled, dubbed or voiced-over. The translational stage which precedes audiovisual translation is the stage of the *representation* of the verbal codes of the narrative, which are often not the verbal codes of the narration.

Film and television are polysemiotic media which signify through combinations of visual, verbal and acoustic elements. All of these elements work together to create meaning. For the purposes of translation, Dirk Delabastita (1990) has divided the codes into verbal and non-verbal acoustic codes and verbal and non-verbal visual codes. 'Verbal acoustic' codes include dialogue and voiceover. 'Non-verbal acoustic' codes include sound effects and music. Delabastita goes on to distinguish between 'verbal visual' codes (captions, subtitles, inserts, in-vision verbal material such as letters, street signs, graffiti, etc.) and

'non-verbal visual' codes in the form of images. All of these codes are involved in the business of narration, though in some films a given code may carry more or less narrational weight. In Derek Jarman's *Blue* (1993), which consists of a dialogue track, music and sound effects over a blue screen, acoustic codes carry the narration to an unusual degree. More commonly, films seek to minimise dialogue in favour of visual codes. Luc Besson's early feature *Le Dernier Combat* (*The Last Battle*, 1983) portrays a post-apocalyptic future where mankind has all but lost the power of speech. The film contains only one line of dialogue. The emphasis on visual codes increased the film's chances of achieving an international audience. In F.W. Murnau's late silent feature *Tabu* (1931), Murnau almost eliminates intertitles. The narration is carried visually with the help of a small number of diegetic verbal elements including notices and letters. Murnau's earlier *Der Letzte Mann* (*The Last Laugh*, 1924) had gone even further, with its famous 'single intertitle'.

Murnau was not alone in his disdain for intertitles. In the early decades of cinema, both critics and theorists resisted the incorporation of natural language as a signifying code in cinema, disparaging the increasing use of intertitles in teleplays and praising filmmakers such as Murnau who privileged visual over verbal codes. This distrust of language stemmed from an eagerness to differentiate the new moving pictures from the established medium of theatre. It also originated in a belief in the power of cinema as an international language which could be understood by audiences worldwide. Nevertheless, speech quickly became a major signifying code of film narration, first through the intertitles of photoplays and later through the addition of sound and the arrival of the talkies.

The centrality of dialogue to film brought with it an important question: what language should characters speak?[8] One obvious choice is that the characters should speak the language which they 'purport' to be speaking, in other words the language of the story world or diegesis. Another, equally obvious, choice is that the characters should speak the language of their audience, for whom the story is being told. The choice does not arise when the film is being produced within a single national context, for a single language community, and sets out to tell a story about members of that language community. It arises when the languages of audience and characters are not identical, or when more than one language is invoked in the narrative. The existence of these linguistic choices sets the terms of the problem as fundamentally representational.

As an element of the signifying codes of film, natural language in cinema communicates. It represents the world, it describes, emotes, relates. Inasmuch as these descriptions, expressions and relations are comprehensible to us, we can think of language on screen as reproducing language offscreen. We talk, after all, about a screenwriter having a 'good ear' for speech. We know, however, that even perfectly comprehensible dialogue does not reproduce, but rather represents natural speech (cf. Taylor 1999, 2006). It is 'written to be spoken as if not written' in the words of Gregory and Carroll (quoted in Taylor 1999: 443).

As Alan Williams points out, otherwise acute film theorists who recognised that images were representations and not reproductions of reality were slow to accord the same recognition to sound. He quotes Jean-Louis Baudry as saying 'one does not hear an image of the sounds but the sounds themselves' (Williams 1980: 51). As Williams observes, on the contrary, sound is highly constructed in film. The sounds that are recorded are one (microphone's) *perspective* on the sounds originally produced; in other words, they are at best a transmission of those sounds. Not only this, but sound on film is also an *interpretation* inasmuch as 'the apparatus performs a significant perceptual work for us – isolating, intensifying, analyzing sonic and visual material' (ibid.: 56).

Spoken and written language in the cinema is both a signifying code or vehicle and always already an object of representation. In discussing the representation of foreign language(s)[9] as translation, I will be drawing extensively on work by Meir Sternberg, who has theorised mimetic literary practices as a form of translation, where the existence of many languages in the world lays on each language 'the burden of reporting messages originally encoded in other languages' (1981: 221). Language is one of the parameters shared across narrative media. If, as Sternberg posits, literature is confronted with 'a formidable mimetic challenge: how to represent the reality of polylingual discourse through a communicative medium which is normally unilingual' (1981: 222), this constitutes no less a challenge to cinema, which also aspires to tell and sell stories across national and linguistic boundaries. This is not only a problem for English-language cinema, but it has been argued, notably by Shohat and Stam (1985: 191) that the hegemonic position of English-language cinema has resulted in a particularly large and diverse body of examples of 'the interlingual tension between language as represented object … and language as representational means' (Sternberg 1981: 222).

The represented nature of film languages comes across clearly from the numerous possibilities for the representation of a given foreign

language on screen. Native German speech can be represented by native German speech, as in the scenes in Billy Wilder's *One, Two, Three* (1961) in which the young East German Communist Otto Ludwig Piffl, played by German actor Horst Buchholz, speaks German to other German characters. Non-native production can be represented by non-native speech, as in George Clooney's heavily accented German dialogue in *The Good German* (Soderbergh, 2007). But a natively spoken language can also be represented by non-native production, as in the case of Cate Blanchett's carefully learned German speech in *The Good German* or Meryl Streep's Polish dialogue in *Sophie's Choice*. It can be represented by visual means; in the BBC television play *Caught on a Train* (Poliakoff, 1980), German is represented on screen at one point by a shot of two characters known to be German speakers speaking inaudibly, with the context providing the necessary information for the viewer. It could even be represented by gibberish as in Charlie Chaplin's *Great Dictator* (1940), where German is represented by random German lexical items and guttural nonsense syllables. A language can be represented by another language, as in Alan Parker's *Midnight Express* (1978) in which the 'Turkish' speech is largely Maltese, or in *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* (Charles, 2006), where the 'Kazakh' language is a macaronic mixture of languages including Hebrew and Romanian. One might also think of the interchangeability of Native American languages in Western films.[10] For an anglophone audience, a foreign language can also be represented by English, as in *The Reader* (Daldry, 2008), where English speech, delivered by actors of several nationalities, stands in for German.

Narrative versus narration

Following the formalist distinction between narrative (*fabula*) and narration (*syuzhet*) (cf. Bordwell 1995: 48–62), this study is concerned with the relationship between narrative (represented) languages and narrational (representing) languages. At times there is a very close match between representing and represented language. In the documentary tradition and where dialogue is developed by improvisation rather than being scripted, the distance between language as representing sign system and language as represented object tends, asymptotically, towards zero. Mainstream films, on the other hand, offer us numerous examples of illustrative, and sometimes productive, tensions between narrative and narrational languages.

It is easiest to acknowledge the representational nature of film language when we meet speech whose purpose is to make strange a language we know well. In the Irish short film *Fluent Dysphasia* (O'Hara, 2004) Michael 'Murph' Murphy, played by Stephen Rea, demonstrates hostility to and ignorance of the Irish language in refusing to help his daughter with her Irish homework. After a concussion, Murph finds himself unable to speak anything but Irish and, worse, unable to understand English when it is addressed to him. In desperation he goes to visit his friend Sean (Paddy C. Courtney) who was the last person to see him speaking English. Murph can only speak in Irish to Sean, who (as a non-Irish speaker) is unable to understand him. In return, Murph has no way of understanding Sean's English speech. Two shots convey Murph's and Sean's competing perceptions. The first is a shot of Murph from over Sean's shoulder as we hear Sean ask him to 'talk proper Murph'. We then cut to a reverse close-up shot from Murph's point of view of Sean's face as he speaks. Although the dialogue track continues uninterrupted, Sean's speech is now gibberish. We recognise this as not only a visual, but also an aural point of view, a 'point of audition' as Michel Chion has described it (1994: 89–92). The English-speaking viewer is cued to recognise that Sean's exhortation to Murph to speak English and the random babbles that Murph hears are the same speech, and thus the viewer experiences their own language made strange to them.[11]

Let's return to our scenario in which the language of a film differs from the language normally assumed to be spoken by its characters. The filmmaker chooses to accommodate the language of the primary target audience. A good example is *The Hunt for Red October* (McTiernan, 1990). The plot focuses on a defecting Russian submarine commander who 'steals' a submarine and his crew and attempts to take it to the United States. Much of the film's action takes place on the submarine among a homogeneous Russian-speaking group of characters. In the same way as the film's set represents the interior of a submarine, and the actor Sean Connery represents Captain Marko Ramius, the non-native Russian spoken in some early scenes represents native Russian speech. (In this case, the quality of set construction and casting is arguably better than the quality of Russian construction, as native speakers tell me that they find the Russian in this opening section of the film impossible to follow without reference to the English subtitles.) The Russian language could have been represented by different means. In the thriller *K-19: The Widowmaker* (Bigelow, 2002), also set on board a Russian submarine, the Russian language is represented by accented English throughout.

This gives us a primary narrational distinction in classifying different representational possibilities for language on screen. One can shoot a film in the diegetic language, the language spoken by the characters in the story world, more or less precisely matching any represented foreign language(s); or one can shoot in the language of the audience, disregarding any mimetic requirement in relation to foreign language. And there is a third option: one can 'design out' the requirement for a foreign language in the first place.

Vehicular matching and heterolingualism

In a 1981 article, Meir Sternberg terms the two poles of linguistic representation in narration 'vehicular matching' and 'homogenisation'. Vehicular matching matches the language(s) of the characters in the story world. 'Far from avoiding linguistic diversity or conflict, [it] accepts them [...] suiting the variations in the representational medium to the variations in the represented object' (223). This approach aims for a more or less precise match between the language(s) represented and the representing language(s). Sometimes this may only involve a single language (Latin in Derek Jarman's *Sebastiane* (1976), for instance), but more often it is resorted to where part of a film's dialogue purports to be in a second or third language, and thus results in a polyglot film product. Prominent recent examples include *Sophie's Choice* (Pakula, 1982), *Traffic* (Soderbergh, 2000), *Babel* (Gonzalez Iñárritu, 2006) and *The Kite Runner* (Forster, 2007).

Vehicular matching is one source of what Rainer Grutman (1996: 18) has called 'heterolingualism', defined as 'the use of foreign languages or social, regional and historical language varieties in literary texts' (Meylaerts 2006: 4). Although, like Sternberg, Grutman originally envisaged the concept in relation to literature, it invites extension to film and television, which are in some ways freer to multiply languages than print literature is. Grutman is careful to distinguish between sociolinguistic multilingualism as in diglossia or code-switching, and the motivated deployment of multiple languages in fiction. Vehicular matching is not 'realism', though it sometimes responds to a perceived demand for realism. Instead, it is considered here as a response to a 'language requirement' generated by the fabula. Nor does vehicular matching have to involve 'real' languages. The language may be simulated or invented, as with *One Million Years BC* (Chaffey, 1966), *La guerre du feu* (*Quest for Fire*, Annaud 1981) or *State Secret* (Gilliat, 1950). The makers of *State Secret*, uneasy about setting their film in a recognisable

Mitteleuropa during the Cold War and in search of a suitably indeterminate foreign language, employed a 'remarkable lady linguist from London University' (Georgina Shield) to invent a national language for their fictional country of Vosnia. The result was a hybrid language involving 'a Serbo-Croat base, with Polish endings' (Hawkins 1973: 95) and actors were coached on set in its correct grammatical use.[12]

Vehicular matching is not unique to sound film. The silent period sometimes saw heterolingual intertitles, as in D. W. Griffiths's *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913).[13] Here a moment of dialogue between two Injun braves is represented through an (apparently) indigenous phrase (Figure 1.1):[14]

Figure 1.1 Vehicular matching plus translation in *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*

The 'Injun' language is supplemented by an English translation in brackets, much in the manner of a subtitle. By contrast, the Lon Chaney vehicle *Mr Wu* (Nigh, 1927) uses untranslated 'Chinese' characters in one sequence as a sight gag to represent dialogue between Chinese-speaking characters whose conversation is incomprehensible to an Englishman also present in the scene (cf. Viviani 2008). Mr Gregory, an Englishman visiting China, has found his way into the walled garden of the Wu family. Here he meets Mr Wu's daughter Nang Ping and tries to strike up a conversation, but is frustrated by his inability to speak Chinese. They are interrupted by Nang Ping's maid Soo Yong, whose angry speech is represented in a rapid series of 18 semi-animated intertitles featuring

Chinese or Chinese-looking characters without English translation. A few examples will give us an idea of the gag (Figures 1.2–1.4):

Figure 1.2 *Mr Wu*: an untranslated 'Chinese' intertitle

Figure 1.3 *Mr Wu*: another untranslated 'Chinese' intertitle

Soo Yong's speech is accompanied by pyrotechnic visual effects to signify her anger at Mr Gregory's presence in the garden. Nang Ping responds soothingly and the conversation continues in a series of visually more sedate Chinese intertitles. We discover a moment later that

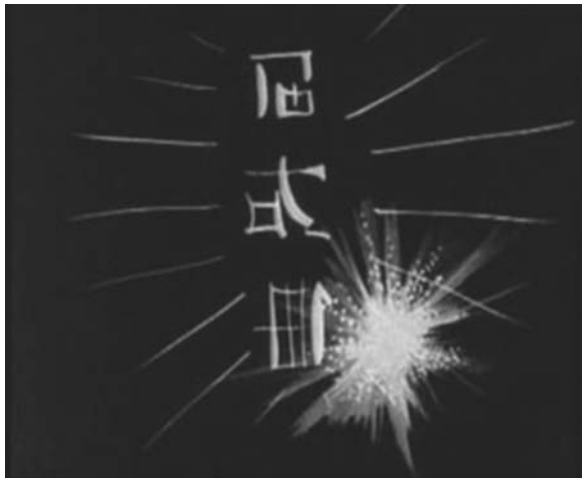

Figure 1.4 *Mr Wu*: a third untranslated 'Chinese' intertitle

both Nang Ping and Soo Yong speak excellent English, and the conversation continues in English. This kind of marked linguistic choice reflected representational stakes which would rise sharply with the advent of audible film dialogue.

As I suggested above, the use of foreign languages in film is usually the result of an impulse towards vehicular matching. We hear a buzz of Spanish in the background, occasionally emerging into the foreground, in films set in Spanish-speaking regions such as *The Big Steal* (Siegel, 1949), *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (Huston, 1948) or *Bring Me The Head Of Alfredo Garcia* (Peckinpah, 1974) because we expect some degree of acknowledgement of the film's setting. But vehicular matching does not exhaust the range of uses that can be made of foreign languages in the cinema. In Grutman's terms, vehicular matching is not coterminous with heterolingualism. A broader notion of heterolingualism might encompass uses of language which see the multiplication of languages as an end in itself for thematic or aesthetic reasons. True macaronic cinema, like macaronic literature in which 'a polylingual medium may be used ... in the absence of a corresponding polylingual object or shift within the projected reality' (Sternberg 1981: 228), is rare. Usually, macaronic dialogue in cinema, as with Salvatore's polyglot dialogue in *The Name of the Rose* (Annaud, 1986), is representative of polylingualism in the diegesis. But the represented narration may choose to exceed a 'requirement' or fabula-generated demand for foreign language. In *The Kite Runner*, with its action set in Dari-speaking Kabul and the English-speaking

United States, there is a clear rationale for the use of both languages. But we can also imagine 'gratuitous' uses of the foreign language which extend beyond the representative to incorporate a decorative purpose, as in the case of the Esperanto of *Incubus* (Stevens, 1965) or *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Sex But Were Afraid To Ask* (Allen, 1972), in which the sequence 'Why Do Some Women Have Trouble Reaching Orgasm?' is shot in Italian with subtitles, not for any ostensible reason related to the plot but as a homage to Italian art films of the 1960s. *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) with its exaggeratedly multilingual dialogue, plays knowingly on the fabula's demand for the foreign language (see Introduction).

We find allegorical deployments of heterolingualism in films such as Manoel Oliveira's *Um film falado* (*A Talking Picture*, 2003) in which five characters played by John Malkovich, Irene Papas, Catherine Deneuve, Stefania Sandrelli and Leonor Silveira hold polyglot conversations which are diegetic – they are nominally motivated by circumstances in the story world – but non-naturalistic. The purpose of the multiplication of languages is to frame the notion of a common European cultural identity. Hal Hartley's *Flirt* (1995) offers another example. The same storyline about a three-cornered relationship is replayed three times in three different settings and languages (English, German, Japanese). The three narrational languages are vehicles for three different diegetic linguistic realities, and the juxtaposition of languages underlines a conventional message about the universality of human drives and emotions.

Much remains to be said about all such uses of foreign languages on screen. This study is particularly interested in vehicular matching as a marked strategy, driven by the need for a certain kind of representation often linked to perceptions of authenticity. Negotiation around the question of language is not confined to mainstream film. Although for many kinds of independent, engaged and art cinema vehicular matching seems an unmarked aesthetic choice (we are not surprised to find both Polish and French spoken in Kieślowski's *La double vie de Véronique* (1991) or Spanish, Catalan and English dialogue in Loach's 1995 *Land and Freedom*), funding considerations can always prompt discussion about a film's language, even in art cinema where the sums involved are relatively small. Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet planned to shoot their 1979 film *Dalla nube alla resistenza* (*De la nuée à la résistance*), based on the writings of Cesare Pavese, in Italy, in Italian, with a French crew. The film's budget was, in relative terms, tiny, but when they approached the Centre national de la Cinématographie, the principal French funding agency, for support, they were told that their project

was 'un film sauvage', reproached that French cinema was in crisis, and told to shoot in French – or if not, what about a compromise strategy of shooting in Corsica, in Corsican dialect with French actors? (Burdeau and Renzi 2006: 39).[15]

Similar stories abound of pressure on directors and scriptwriters to alter the language design of films away from vehicular matching strategies. John Kristian Sanaker has argued that in cinema 'la représentation hétérolingue est devenue une chose banale [heterolingual representation has become banal]' (2008: 159), but, though it is currently fashionable, it is far from a given, especially in major productions with large budgets. The bigger the budget, and the more mainstream the production context, the more marked the choice of vehicular matching becomes. This is the case especially with popular genres such as thrillers (*The Third Man* (Reed, 1949)), Westerns and historical epics (*Treasure of the Sierra Madre, Dances With Wolves* (Costner, 1990), *The Last Samurai* (Zwick 2003) and war films (*None But The Brave* (Sinatra, 1965); *The Longest Day* (Marton, 1962)*; Tora! Tora! Tora!* (Fleischer/Fukasaku, 1970)) which are traditionally associated with more homogenising strategies. Vehicular matching has the potential to put considerable processing strain on the viewer, and as a strategy has historically been avoided by films expecting a wide release and television productions expecting a large viewership.

A good example of overt vehicular matching is *Shōgun* (1980), adapted from the bestselling historical novel by Richard Clavell. The five-part miniseries, later re-edited as a feature film, tells the story of a British sailor shipwrecked in seventeenth-century Japan who comes to know and admire Japanese culture. It contains long sequences of unsubtitled Japanese dialogue. The rationale, based on the use of Japanese words and phrases in the novel, was that there was enough repetition and enough context provided that the audience would (a) understand what they needed to about the plot and (b) gradually learn Japanese alongside the protagonist. The miniseries was a considerable commercial success, attracting one of the largest television audiences to date, but reviewers were resistant to the linguistic policy. At one screening of the miniseries, some reviewers were said to have been unable to follow events in the plot, and complaints were made to the producers. Writing in the *New York Times*, John J. O'Connor (1980) called the $20 million miniseries 'the world's costliest language lesson' and opined that

> 'Shogun' faced a formidible [sic] problem with language. It failed to discover a workable solution. The use of untranslated Japanese

> is a ludicrous impediment to comprehension. Granted, after watching this 12-hour production, I now know 'dozo' means 'please,' and 'domo' means 'thank you.' But there must be an easier way.

Homogenising approaches

The question of language in *Shōgun* would appear to be unavoidable. The fabula recounts a European arriving in Japan unable to communicate, learning Japanese through his interpreter and later becoming assimilated into Japanese society. In 1980, however, audiences would have been used to the disregard of mimetic demands for the representation of foreign language. What Sternberg calls the homogenising convention 'retains the freedom of reference while dismissing the resultant variations in the language presumably spoken by the characters as an irrelevant, if not distracting, representational factor' (1981: 224). Homogenising narratives move freely in space and time, subordinating any questions of linguistic verisimilitude to the linguistic requirements of the target audience. Here anglophone film is a frequent offender; as Shohat and Stam put it,

> Hollywood ... came to incarnate a linguistic hubris bred of empire. Presuming to speak for others in *its* native idiom, Hollywood proposed to tell the story of other nations not only to Americans, but also for the other nations themselves, and always in English. (1985: 36)

It is difficult to pick individual examples from nearly 90 years of sound film, but one might immediately think of period films such as *Spartacus* (Kubrick, 1960) or *Gladiator* (Scott, 2000). One film that struck me recently on re-viewing as homogenising to an unusual degree is Frank Marshall's film of Piers Paul Read's account of the Andes plane crash survivors *Alive!* (1993). The language of the diegesis is Spanish, but the mostly American cast speak English with hardly a trace of an accent and with no acknowledgement of any slippage between the narrating and the narrative language. Another example might be *The Honest Courtesan* (Herskovitz, 1999), a heavily fictionalised account of the life of the Venetian poet Veronica Franco. The Italian language of the diegesis is represented by the English and American cast speaking English with their own accents. (Of course homogenisation is by no means limited to English: think, for instance, of French and Italian film adaptations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.)

Mimetic compromise

Thinking of examples of homogenisation is more difficult than one might imagine. *Schindler's List*? *All Quiet on the Western Front*? *America, America*? *To Be Or Not To Be*? *Braveheart*? *Pocahontas*? *Memoirs of a Geisha*? *1492: Conquest of Paradise*? *K-19: The Widowmaker*? These films all use English as a narrational language to represent a non-English diegetic language or languages. At the same time they cannot be said to be exclusively homogenising, because they all acknowledge the tension between representing and represented language to some degree, either through accent, or through partial or selective reproduction of heterolingual discourse, or a combination of the two. Very few films entirely abandon any attempt to reflect the language of the place or period. In fact, films offer us a wide range of linguistic strategies, tending towards matching or homogenising approaches without adhering entirely to either one.

These tendencies have been discussed by Sternberg under the heading of 'mimetic compromise'. Sternberg identifies four types of compromise in linguistic representation. 'Selective reproduction' is the 'intermittent quotation of the original heterolingual discourse' (225). This may come in the form of greetings, exclamations or phatic speech markers. On screen, certain elements of the dialogue are more likely to be reproduced than others. Rituals such as weddings and funerals are often conducted entirely or partially in the foreign language (*Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (Madden, 2001), *Braveheart*, *Amistad* (Spielberg, 1997), *The Third Man*). Even where the dialogue is entirely homogenised, songs are often sung in the foreign language as in *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Milestone, 1930) or *America, America* (Kazan, 1963). The speech of minor characters is more likely to be linguistically matched than that of protagonists (*The Name of the Rose*, *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*). Sometimes the matched dialogue is doubled through repetition in English. The foreign language is also likely to appear as 'noise' where multiple voices are superimposed, e.g. crowd scenes and children playing.[16]

There is also the crucial question of the *degree* of a language's foreignness. Not all languages are phonologically, geographically or commercially equal. In a multilingual film some languages may have 'privileged' status. Confronted with several languages to represent, many mainstream film directors choose to match some languages and not others. In Billy Wilder's comedy *One, Two, Three* (1961) scenes featuring German characters speaking to each other are shot in German, while in similar scenes featuring Russian characters, accented English represents

Russian. Conversely, the Russian filmmaker Rodion Nahapetov's *Border Blues* (2004), which tells the story of Russian immigrants to the United States trying to cross the Mexican border, chooses to shoot scenes involving Russian-speaking characters in subtitled Russian, but reproduces the Spanish of his Spanish-speaking characters only selectively. The dominant narrative language is often homogenised, while subsidiary languages are matched, as in Lubitsch's *Trouble in Paradise* (1932). French is the language of the film's main characters and the dominant language of the narrative, so French speech is represented by English, but in several short scenes in the opening sequences of the film, set in Venice, Italian is matched.

Sternberg's second compromise strategy, 'verbal transposition', is defined as 'the poetic or communicative twist given to what sociolinguists call bilingual interference' (1981: 227): in other words, the use of forms of expression which evoke an underlying foreign language. These can be syntactic forms, phonetic spellings or turns of phrase, as in the very marked use of third person for first person in the English dialogue of *Savage Innocents* (Ray, 1960). The hero Inuk, played by Anthony Quinn, refers to himself throughout as 'this man'. This and other unusual constructions in English represent the Inuit language spoken in the story world. In cinema, accent is frequently called upon to generate this type of transposition.

Usually, even in the case of homogenising strategies, some attempt is made to convey the foreignness of the represented language through accent (*Schindler's List*; *The Dancer Upstairs* (Malkovich, 2002); *Before Night Falls* (Schnabel, 2000)). These effects of accent and linguistic substratum are often achieved through casting 'foreign' actors.[17] We may also see differentiated English accents representing multiple languages, as in the otherwise homogenising *Charlotte Gray* (Armstrong, 2001), a Second World War story of an British spy in the French resistance. The Scottish protagonist, played by Cate Blanchett, is bilingual in French and English. As a covert operative parachuted into occupied France, she speaks Scots-accented English when speaking English, and English with a hint of French when the narrative decrees that French is being spoken. In a 2002 interview, the film's director Gillian Armstrong explains the decision to use English in shooting. Her account is worth quoting at length because of the range of factors relating to the choice of narrational language that she touches on:

> my instinct was to do it in French and we went through every permutation [trying to make that work] ... Cate was very gung ho to learn it

> in French and I had the script translated and then realised it would have meant almost two thirds of the film was in French. She'd have to have it perfect, of course, which was a big ask. And I realised I'd have to have a French cast, including two small kids, and French was my weakest subject at school. I suddenly thought, gawd, I'd be on set with translators and we'd be going back and forth and how do I tell that the delivery has the right emotional content and I realised I just wouldn't be able to do it. It would have been horrible. Then the distributors went berserk saying two thirds of the film would have to be subtitled, which was farcical for a film aimed at an English language audience. It was a no-win situation. Warner Bros would have pulled out and it wouldn't have been made with me or with Cate. I went to France in the beginning and could have cast it with French actors, but their English accents were all different, depending on where and how they'd learnt English. Some had American inflections, others were quite British. We heard that they were having similar problems on the set of Captain Corelli's Mandolin ... so we felt it was better to unify the accents so that the characters all seem to come from the same place. The French actors were afraid of sounding like clichés or caricatures of Frenchmen. (Urban 2002)

Armstrong declares that her first choice would have been to match languages (the fabula generating the 'language requirement') but that this would have resulted in a predominantly French-language film. She confirms that the film's primary or domestic audience is English-speaking. If the film were shot partly in French, the subsidiary cast would be French rather than British, and the French-language medium would have implications for Armstrong's ability to direct effectively. Not all directors find it as problem-free working with actors in other languages as Jim Jarmusch.[18] The Frenchness could have been imported via the bodies of the actors, but there would then be less control over vocal delivery. In one scenario the director would be working in a foreign language; in the other scenario, the actors would be. The involvement of a Hollywood major further restricted the range of linguistic approaches available, because of fears about the response of the domestic audience to subtitled dialogue. The *proportion* of foreign language to domestic language is also a major issue. This is not a question of a subtitled interlude, such as we find, for instance, in *Atonement* (Wright, 2007). Two-thirds of the film would need to be subtitled, making the film predominantly a foreign-language film (a question to which we will return in Chapter 4). The nationality and language competence

of the film's star, Cate Blanchett, a major draw for the film, was also a factor. A perfectly bilingual actor such as Kristin Scott Thomas could have been envisaged but would not have been a box office draw to the same extent. In the circumstances a homogenising approach featuring an anglophone cast with French accents offered an acceptable compromise.

Perhaps the most interesting, because the most medium-specific, of Sternberg's suggested categories of mimetic compromise is what he calls 'explicit attribution'. Simply put, explicit attribution involves telling the reader that a character is speaking a foreign language. It is the commonest way of representing a foreign language in prose fiction:

> Then, suddenly, from somewhere behind me, came a man's voice, speaking low, in French.
>
> 'So this is where you are!' (Stewart 1955: 27)

Attribution allows a series of effects which are unavailable where the language is to be heard rather than simply described. For instance, it permits indeterminacy. We may be told that a character is speaking a language which we cannot identify:

> The boy spoke slowly, with the signs of fatigue deepening in his face. I have no recollection now of what language he spoke; whether his English was good, or whether Max and Adoni eked it out with translation: the latter, I suspect; but whatever the case, the story came over vividly and sharply. (Stewart 1965: 144)

Written language is diegetic rather than mimetic, 'telling' rather than 'showing'. Film is the reverse. On screen, as a general rule, a language must be heard, and therefore specified, to the extent that 'the sound-film is virtually incapable of representing speech *without* an accent' (Stam 1989: 60). Explicit attribution might therefore appear antithetical to the mode of signification of film. If the characters are supposed to be speaking French, then either they speak French, with or without subtitles, in which case no attribution is necessary, or they speak the language of their audience, homogenised, and the attribution of Frenchness to their speech is implicit. The alternative would seem absurd; as Jacques Derrida recognises, 'l'affirmation d'une langue par elle-même est intraduisible' [the affirmation of a language through itself is untranslatable]' (1987: 59) [translation by Shari Benstock (Derrida 1998: 28)]. To say, in English, 'I am speaking English' is a speech act; to say, in English, 'I am speaking French' is a performative contradiction.

But to borrow Roman Jakobson's formulation: like languages, media differ in what they must say, not in what they may say. Performative contradiction or not, we do occasionally find explicit linguistic attribution on screen. Perhaps the best-known example is the Western film *Broken Arrow* (Daves, 1950), adapted from Elliott Arnold's 1947 novel *Blood Brother*.[19] The attribution occurs in the opening voiceover by Tom Jeffords, played by James Stewart, which begins:

> This is the story of a land, of the people who lived on it in the year 1870, and of a man whose name was Cochise. He was an Indian – leader of the Chiricahua Apache tribe. I was involved in the story and what I have to tell happened exactly as you'll see it – the only change will be that when the Apaches speak, they will speak in our language.

Here the attribution is flagged up in the opening moments of the film, at a comfortable remove from the dialogue to which it refers. The film homogenises languages, with English standing in for Apache throughout, but the initial acknowledgement of the difference of Apache speech inflects the whole viewing of the film. Even a simple attribution was a watershed in the linguistic representation of Native Americans in the cinema. It allowed Cochise to speak fluently rather than adopting the pidgin or halting English of previous Native American characters. The treatment of language is an integral part of the *prise de conscience* which the film represented, as a landmark in the shift towards a more sympathetic cinematic portrayal of Native Americans on screen (Larkins 1970; Hilger 1986).[20]

Broken Arrow gets around the representational problem of explicit attribution by locating the attribution at some distance from the attributed dialogue. Where attribution is located at the same point as the dialogue the effect can become comic or parodic. In series 4, episode 12 of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Whedon, 1997), the librarian Rupert Giles is transformed magically into a Feoral demon. In this guise, Giles finds that nobody can understand him, though to him it appears that he is speaking English. Aural point of view shots reveal that to the other English-speaking characters his speech sounds simply like growling. When he encounters the vampire Spike and finds that Spike can understand him, he asks eagerly whether he is speaking English, only to be told, 'No, you're speaking Feoral. I happen to speak Feoral.' The attribution works because linguistic indeterminacy is achieved by showing the same dialogue from two aural points of view, and because viewers

of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are conditioned to expect non-naturalistic effects in the show.

The homogenisation of languages could be considered a form of implicit, rather than explicit, attribution. Where the homogenised language represents a diegetically monolingual situation, outside situations of language contact, this is unproblematic. A stable relation is constructed over the course of the film between a single representing language and a single represented language. But a potential cognitive disturbance is created where a situation of language contact arises in a narrative for which English is both a representing (homogenising) language and a represented language. The problem is satirised in Woody Allen's *Bananas* (1971), in the scene where Allen's reluctant Central American dictator arrives in the United States for a state visit, to be met by the official interpreter Mr Hernandez who solemnly translates Woody's homogenised English-for-Spanish into 'real' English for the welcoming dignitary, and vice versa, only to be apprehended by two psychiatric nurses and chased across the apron with a butterfly net.

In one of the final sequences of Elia Kazan's *America, America* the protagonist, the young Anatolian Greek Stavros Topouzoglou (Stathis Giallelis), arrives in the United States under the assumed name of his dead friend Ioannis Kardasian. He finds himself on Ellis Island, waiting to be processed by the immigration authorities. As English dialogue has represented Greek throughout the narrative, the arrival on Ellis Island will pose the problem of the clash of narrational and narrative languages. Topouzoglou knows no English, but one of his companions speaks it fluently. When asked for his name by an immigration official, Topouzoglou is silent, unable to understand, and looks to his companion for interpretation. Close-up shots of the protagonist's face, his nervous smile and repeated glances at his companion for an explanation (Figures 1.5–1.6) cue the viewer to understand that Topouzoglou cannot understand the immigration official. His companion prompts him to give his name, Ioannis Kardasian. When asked whether he wants to be an American, he answers, again following his companion's prompt, in the affirmative, and is told that the first step is to change his name. Not understanding the immigration officer, Topouzoglou repeats his assumed name, Ioannis Kardasian, with increasing emphasis. The immigration officer is inspired to rename him 'Joe Arness', a corruption of 'Ioannis'. In the words of the immigration officer, 'Well, Joe, you're reborn. You're baptised again and without benefit of clergy.'

Figure 1.5 Incomprehension demonstrated by a nervous glance

Figure 1.6 Incomprehension demonstrated by a polite smile

This is a complex scene involving cultural and linguistic translation as well as narrational translation. In this penultimate sequence of the film, Joe is no longer the idealistic Stavros who left the village and his family so long before. Joe is becoming a 'translated man', in Salman Rushdie's phrase, someone who has been 'borne across' both space, in the form

of the Atlantic Ocean, but also the many obstacles, compromises and lessons of his journey. The scene is structured around a conventional three-cornered scenario of speaker A, speaker B and interpreter. The interpreter here acts as a liaison interpreter and as a reader, because the newly named Joe cannot read his new name as given to him by the immigration official. He also acts as a cultural mediator, explaining to 'Joe' through repetition how 'Ioannis' became 'Joe Arness'. Beaming, 'Joe' speaks what will be his first word of English: 'good'. Narratively speaking, this is clearly his first word of English despite the fact that, narrationally, Stathis Giallelis has spoken English throughout the film. The sequence of shots underlines this moment of translation as it moves repeatedly and sequentially from Stavros/Joe to his interpreter, back to Stavros/Joe, and then to the immigration official. The shot design visually and rhythmically supports the viewer's reading of the scene as one of translation, helping to overcome any cognitive dissonance prompted in the viewer by the clash of narrational English and narrative English. The mimetic and the homogenising use of English can thus coexist in the same scene which nevertheless remains 'decodable' by the viewer.[21]

An important site of explicit attribution in the cinema, of course, is in film scripts, which often use explicit attribution to show where a film's dialogue deviates from the language of the script. Few film scripts are like that of *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (Naremore 1979) in which the English dialogue is given in English, and the Spanish in Spanish, without translation. In Paul Laverty's published scripts for *Carla's Song* and *Bread and Roses*, for example, dialogue is printed in English, but identified as Spanish either scene by scene or, where frequent code-switching is taking place, line by line. A similar arrangement is used in Tarantino's recently published screenplay for *Inglourious Basterds*. Published scripts of *Traffic* and *The Kite Runner* make no mention of language matching. In such cases the foreign dialogue may be prepared in advance of shooting or even improvised on set. Sometimes relatively little indication is given to help the formulation of the foreign dialogue, as in the case of *The 13th Warrior* (McTiernan, 1999), whose foreign language consultant and script translator, Juta Kitching, had to work with an explicitly attributive script:

> The script was often noncommittal in that it could for example give such vague directives as 'mutters under his breath in Norwegian', or 'pronounces a magic spell in Norse' or 'enquires about such-and-such in Latin'. In other words, there was no text supplied to be translated,

> so I had to make it up, to create the discourse and then translate. (Kitching 2002)

In this case, Kitching found herself writing not only the target text, but also the source text – a good illustration of the 'translation without an original', which is narrational translation.

Referential restriction

The choice facing the filmmaker is not only whether to match languages or to disregard the issue and shoot in the language of the domestic audience. To express the choice in those terms suggests that the profilmic event is externally constituted and that it merely remains to decide which languages the actors should be heard speaking. But, as David Bordwell has emphasised, 'the profilmic event is already narrational' (1995: 15). The camera films a scene which has already been constructed according to the requirements of the narration. The sets, locations, actors' bodies, dialogue and actions which will populate a given sequence of shots and scenes are designed in the light of the demands of the fabula and the available representational resources.

In linguistic terms, the stage of script development offers the opportunity to adjust the quantity of the foreign language in the diegesis. This is Sternberg's third linguistic-representational possibility, 'referential restriction'. It allows a scriptwriter to avoid or minimise the problem of the multiplication of languages in a story. In literature, according to Sternberg's definition, referential restriction confines the represented world 'to the limits of a single, linguistically uniform community whose speech patterns correspond to those of the implied audience' (Sternberg 1981: 223). Any film set within one speech community which shares a language with the film's domestic audience can be classified under this heading. British-made films of Jane Austen novels, for instance, might constitute good examples. Leaving aside what are of course important questions of register and sociolect, for films set within a single speech community the question of the representation of foreign languages is irrelevant.

Film demands an extended conception of referential restriction. Dialogue is inevitably accented and the expectation of vehicular matching is greater than in literature. While referential restriction can simply refer to a film's setting within a single language community, it can also be understood as the potential for designing heterolingualism out of the narrative, or according it minor importance, in films where it might

initially be expected to be important. Thus popular border-crossing film narratives of travel, exploration or war often rely on the existence of English-language speakers or learners to set the scene, explain the action or advance the plot. Films such as *The Big Steal* (1949), *Volunteers* (Meyer, 1985), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (Spielberg, 1984) and *Good Morning Vietnam* (Levinson, 1987) often only seem interested in characters once they achieve communicative competence in English, while foreign languages are reduced to mere background noise. For characters like the Mexican police chief in *The Big Steal*, the acquisition of English is the only way to win a voice. This comedy drama is set in Mexico with American protagonists Duke Halliday, played by Robert Mitchum, and Joan Graham, played by Jane Greer. Duke's linguistic incompetence is presented early, while Joan is presented as a very competent Spanish speaker. While setting them up as the film's primary couple, the opening sequences also establish Joan as Duke's interpreter. When the couple are arrested, it turns out that Joan's interpreting services are not required because the local chief of police, Inspector General Ortega (Ramon Navarro) is an enthusiastic learner of English. Subsequent dialogue between the Inspector General and his lieutenant, a graduate of the University of California who is Ortega's English tutor, can also be delivered in English because the Inspector General's enthusiasm for English practice has been established. In *The Big Steal* the device of English learning allows the sympathetically drawn character Ortega extended dialogue and a substantial role in the narrative.

A striking example of referential restriction is the James L. Brooks comedy drama *Spanglish* (2005), whose plot revolves around the relationship between a Mexican housekeeper, Flor Moreno, and her English-speaking employers, the wealthy and neurotic Claskys. This film is titled after the mixed code of Spanish and English spoken by many Chicanos (cf. Stavans 2003) which is characterised by code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing and neologism. The film is marketed as a story of cross-cultural communication and miscommunication. Its protagonist Moreno, who speaks only Spanish, must communicate with the Claskys and other anglophones through her daughter Cristina, drafted as a sometimes reluctant mediator.

Language design in the film takes place on two main levels. Predictably, the film contains a certain amount of dialogue in Spanish. This is unsubtitled, sometimes interpreted diegetically by Cristina and sometimes translated via a voiceover from Cristina.[22] There are few verbal exchanges of any length between Cristina and her mother, probably because of the necessity for linguistic mediation. But what surprises

the viewer most, in a film which capitalises on questions of linguistic identity in Los Angeles (which we are reminded in the opening minutes of the film is '48 per cent Hispanic'), is the total absence of any code-mixing of any kind – in other words, the absence of Spanglish from *Spanglish*. Far from engaging with hybrid Chicano identities, by setting up two languages as polarised as the two families represented (first-generation Mexican immigrant versus white; poor versus rich; warm versus repressed; emotionally intelligent versus emotionally stunted) the film presents impermeable identities which can only communicate by means of a gradual assimilation represented by a shift into English. It is only Flor's acquisition of English which allows the romantic subplot with John Clasky (Adam Sandler), which is the focus of the latter half of the film, to develop. This rejection of hybridity is emphasised by the casting of an Iberian Spanish actress, Paz Vega, rather than a Chicana actress, as Flor. In the tradition of Hollywood peritexts, Flor's trajectory in California is mirrored by that of Vega, who spoke little or no English when she was cast in the role, and who we are told learned English on the set from her co-stars (Keck 2004). The assimilative language policy adopted by the film belies its superficial narrative of intercultural contact and negotiation.

To manage heterolingualism by writing a shift into English into the story reflects and helps to perpetuate external sociolinguistic and historical realities. One narrative device often used to overcome the multiplication of languages on screen is the suggestion by a non-English-speaking character that it would be good to practise his or her English. This device is used, for instance, in *Moscow on the Hudson* (Mazursky, 1984) to reduce the quantity of subtitled Russian dialogue in the opening scenes of the film set in Russia. It is used in *Last Night in Rio* in order to allow Brazilian actress Carmen Miranda to shift from speaking Portuguese to speaking English. Another plot device is the revelation that a character presumed to be a non-English speaker in fact has English competence. This achieves a double purpose of exploiting the dramatic possibilities of incomprehension without long-term inconvenience for the development of the action (cf. *Design for Living*; *The Interpreter*; *Mr Wu*; *Red Sun* (Young, 1971)). Referential restriction of this kind is facilitated by the circular colonial relationship in which globalisation creates a caste of English learners who then become easily available as a narrative device, which in turn may perpetuate linguistic globalisation. The trajectory of immigration towards the Anglophone nations is reflected in films such as *America, America*, *El Norte* (Nava, 1983); *Moscow on the Hudson*; *Amistad*; *The Terminal* (Spielberg, 2004), *Spanglish* and many

others. These films enact and re-enact the shift into English, which Eric Cheyfitz has called

> the deepest [desire] of US foreign policy towards the Third World in the twentieth century…: the 'barbarian' or 'savage', or the 'communist' or 'terrorist' coming to claim the United States, not in the barbarian's terms, of course…but purely in America's terms, the savage in loving submission to our will, willingly speaking proper English, the language of 'civilisation'. (1991: 3)

The device of the English learner, like other cinematic language management ploys, both draws on and contributes to the wider media 'linguascape', to use Adam Jaworski's term (Jaworski et al. 2003), reinforcing asymmetric cultural formations and reinforcing audiences' perceptions of the world as a place where English is always spoken when it is needed.

Referential restriction can also, of course, be due to pragmatic factors associated with production, such as the ability and willingness of actors to work in a foreign language, and the pressures from funders. The latter was an issue in Sue Clayton's international co-production *The Disappearance of Finbar* (1996), set partly in Ireland and partly in Scandinavia, whose language design was directly affected by the demands of the different producing nations:

> The Swedish Film Institute…invested on the understanding that at least parts of the film would be in the Swedish language. Channel Four however subsequently refused to have any subtitles in the film – so the Swedish and Finnish language could only be used where it was obvious to English language speakers what the meaning of the dialogue was, or alternatively, where humour is generated by the English language spectator sharing the Irish character's bewilderment and confusion. (Wayne 2002: 17)

As Clayton's experiences show, the temptation to read vehicular matching solely in ethical terms, as a type of linguistic 'authenticity', must be resisted. Linguistic representations are inescapably linked with the political, commercial and sociocultural contexts of their production. While patterns of linguistic strategy over a period of time or for a given national/regional context constitute representational tendencies which deserve critical attention, individual deployments and combinations of linguistic strategies may not be easily classified.

The scriptwriter for *Shōgun*, Eric Bercovici, responded with some heat to criticism of the linguistic strategy of the series by saying that some people 'for some reason found it astonishing that Japanese is spoken in Japan' (O'Connor 1980). This was, of course, not the point. Nobody would deny that Japanese is spoken in Japan, but few people would deny that other options were available to the filmmakers in representing the heteroglot diegetic situation. Overseas films and television programmes shot in Japan negotiate the foreignness of the language in very different ways, which might include: homogenising accented or unaccented English, subtitled Japanese dialogue, unsubtitled Japanese dialogue with voiceover, unsubtitled Japanese dialogue with diegetic interpreting, or the incorporation of English speakers or English learners in the narrative.

What is critically interesting is the evaluation of why one strategy has been used rather than another, and what implications this might have for the representation of the foreign. Cinema has its own forms of language policy and language planning which dictate the design and management of foreign-language dialogue. In the next two chapters I will discuss some of these devices and the situations within which they are used, arguing for the complexity and richness of language management strategies on screen.

2
The Dream of Instant Translation

Translation is many things. It is insufficient, excessive, contingent, temporally bound, iterative, different (and différant). It is, as many scholars in the post-structuralist tradition have acknowledged, impossible, and at the same time necessary. It is not – can never be – perfect, instant or redundant. And yet, as I will argue in this chapter, all three of these qualifiers are associated with the way in which cinema 'dreams' translation. Let me begin with two apparently throwaway remarks.

The first remark is one made by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam in relation to the difficulty of translating film titles, which are notoriously often the objects of recreation and sometimes misinterpretation. 'Perfect translation', they say, 'is in the best of circumstances a virtual impossibility' (1985: 42). The overdetermined nature of this statement invites attention. The reference to a 'perfect translation' is taken from George Steiner. In *After Babel*, Steiner describes the 'perfect act of translation' as a translation which adds nothing to and subtracts nothing from the source text:

> A 'perfect' act of translation would be one of total synonymity. It would presume an interpretation so precisely exhaustive as to leave no single unit in the source text –phonetic, grammatical, semantic, contextual - out of complete account, and yet so calibrated as to have added nothing in the way of paraphrase, explication or variant. (Steiner 1992: 428)

Steiner speaks in the conditional, which paradoxically has the effect of making the impossible 'perfect' translation more accessible than if he had simply used the present. Shohat and Stam rightly observe that a 'core of mutual incommensurability' will always remain. Translation,

they argue in line with recent translation theory, should become a 'dynamic process of cultural recoding, a change in the form of linguistic energy'. And yet, their triple rhetorical return to the scene of 'perfect translation' in the 'best of circumstances', which is only a 'virtual impossibility', not an absolute one, testifies to the resilience of the concept of the ideal translation which will convey the text, the whole text and nothing but the text.

This could seem rather quibbling, but for the extent to which Shohat and Stam's remark plays into a deeply rooted dream of perfect translation which has been recurrent through literary criticism, if less so in translation theory since the 1970s. Discussing translations of *Ulysses*, the Joyce scholar Fritz Senn remarks wistfully that 'no translation can be expected to give us the full orchestration of Joyce's novel'. He goes on to suggest, again by means of a wistful conditional, that 'it would be a unique stroke of luck if a translator could achieve the same depth and richness' as the original (Senn 1967: 172, 178). Senn does not suspect for one minute that the 'perfect' translation of Joyce exists (few know better than he that it cannot, and should not), but the concept acts as a kind of *tertium comparationis* for his reflections as it does for Steiner's. For Steiner, the perfect translation is 'in practice ... possible neither at the stage of interpretation nor at that of linguistic transfer and restatement' (1992: 428). The key phrase is 'in practice'. In theory, even if not in 'theory', the perfect translation is alive and well. Even the recognition of its impossibility, rehearsed here, only reinforces its hold on the imagination.[1]

The second remark which struck me was made by the director Tony Scott on the DVD commentary to *Man on Fire* (2004), a film whose plot centres on the kidnap of a child in Mexico and the revenge meted out by her bodyguard, played by Denzel Washington. In the course of the DVD commentary Scott describes the research he carried out for the film, which included meeting a Mexican kidnap survivor and her mother. An interpreter was involved in the discussion, because the mother did not speak English:

> it was just such a traumatic experience just sitting in the same room and the mom didn't speak English, she spoke Spanish with an interpreter, but I just, I didn't have to listen to the interpreter, I just looked into the mom's eyes and sat and talked to her daughter.

The imaginary ideal of a perfect translation is what makes source-text-oriented translation approaches so resilient in everyday discourse, even in the face of a generalised shift by theoreticians of translation

towards functional approaches whose main criterion is acceptability to a target audience. Its obverse is the lack of need for translation – not, as one might think, in the form of multilingual competence, but in the form of the moment of instantaneous human communication which transcends language, to which Mel Gibson aspired in aiming to 'cross language barriers with visual storytelling' in *Passion of the Christ* (2004), and which Tony Scott recalls in his description of a traumatised woman whose words need no interpreting because he can understand everything he needs from her just by looking at her face.

Aleida Assmann has considered some of the manifestations of 'visions of universalism' in which 'the shattered unity [of language] is restored' (1996: 85). Though the search for a real 'perfect language' is now a matter of history, Assmann's statement that 'we are no longer in the grip of these visions' seems rather a sweeping one. The dream of a perfect language, Benjamin's 'reine Sprache', has been displaced, rather than dismissed. We hear its echo in a range of cinematic discourses, from Jim Jarmusch dismissing the difficulties of working with actors in several languages as insignificant, to the epitexts of films such as *The Interpreter* (2005) and *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* (Lin, 2006). For Pollack's *The Interpreter*, the tagline used for one poster was 'The Truth Needs No Translation' – a rather surprising statement, given the film's ostensible subject matter, but in fact one which well reflects the (un)importance of interpreting to the film's narration. *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, released three years after *Lost in Translation* and shot in the same city, alludes epitextually to its predecessor through the tagline: 'On the streets of Tokyo, speed needs no translation', positioning itself as a supralinguistic kinetic spectacle in opposition to Sofia Coppola's existential drama.

Such throwaway statements, trivial as they are individually, speak to the myth of film as a universal language which is a 'powerful staple in Hollywood's mythology about itself' (Hansen 1984: 100). D. W. Griffith is reported to have said that 'a picture is the universal symbol, and a *picture that moves* is a universal language. Moving pictures, someone suggests, "might have saved the situation when the Tower of Babel was built" ' (quoted in Hansen 1984: 99). Silent film, with its easily replaceable intertitles, promoted a view of cinema as universal. To such an extent was this universality accepted that after the return of Babel in the form of talking pictures, exhibitors continued to show English-language pictures in foreign-language territories (Maltby and Vasey 1994; Low 1997), taking some time to realise that audiences might become restive at hearing an unfamiliar language.

In different forms, the notion of film as a universal language which would promote peace and brotherhood continued to reverberate in the face of the manifest imperfections of audiovisual translation technologies. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Russian filmmaker Vsevolod Pudovkin issued a passionately felt call for what he called the 'Global Film'. Pudovkin, like many filmmakers of his era, saw the advent of the talkies as compromising the purely cinematic qualities of silent film through contamination from literary and theatrical traditions. One of the negative consequences of this theatricalisation of the cinema was that 'sound films ... lost their international character' (Pudovkin 1947: 329). The ruin of the film as a work of art is specifically attributed by Pudovkin to translation:

> Since the spectator has to read, almost without pause, the translated words of the film's dialogue, idiotically printed on the picture itself, he cannot be expected to gain any impression from the pictorial composition of the original film. Furthermore, the spectator – for he is no longer an auditor, but only a spectator – can only be distracted by the unknown language coming from the loud-speaker; this has no more meaning for him than the static in poor radio reception. His attention, instead of being attracted to the direct perception of the work of art, is broken up: his impressions are scattered in all directions, and he is not fully moved, as one should be by a work of art. Our contemporary film with its superimposed subtitles gives me the impression of an entertaining bus excursion that has been arranged by removing tires, muffler, and springs from our vehicle. Such excursions give me nothing but nervous indigestion. Attempts at dubbing the translated dialogue in the mouths of the original actors have been little more successful. (ibid.)

Pudovkin is dismissive here both of the acoustic qualities of the foreign language, which he compares to static noise, and of the spectator, who by virtue of not understanding the spoken language of the film becomes not a listener, but merely a viewer of the film. For Pudovkin the cognitive burden imposed on the viewer by translation makes 'direct perception' of the work of art impossible. He goes on to argue for a new form of cinema 'comprehensible to all peoples'. One likely pathway, he suggests, is documentary cinema, whose montage of images with voiceover accompaniment satisfies his desire for a dialectical cinema and 'may be translated into any language without disturbing the integrity of expression'. A second pathway, it seems, would be to

return to an era in which spoken dialogue was sparingly used, indeed to the silent era in which dialogue intertitles 'were carefully chosen and appeared only when necessity flung them to the crest of a wave of feelings and thoughts that had already been read by the spectator in the mimed performance of the actor' (ibid.: 331). Pudovkin argues that such words 'are really universally understood' even before they are spoken, and 'may well serve as a lead in our search for a new film form comprehensible to all' (ibid.).

It is this notion of universal understanding that interests me here. Pudovkin cannot turn the clock back and remove dialogue from the cinema, but he suggests that

> there are words so immediately linked with mimed actions that their meaning is already read on the speaker's face before the word has been fully articulated. Their intonations take on almost purely musical functions. ... Such a word can be almost completely comprehended by any person, regardless of the language in which it is spoken. (ibid.)

The play in this passage between comprehension and incomprehension is rather marked. On the one hand, these words are (almost) completely comprehended, regardless of language. On the other hand, such words are likened to musical elements which are by definition not linguistic, which do not signify in a linguistic sense at all. Language is collapsed into a non-signifying sign system and at the same time equated with complete transparency. Pudovkin seems to be speaking of contextualisation of the verbal language in the polysemiotic medium where gesture, expression and *mise en scène* can enable the viewer to retrieve meaning. For Pudovkin, the translatability of the verbal language of the text tends (almost) towards perfection, but this is in fact not translatability, but the lack of need for translation, because the verbal dialogue is emptied of signification as it tends to become merely material, or 'musical'. The repetition of 'almost' speaks to the impossibility of the task, invoking again the dream of perfect, instant, redundant translation.

In his response to Pudovkin in the same issue of the *Hollywood Quarterly*, the subtitler Herman Weinberg defends subtitling as a mode of translation, arguing that poor-quality subtitling is the problem rather than subtitling per se (1947: 333–334). He offers a different solution, calling for a return to multiple-language production as it had been practised in the 1930s. Only wholesale remaking will resolve the problem of translation. Incidentally writing himself out of a job, Weinberg advocated

multiple-language production which would provide 'an eventual international film form ... no longer subject to the interpretive limitations of the harassed translator' (336). Weinberg suggests the formation of a board for the approval of scripts which would then be made in all of the major languages of filmmaking – an enterprise beside which Babel-sur-Seine itself, the Paramount studio at Joinville, fades into insignificance. I find it difficult not to read this intervention as facetious in intention and to sense a touch of mischief to his final call that the 'board of qualified consultants ... from the major language groups among the nations' which would approve treatments for production in their various languages should include Pudovkin himself.

The translating dissolve

Pudovkin and Weinberg are of course talking about translation for international distribution rather than translation at the production stage. But heterolingualism within the film diegesis may also call for translation. What happens, for instance, when a filmmaker chooses to match *written* language on screen? The result will be that either the viewer or the characters or both will be confronted with written material in a language they cannot read. Nowadays, such material would often be subtitled. From the silent period through the 1940s a different device was used which we may call the 'translating dissolve'.[2]

In Frank Capra's *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933), the eponymous general, played by the Danish–Swedish actor Nils Asther, is persuaded to write a safe conduct pass for the Reverend Robert Strife (Gavin Gordon) to allow the clergyman to rescue some orphans from a Christian orphanage at a moment of civil unrest. When the general discovers that the clergyman has postponed his own wedding to Megan Davis (Barbara Stanwyck) to rescue the orphans he is contemptuous and drafts the 'safe conduct pass' in order deliberately to put the clergyman in danger. This is a key scene which sets up the main action of the plot. It is important for the English viewer that the mismatch between what the general says he is writing in Chinese and what he actually writes is made available. The film achieves this by offering us the Chinese text and then replacing it, via a dissolve, with the English text (see Figures 2.1–2.3).

This dissolve, although it fulfils precisely the same function as a subtitle or even a voiceover translation would, seems to have a different ontological status in relation to the narrative. A subtitle is superimposed upon the image. A voiceover translation would be an addition to the

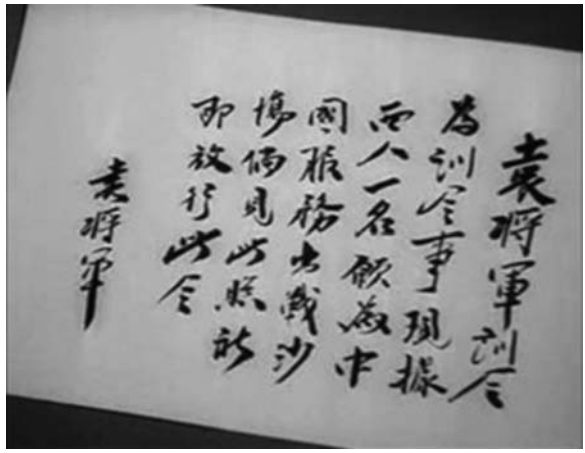

Figure 2.1 *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*: Chinese safe conduct letter[3]

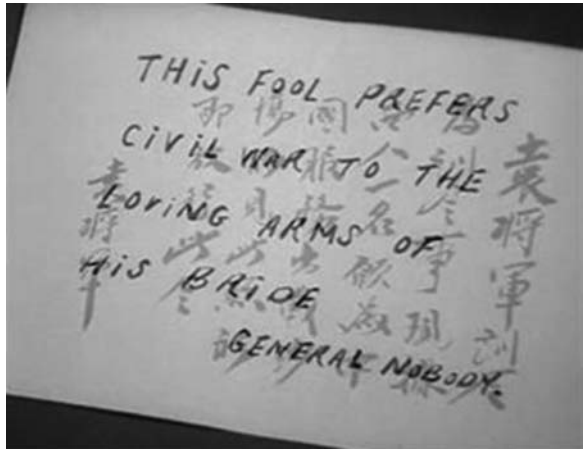

Figure 2.2 *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*: mid-dissolve

soundtrack. Both are arguably paratextual and they leave intact at least the ideal of the inviolability of the image. Instead, this dissolve seems to act textually, functioning not simply to allow 'overhearing' by the viewer but to constitute a point of view for one or more characters. In this case, the point of view is that of General Yen who, unlike Robert Strife, knows what the mendacious message contains. The mimetic

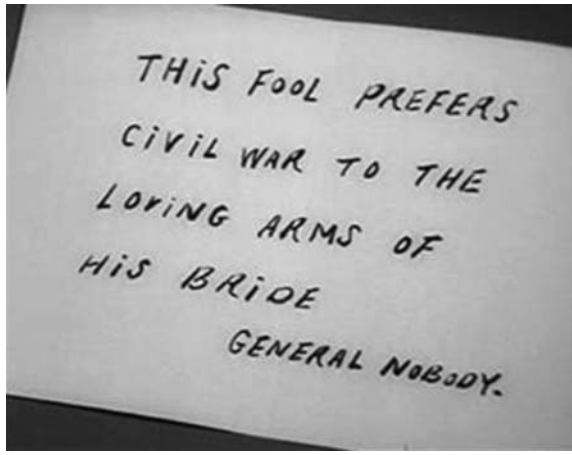

Figure 2.3 *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*: safe conduct letter in English

effect is reinforced by the script used for the English text which suggests a scrawled note.

The mimetic effect of the script is weak in this example; a more characteristic one might be found in Pudovkin's *Deserter* (1933) where a striking worker in Germany carries a sign in German which dissolves into Russian, the language of the film's primary target audience (Figures 2.4–2.6).

Figure 2.4 A German striker's placard in *Deserter*

Figure 2.5 Mid-dissolve

Figure 2.6 The 'target text' in Russian

The effect is momentary, and trivial in relation to the narrative. There is no need, pragmatically speaking, for the translation mimetically to resemble the original; today, the sign would be subtitled and thus presented in an entirely different typographical and spatial format, which would make the translation an overt act and situate viewers as target-language speakers. The translating dissolve, on the other hand, suggests that if we spoke German, this is what we would be reading; it projects us immersively *into* the narrated events.

The diegetic effect of the device is clearer yet again in the following example from *Daughter of the Dragon* (Corrigan, 1931). Ah Kee, played by Sessue Hayakawa, receives a secret message in Chinese characters in a matchbook. Note the use of an orientalised font recalling 'Chinese' brushstrokes for the English text (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8).

The first dissolve from the Chinese to the English text is followed by a second dissolve back to the Chinese text. This device seems to sit on the borderline between 'perceptual subjectivity' and 'mental subjectivity' to use Bordwell and Thompson's terms (2008: 91) – or rather, it seems to involve a swift passage from one to the other: from the perception

Figure 2.7 The original Chinese message in *Daughter of the Dragon*

Figure 2.8 The English message after the dissolve in *Daughter of the Dragon*

(both viewer and character 'see' the same characters, even if they do not understand them) to the mental *comprehension* which cannot but be cast as a translation. As with the German to Russian dissolve in *Deserter*, a Chinese reader will *see* what is in Figure 2.7, but *understand* (if the Chinese is written and translated correctly) something akin to what is in Figure 2.8. The second dissolve back into English emphasises the perceptual/mental nature of the moment – diegetically speaking, the text remains unaltered. Textually speaking, the 'translation' represents a moment of 'perceptual/mental point of view'.

Later instances of the device seem marked[4] but its frequency in the 1920s and 1930s suggests that it was easily acceptable to audiences. Its interest for us lies in the mobilisation of the filmic apparatus, in the form of the dissolve, to cast the translation as a function of perceptual/mental subjectivity. A translation effect (source text becomes target text) is thus framed as non-translation (translation is not necessary because the viewer 'understands' the insert from the point of view of a character). Translation is at once instant and redundant.

Managing languages through narrative framing

The translating dissolve is only one of a set of more or less conventionalised linguistic-narrational devices found in film and television. Most concentrate on dialogue rather than on in-vision written language. Abé Mark Nornes sees the arrival of sound as prompting narrational exploration by filmmakers in how to manage languages, one option being the polyglot film such as Pabst's *Kameradschaft* (1931) which makes a virtue out of Babelic necessity. Nornes also cites the English version of Josef con Sternberg's *Die blaue Engel/The Blue Angel* (1930/1931), which employs referential restriction in order to introduce English into the diegesis by employing the motif of the English learner (Nornes 2007: 20). But Nornes demonstrates an uncharacteristic blind spot when he suggests that the establishment of homogenising uses of English accompanied an abandonment of efforts on the part of filmmakers to find creative solutions to the language problem: 'by the 1950s, everyone in the world in every era of history speaks English, and diegetic devices designed to motivate and explain away language difference become the domain of science fiction' (2007: 21). On the contrary, parallel to the ongoing use of homogenising English (which shows no sign of disappearing from mainstream cinema) we find throughout the century a succession of more or less sophisticated narrational devices for representing and managing heterolingual scenarios.

We saw some examples in Chapter 1 of restriction of reference to speakers of English only, meaning that narratives are peopled with eager English learners. We also see examples of elaborate metadiegetic devices where the translation is enacted through a framing narrative. In the romantic thriller *Shining Through* (Seltzer, 1992), Melanie Griffith plays Linda Voss, a bilingual German and English speaker of German Jewish descent who is sent on a two-week espionage assignment into Germany during the Second World War. The story is embedded within a framing narrative in which Voss is being interviewed in English for American television after the war. This allows the narrative to be framed linguistically as well as temporally. Voss embarks on her assignment in the company of the spy 'Sunflower' (John Gielgud). She initially addresses him in English but is testily ordered to speak German so that he can assess her language competence. Their dialogue continues in German for a couple of turns. After a polite interruption in voiceover by the American television interviewer, we cut to the framing interview, where we hear that Voss is in fact speaking German. When this is drawn to her attention, Voss observes that this is because she remembers the events in German, but agrees to try to 'remember in English'. When we cut back to the scene in the train carriage, the action continues in English, as it does for the rest of the film. This location of the translation shift as meta- rather than extradiegetic may have been meant to increase its plausibility for audiences, though its execution is affected by Griffiths's poor German pronunciation. Although it plays clumsily, the device echoes in interesting ways the experience of remembering translated films. As Edward Branigan has pointed out, 'perceivers tend to remember a story in terms of categories of information stated as propositions, interpretations and summaries rather than remembering ... its surface features' (1992: 14–15). This is very much the case for language. It is anecdotally known that one can remember seeing a film in a language other than the language spoken by the actors, if the film is well dubbed or subtitled. The unobtrusiveness of subtitling seeks to trigger exactly this act of translingual memory.

John McTiernan's *The 13th Warrior* (1999), based on the popular novel (1976) *Eaters of the Dead* by Michael Crichton, offers us a still more elaborate example of linguistic framing. The film tells the story of an Arab, Ibn Fadlan, who fights alongside a group of Vikings to defeat a supernatural enemy. *Eaters of the Dead* draws on two medieval narratives, Beowulf and a tenth-century travel narrative, the *Kitāb* by Ibn Fadlan, an Arabic ambassador to the tribes of northern Europe.[5] In Crichton's source novel, Ibn Fadlan is unable to communicate directly with the Northmen. This

obliges him to draw, first on the services of interpreters travelling in his entourage, and subsequently on a lingua franca, thanks to the Northman Herger, 'by the grace of Allah ... a man of parts and knowing some of the Latin tongue' (Crichton 1997: 49). At no point in the novel do we 'hear' the tongue of the Northmen, which is dismissed by the narrator as being 'ugly to the ear and difficult to comprehend' (ibid.: 36).

From the beginning, the film was planned as a historical epic. It needed to address the language issue in a way which would permit the widest possible audience. In the novel, after he leaves his companions to travel with the Vikings, Ibn Fadlan picks up a few words of the Northmen's language, but Herger continues to act as his interpreter – something that is possible through explicit attribution, but which would be much too cumbersome on screen; even in the novel, Herger finds his role as interpreter rather tedious (ibid.: 56, 60). It will therefore be necessary for Ibn Fadlan and the Northmen to find a common language. The way in which this is set up results in an extended sequence where language and translation are the focus of the narrative.

The film uses a carefully designed combination of vehicular matching and homogenisation. It begins with an English voiceover by Ibn Fadlan, played by Antonio Banderas, explaining the reasons for his exile and outlining the stages of his long journey north. Here English is representing Arabic, and is therefore the language in which Ibn Fadlan communicates with his companion Melchisidek, played by Omar Sharif. Neither of them is familiar with the language of the Northmen. During their first encounter with the Northmen, at a raucous feast, Ibn Fadlan and his companion Melchisidek struggle to make themselves understood:

> MELCHIS.: [*to a passing Viking*] We seek your ...
> [*to Rethel*] We seek your headman, your, king ...
> IBN FADLAN: Try Greek.
> MELCHIS.: [*to Edgtho*] Hegemona humeteron. Basilea humeteron. Eh? [*Edgtho attracts Herger's attention by kicking him*]
> [*to Herger*] Hegemona humeteron. Basilea humeteron. [*Trying Latin*] ... uestrum regem.
> HERGER: Noster rex? Tabernaculum.
> MELCHIS.: [*to Ibn Fadlan*] He says their king is out there in that tent.
> HERGER: Non loquetur.
> MELCHIS.: He says the king will not speak to us.
> HERGER: Non loquetur, quia mortuus est!

MELCHIS.: Apparently the king won't speak to us because he's dead.

In the film, Ibn Fadlan knows no language beyond his own. Nor do any of the Vikings except Herger. The cultured Melchisidek, who is familiar with Latin and Greek, acts as Ibn Fadlan's interpreter in these early scenes. The multiplication of lingua francas in this scene (both Greek and Latin), rather than de-emphasising the problem of communication, instead makes a feature of it, engaging the attraction of archaic languages which David Lowenthal sees as a characteristic feature of time-travel narratives (1985: 22–23).

The actors playing the Northmen initially speak modern Norwegian, except for the Danish actors who speak their own language variety.[6] The Norwegian is anachronistic, as modern Norwegian was not spoken until at least the sixteenth century (Vikør 1993: 51), but any requirement for linguistic specificity here is mitigated by the fact that the Northmen enjoy a certain national-linguistic indeterminacy, being both the 'Rūs' of Ibn Fadlan and the warriors of *Beowulf*.

Subsequent exchanges during the ambassador's stay among the Northmen are achieved through relay interpreting, including the following virtuoso moment of simultaneous cultural and linguistic translation, in which Herger translates the words of the king's funeral ceremony, dimly audible at a distance, into Latin, which Melchisidek in turn translates for Ibn Fadlan's benefit into 'Arabic' (i.e. English):

CELEBRANT: [*faintly, at a distance*] Å, der ser jeg min far.
HERGER: Ecce patrem video.
MELCHIS.: Lo, there do I see my father.
[*Herger continues to speak but Melchisidek's interpreting shifts from consecutive to simultaneous here and most of the Latin is inaudible.]*
HERGER: Ecce matrem et sorores et fratres video.
MELCHIS.: Lo, there do I see my mother, my sisters and my brothers.
CELEBRANT: Å, der ser jeg mine forfedre ... tilbake til begynnelsen.
HERGER: [Ecce ibi genus mei populi video ... retro] ad initium.
MELCHIS.: Lo, there do I see the line of my people back to the beginning.
CELEBRANT: Å, de kaller på meg.
HERGER: Ecce me vocant.
MELCHIS.: Lo, they do call to me.

CELEBRANT: De ber meg om å ta min plass iblant dem sittende der i Valhalla.
HERGER: Sedens ibi in sede beatorum, in Valhalla.
MELCHIS.: They bid me take my place among them in the halls of Valhalla where the brave may live forever.

The film takes the requirement of relay interpreting and shows how rhetorically successful it can be. Of course, all this conscientious reproduction and juxtaposition of languages is still at the service of a language management strategy which will allow a shift in the represented language without requiring a shift in the representing one (in other words, the shift will be from English-representing-Arabic to English-representing-Norse). This is achieved by means of a sequence depicting a process of language learning via total immersion.

The language of the Northmen has been established for the viewer, represented by a mixture of modern Nordic languages. As the warriors journey north, Ibn Fadlan listens to his companions' incomprehensible conversations around the fire. These conversations are unsubtitled, with the result that the acoustic materiality of the Northmen's language is highlighted. Close-ups of faces and lip movements, and repeated shots of actors saying the same phrases over and over, convey the attentiveness with which Ibn Fadlan studies his companions' language. The film's language consultant Juta Kitching, a sociolinguist, designed five campfire scenes (Kitching 2002) incorporating a gradually increasing quantity of code-mixing, drawing on words cognate in English and Norwegian. With the passage of time, signified by changes in the weather and dissolves between shots,[7] comprehensible English words and phrases words and phrases begin to emerge out of the conversation. Ibn Fadlan finally understands enough to decode an unflattering remark about his mother which prompts him to intervene in the conversation in halting but effective Norse:

IBN FADLAN: My mother was a pure woman from a noble family, and I at least know who my father was, you pig-eating son of a whore.
HERGER: How did you learn our language?
IBN FADLAN: I listened!

From this point forward, 'Norse' will be the sole language of the narrative and English of the narration.

It is not surprising that this scene was singled out by critics for its verisimilitude (Aberth 2003: 60; Driver 2004: 211), though clearly considerable poetic licence has been used in its portrayal of accelerated language learning through total immersion. In fact what characterises the scene is not verisimilitude but rhetorical effectiveness; indeed, there is something of a paradox in the use of a shift from Nordic languages to English to represent a diegetic shift from 'English' to Norse.

Although the elaborate sequence of linguistic negotiations which make up the first quarter of an hour of the film only exists because the explicit attribution of language possible as a short cut in prose fiction is impossible to duplicate on film, the cumulative result is the construction of one of the more thoughtful representations of a multilingual environment existing in popular film. It may fairly be said that, in this example at least, a strategy which ultimately seeks to homogenise language incidentally reinforces the materiality of its difference, suggesting that there is still space for evocative moments of cinematic multilingualism, even at the heart of hegemonic film practices.

The 'Babel Fish' homogenising shift

Language management in popular film does not only focus on narrative devices. As with the translating dissolves of the 1910s to the 1940s, formal experiments also continue.

I mentioned in the previous chapter the 'selective reproduction' of heterolingual dialogue as involving conventional elements such as phatic speech, exclamations, songs and ceremonies. These serve to remind the viewer of the heterolingual diegetic situation. In film the *present*-ness of spoken language and the unavailability of explicit attribution has prompted a move towards selective reproduction of the diegetic language at the earliest possible juncture in order to establish the heterolingual setting. Many films and television shows have thus adopted a variant of explicit attribution in the form of a characteristic shift from vehicular matching to homogenisation which cues the viewer to the fact that the language of the diegesis is X but that it will be represented by language Y.

This extradiegetic shift (to distinguish it from diegetic code switching) from narrative language to narrating language performs the shift from incomprehension to comprehension of the foreign dialogue, from foreignness to familiarity, as an act of translation. Perhaps the best-known example of this linguistic transition can be found in *The Hunt for Red October* (1990). Much of the film's action is set in exclusively

Russian-speaking environments, and the question of how to represent the Russian is therefore a pressing one. The leading Russian characters are played by anglophone actors including Sean Connery and Peter Firth. Their dialogue is initially spoken in Russian with subtitles, as discussed in the previous chapter. This is not, however, commercially sustainable, and a shift from Russian to English takes place in the early minutes of the film, in a scene in the captain's cabin between Connery, playing Captain Marko Ramius, and Firth, in the role of the ship's political officer. Firth quotes in Russian from the captain's copy of the Book of Revelations, subtitled '[and they gathered them together] [In a place called Armageddon]'. As he reads, the camera zooms in on his face until at the closest point we can only see his mouth saying the word 'Armageddon'. A moment of understanding without subtitles is achieved by using an unsubtitled biblical reference common to Russian and English. The camera then zooms out again and Firth continues reading, in English: 'and the seventh angel poured forth his bowl into the air, and a voice cried out from Heaven, saying, It is done'. The result is a smooth transition from vehicular matching to homogenising English, which will be used aboard the submarine for the rest of the film (and which will cause no problems until the Russian crew meet their American counterparts).

This translating shift constitutes an additional immersive device consonant with the film's conventionally naturalistic style. The subtitled dialogue which opens the film offers a moment of additional authenticity – yes, this is a real Russian submarine, and we know that because it is peopled by actors/sailors speaking real Russian – and distance, in the form of titles interposed between the viewer and the diegetic world. The disappearance of the subtitles at the apex of the close-up literally brings us closer to the characters by removing the interposed text, thus granting us even closer access to the film. The device therefore valorises homogenisation as a device which brings us closer to the characters while profiting from the cultural capital and authenticity effect of subtitled dialogue.

This shift into homogenising English works best when its audience does not notice it, and anecdotal evidence suggests that for some viewers this is indeed the case (see p. 51). An explanation for the effectiveness of the close-up for this purpose may be found in early writing on the cinema, in which the close-up is described in hermeneutic terms. In *Theory of the Film*, Béla Balázs argues that 'in the days of the silent film [the close-up] not only revealed new things, but showed us the meaning of the old' (Balázs 1970: 185), and that the close-up of the human face

reveals 'emotions, moods, intentions and thoughts' (189). Subsequent commentators pick up on these aspects of the close-up. As Judith Roof puts it, 'close-ups spawn the illusion of knowledge and certainty located in the image itself as the site of meaning, the answer to all questions, and the kernel of epistemological nourishment' (Roof 1999, para. 2). The close-up seems to offer unlimited *access*. Mary Ann Doane argues that 'the face is the intensification of a locus of signification' (Doane 2003: 96). 'Closeness' is of course one of the primary conceptual metaphors relating to translation. We speak in English of a 'close' translation as opposed to a translation which 'departs' from the source. The use of a zoom to close up can therefore be seen as an example of what Boris Eikhenbaum has called 'film metaphor' which is parasitic on verbal metaphor in that it is a 'visual realisation' of it (1974: 30; cf. Stam 1989: 62–63). The combination of the spatial metaphor inherent in the zoom and the hermeneutic motion of the close-up on the speaker may help to explain the rhetorical effectiveness of this device which has been re-used in several prominent films including the action adventure *The Mummy Returns* (Sommers, 2001) and Disney's 1995 feature *Pocahontas* (Gabriel, 1995). It has not, however, become a standard filmic device in the form in which it is presented in *The Hunt for Red October*. Indeed in these later films it is characterised by a growing linguistic remoteness and inauthenticity. In *The Mummy Returns*, several short scenes are shot in a reconstructed ancient Egyptian language prepared for the film by the Egyptologist Stuart Smith. A fairly large portion of the film recounts the journey of the protagonists' small son Alex as a prisoner of the Mummy. Like the Mummy, Alex speaks ancient Egyptian fluently, but in order to avoid shooting longer scenes of dialogue in this reconstructed language a close-up is allowed to mark the moment when the Mummy acknowledges that the boy understands him, whereupon the dialogue continues in English. The close-up of the human face has been replaced by a close-up of the Mummy's metallic mask.

Other filmic codes may also be used to enact a moment of translation from narrated to narrational language. Some of these are based on camera movements. The second episode of the first series of *Lost* contains a flashback by the Iraqi character Sayid Jarrah to an interrogation he carried out as a member of the Republican Guard. The scene opens in Arabic with subtitles. After a few lines of dialogue the camera settles behind Falah, the interrogation subject, looking over his left shoulder at Jarrah. A zoom to a close-up of Jarrah's mouth is followed by a dolly right. Falah's head blocks our view of Jarrah, and when his face comes into shot again over Falah's right shoulder, Jarrah is speaking English.

All further interaction between Iraqi characters in the episode takes place in English.

In *Clear and Present Danger* (Noyce, 1994), which is set partly in South America, the dialogue of the first sequence begins in Spanish with subtitles. The extradiegetic shift from Spanish to English takes place at a dramatic pause in the heated Spanish-language conversation between the drug lord Escobedo and his adviser Cortez. The pause is accentuated by a couple of moments of slow motion. When the film resumes at normal speed the characters are speaking Spanish-accented English. Sometimes the shift simply happens on a cut – *The Ice Runner* (Samons, 1992), *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005) – but usually there is some visual or aural punctuation to cue the reader to the shift from represented to representing language. *Bulletproof Monk* (Hunter, 2003) opens with a martial arts action sequence with a few lines in Cantonese with subtitles. The following scene contains a lot of expository dialogue. As this second scene begins, a shift of languages takes place which is marked aurally rather than visually. In the middle of a line of dialogue the voice of the Master Monk, played by Roger Yuan, fades out, along with the subtitles, and an English-speaking voice fades in. The shift happens on the phrase '[subtitle: the ending of my destiny…] and the beginning of yours' (Figure 2.9). Here the 'hook' is a narrative one as well – this moment marks the handover of power from the master to his student as well as from represented language (Cantonese with English subtitles) to representing language (English for Cantonese).

Figure 2.9 The shift from representing Cantonese to representing English

Similar devices continue to be reworked and redeployed in mainstream film. Most recently at the time of writing, *Valkyrie* (Singer, 2008) adopts a German-to-English shift by means of a voiceover. The film opens with German titles which morph into English (recalling a similar device used in *The Hunt for Red October*). The action of the film opens in North Africa where Colonel von Stauffenberg (Tom Cruise) is sitting in his tent writing seditious letters. The text of the letters is read in a German-language voiceover, spoken with a strong accent by Cruise, with English subtitles. After two or three titles' worth of German voiceover, Cruise's German voiceover is supplemented by a louder voice-over in English, also spoken by Cruise. For the space of one or two titles the subtitled German and the English voiceovers overlap. The English subtitles and the German voiceover then fade out and from then on the film's dialogue is exclusively in English.

These examples are worth describing at some length in order to convey the adaptability of this translating device, which adopts different visual and aural devices to cue the audience to the moment of translation. The translating close-up in its original form is attributed by John McTiernan to Stanley Kramer. *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Kramer, 1961) recounts the trials at Nuremberg in 1947 of a group of senior legal figures of the Third Reich. The Nuremberg trials were famously one of the early showcases of simultaneous interpreting, but, as most of the film's action takes place in the courtroom, interpreting throughout would make the narration too cumbersome. A shift from bilingual German and English dialogue, representing the multilingual courtroom, to English-only dialogue therefore takes place in the course of the first extended German speech of the trial, delivered by Hans Rolfe (Maximilian Schell). Rolfe's speech begins in German and shifts almost seamlessly into English in mid-sentence: 'Der anerkannte Sinn dieses Gerichts [Interpreter: 'the avowed purpose of this tribunal'] is broader than the visiting of retribution on a few men.' Again, the moment of translation is marked by a close-up. Here, however, the device is more complex, a carefully thought out sequence which relies heavily on a visual metaphor of translation. Kramer credits his director of photography Ernest Laszlo with the shot design:

> In the early part of the picture, we had German actors do scenes in German to convey that the actual trial was mostly in German, though the picture would be mostly in English. I needed a graceful way to handle the transition from one language to the other. Once

> again, Laszlo provided a solution. We started the transition scene with Schell addressing the court in German. Laszlo's camera zoomed in on him, then turned elsewhere, then turned again to Schell so that we were able to switch his speech from German to English in perfect cadence as the camera came in on him the second time. His English picked up from his German so naturally you could almost let it pass without noticing it. Schell deserved much of the credit for the ease with which this worked. He was so remarkably fluent in both languages, you could hardly tell which of them was his native tongue. (Kramer 1997: 186)

Again, as in all audiovisual translation, the aim is inconspicuousness. In fact, the camera movements are not quite as Kramer remembers. During Schell's address to the court, accompanied by the voice of the interpreter in voiceover, the camera settles in the interpreters' booth, looking over the shoulder of two interpreters and through the glass wall of the booth at Schell's character (Figure 2.10). In the foreground we can see the microphone through which the interpreters address the court. After a few moments the camera rises vertically out of the booth (Figure 2.11), then zooms in to Schell's face (Figure 2.12). As the camera reaches its closest point, between one breath and the next, Schell switches from German to English. The camera then zooms out again to a medium shot as Schell continues to address the court.

Figure 2.10 The camera in the interpreters' booth

Figure 2.11 The camera rises out of the interpreters' booth

Figure 2.12 Close-up at the point of translation

If in the instances of translation shift discussed previously the camera was often cast as a metaphorical translator, here the camera establishes itself through its brief sojourn in the booth as a true interpreter among other interpreters. At the same time it makes the other interpreters redundant for the spectator (not of course for the characters, who will continue to need their headphones throughout the trial).

This moment in *Judgment at Nuremberg* is significant, not only because it provides us with what seems to be the genesis of the translating close-up,[8] but because it constitutes an explicit link with the idea that the cinematographic apparatus can transcend national languages. Michael Cronin has observed that 'in the contemporary tachocracy of the Western world, human translation is an impediment: it slows down the circulation of goods, services, peoples' (2003: 114). Human translation is increasingly supplemented (and, says the dream, one day substituted) by translation memory software, which speeds up translation, and machine translation systems, which make it instantaneous. The crane shot and zoom evoke a mobile interpreting camera with the power to translate instantly for us what mere human interpreters laboriously translate phrase by phrase – not all that distant from some more recent technological incarnations of the dream of instant translation.

The dream of instant translation

It has been argued that the shift from represented to representing language on screen is cast as explicitly translational. There are, however, important differences between the activity of translation and the enacted translations we have seen in popular film. The most important of these differences lies in the iterative nature of translation. Translation is by its very nature repetition – a re-performance, a re-drafting, a re-wording – but also an iterative process of back-and-forth movement between two texts and languages. In David Macey's reflection on his own translation practice 'Beginning the Translation' (2000), the word 'again' occurs 22 times. Translation takes place 'from screen to text and back again' (ibid.: 7), from draft to draft, through checking and revision, always alert for patterns, for intrusive repetitions, always keeping the text's cohesion and comprehensibility in mind. Translation is cyclical, word after word, paragraph after paragraph, always the effort to begin again.

It is this repetition which cinema resists. As we will see in Chapter 3, few films tolerate for long the doubled, three-cornered exchanges characteristic of liaison interpreting. Each time a subtitle appears on screen, the moment of translation repeats itself. In obviating the need for subtitling or interpreting, the translating close-up or the translating dissolve or the translating cut deny the iterative nature of translation. They are also virtually instantaneous. They forcibly recall the 'Babel Fish' as described by Douglas Adams in *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979). For readers unfamiliar with that work, the Babel Fish is a small yellow fish

which you put in your ear, whereupon you instantly understand all the languages of the galaxy. It

> feeds on brainwave energy received not from its own carrier but from those around it. It absorbs all unconscious mental frequencies from this brainwave energy to nourish itself with. It then excretes into the mind of its carrier a telepathic matrix formed by combining the conscious thought frequencies with nerve signals picked up from the speech centres of the brain which has supplied them. The practical upshot of this is that if you stick a Babel fish in your ear you can instantly understand anything said to you in any form of language. (Adams 1979: 49–50)

The Babel Fish not only represents the capacity to understand any language we hear, it also holds within itself the moment of shift figuratively portrayed as a process of digestion. The Babel Fish is one of a stable of instant translators available in science fiction, along with the Universal Translator of Star Trek, the 'translator microbes' of *Farscape* and the *honyaku konyaku* ['translation jelly'] of *Doraemon* (Cronin 2000: 129–131; Nornes 2007: 21) – all manifestations of the dream of instant translation.

With the arrival of sound film, the dream faded of moving pictures as a universal language where translation would be redundant. With the birth of machine translation technology in the 1950s, the dream of the universal language was replaced with the dream of instantaneous translation. Machine translation has so far failed to deliver on this dream, though it has become embedded in many translation environments as an increasingly useful tool, to be supplemented by the work of human translators. The dream itself has, however, remained remarkably persistent. It takes the form of the displacement of the repetitive effort of translation into a machine or device which digests, like the Babel Fish, and regurgitates comprehensible language.

An article in the *Economist* in December 1986, having considered Esperanto and Basic English, concluded that the only alternative to English as a world language is

> the interpreting machine. One day, perhaps, there will be a portable black box – the size of a largish pocket calculator? – with flawless powers of voice recognition and simultaneous translation. Put it on the desk between you and your Japanese counterpart, and let talks proceed. ('Estas neniu alternativo'.)

This passage is now faintly amusing for its representation of the technology of its own time, but also for its prescience. Twenty years later it is in voice recognition software that we see the dream of instant translation re-expressed. This dream is one with which translators and translation scholars, trainers and students are very familiar in the form of the easy availability of web-based translation software which promise to reduce the necessity for human translators. A similar Holy Grail is dreamed of for interpreting, driven today largely by the need for instantaneous communication on the battlefield. Google recently announced that an interpreting smart phone using voice recognition software and a voice synthesiser is at an advanced stage of development (Gourlay 2010). A story circulated a few years ago about research which was apparently on the brink of translating speech before it is even uttered (Biever 2006). The technology was said to 'read' impulses in the muscles of the face and throat by means of electrodes and translate them via an electronic voice simulator into the target language in a manner which simulated on-the-spot dubbing. It has been observed that this was a rather speculative report on what was in fact straightforward voice recognition technology with no immediate translational application (Liberman 2006), but whether or not this technology was over-reported, what is interesting is how well it illustrates the powerful hold that the possibility of translation without translators retains in the popular imagination. It is not a coincidence that the technology was referred to using the cinematic image of dubbing, because this is a dream shared, as we have shown, by the cinema.

What we have seen in these examples of translation shifts in popular film is a repeated rehearsal of the Babel Fish moment. They constitute an extradiegetic translation effect which allows the viewer to 'overhear' what is otherwise an internally consistent diegesis in which the speakers understand each other, but speak a language which is incomprehensible to the audience. In general, the examples discussed here distinguish clearly between the diegetic and the extradiegetic, taking care to maintain diegetic consistency.

This is not always the case. Homogenising strategies may result in instances of 'narrative amnesia' (Hague 2007) where inconsistencies in linguistic treatment arise. Homogenising strategies may also result in cavalier treatment of language contact situations. Disney's *Pocahontas* offers a striking example. The film faces two problems relating to language. In an animated feature aimed at a young audience which seeks to present the colonial encounter partly from a Native American perspective, the first problem is how to represent the language in which that

perspective is expressed. The second problem is how to represent contact between two mutually incomprehensible language communities. As with most animated films, the option to subtitle is discarded and English in *Pocahontas* is both the narrative language of John Smith and his companions, and the narrational language representing Powhatan, the language spoken by Pocahontas and the other Algonquin. This leaves unsolved the problem of how to render the linguistic contact between John Smith and Pocahontas.[9] When Smith meets Pocahontas and addresses her in English, she is perplexed:

> SMITH: Don't run off. It's all right. I'm not gonna hurt you. Here, let me help you out of there.
> POCAHONTAS: Mattaquenatorath? [I don't understand you]
> SMITH: You don't understand a word I'm saying, do you? It's all right.

Incomprehension is achieved through selectively reproducing a phrase of Algonquin, though elsewhere in the film Algonquin is represented by English.

> SONG plays *Listen with your heart*
> *You will understand*
> *Let it break upon you*
> *Like a wave upon the sand*
> SMITH: Who are you?

The animation represents a zoom to close up on Pocahontas's face, reaching its closest point at the word 'understand' (Figure 2.13).

> SONG plays *Listen with your heart. You will understand.*
> POCAHONTAS: Pocahontas.
> SMITH: What? What did you say?
> POCAHONTAS: My name is Pocahontas.
> SMITH: I'm John Smith.

Understanding is achieved by a kind of gestalt, underlined with a reprise of the song 'Listen with your heart', which thematises Pocahontas's ability to read signs in nature. The viewer is given to understand that this established sensitivity will also allow her to understand and respond to Smith's English speech (not, of course, the other way around). The close-up here is arguably a metonym for the processes of

Figure 2.13 The hermeneutic close-up in *Pocahontas*

language learning which are explicitly spelled out in Terrence Malick's retelling of the Pocahontas story *The New World*, but the device also enacts the colonial imposition of a hegemonic language or, put another way, the colonial denial of the freedom to refuse translation. It is interesting that the scene is dramatised not as mutual incomprehension but as Pocahontas's inability to understand English, swiftly followed by her acquisition of the language. John Smith has no such difficulty with Algonquin, and guesses the meaning of the phrase 'Mattaquenatorath' correctly. An opportunity is missed to present both characters as equally at a loss when confronted with linguistic difference. Only one character, Pocahontas, is 'translated' linguistically, as history relates just as she will later be geographically when she accompanies John Smith to England. What the close-up enacts is not truly the hermeneutic motion but the elision of any trace of the resistance to understanding which is inherent in the foreignness of languages. Also at work here is a dream of 'magic' translation which is the ultimate purpose of the semiotic theme running through the film of interpretation of signs found in nature. Through translation, translation becomes ultimately unnecessary.

Better understanding without translation

This, then, is the final stage of the dream of instant translation – where translation becomes redundant, echoed in Tony Scott's account of his

meeting with the mother of the Mexican kidnap survivor. This notion finds further expression in ironic combinations of language mixing and subtitling which are designed to underline the ways in which communication transcends and makes language obsolete. One device in particular enacts cinema's dream of translation.

In a key scene in Spielberg's 1997 film *Amistad* the attorney Roger Baldwin, played by Matthew McConaughey, attempts to communicate with his client, Cinque/Singbe, played by Djimon Hounsou. Singbe is a recently captured slave from modern-day Sierra Leone who has, with other slaves, taken control of the ship on which they were being transported. The ship subsequently makes landing in Massachusetts and all the slaves are arrested. In order to have them freed, the court-appointed attorney Baldwin needs to prove that Cinque and his companions are from Africa and therefore illegally acquired slaves, rather than slaves born in Cuba. Baldwin speaks no Mende, and Cinque speaks no English. The two embark on a set of parallel reflections, Baldwin in English, Cinque in Mende. The subtitles which translate the Mende dialogue make clear that the two characters, despite having no verbal basis on which to communicate, are experiencing the same thoughts at the same time.

On a more comic note, one of the eight couples depicted in the British comedy drama *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) consists of a monoglot Portuguese maid in France and her employer, an equally monoglot English novelist. Over the course of several scenes, their relationship develops in near-silence, apparently by sheer power of attraction. In one key scene, in which the maid accidentally lets the wind blow the novelist's manuscript-in-progress into a pond and they both dive in to rescue it, the two speak extensively to each other, again without any verbal basis for communication, and yet magically alighting on the same topics of conversation (the eels in the pond, the fact that the novelist doesn't rate his work highly, the fact that he is very fond of pastries). Their gestalt communication is so well established that the final big laugh in the scene comes when she suggests that 50 per cent of the book's profits might be an appropriate reward for rescuing it from the pond, and he independently comes up with the idea of giving her a cut of 5 per cent.

Eventually, both Simbe and Aurelia will learn English, and their final conversations with Roger and Jamie respectively will be in that language. Indeed, the line remembered as most powerful and moving by some viewers of *Amistad* is where Cinque speaks in English for the first time, standing up in court to say 'Give us us free!'. One might also cite in the same context the scene in *The Interpreter* where Nicole Kidman's character is acting as the liaison interpreter for a tense meeting involving the

ambassador for an oppressive and violent African dictatorship. At the climax of the meeting, when the UN negotiator is delicately suggesting that resignation is the only way to escape a trial in The Hague, the African delegate breaks into fluent and articulate English, surprising the assembled officials, obviating the need for an interpreter and suggesting two things: one, that Hollywood finds certain narrative dynamics difficult to achieve in a foreign language and, two, that everybody secretly speaks English anyway.

This trope of mutual understanding transcending language, which relegates translation in the form of subtitles to a mere illustration of its own redundancy, is common to many different cinematic contexts. In the first episode of Hannes Stöhr's portmanteau film *One Day in Europe* (2005) Kate, an English visitor to Moscow, and her Russian host Elena achieve after some difficulties a mutual understanding, reached with a combination of sign language, and cognate words, which can be read as part of Stöhr's paean in praise of European unity. In Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (1999) a close friendship exists between Ghost Dog (Forest Whitaker) and Raymond (Isaach de Bankolé) despite the fact that Ghost Dog speaks no French and Raymond no English. Their mutual understanding is conveyed through bilingual conversations in which English subtitles to Raymond's dialogue underline the extent to which the two friends are in synch. Interestingly, Jarmusch's scenario envisages no linguistic rapprochement, no language learning. It is not necessary – Raymond and Ghost Dog are post-national subjects who share what is important without recourse to national language.

The rehearsal of the colonial linguistic imaginary in *Pocahontas* and *Amistad* is underlined in the post-colonial subversion of the trope to be found in *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India* (Gowariker, 2001), a historical drama whose subject is a cricket match played between a team of British officers and a motley Indian village team. The hero Bhuvan (Aamir Khan) challenges an arrogant English officer, Captain Andrew Russell, to a cricket match with the village's annual taxes at stake. In one scene Bhuvan and several companions covertly observe the officers playing cricket in order to learn the rules. Russell's sister Elizabeth (Rachel Shelley) notices them and attempts to suggest that she could give them some cricket training:

> ELIZABETH (friendly): I know what you were doing behind that tree. You were trying to learn the game.
> BHUVAN (not understanding, nervously): [No, *memsahib*. We're only trying to learn the game.][10]

ELIZABETH (not understanding, but disappointed): Oh, I thought you were trying to learn the game.
SMALL BOY: [What's she saying, Bhuvan *Bhaiyya*?]
BHUVAN: [I think she's telling us to go.] [*to Elizabeth*] [All right, we're going.]
ELIZABETH: No. Wait.

The characters' shared understanding of what is taking place is revealed extradiegetically in the subtitles, but their inability to communicate and their inculcated assumptions about each other mean that even their common understanding of the situation quickly breaks down into confusion. Elizabeth is forced to call on the services of an interpreter to convey her offer of assistance as a cricket coach. In coaching Bhuvan and his friends, she is of course betraying her brother and the Raj. Elizabeth will go on to fall in love with Bhuvan and learn Hindi in order to be able to talk to him. In having its British heroine learn Hindi, the film pointedly reverses the usual colonial trope. *Lagaan* is a popular fantasy about underdogs successfully resisting the colonial oppressor, complete with Bollywood musical numbers, so its representation of linguistic issues is simplistic, but in dramatising incomprehension rather than comprehension, it offers an antidote to the instantaneousness, and hence erasure, of translation to which popular film so frequently aspires.

The devices discussed in this chapter show how the constant evolution of film style has resulted in a range of devices for signifying and enacting translation on screen. These devices in turn evolve and are renewed, as with the different camera and sound mixing tricks which signal the shift from subtitled to homogenised dialogue. They provide a way of acknowledging, and then dispensing with, heterolingual dialogue. Taking a different approach, in Chapter 3 I will look at how longer stretches of heterolingual dialogue are managed when, for mimetic, ideological or aesthetic reasons, filmmakers wish to give foreign-language dialogue more prominence in screen narrative.

3
Before and Beyond Subtitles

The significance of textual heterolingualism is not necessarily a function of the quantity, but of the nature and quality, of foreign-language use in a text (cf. Delabastita and Grutman 2005: 17). There are many films in which isolated heterolingual words or phrases acquire a resonance out of proportion to their frequency of occurrence. Laura Martin (1984) finds more evidence of biculturality in the scattered Spanish phrases, lexemes and song lyrics of *Zoot Suit* (Valdez, 1982) than in the quantitatively more significant Spanish dialogue of *The Border* (Richardson) released the same year. But the markedness of the use of a foreign language on screen is *also* a function of its quantity in that sustained use contributes towards the constitution of the foreign dialogue as a text demanding hermeneutic engagement rather than simply as a musical feature of the acoustic landscape. In this chapter I look at foreign languages as marked elements of a film's dialogue track, and hence as elements which require translation.

The use of Yiddish in an early sequence of *Taxi!* (Del Ruth, 1932) is striking for several reasons. It is phonologically pleasurable to listen to. It recalls intertextually the tradition of Yiddish-language sound film in the United States (cf. Kellman 2009). It is, extradiegetically speaking, funny to hear it used with fluency by the young James Cagney. Narratively it is surprising to learn that the fluent Yiddish-speaking taxi driver is in fact of Irish background. Both its context and its duration are striking. The Yiddish conversation goes on for more than a minute of screen time at a point in the film's narrative arc more usually occupied by exposition. It takes place among New Yorkers who might also be expected, at least in Hollywood, to have English available as a code to switch into. It thus exceeds the rhythmic and social conventions of foreign-language use in film.

Such is the kind of foreign-language use with which this chapter is concerned.

Such stretches of foreign-language use in films, which go beyond phatic or ritual speech or markers of location (what Christoph Wahl (2005) has called 'postcarding'), assert the status of foreign-language dialogue as a potential object for translation. This does not mean that they *will* be translated (the Yiddish dialogue in *Taxi!* is neither voiced-over, interpreted nor subtitled). Instead there may be pleasure offered in the acoustic materiality of the language itself, enjoyed for its 'absolute guttural, liquid or honeyed quality' (Ruskin, quoted in Kracauer 1997: 110). Michel Chion has theorised that alongside 'theatrical speech' ('dialogue' proper) and extradiegetic or 'textual' speech such as voice-over, there is a third form of speech in cinema, which he calls 'emanation speech', described as 'speech which is not necessarily heard and understood fully, and in any case is not intimately tied to the heart of what might be called the narrative action' (Chion 1994: 172–178). This is a form of 'relativised' speech which shares some characteristics with the use of foreign languages, especially where the language is invented or only approximated, or where the quality of the sound mixing compromises the comprehensibility of the language.[1] For Chion, as for Siegfried Kracauer, emanation speech is the most cinematic form of speech, because it is the least theatrical.[2] Such speech includes the hieratic language of ritual, 'baby talk', and the language of high emotion (which might explain why these are some of the forms in which foreign languages most commonly occur on screen). An evocative scene in Clara Law's *The Goddess of 1967* (2000) sees the blind character B. G., played by Rose Byrne, listen to one side of a telephone conversation in Japanese, a language of which she has no knowledge. As J. M. (Rikiya Kurokawa) talks on the telephone she mimics the sounds he makes, enjoying them on a purely acoustic level. English subtitles simultaneously explain to the viewer the content of J. M.'s dialogue which contains an important plot point, but the uncomprehending repetition of his sounds plays an equally important role in the scene as B. G. uses them to delineate the aural contours of J. M., just as she used her hands to make out the shape of his face in an earlier scene.

The form of listening which B. G. engages in in this scene has been referred to by Michel Chion as 'reduced listening'. Chion outlines three forms of listening in the cinema: 'causal' listening, 'semantic' listening and 'reduced' listening (Chion 1994: 24–30). Causal listening is listening for the source or cause of a sound; semantic listening 'refers to a code or language to interpret a message'; reduced listening, which is of

most interest to Chion, is a mode of listening 'that focuses on the traits of the sound itself, independent of its cause and of its meaning'. These modes of listening seem particularly useful for considering how we listen to foreign languages on screen.

How we process a language, whether we receive it as words or noise, depends on a number of factors. One is sound mixing. Foreign-language speech can be multiplied to produce a 'babble of noises in the background' (Sinha 2004: 184), as in many neo-imperialist adventure films which use foreign settings for their glamour and exoticism. Classed as undifferentiated noise, this acoustic rather than verbal constituent of the soundscape avoids the question of translation by triggering reduced rather than semantic listening.

Another factor is the degree of distance of the foreign language from our own. It has been argued that languages which are phonologically and geographically very distant from ours remain 'a dense mass of sounds ... reduced to external noise, to dross or impenetrable materiality' (Assmann 1996: 87). Such languages would appear to invoke reduced listening. But when the foreign language emerges from the babble of sound to assert its status as theatrical speech, the way in which we listen may change. A case in point is the language invented for Ingmar Bergman's *Tystnaden* (*The Silence*, 1963). The film brings home to the viewer as well as to the dying translator Ester our vulnerability in the face of acoustic alterity.[3] The invented language of Bergman's imaginary city of Timoka is equally opaque to all viewers of the film. None of the many languages Ester knows raises a glimmer of recognition. But the presence of an unknown language triggers in Ester the *will* to translate. When the maître d' fails to respond to her few words of French, English and German, they resort to sign language. Once a line of communication has been established, Ester is able to acquire her first word in the foreign language: 'kasi', or 'hand', carefully written down for her on a piece of paper by the maître d'. It is these 'words' in the foreign language that she will give to her nephew Johann when he and his mother leave the hotel. Just as Johann speaks the first words in the film, asking Ester what a notice in the carriage says, sounding out the words only to be told that she does not know what they mean, the final shot of the film sees Johann sounding out his aunt's 'words in the foreign language'. No translation is available to us,[4] but the silence is broken by the careful specificity of this collection of words – the beginning of a possibility of communication.

I would suggest that the form of listening we engage in when faced with theatrical foreign speech on screen lies somewhere between

Chion's 'causal', 'semantic' and 'reduced' listening. It is 'reduced' inasmuch as our lack of ability to interpret the speech semantically will throw us back on its undifferentiated phonic qualities. It is causal in that we retrieve paralinguistic information, for example about the speaker's emotional state. In the case of the landlady in *The Third Man*, for instance, her agitated emotional state constitutes most of the information available to the non-German-speaking viewer. It is also semantic inasmuch as we remain *open* to the possibility of the retrieval of meaning. We might call it active listening.[5] It is the form of listening on which, for instance, the dialogue design of *La guerre du feu* and *Shōgun* relies; it is anticipated that viewers will decode and pick up words and phrases and draw on this accumulated vocabulary as the film or television show proceeds.

Listening to a cognate language or a language to which we have some exposure is qualitatively different from listening to a language which is entirely alien. In the former case, active listening may be rewarded with productive retrieval of meaning. Borrowed words, common etymological roots, proper names, multinational brands, the memories of long-ago language classes: all can be called upon to help us process meaning. Not only can, but must, because 'it is very difficult to stop paying attention to the meaning of what is being conveyed to reflect on phonetic or acoustic properties of the sound stream' (Lorch and Meara 1995: 65). If we *can* understand elements of the foreign-language dialogue, we will.

And of course film differs from the printed text or the sound recording because of the polysemiotic nature of the medium. In film, speech is only one code among several, and the speaker of the foreign language is a speaker among others. Even for a language in which we have minimal competence, the meaning of the foreign language can be 'made clear by context, cognates, or pantomime'; where more complete transmission of the content of the speech is required we may find 'a bilingual character handily present to provide a translation' (Kozloff 2000: 80). This raises some interesting questions, not only about how 'foreign' foreign language on screen may be, but also what might constitute its 'translation'. Against a background in which some degree of active listening is assumed, we will look in this chapter at some of the conventions which are available for the 'semanticising' of foreign-language dialogue.

This will lead us to a further question: what influence might these translation conventions have on the narration as a whole? Dirk Delabastita and Rainer Grutman have speculated about the possibility of elaborating 'a "grammar" or a "matrix" of typical multilingual or translation-based plots" (2005: 24). They suggest cautiously that 'the use

of multilingualism and interlinguistic situations is perfectly consistent with a number of basic narrative principles, such as conflict, character configuration, spatial opposition, mimesis, and suspense management'. Some of these topics will be touched on in this chapter, where it will be argued that the range of translation devices available for the management of foreign languages on screen needs to be considered in narrational, as well as translational, terms.

Translating *mise en scène*

Billy Wilder's comedy *One, Two, Three* (1961) is a good example of a film in which *mise en scène* is effectively deployed to contextualise foreign dialogue. Two scenes of the film are shot in German without subtitles. In the first scene, the earnest young East German Communist Otto Ludwig Piffl (Horst Buchholz) is arrested by the East German police as a result of a prank played by C. R. MacNamara (James Cagney), who is trying to end Piffl's clandestine marriage to the daughter of MacNamara's American employer. The second scene involves Piffl's questioning by the police and his eventual capitulation and extorted confession that he is a CIA agent.

The first scene sets up an elaborate projection of what is to follow. MacNamara needs to get rid of Piffl quickly, as Scarlett's parents are flying into Berlin in a matter of hours. Piffl is on his way back to East Berlin, having dropped Scarlett off at MacNamara's office. MacNamara sets up a comic sting involving the infiltration into Piffl's motorcycle sidecar of a 'wedding present' in the form of an Uncle Sam cuckoo clock which plays 'Yankee Doodle Dandy', wrapped in a copy of the *Wall Street Journal*. He also has his assistant Schlemmer fasten a deflated balloon saying 'Russki go home' to the exhaust pipe of Piffl's motorcycle. Schlemmer's request for an explanation from MacNamara provides a pretext for prediction of the likely outcome of the prank:

> MACNAMARA: [...] We can just sit back now and let the East German police finish the job. [...] All it takes is a little knowledge of physics and elementary psychology. Right now, Comrade Otto Ludwig Piffl is tooling along on his motorcycle toward East Berlin, gay, chipper, feeling like a million roubles. Little does he know that meanwhile back at the exhaust, the fumes are filling the balloon. It gets bigger and bigger, and all the time in the sidecar, a little booby trap is ticking away. Now,

> if my calculations are correct, all these things will begin to pay off once he passes through the Brandenburg Gate.

The speech is delivered in voiceover over shots of an oblivious Piffl driving happily along the road, culminating in a final shot where the camera pans to show him approaching the Brandenburg Gate. By this time the balloon on the exhaust pipe has inflated enough for the border police to see the slogan 'Russki go home'. Piffl is pulled over, much to his surprise:

> BORDER POLICEMAN 1: Was hab'n Sie da? Was soll das? [What do you have there? What's that supposed to be?]
> OTTO: Keine Ahnung. Ich seh' das Ding zum ersten Mal. [No idea. I've never seen it before.]
> BORDER POLICEMAN 1: Papiere! [Papers!]
> BORDER POLICEMAN 2: Was ist in dem Paket? Was tickt denn da? [What's in the package? What's ticking?]
> OTTO: Hah! Das? Das ´ne Kukucksuhr. Habe ich als Hochzeitsgeschenk bekommen. [Ha ha! That? That's a cuckoo clock. I was given it as a wedding present.]
> BORDER POLICEMAN 2: Tatsächlich! ´Ne Kukucksuhr. [Really! A cuckoo clock.]

They open the clock. A miniature Uncle Sam resplendent in stars and stripes pops out as the clock chimes the tune to 'Yankee Doodle Dandy'.

> BORDER POLICEMAN 1: Mensch. Sie schmuggeln ja amerikanische Propaganda! [Heavens. You're smuggling American propaganda!]
> OTTO: Ich? Amerikanische Propaganda? Davon hab' ich nichts gewusst. Dachte es sei ne Kukucksuhr. Konnte doch nicht wissen, was das für'n Kukuck ist. [Me? American propaganda? I didn't know anything about it. I thought it was a cuckoo clock. I couldn't know what kind of a cuckoo it was.]
> BORDER POLICEMAN 3: [*looking at the wrapping paper*] Sieh' dir mal das hier an! *Wall Street Journal*. [Take a look at this! *Wall Street Journal*.]
> BORDER POLICEMAN 1: Wall Street? Sie sind verhaftet! [Wall Street? You're under arrest!]
> OTTO: [*as he is bundled into the police car*] Das ist ja Wahnsinn. Reiner Wahnsinn! Ich bin unschuldig! Ich bin Mitglied der

> kommunistischen Partei! Genossen, ihr müsst mir glauben! Genossen! Brüder! Frei lebe die Revolution! [That's crazy. Really crazy! I'm innocent! I'm a member of the Communist Party! Comrades, you must believe me! Comrades! Brothers! Long live the Revolution!]

The German dialogue is quite extensive but several factors combine to make it easily understandable for the viewer. The 'sting' has been comprehensively flagged earlier in the narration, both in MacNamara's explanation to Schlemmer and in an earlier conversation between MacNamara and Scarlett which mentions the Russian habit of floating propaganda balloons across the border saying 'Yankee go home'. The viewer has therefore already been prompted to activate likely scenarios or 'schematas', in the terminology of cognitive film studies (cf. Branigan 1992; Bordwell 1995). The events in the German scene corroborate these existing expectations rather than introducing new information.

The scene incorporates a very high degree of visual/verbal redundancy. The emotions expressed in the dialogue (curiosity, pride, aggression, surprise, panic) are clearly flagged by the characters' facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, gesture and movement. Communicative cues are predictably followed. The first policeman's question 'Was hab'n Sie da? Was soll das?' is followed by Otto turning his head to look in confusion at the large balloon clinging to his exhaust pipe. He responds immediately to the request for 'Papiere!' by taking out his identity card from his back pocket and handing it over to be perused by the policeman, and so on. The German in the scene, though authentic native German, uses a number of cognate words and borrowings which may well be recognisable to English-speaking viewers: *Papiere, Paket, Kuckucksuhr, schmuggeln, Amerikanische Propaganda, Kommunistischen, Revolution* and of course the *Wall Street Journal*. Several of these items occur more than once (*Amerikanische Propaganda*; *Kuckucksuhr*; *Wall Street*). The result is a scene which allows viewers to comprehend the content of the dialogue almost completely, though the German dialogue would without the accompanying visuals be opaque to a non-German-speaking audience.

The film's second German scene is even more easily processed than the first. Back at the police station, Otto is being cruelly interrogated with the aid of a record of 'Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini' played at different speeds. For the sake of brevity, we can say that, while the scene contains quite a lot of German dialogue, it is fundamentally composed of two verbal elements and one visual one: Piffl's initial protestations of his innocence ('Nein, nein!'); his capitulation ('Ja, ja!') after the record

is speeded up to a particularly ear-piercing pitch; and his subsequent signing of a bogus confession. This sequence of events adheres closely enough to the conventions of interrogation scenarios that the scene is comprehended perfectly.

A contrasting approach can be observed in Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949). The film uses extensive unsubtitled German dialogue to underscore the confusion and incomprehension of its American protagonist, stranded in a bleak post-war Vienna. The marked use of German in the film was widely commented on by reviewers. Cyril Ray and Richard Winnington see the device as primarily reinforcing narrative plausibility (Manvell et al. 1951: 91, 97). For James Monahan,

> few if any other British or American films have seemed so much at home in a thoroughly foreign setting; it is, in part at least, a matter of a particularly judicious and subtle use of German speech and credibly broken English – so that the British spectator is, on the one hand, never fogged and, on the other, is really convinced that the action is occurring in Vienna. (ibid. 94).

In Reed's film we are deliberately given comparatively few cues to translate the content of the German speech. Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten) has arrived in Vienna to discover that his old friend and sole contact in the city, Harry Lime, has died in mysterious circumstances. In this scene Holly has discovered a key clue to Harry's disappearance and is trying to persuade the witness to help him to build a case for investigation by the police:

> HOLLY: I was told there were only two men there. You've got to tell your story to the police.
> PORTER: Police? Why police? Das ist doch Blödsinn, was Sie da sagen! [You're talking nonsense.][6] It's nonsense, all nonsense. It was an accident.
> HOLLY: You don't know it was an accident. You only saw a dead man with three men carrying him.
> PORTER: Der Ami macht mi(ch) noch ganz deppert. [This Yank is driving me crazy.] I should have listened to my wife. She said you were up to no good. Gossip!
> HOLLY: Suppose I take your evidence to the police.
> PORTER: ...von mir aus gehts auf zur Gasanstalt, aber mi lasst's aus, aus mit der Polizei. [Do what you like. Just don't get me involved with the police.]

HOLLY: Now hold on.

PORTER: Das hat man davon, wenn ma freundlich ist zu den Ausländer. Hätt' i doch nur auf mei Frau g'hört, de hat ma gleich g'sagt, de Hand von der Butt'n, du verbrennst dir nur deine Finger. I have no evidence, I saw nothing, I said nothing. It's not my business. [That's what I get for being kind to foreigners.] [If only I'd listened to my wife. She said,] ['Play with fire and you'll get burned.']

HOLLY: We'll make it your business.

PORTER: Ach, jetzt hat's aber zwölfe g'schlagn, mi lasst's aus mit der Polizei. Das hat man davon, wenn man freundlich ist mit de Ausländer, gehn mir aber ... Fräulein Schmidt, sie waren mir immer sehr sympatisch. [That's the last straw. Leave the police out of this.] [This is what I get for being kind to foreigners.] [Miss Schmidt, you've always been very nice.] I have always liked you, but you must not bring this gentleman again. [*To Holly*] You must go at once please. Please! Sonst vergess i mei wienerischen Charme. Please! – Und ich blöder Hirsch. Nur weil i höflich sein will, krieg i de [indecipherable] Schererei mit der Polizei. [Or I'll forget my Viennese charm.] [What a fool I am!]

There is some verbal redundancy in this scene. The porter's regret that he did not listen to his wife is expressed in both German and English. A few remarks (his dismissal of Holly's accusations as 'nonsense' and his assurance to Anna Schmidt that he has always liked her) are performed bilingually. But there is an excess in the German dialogue in relation to what is delivered in English. The porter's fear of the police, implicit in his English dialogue and in his body language and intonation, is repeatedly made explicit in the German. In German hints of the porter's own interior life are on display – his regret for his original impulse to help Martins and his frustration, in a post-war Vienna under international military jurisdiction, at the behaviour of the 'Ami'. The German is decorative as well as functional, for instance in the idiomatic 'von mir aus gehts auf zur Gasanstalt' – 'Martins can go to the gasworks [to hell]'. There is also a wry joke in the final threat that the porter may 'forget his Viennese charm' if his two visitors do not leave immediately. English–German cognates are conspicuous by their absence, except for the repeated 'Polizei'. There is also, of course, no way for the non-German-speaking viewer to pick up the porter's strong Austrian accent.

Most interestingly, the shot design deliberately avoids supplementing the porter's German speech with facial expression or gesture. Instead, as Holly threatens to take the porter's evidence to the police, prompting an aggressive verbal response from the porter, the camera cuts away from the two men to frame the door to the flat. A ball comes bouncing through, followed shyly by the porter's small son. During the dialogue which follows, the camera cuts back to the porter when he switches codes into English, only to cut back in turn to the doorway and the listening child when the porter switches back into German. During the German dialogue, the camera remains motionless on the child's listening face. This deliberate avoidance of visual–verbal interaction has an estranging effect which is heightened by the fact that Holly and most viewers do not understand the German dialogue, while the child clearly does. This will have narrative implications later when the porter is murdered and the child identifies Holly as the suspected murderer.

Much of the German dialogue in the film is given to Anna Schmidt's elderly landlady, a relic of former grandeur who shuffles around her once-grand, now dilapidated house with straggly hair and wrapped in a blanket. Her shrill voice acts as a counterpoint to several scenes, including one in which the international police search the house and take Anna away for questioning:

> LANDLADY: Wie die Vandalen![7] He, Sie! Wo schleppen Sie dann das wieder hin? Mein Gott, Sie können doch nicht das ganze Haus auf den Kopf stellen. Das ... Oh, versteht er auch nicht. Mensch! Hier ist doch kein Wirtshaus. Hier ist das Schlafzimmer einer Dame. Fräulein Schmidt, erklären Sie doch den Leuten! [Like vandals!] [Where are you taking that?] [You can't turn the whole building upside down, for God's sake!] [He doesn't understand either!] [Listen, this isn't some pub.] [This is a lady's bedroom!] [Miss Schmidt, explain to these people.]
>
> ANNA: Ja, ja.
>
> LANDLADY: Sagen Sie es nur den Leuten, damit Sie's auch wissen! [Tell them so they'll understand!]
>
> HOLLY: What'd she say?
>
> ANNA: Only complaining about the way they behave in her house.
>
> LANDLADY: Hier sind früher Fürsten aus- und eingegangen. Hier hat sogar ein Metternich verkehrt. [Royalty used to frequent this house. Even a Metternich!]
>
> ANNA: (*to Holly*) Give her some cigarettes.

LANDLADY: Das waren noch Zeiten. Da hat man sich anständig benommen. (*Holly offers her some cigarettes.*) Danke, danke, sehr liebenswürdig, danke, danke vielmals. Sie sind wirklich der einzig anständige Mensch hier. [People still knew how to behave in those days.] [Thank you very much. Very kind of you.] [You're the only real gentleman here.][...]

Landlady: Schöne Geschichte. Sie sind Amerikaner. Wäre so etwas in Ihrem Lande möglich? Die Leute benehmen sich ja wie die Einbrecher. Eines ist sicher. Die Befreiung habe ich mir ganz anders vorgestellt. [What a foul business! You're an American.] [Could this happen in America? They act like petty thieves.] [One thing is sure: I never imagined liberation would be like this!]

For an anglophone viewer the old lady's grating, whining tone of voice is the primary signifier in her speech, but her German dialogue gives the character an inner life which is again in excess of what is available to English-speaking viewers. Like the porter, she incarnates the post-war trauma of the ruined city so evocatively photographed in the film. For her the squalor of the present is always in contrast with the grandeur of the past which she repeatedly evokes. Unlike the porter, she is almost continually in-shot when speaking German, her present appearance contrasting vividly with the evoked elegance of the past. There is no bilingual enunciation here; the landlady speaks no English at all. Instead a thread running through her dialogue in this scene and elsewhere is the difficulty of communicating with the city's new multilingual police force. Her final line in this scene conveys a bitter disillusionment which is lost on the anglophone audience. The alienation of her dialogue is reinforced by Anna's refusal to interpret, dismissing her complaints and then, in the face of her tragic recollections of past grandeur, suggesting that Holly gives her some cigarettes. In the ruined post-war city barter becomes an effective lingua franca.

Diegetic interpreting and translation

Mise en scène can, as we see here, interact with a film's script design to reinforce or to restrict the viewer's retrieval of the meaning of foreign-language dialogue. Where precise semantic content needs to be conveyed, for the purposes of exposition or for important plot points, a filmmaker can supplement *mise en scène* by employing diegetic interpreters. By 'diegetic interpreting' I mean any act of (oral) interpreting which takes place within the story world through the agency of

a character in the narrative, as opposed to through subtitling, voice-over or any of the extradiegetic modes of translation discussed in earlier chapters.[8] Anna Schmidt takes this role (or refuses it) at several points in *The Third Man*.

Diegetic interpreting has several narrative functions in film. The first, and the most obvious, is that it is a form of vehicular matching; it represents situations of diegetic interpreting. Films such as *Calendar* (Egoyan, 1993), *Le Mépris* (Godard, 1963) or *Lost in Translation* thematise cultural and translational issues through the activity of diegetic interpreters. In this sense the primary users of the interpreting are the characters themselves. But diegetic interpreting is also activated in screen narratives as a way of helping the spectator to overhear by conveying the meaning of foreign-language dialogue where subtitles are not wanted. This may be before subtitles became common in domestic productions, as with a film like *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), a film deliberately designed with extensive Spanish-language dialogue, in which the old-timer Howard acts as an interpreter for his companions Dobbs and Curtin (and, by extension, the viewer) in their encounters with Spanish speakers. As occasional subtitles become more acceptable in mainstream film, diegetic interpreting may be alternated with subtitles for the sake of narrational efficiency, but it may also be deployed as a film's only mode of translation where subtitles are unwelcome.

On-screen diegetic interpreting usually takes the form of liaison interpreting. This differs from conference interpreting in that it is two-way (one interpreter working from and into both languages) and consecutive, rather than simultaneous, in that the interpreter waits for the speaker to finish before speaking. The potential difficulty such a form of interpreting may cause for narration can be illustrated by Cecilia Wadensjö's model of turn-taking in liaison interpreting (here slightly adapted):

> SPEAKER 1: Utterance 1 [in language 1]
> INTERPRETER: Utterance 1′ [translation into language 2, to Speaker 2]
> SPEAKER 2: Utterance 2 [in language 2]
> INTERPRETER: Utterance 2′ [translation into language 1, to Speaker 1]
> SPEAKER 1: Utterance 3 [in language 1]
> INTERPRETER: Utterance 3′ [translation into language 2, to speaker 2] etc. (Wadensjö 2002: 357)

The key feature of the turn-taking is repetition – each utterance is repeated in the other language and the language changes every two

turns. As we can imagine, this will be a trying schema to reproduce on screen and we may expect to find it refined in various ways, for instance via a form of chuchotage ('whispering'), where the interpreter's rendering overlaps with the source dialogue in order to cut down on the screen time taken up by interpreting (e.g. *Shōgun, Fail Safe* (Lumet, 1964), *The Interpreter*, *The 13th Warrior*). Like other screen activities, diegetic interpreting is subject to the tendency to '[streamline] human activity, smoothing the rough edges away, reweighting it for the purposes of creating representations which are densely and redundantly informative, as well as emotionally arousing' (Bordwell 2003: 57). The present discussion of representations of interpreting will not contrast them with 'real-life' scenarios so much as consider the specific ways in which cinema modifies or valorises the basic interpreting scenario to accomplish a narrative goal.

Roland Joffé's 1995 adaptation of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* begins with what purports to be a scene of intercultural dialogue, mediated by an interpreter, between Governor Bellingham, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale and the Algonquin chief Metacomet at the funeral of Metacomet's father Massasoit. As the opening credits finish we are shown the two Europeans in a medium shot. Bellingham begins by prompting Dimmesdale to deliver a line or two of condolence to Metacomet in Algonquin (subtitled). Dimmesdale and Bellingham have also brought an interpreter with them, Johnny Sassamon (George Aguilar) who supplies a phrase when Dimmesdale's memory (improbably) fails him. Bellingham picks up the speech in English, invoking the friendship that had existed between the colonists and Massasoit. As Bellingham speaks the camera cuts from him and his two companions to a reverse shot of Metacomet who responds with hostility. Sassamon interprets Metacomet's response. Metacomet walks off in disgust, pausing to say a few words to Dimmesdale – dialogue which is also interpreted by Sassamon.

This scene is constructed to resemble one of bilateral liaison interpreting, but on closer examination the interpreting takes place in one direction only. Bellingham's short speech in English is uninterpreted for Metacomet, though the narrative set-up clearly indicates that interpreting is required (Dimmesdale has prepared his condolences in Algonquin) and there are two competent interpreters present (Dimmesdale and Sassamon). It is apparently assumed that English is understandable by osmosis (a common colonial assumption). This monodirectionality of interpreting supports Edward Branigan's suggestion that 'an important component of any narration concerns what

has been excluded from the story – what has *not* been selected, given a duration, organized, and emphasized in the telling' (Branigan 1992: 177). Far from being simply shot to 'summarise' the interpreting process, the shot described above seems constructed to emphasise its elision by including both Bellingham's English speech and the beginning of Metacomet's response in the same shot, and thus casting Metacomet's response as a direct response to the English speech. The only interpreting which takes place in the scene is from Algonquin to English; paradoxically, the person who is the target of most of the interpreting (not counting, of course, the overhearing spectator) is Dimmesdale, the Bible translator and the only other person present whose demonstrated bilingual competence means that he does *not* need interpretation.

It might be argued that the interpreting is not entirely unidirectional; after all there is Dimmesdale's opening speech, which has presumably been translated from English into Algonquin for the occasion. Rather than providing the 'other side' of the interpreting experience, however, this reinforces the unidirectionality of the language transfer, because as viewers we experience Dimmesdale's speech not as translated from English into Algonquin, though this is narratively speaking what is implied, but as once again translated from Algonquin into English in the form of the subtitles: '[My brother Metacomet, may] [the noble spirit of] [your father Massasoit…] [soar with the eagles]'. By privileging the requirement to convey the content of the dialogue to anglophone viewers to the exclusion of other narrative considerations, what purports to be a scene of intercultural communication in fact ironically reinforces the unidirectional flow of power and appropriation of indigenous language typical of the colonial context.

The interpreting is an isolated incident in *The Scarlet Letter*, which is shot in English and among English speakers. Other films, set in more heterolingual contexts, may need to rely more heavily on diegetic interpreting. The availability of this as a device can, however, have repercussions for a film's plot. Two films featuring especially marked uses of diegetic interpreting are the 'sympathetic' Western *A Man Called Horse* (Silverstein, 1970) and the mini-series *Shōgun* (1980). Both are narratives not of border crossing but of assimilation where a character crosses over from life in the target language to life in the source language. As a result, diegetic interpreting becomes something of a narrational blind alley. In *A Man Called Horse*, based on a short story by Dorothy M. Johnson, an English aristocrat is captured by the Sioux and after a period of imprisonment proves himself, marries into the tribe and 'goes native'. James Clavell's novel *Shōgun* and its television adaptation recount the

assimilation of a shipwrecked English sailor into Japanese society and politics. In both source fictions, language learning is explicitly mentioned and the heroes are described as assimilating linguistically as well as culturally into their host society.

This poses an insuperable narrational problem for *A Man Called Horse*. It was noteworthy in its day for its aspirations to ethnographic realism, which included extensive Sioux dialogue – but without subtitles (this was 20 years before *Dances With Wolves*). What vehicle could convey the detail of characterisation and plot as the hero progressively assimilated into the Sioux tribe? The solution chosen by the filmmakers was a form of referential restriction by means of the creation of a character not present in Johnson's short story, the fellow-prisoner Batise, son of a French father and an American Indian mother of another tribe, who acts as Horse's interpreter throughout the film, dying opportunely at the very end shortly before Horse's departure for England. Batise's advent allows for some cross-cultural understanding for Horse and for the viewer (interestingly, the Indians, who are talkative enough over the course of the film, are almost entirely silent in the early scenes leading up to Horse's arrival at the encampment and his meeting with Batise). Although we are to understand that Horse achieves complete assimilation into the tribe as a warrior and family member, he never learns to speak Sioux fluently because narrationally the film gives itself no way of making this accessible to viewers. At the same time, the filmmakers refuse to give in and homogenise the dialogue into English. At one point the film even has recourse to a dream sequence in order to allow Horse and his Sioux wife to communicate in English. The details of the script design are thus dependent on the choice of narrational translation mode.

In *Shōgun* the intermittent presence of other English speakers who can provide exposition or relief from Japanese dialogue makes the narration at first sight more manageable. While in the novel Blackthorne quickly picks up Japanese, the television Blackthorne will continue to rely on interpreters. The narration goes to considerable lengths to maintain this strategy, and the strain it imposes becomes visible at several points, where the diegesis is unable to maintain translation and the heterodiegetic narrator is co-opted as a translator, providing voiceover translation for key lines of dialogue where no English speakers can be incorporated into the scene to provide interpreting. The result is a form of Genettian metalepsis (see also Chapter 5) where the audience is jerked abruptly between levels of the narration. As a result, the English voiceover, which becomes almost a dub track in places, is much more

estranging than the Japanese diegetic dialogue, though one would expect the opposite.

A further function of diegetic interpreting in popular film is to provide suspense. If narration is, as Edward Branigan argues, 'a way of making knowledge intermittent' (Branigan 1992: 69) then diegetic interpreting is the narrational mode par excellence. The temporality of interpreting, its doubled rhythm, allows for serial or sustained moments of suspense: What are they saying? Are they friendly? Will they help us? Will our heroes manage to decipher the ancient inscription and save the world? This is perhaps epitomised in the scenes in *Fail Safe* (1964) where Buck (Larry Hagman) interprets for the US President and the Russian premier in a desperate attempt to avert nuclear war. The interpreting is all but simultaneous, and the Russian nearly inaudible. Although the intervals of suspense are extremely short the effect is nevertheless nail-biting.

Albeit with less at stake, interpreting is also crucial in the final minutes of *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* as the prospectors Howard and Curtin search for the mules with their cargo of gold dust stolen by their companion, the late unlamented Fred C. Dobbs:

> STOREKEEPER: Señores, les tengo muy malas noticias. Su compañero fue muerto a sangre fría por tres bandidos.[9]
> HOWARD: Dobbs is dead!
> CURTIN: What?
> HOWARD: Yeah, bandits got him.
> CURTIN: Our goods, what about our goods?
> HOWARD: ¿Dónde están nuestras cosas?
> STOREKEEPER: Sus cosas y las pieles están en mi oficina.
> CURTIN: What? What?
> HOWARD: He says our goods are safe in his office.

Curtin's function in this scene is to express the growing tension of the search by putting pressure on Howard to keep the flow of information coming, while Howard's interpreting acts to regulate Curtin's and the non-Spanish-speaking spectator's access to the field of information (cf. Branigan 1992: 69). Each turn in Spanish forces the non-Spanish-speaking spectator to hypothesise on the basis of codes such as intonation and body language about the possible information being conveyed. Every turn of Howard's will then deny or confirm the spectator's hypotheses. The characters are not aware, though the spectator is, that Gold Hat and the other bandits have already found the bags of gold dust hidden in the mule packs. The viewer who has seen the shot

of two bags being emptied out on the ground may already suspect that Howard's and Curtin's search will be in vain but the narration deliberately delays confirmation of this hypothesis:

> CURTIN: It's not here Howard, it's not here.
> HOWARD: Keep your shirt on, keep your shirt on. ¿Sabe algo sobre unos costalitos, como así? ... ¿y muy pesados?
> STOREKEEPER: No, de eso no sé nada.
> ANGEL: Ah, ya me acuerdo. ¿Dice usted, unos costalitos de lona?
> HOWARD: Sí, sí, dónde están?
> ANGEL: No sé. No los vi. Yo sólo sé lo que dijeron los bandidos.
> CURTIN [*to Howard*]: What? What? [*Howard ignores the question*].
> HOWARD: Acuérdate de lo que dijeron de los sacos. Acuérdate ...
> ANGEL: Dijeron que tenían unos costalitos con arena que creían que eran para que pesaran más las pieles cuando las vendieran.
> HOWARD: Said he heard the bandits talking while they were waiting to be shot. Said that they thought it was bags of sand hidden in among the hides to make it weigh more when Dobbs went to sell them in Durango.
> CURTIN: Where are they?!

At this point in the published script, Howard acknowledges the truth that all the gold is gone and their effort is for nothing. 'Don't you understand ...?' he asks Curtin (Naremore 1979: 193). The film, on the other hand, further defers the moment of confirmation by continuing Howard's questioning of the boy. Rather than being *told* that 'the wind has carried all of [the gold] away – all of it to the four corners of Mexico' (ibid.: 193–194) we will be *shown* by following the gold to yet a third location:

> HOWARD: Sí, ¿dónde están? ¿Los sacos?
> ANGEL: En el convento por el paredón viejo. Allí es donde dijeron los bandidos que abrieron la carga.
> HOWARD: In the ruins outside town. Come on!

The information is treated narrationally as if it still offers another possibility of recovery of the gold. To stirring brass on the soundtrack the two prospectors and their guides leap onto their horses and find themselves galloping through a high wind, heavy with dust, which is of course the missing gold. Only when they arrive at the ruined convent in the dust

storm to see the empty bags blowing over the sand will they acknowledge that all hope of recovery of the cargo is now gone.

Language is an important resource in *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, which was one of the first American films to be shot entirely on location outside the United States (Huston 1981: 143). The film matches languages meticulously and includes several scenes exclusively in Spanish (all the scenes of Howard in the Indian village; the scene where the charcoal burner finds the wounded Curtin; the scene where the bandits attempt to sell the stolen mules). This was no more welcome to the film's producers then than it would be now; Jack Warner is reported to have said, on seeing the rushes, 'Christ, what's Huston doing? Has he lost his mind entirely? He's making a Spanish version!' (Pratley 1977: 63). Howard's role as interpreter takes on a special importance in supporting the repeated deferral of the film's tragicomic denouement. Although the flow of information is still one way (the Mexican characters are not looking for information from Howard and Curtin, and so the bulk of the interpreting is Spanish to English, not English to Spanish), Curtin's anxious questions and Howard's rendering of them into Spanish provide a much more bilateral experience of interpreting than we see, for instance, in *The Scarlet Letter*. The very iterativeness of the interpreting encounter acts to heighten the tension in the narrative and keep open the promise that the viewer's speculations may yet be disproven.[10]

Spanish speakers may also note in this scene that Howard has a tendency to embroider in his interpreting. The information that their belongings were 'safe' in the office is an addition with respect to the Spanish dialogue and, though reassuring in the moment, turns out to have been rather an overstatement. That Angel 'said he heard the bandits talking while they were waiting to be shot' is nowhere present in Angel's Spanish dialogue,[11] though Angel is unlikely to have overheard the bandits anywhere else and the information could be inferred from the context. As it happens, Howard's verbal embroidery has no narrative significance and does not affect his unquestioned integrity as an interpreter. The gap between what he hears and what he conveys, however, illustrates an important trope in film (and not merely for what it suggests about the potential for filmmakers to be cavalier about linguistic accuracy).

The cinematic trope of the unreliable interpreter is of long standing. The possession of multiple languages creates the space for unreliability or for deliberate misinformation, hence for comedy or suspense. As characters, interpreters and translators can be shiftless or shifty, tricksters (Sakini in *Teahouse of the August Moon* (Mann, 1956); 'Mouth' in

The Goonies (Donner, 1985); Maverick in *Maverick* (Donner, 1994); Travis in *The Rundown* (Berg, 2003)) or buffoons (Professor Gibbs in *Amistad*; Simon Graham in *The Last Samurai*, Amélie in *Stupeur et tremblements* (Corneau, 2003); C3PO in *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977 and sequels)). Perhaps the most commented-on example of an unreliable interpreter is Guido (Roberto Benigni) in *La vita è bella* (*Life is Beautiful*, 1997). A new arrival in the concentration camp, Guido freely admits to his companions that he cannot understand German, but nevertheless undertakes to interpret the German-speaking guard's instructions to the new Italian prisoners. As the guard shouts in (unsubtitled) German, Guido shouts in Italian. Guido matches the guard's tone while disregarding the possible semantic content of his speech. Instead, Guido uses the intervals of the interpreting to elaborate a game which will allow him to protect his son by giving him instructions in how to behave and circumscribing his actions within the camp (cf. Talbot 2006). Taking on the role of an interpreter allows Guido a momentary but sufficient control of the circulation of discourse to achieve this purpose.

From a comic point of view the scene functions on several levels. Dramatic irony generates comedy because the spectator knows that Guido has no idea what the guard is saying and yet the guard accepts Guido's interpreting at face value. There is comedy in the incongruous juxtaposition of the guard's angry shouts and Guido's exhortations (subtitled for non-Italian speakers) about game points and lollipops and jam sandwiches. Above all, it is most comic because in an important sense Guido's is an extremely faithful translation. The 'Skopos' theory of Hans J. Vermeer (2000) postulates that all translation is governed by the translation brief. Guido's brief is to avoid having his son hear the guard's actual words, to find a way to protect him by guiding his behaviour, and at the same time to have his deception undetected. In order to achieve this he must *seem* to be interpreting perfectly. His priority in interpreting becomes to mimic the temporal and gestural parameters of the guard's discourse as closely as possible. The length of every turn is carefully matched; tone of voice and gesture are mirrored and incorporated on the fly into Guido's improvisation. We remember Harry Mathews's and Louis Zukofsky's experiments with formal constraint in translation; Guido's is a comparable, almost Oulipian performance. We laugh at the improbability of his translation while admiring its formal ingenuity and the speed with which he thinks on his feet – an essential quality for a good interpreter.

Not every unreliable interpreter proceeds from Guido's sound ethical base. The hackneyed saying 'Traduttore, traditore' (translator, traitor) is

enacted in films such as *Ride Ranger Ride* (Kane, 1936), where an interpreter between the settlers and the Injuns turns out to be an Injun chief in disguise. 'Heteronymous' or 'native' or 'foreign' interpreters in Cronin's terms (2006) have historically been the objects of suspicion. In the early years of the colonisation of South Asia the British found it to be 'highly dangerous to employ the natives as interpreters, upon whose fidelity they could never depend; and it was at last discovered that they must apply themselves to the study of the ... language' (quoted in Cohn 1995). But autonomous interpreters are also suspect; popular films such as *The Last Samurai* and *Dances With Wolves* rehearse the questioning of loyalties which is apparently the inevitable result of close contact with another culture. Such films tend to present typically binary situations where 'if you're not with us you're against us' and reflect a suspicion of autonomous interpreters whose interest in other languages and cultures is seen by the characters around them as disloyal and evidence of instability of character.

More nuanced portrayals of interpreters and intercultural mediators invite a reading of the translator's position as hybrid and as a nexus of multiple, often competing loyalties (cf. Cronin 2009: 81–107). The possibility of superimposing diegetic and extradiegetic translation makes audiovisual media particularly competent to showcase the mediation which interpreters are required to undertake by juxtaposing a 'literal' translation and a 'real' one, conferring what Cronin (2009: 107) has called 'reflexive awareness' on the spectator. A common trope presents two translations of source-language dialogue – one oral (diegetic), one written (extradiegetic) – in the form of subtitles. The comedy or drama is generated by the divergence between the two translations. In *The Painted Veil* (Curran, 2006) Dr Walter Fane is trying to persuade a Chinese warlord to support the building of an aqueduct to help stop a cholera epidemic. The Chinese Colonel Yu participates as Fane's interpreter. The interpreting encounter proceeds as follows:

> WALTER FANE: Our plan is to divert the water to the town from the fields upriver, above the burial grounds. With your permission and the assistance of your troops the graves will be moved away from the water. And Colonel Yu and his men will enforce the prompt burial of the dead. Maintaining the integrity of the water sources and enforcing proper sanitation over the next few weeks will make a difference between a few more deaths and possibly thousands.
>
> COLONEL YU: [*speaks in unsubtitled Mandarin*]

WARLORD: [*subtitled*] [Is he finished?] [I won't sacrifice my men to that cholera mess.][Forget it!] [When people die,] [It's destiny! I'll have nothing to do with it!] [You,] [get him out of here!]
COLONEL YU: He said 'No'.
WALTER FANE: He doesn't speak any English, does he? [*nodding to the Warlord*] Tell him that's the most ridiculous suit that I've ever seen.
COLONEL YU: [*subtitled*] [This Doctor] [respects you greatly] [and you are right.] [It is quite a mess, this epidemic.] [But my superior said] [if your men cannot control it] [... then our army will be happy to come out here and help you] [... after seeing this place,] [... it's so overwhelming ...] [I'm afraid once our soldiers are here] [they won't want to leave.]

This is a very conventionally structured interpreting encounter which formally follows Wadensjö's model. Cinematographically it is lightened by presenting most of Fane's first turn in voiceover over shots of his and Yu's arrival at the palace. It is assumed that Colonel Yu's first turn constitutes an accurate rendition of Walter's speech, but, thereafter, this scene holds the attention for the divergence between the source and the target dialogue as to both quantity and content. Colonel Yu adheres strictly to pragmatic principles when interpreting, as the subtitles reveal. They also show that, although notionally the interpreter in the scene, he is more of an instigator than a mediator. Fane's observation about the warlord's gaudy Western-style military uniform is not a turn in the interpreting process so much as an invitation to Yu to manage the conversation as he sees fit. In turn, Fane's presence masks Yu's agency and allows him to achieve his purpose by misdirection.

Sometimes the role of interpreter and interlocutor are combined. A common device in popular film has characters code-switching 'spontaneously', repeating themselves in two languages as the porter does in the scene from *The Third Man* quoted earlier in this chapter. A variant of this is the bilingual conversation (like a one-sided telephone conversation) where one character's turns carry the meaning of the whole conversation, as in this exchange from *That Night in Rio* (Cummings, 1941). Larry Martin's roving eye has drawn his Brazilian wife's displeasure:

CARMEN: Basta de mentiras, ouviu? Quem é aquela mulher sentada na mesa em frente? [Enough of your lies, do you hear? Who's that woman sitting at the front table?]

LARRY MARTIN: What woman at what front table? Besides, I never saw her before.
CARMEN: Então porque estava sorrindo e piscando para ela? [So why were you smiling and winking at her?]
LARRY MARTIN: Aw, that wasn't a hotel lobby smile I was giving her – that smile belongs to my public. She's a customer and she's entitled to a piece of it like every other pretty girl, [*hastily*] I mean like every other customer.
CARMEN: Foi essa mulher que você viu ontem à noite, não é? [It's that woman you saw yesterday evening, isn't it?]
LARRY MARTIN: I wasn't out with her or with anybody else last night. I was home in bed by twelve thirty.

This is Carmen and Larry's first scene together offstage. Their bilingual competence is established by the fact that they understand each other perfectly. The Portuguese dialogue requires no translation. As with the one-sided telephone conversation, you can easily follow the turns of the dialogue because of its verbal redundancy. The text does not let a bad source text stand in the way of a good translation; not every element attributed by Larry to Carmen is present in her Portuguese dialogue (the 'hotel lobby smile', for instance). This 'double monolingual' device in which 'code B repeats what has been uttered in Code A' but 'each language holds its ground with little contamination' (cf. Grutman 1993) is milked for its comic potential in this scene, but it soon gives way to English-only dialogue as Larry reminds Carmen that she needs to practise her English.

A function of diegetic interpreting not to be overlooked is the ludic function. There is an inherent comic potential in the iterations of the interpreting scenario, perhaps never bettered than in a deliciously overplayed scene from Ernst Lubitsch's *Trouble in Paradise* (1932). The stodgy Monsieur Philiba (Edward Everett Horton) has had his wallet stolen by one of the film's thieving protagonists. A scene in which he explains, via an interpreter, to a police inspector and four accompanying policemen what has happened has no relevance to the carrying forward of the plot of the film but allows for some fine physical comedy and enjoyment of the (exaggerated) sounds and gestures of Italian speech:

POLICEMAN: Mi dica un po', quanto danaro aveva questo signore?
INTERPRETER: Un minuto, un minuto [indecipherable] signore. The representative of police wants to know how much money you had, Monsieur Philiba.

PHILIBA: Oh, yes, yes. I had exactly twenty thousand lire. I had just cashed a traveler's cheque and I put the money in my wallet.

INTERPRETER: Il signore dice che aveva esattamente ventimila lire. Aveva incassato uno check e ha messo il danaro nel portafoglio.

POLICEMAN: Sì ma perché ha ammesso questo sconosciuto nella sua stanza?

INTERPRETER: Glielo domanderò. Why did you let this man in, Monsieur Philiba?

PHILIBA: Well, he knocked on the door. You see, I was expecting two, two business associates. [*cutaway to the policemen, looking much struck*]

INTERPRETER: And then what happened, Monsieur Philiba?

PHILIBA: Well, I said 'come in!' and there he was. A fine looking man with a moustache and long sideburns. He said 'Good evening, I'm the doctor'. I said 'Doctor?'. He said 'Yes, the doctor. I've come to see you about your tonsils'.

INTERPRETER: Il signore dice 'Avanti!' e si presentò alla porta un signore alto, i baffi lunghi, le fedine, e dice 'Io sono il dottore'. Un minuto, 'Il dottore?', dice lui. Dice 'Sì, sono il dottore. Sono venuto ad osservare le vostre tonsille'.

POLICEMAN: Tonsille ... ma soffre alle tonsille il signore?

INTERPRETER: Ah, un minuto. The representative of the police like to know if there is anything wrong with your tonsils, Monsieur Philiba?

PHILIBA: No.

INTERPRETER: Niente.

PHILIBA: That's what I tried to tell him. Well, one word led to another. He was really a very charming fellow. We talked for about ten minutes.

INTERPRETER: Questo qua lui gli disse. Ma siccome lui era una persona molto cortese, molto gentile, parlarono assieme per dieci minuti.

POLICEMAN: Ma riguardo a che?

INTERPRETER: Ah, domando. What did you talk about, Monsieur Philiba?

PHILIBA: About tonsils.

INTERPRETER: Tonsille!

POLICEMAN: Ma come...

PHILIBA: So then I said to myself 'Alright, if he wants to look at them, let him look at them, there's no harm in that'. Then he said 'Say AHH'. So I said 'AHH' and that's all I remember. When I woke up I still had my tonsils but my pocketbook was gone.

This long sequence is reproduced in its entirety to illustrate how almost every turn of a conventional interpreting exchange is scrupulously observed. The turn-taking is intensified by the *mise en scène*, which places Philiba and the Italian policemen far enough away from each other that the camera must pan left and right alternately each time they speak. It is in the very meticulousness of the turn-taking that much of the scene's comedy lies. Not only does the interpreter emphasise his function as go-between by literally going between and bringing the camera with him to a redundant degree – there is no apparent reason why M. Philiba has to stand at such a remove from the five policemen – he also emphasises his function with phatic interjections such as 'Glielo domanderò' [I'll ask him], 'domando' [I'll ask him] and redundant explanations such as 'The representative of police wants to know'.

At only one point is the rhythm of the interpreting interrupted, when M. Philiba mentions his 'business associates'. His hesitation about these associates confirms our suspicion, on the basis of a previous shot of two gaudily dressed women arguing in Italian outside the door of his hotel room, that the 'business associates' were in fact prostitutes. The Italian policemen have no way of knowing this, or of understanding M. Philiba's remark without interpreting, but the interruption of the camera's pendulum-like movement and the single cutaway shot offers a moment of 'narrative amnesia' which functions as a typically Lubitsch wink to the audience.

Voiceover

Voiceover is the 'third' mode of audiovisual translation, after subtitling and dubbing. Gambier defines voiceover as 'a form of revoicing', also called 'half dubbing' where 'a documentary or an interview is translated/adapted and broadcast approximately in synchrony by a journalist or an actor' (2003a: 173). The source dialogue track is usually audible for a few seconds before the voiceover comes in, after which the source dialogue track is turned down to a low level of audibility. Voiceover was the normal form of narrational translation in ethnographic cinema until the introduction of subtitles in the early 1970s (MacDougall 1998).

Voiceover can also be a form of audiovisual translation of entire films or television programmes. The voiceover may be entirely in one voice (the Polish 'lektor'), or, as in Russia, a male and a female voice may voice over the corresponding characters in a film or television programme.[12] In the UK, the US and Western Europe voiceover is most likely to be found in news broadcasting or in documentary film and television.

Voiceover in Gambier's sense is of course already a specialised use of the general technique, which is a major organising device of narrative cinema (see Kozloff 1988) and constitutes the principal form of what Michel Chion calls 'textual speech'. It may be defined as 'oral statements, conveying any portion of a narrative, spoken by an unseen speaker situated in a space and time other than that simultaneously being presented by the images on the screen' (Kozloff 1988: 5).

Sometimes, this narrating voiceover doubles as an interpreter. One such part-time interpreter can be found in *Babettes Gæstebud* (*Babette's Feast*, Axel, 1987). The film is shot in Danish with extensive dialogue in French, reflecting the importance to the narrative of two French characters, the singer Achille Pépin and the maid Babette. The film's action is framed by an omniscient Danish-speaking female narrator. She introduces us to the characters, streamlines the narrative by accounting for intervals between events, highlights key plot points and comments on the characters' inner thoughts.

One day the sisters Filippa and Martine receive a mysterious visitor, the refugee Babette, bearing a long letter in French from Pépin, Filippa's former singing teacher, who asks them to give Babette a home. They read the letter aloud together. This is a key turning point in the fabula. There is no issue of *diegetic* comprehension – the sisters speak French fluently – but we might expect the letter to be accompanied by subtitles for the audience's benefit, as with other French dialogue in the film. Instead, the narrator chooses to join in with the reading, providing a Danish voiceover translation. The voiceover, paced sometimes to cover the sisters' voices, sometimes to allow them to be clearly heard, creates the 'feeling of connection and intimacy' (Kozloff 1988: 128) which Kozloff sees as typifying the voiceover.

The voiceover is used in *Spanglish* to reduce the necessity for Spanish-language dialogue. *Spanglish* is also framed by a female voiceover, spoken by an older version of Cristina Moreno, Flor's daughter. This voiceover almost entirely replaces dialogue in the film's first sequences, set in Mexico and Spanish-speaking Los Angeles. Only one line of dialogue is delivered in Spanish in this first part of the film, when Flor

decides to leave Mexico with her daughter and go to the United States. The voiceover translates and contextualises the Spanish dialogue:

> FLOR: Una lágrima ... sola una sola ... Haz la mejor posible.
> NARRATOR: 'One tear ... only one ... so make it a good one.' This was my mother's instruction to me.

In *Before Night Falls* (2000) Julian Schnabel's adaptation of the memoir *Antes que anochezca* by Reinaldo Arenas, the relationship between dialogue and voiceover is particularly rich. The film is shot largely in English, but it is heavily heterolingually marked, first of all by the very thick accent of Javier Bardem, who plays the adult Arenas, and also by frequent code-switching between Spanish and English. The dominant offscreen voice of the film is that of Bardem/Arenas. Arenas's voiceover sometimes delivers excerpts from his Spanish writings, subtitled in English, and sometimes English translations, as in the opening voiceover which is composed of a patchwork of quotations from the English translation by Dolores M. Koch of *Antes que anochezca*. Much of the dialogue in the film's opening scenes is in Spanish, usually with English subtitles. This represents selective reproduction of a presumably monolingual Spanish diegetic situation. English establishes itself gradually as the dominant language of the narration. In the early scenes, Arenas's English voiceover stands in a contrapuntal relationship to the hispanophone diegetic world; it does not translate it in a word-for-word sense (subtitles hold that role), but it describes and accounts for it. At one point, however, the voiceover does cast itself as a translation. In voiceover, we hear Arenas reading, in English, an excerpt from his 1982 novel *Cantando en el pozo* [*Singing from the Well*]. The excerpt is about his relationship with his mother. As the excerpt in voiceover quotes the narrator's mother ('As my mother smacked me, she cursed and yelled, "Maldito! Bad seed!" She shouted at the sky, "I want to get out of here." ') we see a shot of his mother shouting. Her dialogue is inaudible but we are cued to read her speech as the speech being remembered in this extract from the memoir. The juxtaposition is one of source text and target text.

So one of the roles of narrators in film may be to translate elements of the dialogue. But there is a second, more general way in which we can understand voiceover as a form of translation, and that is to the extent that it represents a 'framing and juxtaposition of differently-encoded speech' (Sternberg 1981: 221). Such voiceover presents, in English, a discourse which stands in a representational relationship

to the heterolingual diegetic situation it overspeaks. It seems useful to conceptualise this translational narrating voiceover (TNV) as a distinct subtype of voiceover, with its own characteristics. It pertains to fictional scenarios in which the extradiegetic voiceover diverges in whole or in part from the language(s) of the diegesis (in most of the material analysed for this book, an English voiceover framing a non-English or putatively non-English diegesis).

Unlike conventional translating voiceover, TNV may be partial, occurring in specific sequences of a film or television programme. It may not explicitly reproduce actual source-language dialogue. It might be asked how a narration which bears no textual relationship to a source text can be a considered a translation. One reason is that such narration almost always describes and interprets scenarios which, it is assumed, by the logic of the diegesis the viewer would not be able to understand linguistically. Rolf de Heer's *Ten Canoes* (2006) is filmed in indigenous aboriginal languages with English subtitles, and features an English-language voiceover by David Gulpilil. Gulpilil's accented English situates us geographically and ethnically and frames the narrative in an accessible way (his narration begins with a humorous reference to *Star Wars*), punctuating the Ganalbingu dialogue at intervals (Starrs 2007).[13]

A striking example of TNV is provided in Jerzy Skolimowski's 1982 film *Moonlighting*. The film's protagonist Nowak, played by Jeremy Irons, is a Polish electrician sent by his employer to London in December 1981 to renovate the employer's London property. Nowak is accompanied by three other Polish workmen. He is the only one of the four who speaks English. The film is shot in the realist tradition. All the dialogue between the four workmen is in Polish (the other three roles are played by Polish actors), without subtitles. As the only English speaker, Nowak acts as the interpreter for the group and communicates with the small number of British people the workmen encounter: 'As my men didn't know a single word of English, I would have to speak for them all,' he says in voiceover in the opening scene of the film. This voiceover will become the film's principal mode of translation. In the story world, the men speak only Polish when they are alone together. Via his voiceover, Nowak translates their experience into English for the non-Polish-speaking audience. The result of this language strategy is that Polish dialogue in the film is minimal, consisting of short phrases, and almost all the film's dialogue is given to Nowak. This makes it impossible for the three other workmen to emerge as fully realised characters. Of the four workmen Nowak is the only one whose subjectivity is fully explored.

Thom Fitzgerald's 2005 portmanteau film *3 Needles* has a familiar structure in which a theme (here the theme of AIDS) is elaborated through three stories, set in three different continents and told in three different languages. The stories are linked by a strong female voiceover spoken by Olympia Dukakis, who also plays a character in one of the stories. The film begins with a prologue set in an unnamed African rural village, showing a singing procession of families, which cuts to a scene of a group of boys rubbing themselves with mud in preparation for their circumcision ceremony. At this point Dukakis's voiceover begins:

> Huku was fifteen years old. Like most boys he was impatient for this day to arrive, and then surprised when it finally did. But his grandmother had told him the tribal wisdom: 'You don't peel a banana until it is ripe enough to eat.'

The voiceover does not translate the words of the song sung by the villagers or the boys' almost inaudible and fragmentary dialogue as they prepare for the ceremony. The arrival of theatrical speech in the film comes a little later, and it will be signalled by the addition of subtitles. But the voiceover explains to us the cultural significance of the actions we see on screen, and it provides a translation of a source text in the form of a traditional saying. Although this source text is 'offscreen' and temporally removed from the scenes that we are watching, we must reconstruct it imaginatively as an originary source text in order to decode the voiceover. Not only does the voiceover offer us a translation, but it creates and controls the source text by not including it on the soundtrack. (It is assumed in the case of this film, which is a thoughtful 'message movie' about the AIDS crisis whose African sequences were filmed in South Africa among the Pondo tribe, that there *is* an originary proverb, but we cannot know for sure.)

This use of narration creates a powerful translation *effect*. Sarah Kozloff quotes Eric Smoodin's remark that 'Once the presence of the voice-over narrator has been established, the entire film serves as a sort of linguistic event, as the narrator's speech even when there is none' (quoted in Kozloff 1988: 47). The translator-narrator is established in a similar way. Such a narrator, even if he or she never translates again, will remain a potential translator and his or her voice will influence our interpretation of the events on screen. As Dukakis's voiceover continues, it further explains and glosses the actions of Huku and the other

African characters in a manner which explicitly echoes ethnographic translating practices:

> In the weeks it would take to form a scar, Huku was educated in the ways of men: how to fight, how to make decisions, and to no longer play wind instruments. At night he learned [*beat*] to pray. [*interval*] Clay had rendered him invisible. When he regained his skin, it seemed somehow darker, tougher. It was only when he rubbed on the butterfat that his skin burned with new life. Drinking in the oils, the sensations made him wonder if it was indeed a new skin. [*interval*] He burned down the grass hut he had built and with it, his childhood. But he was given a stick to walk with, blackened in the fire of his boyhood memories. When he returned home, he would truly understand what it is to be a man.

A pause for a single beat in the narration allows the boys' singing voices to emerge, and we are told that the song is a prayer. The substance rubbed into the boys' skin is revealed as butterfat and the significance of the washing off of the clay from the circumcision ceremony is made clear. The voiceover glosses the action on screen for the spectator, though the traces of speech we overhear remain in themselves untranslated. It is closest to the kind of translational voiceover called 'free commentary' (Gambier 2003a).

The heterolingual dialogue of *3 Needles*' three parallel stories is rendered with English subtitles throughout. Here the voiceover is not overtly used, as it is in *Moonlighting*, to minimise foreign-language dialogue or avoid having to subtitle it. Instead it is used to frame the narrative, to cushion the transitions between the different settings and to underscore the film's didactic message.

In other cases, voiceover has a more overtly substitutive function. It takes advantage of the heavily *suggested* foreign language hovering at the edges of our hearing to delineate foreign-language environments without having to subtitle dialogue or resort to homogenisation.[14] The most extreme example of such TNV is probably Josef von Sternberg's Japanese-made *Anatahan* (1953). The film is shot entirely in Japanese without subtitles, and the narration is carried by *mise en scène* and by a very dominant English voiceover, spoken by von Sternberg himself. The film, which is cognitively an extraordinary experience not only for the long stretches of Japanese dialogue but also for the overpowering quality of von Sternberg's narration, is a vivid example of the power wielded by the omniscient translating narrator.

TNV can be considered a domesticating strategy, because it dispenses with the need to engage semantically with the source language and instead frames the foreign-language source culture on its own terms. Its sheer authoritativeness overrides alternative readings and closes interpretive possibilities. We think, for instance, of the omniscient and cynical voiceover narrator of Visconti's *La terra trema* (1948). If, as Sarah Kozloff argues, 'voiceover serves to naturalize the strangeness of cinematic narration; an odd, impersonal narrative agency is thus humanized and tamed' (1988: 128), translating voiceover also serves to naturalise and domesticate a foreign environment.

Spanglish is a particularly crude example of domestication. A highly problematic film which was discussed in Chapter 1 for its careful management of the Spanish language, one of the ways in which the film manages its heteroglot subject matter for a mass audience is by erasing the Spanish from the opening sequences of the film, set in Mexico and in Spanish-speaking Los Angeles. Instead, the opening scenes of the film are accompanied by Cristina's voiceover recounting her life with her mother. There is almost no audible diegetic dialogue as such, with the exception of the single line quoted previously and translated by Cristina's voiceover, until Cristina and her cousin arrive for the job interview at the Claskys' house and thus move definitively into anglophone space. Instead, in the early sequences of the film we are offered traces of Spanish 'emanation speech' in an illustrative relationship with the English voiceover, which appears to be creating the 'source language' (on-screen) dialogue as it speaks – not merely an omniscient, but an omnipotent author-translator.

The material sounds of foreign languages can be experienced as a moment of colourful exoticism, or as a threat and an imposition in public space. In the United States, Spanish is often experienced as the latter. Voiceover allows for this space to be tamed by silencing or reducing the occurrence of foreign language. If, as Robynn J. Stilwell has argued, ' "over" is a foregrounded space, under the control of a character/narrator who is usually to some degree controlling our responses, through omniscience, knowledge gained through time, or language' (Stilwell 2007: 196), then *Spanglish*, while it presents the child Cristina as an intercultural mediator who moves easily between Spanish and English (though never in both at once), performs a double erasure of Spanish from the film, by overreading it in the past and silencing it in the present. The adult Cristina as we encounter her only exists in a single linguistic space. There is no Spanish in her voiceover, presumably reflecting the administrative monoglossia we would expect from the prestigious American

university to which she is applying. Through the voiceover, the film neutralises the threatening Mexican linguistic space and, at the same time, relegates Cristina's diglossia to her own past.

Voiceover offers a powerful model for the management of language, not least because it can choose to transmit as much or as little foreign-language dialogue as the scriptwriter chooses – from *Anatahan* or *Ten Canoes* at one extreme, where the foreign-language dialogue is unrestricted (in these two films the framing voiceover arguably makes possible the large quantity of foreign-language dialogue), to *Spanglish*, at the other, which uses voiceover to repress the presence of the foreign language from the film.[15]

Translational voiceovers are as protean as all filmic voiceovers (Kozloff acknowledges the permeability of the boundaries between voiceover, written titles, in-vision verbal material, interior monologue and voice-off narration), but they have certain predictable features. One is, as for voiceovers in general, a strong emphasis on film beginnings. Such translating voiceovers tend to 'mimic the communication situation more or less fully' (Branigan 1992: 109) by projecting the diegesis as a source text which is being framed in a second language for a target-language audience (*None But the Brave*; *Beyond the Clouds* (Antonioni, 1995); *Ten Canoes*). Although a first-person narrator creates a stronger simulacrum of enunciation, third-person narrators can also be involved (*Woman on Top* (Torres, 2000); *Border Blues* (Nahapetov, 2004); *The Mummy*: *Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* (Cohen, 2008)).

The obverse of the TNV which domesticates a foreign-language story world is the heterolingual voiceover. This is a rarer strategy which tends to be confined to art or accented cinema (cf. Naficy 2001: 24). A striking example is Kristian Levring's Dogme film *The King is Alive* (2000), which frames its narrative about a group of European tourists stranded in the Namibian desert from the point of view of an indigenous observer, Kanana. The film opens with his voiceover, subtitled, and his commentary on the characters' actions recurs at intervals throughout the film. This enacts a translation which runs directionally counter to the translating action of anglophone film,[16] and frames the film's Caucasian characters as radically other in their arcane theatrical enactments in the desert.[17] Another marked device is incidental voiceover in a foreign language (subtitled), as in *Kill Bill 1* (Tarantino, 2003) or James Ivory's *The Savages* (1972). In the light of the pressure to provide an English-language frame for narratives with a heterolingual diegesis, we can read bilingual and multilingual films which choose to reject the framing narration in the domestic language as narrationally marked.

Traffic, whose opening dialogue is Spanish with English subtitles, is one example; *Men With Guns* (Sayles, 1997), which is framed by a subtitled conversation in an indigenous language, is another.

Limitations of space mean that this account of different devices used to promote and manage foreign-language dialogue is necessarily brief. This chapter argues that translating *mise en scène*, diegetic interpreting and voiceover all constitute distinct modes of translation within audiovisual narrative. Like all translations, those analysed above are 'deliberate and conscious act[s] of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication' (Gentzler and Tymoczko 2002: xxi) which cannot be separated from the ideological and sociocultural context of their production. They deserve analysis by scholars of film, translation and cultural studies in order better to understand the aesthetic and political implications of language management on screen.

4
Subtitling and the Ethics of Representation

In the last chapter we looked at devices such as translating *mise en scène*, diegetic interpreting and voiceover through which filmmakers are able to manage heterolingualism on screen. Diegetic interpreting ostensibly serves a double audience of spectators and characters, but it can achieve near-redundancy in relation to plot and become almost exclusively a device for 'overhearing' foreign language. All of these devices define themselves against or in complement to subtitles, and offer alternatives to, or ways to minimise, the subtitling of foreign-language dialogue.

Why are the commercial pressures to avoid the use of subtitles so compelling? It may be worth looking at some of the key features of subtitling to understand why filmmakers and producers have in the past gone to such lengths to avoid their use.

Subtitling is 'diagonal' translation (Gottlieb 1994): not merely between languages, but also as a translation of the oral into the written. Subtitling selects, condenses and organises discourse into discrete syntactically, spatially and temporally delimited units. Subtitles should consist of not more than two lines, each line having a maximum length of between 35 and 40 characters. Each line and subtitle should be composed, where possible, of syntactically self-contained units. Subtitles are 'spotted' or cued to follow the in- and out-times of the dialogue precisely, but here too they exert an organising pressure, always remaining on screen for at least a second, regardless of how brief a line of dialogue may be. Subtitles should never stay on screen for longer than six or seven seconds, because viewers begin to re-read subtitles which sit on the screen for too long. Subtitles thus achieve their own rhythm within the audiovisual work.[1] They are usually written in a standard, correct form of the target language which

tends to avoid markers of dialect, accent and colloquialism. They overlay the image and are read in context alongside the other semiotic codes of the film, which means that subtitlers can take advantage of verbal-visual redundancy to omit explicit translation of certain verbal elements whose meaning is clear from the context, but they may also be constrained in their translation solutions by specificities of the non-verbal codes involved. Subtitling is 'vulnerable', as Jorge Díaz Cintas has suggested, because it juxtaposes source text and target text so that bilingual viewers are enabled, and feel entitled, to comment on the translation solutions adopted. Because subtitling reduces and paraphrases in order to fit dialogue, subtitles may not correspond closely to the dialogue at word level. In this, subtitling is like most forms of translation, but it means that viewers often perceive subtitles as unfaithful. Subtitling tends to elide markers of politeness and interpersonal relationships (Hatim and Mason 1997).

Subtitling is distrusted by distributors because it places a cognitive burden on audiences, particularly those who are unused to watching subtitled material regularly. It may well reduce the audience for a film. It is distrusted by some audiences because 'they don't go to the movies to read',[2] and by some viewers with competence in a second language because of the frequent lack of literal correspondence between source and target texts. The ease with which DVD allows us to compare subtitle tracks and dub tracks, which are usually very different, further contributes to some viewers' distrust of subtitles *and* dubbing because it makes clear how contingent the translation of any audiovisual text is on the translation mode chosen. It does not help that subtitling quality can be very variable, and this can badly affect a viewer's enjoyment of a film or television programme.

The reason why we watch subtitled films in spite of all of these issues is, above all, to enable us to experience the voice and intonation of the actors as originally recorded. Of course, as several critics have pointed out (Altman 1980; Doane 1980), the unity of the actor's filmed body and voice is an illusion which cinema has been at very great pains to perpetuate, but that does not lessen our enjoyment of the *perceived* relationship between voice and body. Dubbing or voiceover is experienced as a radical rupture and rewriting of the film text; it has indeed been suggested that the relationship of a dubbed film to its source is much more that of an adaptation to its source material than that of a translation to its source text (Ascheid 1997).[3] Subtitles, on the other hand, allow us approximate access to a film as it was seen by its domestic audience. They 'allow the viewer access to the original text without at the

same time destroying valuable aspects of that material's authenticity' (Kilborn 1993: 646).

Filmgoers who choose to watch subtitled films often do it as a way of accessing another culture, on the grounds that 'subtitles offer a way into worlds outside of ourselves. They ... embed us' (Egoyan and Balfour 2004b: 30). It is no coincidence that repressive regimes have in the past insisted on dubbing, rather than subtitling, as a mode of translation for imported films. By making audible to us cultural productions from other countries and language communities, subtitles seem to offer the potential for the recognition and welcome of multiple voices. David MacDougall describes the moment when subtitles began to replace voiceover narration in ethnographic film:

> In the 1970s, the subtitling of ethnographic films produced an effect upon viewers not unlike the subtitled fiction films that had begun to be shown about twenty years earlier. Ethnographic films with narrated commentaries that had spoken *about* others had turned their subjects into archetypes. With subtitles, these persons began to achieve the individuality and complexity of characters in fiction. Subtitles opened a new way to their thoughts, and through their thoughts, to their feelings. (MacDougall 1995: 83)

We associate subtitles with an openness to other cultures which recalls Paul Ricoeur's theorisation of translation as hospitality 'where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home' (Ricoeur 2006: 10). By contrast with the specular encounter with other cultures, which is inextricably linked to consumption, whether by means of the tourist gaze or by means of the reduction to spectacle, subtitles allow us to *listen* to other voices. In Bakhtinian terms we might speak of heteroglossia, of the multiplicity of social voices or of the linked notion of polyphony, the 'plurality of voices that do not fuse into a single consciousness but exist on different registers, generating dialogical dynamism among themselves' (Stam 1989: 229). If, as Guillermo Gómez Peña says, no intercultural dialogue is possible without 'a genuine engagement with the concrete forms of expression of other cultures' (quoted in Seyhan 2001: 7), then subtitled heterolingual dialogue must be considered a condition necessary, even if not sufficient, for representing the other. The growth in the popularity of subtitles which we have seen over the past decade even in popular film genres is thus a development at first sight to be welcomed.

The rise of partial subtitling and multilingual film

Subtitles have been much in the news in recent years. *The Passion of the Christ* made headlines in 2004 as an independently produced feature film entirely shot in subtitled ancient languages. It went on to make more headlines for its astonishing box office success. Its British forerunner *Sebastiane*, the 1976 first feature by Derek Jarman, shot in Latin with English subtitles and also dealing with a religious subject, had a budget of £30,000 (Pencak 2002: 13) and, in *Variety*'s inimitable jargon, 'Latin-lingo pic did minimal biz theatrically' (Diorio 2004), though in the UK it was reasonably successful by art-film standards. *Passion of the Christ*, on the other hand, with a budget of $30 million, went on to gross more than $600 million worldwide on theatrical release, of which $370 million was made in the United States alone.[4]

When the film was announced in September 2002 the director stated that he intended it to be exhibited without subtitles (Rooney 2002). Instead, Gibson hoped to 'transcend language barriers with visual storytelling', a project in itself biblical in the effort to overturn Babel and invoke discourses of film as universal language. The presentation of subtitles as a concession rather than as an integral part of the film may also have been a strategy to make subtitles more palatable to the film's target audience, a demographic which has traditionally been perceived as hostile to foreign language and subtitled film. The film was to outdo by far the previous highest-grossing subtitled film, Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), which made $128 million in the United States on theatrical release. The commercial success of the two films prompted speculation that perhaps mainstream American moviegoers were growing less resistant to subtitles (Minns 2004; Rich 2004).

This speculation has not been borne out (see e.g. Kaufman 2006). A dozen, perhaps two dozen, subtitled films a year make more than a million dollars on theatrical release in the United States. Of those, perhaps two might pass the $10 million mark. It can still be extremely difficult for even well-reviewed foreign-language films to find a US distributor.

If we look at the provenance of the most successful subtitled films of the last decade, an interesting pattern emerges. Looking at box office figures since 2000, the four biggest-earning subtitled films are *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Lee, 2000), *Hero* (Zhang, 2002), *Passion of the Christ* and *Apocalypto* (Gibson, 2006). Three out of the four films had their genesis in English and made a deliberate decision to opt for vehicular matching of the dialogue throughout. The script for *Passion of the Christ* was written in English and translated into Latin and Aramaic

by Bill Fulco. The English script for *Apocalypto*, which made $50m on theatrical release, was similarly translated from English into Yucatec Mayan. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which was shot in Mandarin, originated in an English script by James Schamus which went through multiple translations between English and Chinese (Schamus 2000). All three films feature carefully coached dialogue by non-native speakers of the 'source' languages. The earnings of these three films outstrip by tens of millions of dollars the next most successful subtitled films, with the exception of *Hero* (2002) which made $53 million. It is worth noting that *Hero* had been framed carefully for the US market (it was 'presented by Quentin Tarantino' and had been edited at the urging of Miramax, its American distributor, prior to release (Dombrowski 2008)).

These films are, admittedly, exceptional. Other films made by anglophone American directors in languages other than English have fared less well. John Sayles's independent *Men With Guns* (1997), shot in Spanish and four indigenous languages, took some three-quarters of a million dollars on theatrical release. Even A-list directors cannot guarantee a subtitled film's success. Stephen Soderbergh's recent biographical account of Che Guevara, shot almost entirely in Spanish, did very poor business indeed at the box office in the United States; *Che Part I* (Soderbergh, 2008) made something over $2 million on theatrical release. Clint Eastwood's Japanese-language *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006), with a stronger script and better reviews than its anglophone counterpart *Flags of Our Fathers* (Eastwood, 2006), took $13 million at the US box office, less than half that of its sister film.

We might conclude that full-scale vehicular matching is a passing trend which is unlikely to leave a lasting imprint on hegemonic film practices. Recall Gillian Armstrong's description in Chapter 1 of the multiple factors which made it impossible to shoot *Charlotte Gray* in French. In 2006, before the release of *Apocalypto*, Vin Diesel announced a big-budget 'Hannibal the Conqueror' project, which was to be shot in a reconstructed Punic language in a translation by Bill Fulco (Brown 2006). The film is still listed as being in development.

Complicating the picture, however, are US box office takings for films which are partially subtitled. Partial subtitles, traditionally the preserve of more peripheral, accented or intercultural cinemas, which are frequently characterised by multilingual scripts and transnational themes of migration and diaspora, have been increasingly common over the past ten years in mainstream cinema and television. Partly subtitled films will be the focus of this chapter, because they are changing the

audiovisual linguistic landscape and inviting us to rethink what we know about subtitles.

An average 90-minute subtitled feature film on DVD may have something in the region of 800–1,000 subtitles.[5] This puts quantitatively into context some of the partly subtitled films released in recent years. Soderbergh's 2000 feature *Traffic*, partly shot in Spanish (251 subtitles) and with a star cast including Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta Jones and Benicio del Toro, made $124 million at the US box office. *Syriana*, again with an A-list cast and 252 subtitles, made $50 million in 2005. The following year Iñarritu's polyglot *Babel* took $34 million at the box office in the United States. *Babel* featured Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett in the key English-language roles in the film but was predominantly subtitled (486 titles) from Berber, Spanish and Japanese. *The Kite Runner* (2007), most of whose dialogue was in Dari (896 titles) and with no well-known actors, made $15 million. Most recently at the time of writing, *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle, 2008), with no major anglophone stars and extensive Hindi dialogue (204 subtitles), grossed more than $140 million at the US box office. We could also mention *Kill Bill 1* (2003, 158 titles) which made $70 million on theatrical release in the United States and Edward Zwick's *The Last Samurai* (2003, 188 subtitles) which took $111 million in cinemas in the winter of 2003–2004. Subtitles have become a feature, not only of their traditional spheres of art film and transnational coproductions, but also in US and British domestic production.

Partial subtitling has been largely ignored as a phenomenon by audiovisual translation scholars.[6] Henrik Gottlieb spoke in 2004 of 'a few … "exotic" cases … in domestic productions' (2004: 84). Michel Chion (1994: 180) refers to 'a few films' that have relativised speech through the use of a foreign language. Gottlieb's and Chion's remarks are typical of a widespread critical dismissiveness in respect of multilingual film, particularly before 1990. Where it has received any notice at all, the multiplication of languages on screen has been presented as a feature specific to a historical moment. Thus Nataša Ďurovičová identifies *Kameradschaft* and *La grande illusion* (Renoir, 1937) as throwbacks to the multiple-language versions of 1929–1932 (Ďurovičová 1992: 148), while Yves Gambier suggests that 'multilingualism emerged in *Le mépris* back in 1963 – whose dialogues involving the use of different national languages was relatively unknown to that date' (2003b: 56).[7]

This is certainly changing. Literary and cultural critics have identified a growth of multilingualism across many art forms. This multilingualism, which reflects increased mobility and multiculturalism, features in theatre, art, poetry and fiction and is perhaps even more

visible in the cinema. Hamid Naficy identifies accented films, which he identifies as a phenomenon of cinematic globalisation (2001: 3), as often 'made in the interstices and astride several cultures and languages' with the result that 'there is no single original, or source language' (ibid.: 122). This very valid observation is true of many 'non-accented' films too. Audiovisual scholars seem unaware of the long heterolingual tradition that has produced such diverse films as Hell's Angels (Hughes, 1930), Kameradschaft (1931), Allo Berlin, ici Paris/Hallo hallo, hier spricht Berlin! (Duvivier, 1932), Les perles de la couronne (Guitry, 1937) *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), *The Third Man* (1949), *Anatahan* (1953), *Le salaire de la peur* (*The Wages of Fear*, Clouzot, 1953), *Never on Sunday* (Dassin, 1960), *The Longest Day* (1962), *None but the Brave* (1965), *Von Ryan's Express* (Robson, 1965), *Hell in the Pacific* (1969), *Battle of Britain* (Hamilton, 1969), *A Man Called Horse* (1970), *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex ...* (1974), *Last Tango in Paris* (Bertolucci, 1972), *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974), *The Yakuza* (Pollack, 1974), *Hester Street* (Silver, 1974), *The Godfather Part II* (Coppola, 1974), *Sorcerer* (Friedkin, 1977), *El Súper* (Inchaso, 1979), *Windwalker* (Merrill, 1980), *Shōgun* (1980), *Sophie's Choice* (1982), *El Norte* (1983), *A Great Wall* (Wang, 1986) – to name only a few of the more noteworthy films.[8] It is an eclectic list, even omitting films in invented or archaic languages such as *Incubus* (1965), *Sebastiane* (1976) and *La Guerre du feu* (*Quest for Fire*, 1981). Many of the films on it have been treated as anomalous, simply because of the multiplication of languages on their soundtrack, but many hundreds more such films could be named. We are still waiting for a history of heterolingual film which will fully recognise the degree to which the monolingualism of the film text is a construct of the national-cinematic imagination.

As subtitles became more common in mainstream films audiences did not always know what to make of them. Take William Friedkin's *Sorcerer* (1977), a remake of Henri-Georges Clouzot's 1953 film *Le salaire de la peur*. The first hour of Clouzot's film is set in the dead-end South American mining town of Las Piedras, whose inhabitants include migrants and refugees from many nations. The film's polyglot opening sequence features English, French, German, Spanish and Italian dialogue, though French soon becomes the dominant language of the narrative. For the remake, Friedkin went a different route, opening the film with four sequences offering a back-story for each of the four protagonists. The first, set in Mexico, is dialogue-free. The second, set in Jerusalem, features a small amount of subtitled Arabic dialogue. The third is an extended sequence set in France, with French dialogue and English subtitles. No English dialogue is heard until the fourth sequence, set in Boston, which begins some 16 minutes into the film. By this time,

some cinema viewers had voted with their feet and departed. A poster had to be produced for display in cinemas explaining that the opening sequences of the film were subtitled but that the film was otherwise 'an English language film' (Stempel 2001: 149).[9]

Research has yet to reveal how badly judged steps like this may have inflected the ways in which heterolingual dialogue was subsequently written into feature films, but subtitles were used increasingly through the 1980s. The unexpected success of *Dances with Wolves* (1990; 277 titles) marked a turning point for the inclusion of subtitled dialogue in domestic American productions, particularly, as will be argued later in the chapter, in relation to indigenous languages. Subtitles in mainstream anglophone film have now become epidemic. Apart from those quoted earlier in this chapter, further recent major releases which include stretches of subtitled dialogue include *Inglourious Basterds*, *District 9* (Blomkamp, 2009), *Australia* (Luhrmann, 2008), *Gran Torino* (2008), *The Kingdom* (Berg, 2007), *30 Days of Night* (Slade, 2007), *Eastern Promises* (Cronenberg, 2007), *Rendition* (Hood, 2007); *The Science of Sleep* (Gondry, 2006), *Fast Food Nation* (Linklater, 2006), *Black Book* (Verhoeven, 2006) and *The Da Vinci Code* (Howard, 2006), not to mention the subtitled Elvish dialogue of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Jackson), the subtitled 'Ancient Egyptian' and Chinese of the *Mummy* trilogy and the various subtitled languages found in the *Bourne* trilogy. Films seem actively to seek opportunities for including subtitled dialogue, as with a gratuitous scene in the recent *Sherlock Holmes* (Ritchie, 2009), featuring a few lines of subtitled French. If subtitling before the release of *Dances with Wolves* was a marked linguistic-representational strategy, it has now become in popular-dramatic genres all but an unmarked norm. We are even seeing subtitles in non-live action films, including *Blood, the Last Vampire* (Kitakubo, 2000), *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (Trousdale, 2001) and James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009). The characteristics of these subtitles, and the ways in which they may change the way we view subtitled productions, will be considered a little later in this chapter.

And the Oscar goes to…

Filmic heterolingualism has, in recent years, put certain industrial configurations under pressure. The television broadcast contracts which are now closely tied in with major theatrical releases stipulate that films should be predominantly in English. This sometimes requires quantitative evaluation of the foreign language. The distribution of *Slumdog Millionaire* was reportedly in doubt as a result of the decision to shoot part of the film in Hindi. The film eventually obtained

distribution with Warner International Pictures on the grounds that enough of it (73 per cent) was in English to meet the criteria (Goodridge 2009). Stephen Soderbergh was unable for the same reason to obtain US funding for his two-part project *Che* (Olsen 2008) which eventually obtained backing from European sources (Olsen 2008). By contrast, timing of the soundtrack established the predominance of English in Eric Khoo's 2005 feature *Be with Me*, filmed in Mandarin, Hokkien, English and sign language, and meant that the film was deemed ineligible for nomination for the Best Foreign Film Academy Award that year (Koehler 2005: 9).

Award categories have been one particularly conspicuous site of linguistic anxieties. The slippage between a 'foreign film' and a 'foreign-language film' is most visible if we compare the eligibility criteria for the two most important awarding bodies in the US film industry, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which awards the Golden Globes, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which awards the Oscars.

Both organisations offer an award for the 'best foreign-language film' but define the categories differently. The Golden Globes' 'best foreign-language film' award category dates back to 1987 when it replaced a 'best foreign film' category open to any film made outside the United States. The reformulated award category is defined by language rather than provenance. It places no limit on the number of national applications and includes American films shot in other languages. Previous nominees have included *Men With Guns* (1999), *Apocalypto* (2007) and *The Kite Runner* (2008).

The Oscars take a much more prescriptive approach to defining their 'foreign-language film' category. Here I draw on John Mowitt's detailed account of the award's evolution (2005: 46–64). The AMPAS foreign film award was first introduced as a Special Award category in 1949 and was 'intended to honor films first made in a language other than English and first released in a commercial theatre in the United States during the Award Year' (quoted in ibid.: 47). We can see immediately the assumption that films are monoglot, and, as Mowitt observes, that English 'serves as the "unmarked" term' (ibid.). In 1956, the award was made an annual one, and was described as being awarded to 'the best feature-length motion picture produced by a foreign company with a non-English soundtrack ... and shown in a commercial theatre ... . Every country shall be invited to submit its best film' (quoted in ibid.: 52). The requirement of linguistic singularity is no longer present (any combination of languages not including English qualifies as foreign), but national boundaries are

firmly enforced. There seems to be no allowance for transnational provenance or acknowledgement of the role of English in multilingual film (see note 8). Interestingly, a 1981 revision of the regulations allowed for the existence of some quantity of English on the soundtrack, in response to concerns expressed in the course of the 1970s 'over whether dialogue had to be entirely in a language other than English' (ibid.: 55). The regulations continued, however, to prescribe a correlation between the 'dominant' language of the film and the 'national' language of the submitting nation.

As Mowitt observes, the changes in the regulations for the award are underpinned by problematic and unstable assumptions about the relationship between 'language' and speech in films, with the AMPAS remaining 'conflicted' about whether foreignness should be located on the soundtrack of a film or elsewhere, for instance in its cinematography (ibid.). What interests me most, here, is how changing conventions of linguistic behaviour in film, partly attributable to tropes such as migration and industrial factors such as transnational production, were mirrored in gradual changes in award regulations. Particularly contested in recent years has been the Academy's equation of national boundaries and language. Mowitt's account was published before, but strongly foreshadows, the 2006 controversy which accompanied the disqualification of several films from competition for the Foreign Language Film award on national-linguistic grounds. These included one of the best-reviewed films of the previous year, Austrian entry *Caché* (*Hidden,* 2005), directed by Austrian national Michael Haneke but shot in French and performed by a largely French cast; and Italy's official entry, Saverio Costanzo's *Private* (2004), whose dialogue is in Arabic and Hebrew. Two further films were reportedly disqualified because of the presence of too much English on the soundtrack: Khoo's *Be with Me* and a Greek film, *Brides* (2004), directed by Pantelis Voulgaris (Koehler 2005; Cooke 2006). The AMPAS seemed resolute in keeping its draconian equation of language and national territory intact. In November 2005 Anthony Kaufman quotes an AMPAS spokesperson as saying, in a startling invocation of Benedict Anderson's imagined national-linguistic communities: 'At this point, we don't foresee any discussions about this issue…We like to see the countries represented in the films. And with "Private," you wouldn't have any idea that it was from Italy' (Kaufman 2005). The academy later reviewed its position and a press release on 30 June 30 2006, ahead of the 79th awards ceremony, declared that:

> In [a] change for the Foreign Language award, entries submitted in the category no longer must be in an official language of the country

> submitting the film. So long as the dominant language is not English, a picture from any country may be in any language or combination of languages. (AMPAS 2006)

This seems to be a positive step towards the recognition of cinematic heterolingualism, though we notice again that the 'US' acts here as an unmarked term, not apparently being a 'country' for the purposes of the foreign-language film award. The languages of domestic films are invisible for the purposes of award classification.

In fact, according to the AMPAS press release, *Private* was the only film to be officially affected in the previous round of nominations. The Executive Director of the AMPAS called it 'a situation that has cropped up only once before in our history, and may not arise again this century' (AMPAS 2006). The acceptance of not one but two films the following year which would not have been eligible under the previous criteria, Carlos Reygadas's *Stellet Licht* (*Silent Light*, 2007), filmed in Plautdietsch (low German) and submitted as Mexico's official entry, and Deepa Mehta's *Water* (2005), shot in Hindi and entered by Canada, which received a nomination for an Oscar in the Foreign Film category, rather give the lie to Davis's assertion and suggest that the evolution of foreign languages on screen may continue to exceed the limits of the industry's imagination.

Vehicular matching, multilingualism and the burden of representation

The shift towards a greater incidence of multilingualism in films, and a concomitant use of subtitles, could partly be seen as reflecting a growing interest by filmmakers in themes of migration, mobility and intercultural communication. Another factor that needs to be considered is the need of cinematic conventions for regular renewal and innovation, for instance by drawing on the changing linguistic conventions of ethnographic film.

Also a factor is the distinction between the predominantly mimetic nature of film and the predominantly diegetic nature of literature.[10] Questions of linguistic representation which would simply not occur to readers of literature are recurrent for viewers of film. Hence the bilingual Algerian writer Rachid Boujedra may write French dialogue for Arabic speakers in his novels, but complain bitterly about the same usage on screen:

> Employer le français est absolument indéfendable, sinon ridicule. Ali Ghalem, le réalisateur d'un film sur l'émigration algérienne en

> France, *Mektoub*, en a fait l'expérience. Faire s'exprimer en français des ouvriers algériens travaillant en France, cela donne au film un aspect tellement saugrenu que l'on évite difficilement le fou-rire en pleine action dramatique! Lorsqu'un paysan algérien débarque à Nanterre chez son cousin, il ne lui parle pas en français! Tout le film est un ratage extraordinaire à cause surtout de ces dialogues en français.
>
> [Using French is completely indefensible, even ridiculous. Ali Ghalem, the director of a film about Algerian immigration to France, *Mektoub*, is evidence of this. To make Algerian workers in France talk to each other in French is so absurd that it is hard not to burst into laughter in the middle of a dramatic scene! When an Algerian arrives at his cousin's in Nanterre, he doesn't speak to him in French! The entire film is an extraordinary failure because of, above all, the French dialogue.] (Quotation and translation from Serrano 2001: 28)

Sternberg is careful in his narratological model for linguistic mimesis in fiction not to frame the choice between vehicular matching or homogenisation as an ethical one. This is to some extent related to Sternberg's focus on print literature, where the question of linguistic particularism is not usually at issue. Nobody would argue that English speakers should not read the 1995 novel *Der Vorleser* in Carol Brown Janeway's English translation, entitled *The Reader*, rather than in Bernhard Schlink's German original. By contrast, the use of lightly accented English for German in Stephen Daldry's 2008 film adaptation of *The Reader* has been the subject of lively debate.[11] Even an obviously self-conscious, semi-parodic film like the horror comedy *Botched* (Ryan, 2007), shot in Ireland with a mostly Irish cast playing Russian characters in heavily accented English, elicited a post to the Internet Movie Database discussion board for the film about the non-use of Russian for the dialogue.[12]

I am not suggesting in quoting what is a frivolous discussion board post that the original poster was genuinely suggesting that *Botched* should have been filmed in Russian. The interest of the post lies, rather, in (a) its representativeness: there are hundreds of such postings on the IMDB forums, all debating the virtues of vehicular matching versus verbal transposition (foreign accents) or homogenisation; and (b) its very frivolity: if even a film as self-consciously shlock as *Botched* can give rise to this kind of question it underlines the extent to which the question is close to the surface of the consciousness of film audiences.

Part of the demand for vehicular matching on screen is mimetic. Viewers wish characters to behave in a 'plausible' way and this includes

speaking the language suggested by the diegesis. Of course, this form of authenticity is available to film in a way in which it is not available to other media. The polysemiotic nature of film is able to integrate the use of foreign languages to a degree impossible in print fiction, as Sarah Kozloff has observed (2000: 223–224). Translation exists precisely because written texts in a foreign language are opaque to us. But on screen, as we saw in Chapter 3, the foreign language may be supplemented by visual and other acoustic codes which allow us to retrieve meaning from the spoken language in a way impossible in print. Foreign languages thus constitute a form of available authenticity to the filmmaker and the film viewer, and subtitles are one of a number of translation options.

We do not, however, only demand foreign languages in film because film *can* provide them. What Boujedra and other critics have perceived is the *inequality* of film languages. It is not the use of a language to represent another, but the use of a dominant language to represent a marginal or disempowered language, such as the use of French to represent subjects of an Arabic-speaking French ex-colony, which is at issue. Languages on screen are implicated in a network of relations of power, as observed by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam in their 1985 essay 'The Cinema after Babel: Language, Difference, Power' and in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (1994). Inasmuch as linguistic choices in film draw on external socio-political realities, they are also seen as involving an ethics of representation. Shohat and Stam identify one of the fossilised linguistic power structures in cinema as a homogenising use of dominant languages particularly English (see also page 26 above). The use of undifferentiated English renders invisible the work of translation and interpreting which accompanies travel, trade, conquest, occupation, war and exploration (all popular themes in film). The risk is, as B. Ruby Rich argues that 'monolingualism posits a monocultural world, one where "our" values are not merely dominant but genuinely shared and undisputed' (2004: 165). She criticises films which offer a semblance of foreignness without challenging the audience through language. The Miramax-produced *Chocolat* (2000) directed by Swedish director Lasse Hallström, positioned as an arthouse/mainstream crossover through the casting of Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp as the leads, and shot in accented English, is, according to her, 'the perfect monolinguist's wish-fulfillment, offering up a soupçon of sophistication with no linguistic challenges to trouble the surface' (ibid.).

It is this hubris against which vehicular matching can be seen as a resistant strategy. In the paratexts of heterolingual film, vehicular

matching is often identified as the ethical choice. Steven Soderbergh's attitude when making *Traffic* (2000), a cross-border film partly set in Mexico, was that 'If these people don't speak Spanish, the film has no integrity. You just can't expect anyone to take it seriously' (Lemons, quoted in Shaw 2005: 215). These overtones of representational adequacy are echoed in John Sayles's argument for shooting his transamerican film *Men with Guns* in Latin American languages: 'I felt I wasn't going to buy it if it was in English, if it was a bunch of people walking around Latin America speaking English with Latin accents' (Sayles and Smith 1998: 234). The epitexts of prestige cinema draw on the choice to match languages to construct a narrative of opposition to popularising and 'dumbing-down' studio pressure of the kind which refused to countenance the subtitling of *Charlotte Gray*. This does not only hold for English-language film; Christian Carion says of his trilingual 2005 First World War drama *Joyeux Noël* that 'J'ai resisté à ceux qui voulaient un film seulement en français' [I resisted the people who wanted a film that was only in French] (quoted in Sanaker 2008: 147). In the case of Marc Forster's *The Kite Runner*, distributors were worried enough about audience response to the subtitles to warn cinemagoers that the film they were about to see contained subtitles. David Benioff wrote the script for *The Kite Runner* (2007) in English, but was enthusiastic in press interviews about the choice to shoot in Dari, partly for pragmatic reasons – the heterolingual subject matter seemed to prompt an answering heterolingualism in the film[13] – and partly because he saw homogenisation as a 'dated' representational strategy. Benioff contrasts the choice with the wishes of the producers at DreamWorks who were thinking of audience resistance and of their television contracts, which were at risk if too much of the film was in a language other than English (Rocchi 2007).[14]

The restoration of foreign languages to characters from national and ethnic groups which have been denied a voice in fiction film is a compelling justification for foreign-language dialogue with subtitles. The adoption of vehicular matching, especially for indigenous languages, is predicated on the idea that 'the inability to make articulate, understandable sounds, i.e. speak the language of the group, deprives speaking others of their humanity' (Cronin 2000: 14). One of the reasons why multilingualism in film has been so critically invisible is probably because in the early decades after the arrival of sound, heterolingual dialogue was less likely to be subtitled. The use of *mise en scène* to convey the meaning of dialogue (see Chapter 3) facilitates a reception of the foreign speech as sound rather than voice. For Ruskin

and for Vaughan Williams, incomprehensible, untranslated speech is not speech but music.[15] This music can be threatening too: think of the origin of the word 'barbarian' in the 'bar-bar' sounds heard by the Greeks in the mouths of other peoples. By subtitling foreign speech we constitute it as language (cf. Sakai 2009), endowing it with semantic content and recognising speakers' membership of a developed linguaculture.

Subtitled dialogue acknowledges the subjectivity of ethnographic subjects. Shohat and Stam cautiously welcome the subtitled Lakota Sioux language in *Dances with Wolves* and the Algonquin, Huron and Iroquois of Bruce Beresford's *Black Robe* (1991) as a 'relative advance' which triggers 'hopes for a sea-change in linguistic representation' (Shohat and Stam 1994: 192). As we have shown above, the sea change in linguistic representation is arguably taking place. But the modalities of vehicular matching raise further questions, problematising the relations between vehicular matching as linguistic particularism and 'resistant' forms of representation. It is not only that a lot of subtitled 'foreign' speech in film and television is from invented, artificial, reconstructed and archaic languages. Building on the distinction we have established between pre-subtitling, where subtitling is envisaged from early in production, and conventional post-subtitling at the point of distribution, it can be shown that there are important ontological differences between the two varieties of subtitling. The importance of these differences lies mainly in the fact that multiplex audiences are much more likely to encounter the first type than the second.

The treatment of language on screen is predominantly a commercial consideration. Mainstream filmmakers are interested in authenticity inasmuch as it relates to audience expectations and hence audience response. A good example is John Boorman's *The Emerald Forest* (1985). The film tells the story of Tommy Markham, the son of an American mining engineer in Brazil who is kidnapped and adopted by an indigenous tribe. By the time his father finds him ten years later, Tommy or Tomme, as he has become, is a fully integrated member of the 'Invisible People'.[16] Though most of the film's dialogue is in English, the film also features extensive dialogue in Tupi with subtitles (312 titles). This subtitling was the result of a long period of reflection and experimentation dating from the earliest days of pre-production and chronicled in Boorman's published production diary. As early as June 1982, when Boorman was scouting locations, he was already discussing the problem of how to deal with the speech of his Native American characters: 'If

we are to enter the Indian world and be close to the characters, we must understand them. Subtitles would distance them. Can we find a solution to this?' (Boorman 1985: 9).

As the script was progressively developed by Boorman and Rospo Pallenberg, the possibility was raised of making the film's language management easier by filtering Tommy's experiences with the tribe through the character of Markham, Tommy's father. This could be done, for instance, by allowing Tomme, who might be expected to remember some English, to act as a diegetic interpreter between his father and the tribe. The strategy contemplated was apparently a form of referential restriction involving script design which would limit the speaking of the indigenous language to situations in which it could be interpreted by Tomme (ibid.: 12). This structure proved unsatisfactory and the filmmakers decided to narrate Tommy's life with the tribe earlier, at a point in the film preceding his reunion with his father. This would unavoidably raise the question of whether to homogenise or to match the indigenous language.

The film's American distributors, Embassy Pictures, were the first to suggest that dialogue between members of the tribe should be in Tupi with subtitles. Boorman was sceptical about the acceptability of subtitling to his audience: 'Since 25 per cent of the audience is scarcely literate, it is either brave or foolhardy' (ibid.: 107). As an alternative option, Boorman advocated a voiceover done by the actors themselves (ibid.: 114–115), an innovative solution. Meanwhile the film was shot in English in order to keep all options open, including the possibility of dubbing into Tupi and then subtitling or voicing over the dubbed dialogue (ibid.: 115).

The treatment of language remained in question right up until the film's release. In late February and early March 1985, three separate language versions of the film were shown to test audiences (ibid.: 224–227). In one tested version, the Native American characters spoke English. In a second, the indigenous dialogue was looped in Tupi and 'shadowed' or voiced over in English by the same actors. The audience response was clear. They found the English version 'damaging to the credibility of the story' and the voiced over version too much of a cognitive strain, with key dialogue being missed. A third version with the indigenous dialogue looped in Tupi with English subtitles was tested a few days later, and to Boorman's surprise, the test audience responded extremely positively. The film is a step in the growing acceptability of subtitles to render foreign-language dialogue in commercial film,[17] but the director's diary makes clear that the question of how to deal with language

was about acceptability (to the target audience) rather than adequacy to any implied source text. The final version was dubbed into Tupi,[18] then retranslated for the audience via subtitles. Today most mainstream films which match languages and then subtitle the resulting foreign-language dialogue are shot directly in the foreign language.

Here the directionality of translation becomes an issue. The foreign-language dialogue is received by the viewers of a subtitled film as the original dialogue. The subtitles are read as a translation. As we saw earlier in this chapter, however, mainstream film scripts tend to be developed in the language of the subtitles rather than the language of the filmed dialogue. The dialogue is what Anthony Pym, drawing on Gideon Toury's notion of 'pseudotranslations', has called a 'pseudo-original'. Pseudo-originals are 'translated texts falsely presented and received as originals'.[19] The actual translational relationship (sometimes reflecting very complex translational transactions at the production stage) is reversed relative to the translation evoked on screen. In many cases the 'foreign-language' dialogue is a translation by scriptwriters, language consultants or by the actors themselves from a monolingual domestic-language script into the foreign language. This may take place at quite a late stage of production – in some cases, on set.[20] When shooting Sayles's *Men with Guns* the Native American cast members translated the Spanish script into their own languages, 'then, if they fumbled their dialogue on-camera, had to tell Sayles about their mistake' (quoted in Miller 2003: 143). The scriptwriter of *Slumdog Millionaire* describes a flexible process of on-set interpreting and subtitle writing:

> [We got the] casting director ... Loveleen Tanden ... to translate into Hindi, and then the children would do ... their version of it, we didn't want them to do it word for word because [we would] lose them as actors, so they would say their version of the script and then Loveleen would come back to me and translate it literally and say, they said this, instead, is that all right, and I'd go, oh, that's a bit different. And then I would translate it [for the subtitles] into a slightly different version from the literal translation which would then still make sense to the film. So it had a funny journey backwards and forwards from English to Hindi, back to English again'. (Beaufoy 2008)

Similar practices obtain in television. The Korean dialogue on ABC drama *Lost* (Abrams, 2004) was translated from English into Korean by script translators. The Japanese–American actor Masi Ako, who plays Hiro Nakamura in the NBC television show *Heroes*, translated his own

dialogue into Japanese. Actors may or may not be native speakers of the foreign language. In some cases, as with Masi Ako, an actor may be a heritage speaker. In other cases an actor may be coached in the foreign language. The protagonist of *The Kite Runner*, Amir, is played as an adult by British-born actor Khalid Abdalla. Abdalla, an Arabic and English speaker, did not know any Dari when he was cast in the role of Amir, and we are told that he underwent a month of intensive language tuition in order to shoot sequences of dialogue in Dari (Barkham 2007).

If the 'source dialogue' of such subtitled speech is in fact the 'target dialogue' of the translation, where does that leave the subtitles? The subtitles tend to recuperate the original script, or at least are (re)written by the writers of the original script. Simon Beaufoy, James Schamus, Jim Jarmusch and David Benioff have all written English subtitles for the foreign-language dialogue in films for which they originally wrote the scripts themselves. The script for *The Kite Runner* was adapted by Benioff from the novel of the same name, originally written in English by the Afghan-born writer Khaled Hosseini. Benioff's dialogue was also written in English and translated into Dari by Hosseini's father. Benioff then wrote the English subtitles for the Dari dialogue with the help of a translator.[21]

In some cases, an actor may have little or no understanding of the dialogue he or she is speaking, but may have learned it 'phonetically', read it off a cue card or be prompted via a discreet earpiece on set. For *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, Walter Huston memorised his Spanish dialogue from recordings made by a Mexican actor. For *State Secret*, Jack Hawkins secreted copies of his lines in the film's invented language around the set in order to avoid having to memorise the lines. It is rare for extensive language tuition to be given to actors. As a result, the language can be difficult for native speakers to understand. The English subtitles are often indispensable for understanding what the heterolingual dialogue was intended to say! The French spoken by Miriam Hopkins and Gary Cooper in the opening scene of Lubitsch's *Design for Living* (1933) is memorably approximate.[22] Even in *Dances with Wolves*, whose language work is held up as a model, male characters were inadvertently given a feminine inflection (Kilpatrick 1999: 129).

This pseudotranslation requires us to look at subtitles – which purport to offer access to another culture and constitute an encounter with and a site of the multiplication of voices – rather differently. 'Pseudosubtitles' have no originary linguistic world but that of the assumed audience. They cannot constitute an act of translation, because they are a closed loop, effectively constituting, in the case of a film such as *Apocalypto* or

Passion of the Christ, an English-language film for an English-speaking audience which happens to take a quick holiday in Aramaic and Latin along the way.

In order to function, pseudosubtitles share in many of the standard features of subtitles. They appear in similar layouts and fonts; they obey, in principle, similar rules for good spotting and composition. They observe a similar, slightly elevated register with respect to spoken language. But the issue of directionality means that they differ in crucial ways. Translation, as we know, performs certain typical operations on texts. Antoine Berman (1985) has referred to them as 'deforming tendencies'. Discursive levelling takes place according to Gideon Toury's 'law of standardisation' (Toury 1995). The diversity of registers, textual networks and intertextual links may be reduced. In the case of subtitling, texts get shorter – much shorter. Subtitling reduces and condenses verbal material on screen by approximately a third, and sometimes as much as a half (Díaz Cintas n.d.). Phatic fillers, tag questions, repetitions and discourse markers tend to be elided. We therefore watch subtitles, as indeed we read all translation, with a 'supplement', replacing what we assume to have been left out in translation.

Pseudosubtitles, however, often do not constitute a reduction of the dialogue, because the film's dialogue is a translation of the subtitles. Watching *Men with Guns* is a disorienting experience precisely because of the *lack* of excess in the dialogue with respect to the subtitles. Little condensation, omission or paraphrase can be identified in the English subtitles relative to the Spanish dialogue. The delivery of the dialogue seems measured, as though conditioned by the necessary reading time of the subtitle. An early remark to Dr Fuentes by an army officer to the effect that his men spend all their time running round the mountains in pursuit of guerrillas creates a disconcerting effect. The line is subtitled: [My Tigers spend half their time] [chasing guerrillas in those fucking mountains.]. What the General says in Spanish is that 'Mis Tigres se pasan la mita de su vida persiguiendo guerrillas en la maldita montaña'. The subtitling of 'maldita' ('damned') by 'fucking' increases the force of the qualifier significantly. This increase in the force of a swear word is even rarer in subtitling than in translation because written words tend to have a force they do not have in speech and subtitlers therefore tend to tone down swear words. The effect of seeing the subtitle increase the force of the imprecation momentarily reverses the directionality of translation for the bilingual viewer by revealing the source text as the target text.

The close adherence of pseudosubtitles to the conventions of subtitling is such that, although their ontological status is very different to conventional post-subtitles, their epistemic claim is not. Like all subtitles, they project a powerful sense of presence. By overwriting the screen, they evoke an underlying reality, as we observed in Chapter 2, in relation to the initial subtitles of *The Hunt for Red October*. Subtitles, even pseudosubtitles, embed us as viewers precisely *because* they mediate, illustrating the intimate relation described by Bolter and Grusin (2000) between immediacy, which strives for an effect of unmediated transparency, and hypermediacy, by which the medium deliberately calls attention to itself. Pseudosubtitles are potentially problematic not because they are inauthentic but because they exert such a strong authenticity effect. This effect can be subverted, but at the cost of considerable effort – for instance, by making the delivery of the dialogue caricatural (as in the 'Italian' sequence from *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex*) or self-consciously introducing reminders to the audience of the pseudotranslated nature of the subtitles, as in Derek Jarman's *Sebastiane*, whose Latin dialogue is ostentatiously antinaturalistic. By contrast with the authenticising subtitles of, say, *The Passion of the Christ*, Jarman's script uses in-jokes and intertexuality to remind the viewer of the film's origin in English. A snide reference is made to that 'terror orbis terrarum, Maria Domus Alba' (subtitled 'the terror of civilisation, Maria Domus Alba') – a reference to the British family values campaigner Mary Whitehouse. An organiser of lavish chariot races is 'celeberrimus Cecille Mille' (subtitled 'the famous Cecilli Mille ... // ... the director from Silva Sacra'), a reference to Cecil B. De Mille of 'Holy Wood'. But Jarmusch and Allen's approaches are exceptional. Most partial subtitles in mainstream film are deployed for greater authenticity.

A distinction needs to be made here between partial subtitling, which is a formal category, and pseudosubtitling, which is an ontological category. It would be easy to succumb to the crude, if tempting, distinction between a conventionally distributor-subtitled 'foreign film' whose source-language script is assumed to have been developed in an aseptically monolingual environment, uncontaminated by target-culture interests, and a 'pseudosubtitled' Hollywood product conceived and written in English, translated into a (possibly reconstructed or invented) 'foreign language' and performed by actors mangling their lines from cue cards with no idea as to what they are saying. Such a simplistic definition would not reflect the variety of manner and degree of multilingual production. This ranges from the dialogic and collaborative

processes of accented cinema (Naficy 2001; Bal 2007) and the polyglot procedures of international coproduction to pseudosubtitling proper, as in *Apocalypto* or The *Passion of the Christ*. A partially subtitled film need not necessarily be pseudosubtitled.

The formal category of partial subtitles denotes any subtitles which translate heterolingual dialogue. Within this set, the ontological category of 'pseudosubtitles' can most usefully be defined as subtitles which accompany an ostensive act of vehicular matching in which representational adequacy constitutes (a) a *marked* strategy and (b) the *primary* motivation for the inclusion of heterolingual dialogue in a film. Though they represent a target text, pseudosubtitles constitute a source text. The dialogue translated by pseudosubtitles is likely to be diegetically native but delivered by non-native speakers, and may be heavily marked as non-native or difficult to understand. While on the surface partial subtitling and vehicular matching seem like ethical representational choices, pseudosubtitles recall the appropriative 'pseudo-polyphonic' discourse described by Robert Stam 'which marginalises and disempowers certain voices and then pretends to undertake a dialogue with a puppetlike entity that has already been forced to make crucial compromises' (Stam 1991: 263).

The boundaries of partial and pseudosubtitling practices are difficult to define because it can be difficult to establish the directionality of translation in a given film or to account fully for the role of translation in script development and shooting. Jim Jarmusch's creative practices are a good example. Since *Strangers in Paradise* (1984), Jarmusch's films have recurrently deployed multilingualism for narrational and aesthetic purposes. He often works with actors from other countries (Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Japan) and in languages with which he may not be familiar. He has discussed in several interviews how he works with actors whose languages he doesn't speak, for instance in the case of *Mystery Train* (1989):

> I wrote the script in English, and then a Japanese director named Kazuki Oomori translated my script into Japanese. I worked on the dialogue with the actors and my interpreter, Yoshiko Furusawa. As with all actors, I let them improvise in rehearsal, and then I changed my script according to what made us all feel most comfortable about the language. For me, the creation of a character is always a collaboration with the actor, which also comes from writing with specific actors in mind. In Japanese the process was a little complicated, since I couldn't know exactly what the nuances of the changes were. My interpreter was very helpful in trying to explain those nuances, but

I couldn't know precisely how the dialogue was changing. I had to rely on intuition and trust the actors. Then, when the film was shot, I had yet another translator translate the Japanese dialogue back into English, and then I translated that English into my choice of English, and my retranslation is what appears in the subtitles. In the end the subtitles are pretty close to my original script. (Sante 2001: 94)

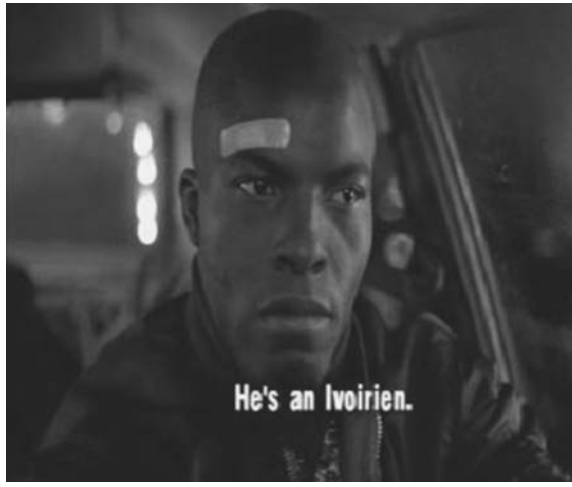

Figure 4.1 Introducing a pun in *Night on Earth*

Figure 4.2 Further explanation of the pun

Jarmusch's 1991 *Night on Earth* offers intriguing hints at his collaborative creative process. *Night on Earth* is a portmanteau film narrating five different encounters between taxi drivers and clients in five different cities on one night. The New York and Los Angeles segments are in English. The other three segments are set in Rome, Paris and Helsinki and shot in

Figure 4.3 Reproducing the sound of the French pun

Figure 4.4 The final step in explaining the pun

Italian, French and Finnish respectively. The Paris taxi driver is played by Isaach de Bankolé, a regular collaborator of Jarmusch's. In the first sequence in this section of the film, the unnamed driver is driving two tipsy Cameroonian businessmen who tease him to tell them what African country he is from. When he eventually admits to being from Ivory Coast, they find this hilarious because of the homophony of 'Ivoirien' (a man from Ivory Coast) and 'Y voit rien' (can't see a thing). This apparently untranslatable pun is worked out over a series of subtitles (Figures 4.1–4.4).

Four different renderings are given of the pun in order to bring it across to an anglophone audience. The English-speaking viewer is shown both the homophones 'Ivoirien' (Figure 4.1) and 'Y voit rien' (Figure 4.3) in French, in order to convey the genesis of the pun. The rendering of 'Y voit rien' as 'can't see a thing' is also repeated (Figures 4.2 and 4.4). Even an English-speaking viewer with no access to French is given more than enough information with which to process the extended joke, which the driver finds so irritating that he finally throws the two businessmen out of his taxi.

Here, even in the absence of access to the detail of script development and shooting, we can make a number of observations. The existence of such a sophisticated pun makes it unlikely that this joke had its origin in Jarmusch's original English script and more likely that it developed through an improvisational process in rehearsal. Jarmusch specifies that the Finnish actors in *Night on Earth* were following a script that he had written, suggesting that by contrast the French and Italian segments, both involving languages to which Jarmusch has access, developed out of a more improvisational approach (Plotnick 2001: 145). The same could be said for the rhymes and references to Italian literature found in the Italian section of the film, in which another regular collaborator of Jarmusch's, the Italian star Roberto Benigni, plays the taxi driver. If such linguistic play indeed developed as a result of actorly improvisation, this poses the question of how to make it manageable for a viewer in the subtitles. It is rare that in conventional circumstances a subtitler would get four opportunities to render the sense of a pun. Speaking speculatively the impression given is of a careful accumulation of cues in the dialogue in order to make the experience of the pun cohesively and cognitively manageable for the non-French speaker. Regarding the directionality of subtitling, this is difficult to pin down and the attempt may not be worth making. The important issue is that the script is likely to have developed in a bilingual, collaborative environment where the juxtaposition of dialogue and subtitles is foreseen from the start. To speak of pseudosubtitling would be unfair, because clearly this is a text which is the result of genuine processes of translation. We must also

recognise that subtitled sequences such as this one can arise from processes of translation which are not those ostensibly presented on screen and which are thus covert, rather than overt.[23]

Subtitling and script design

For *Men with Guns*, John Sayles 'wrote his dialogue to fit the subtitle format of thirty-two characters per line'. This resulted in 'a screenplay style he describes as part haiku and part catechism' (Molyneaux 2000: 242). Molyneaux's observation suggests that pseudosubtitling, in which the dialogue is designed as subtitles, might result in dialogue which is more concise or aphoristic, which might reflect the particular rhythms of subtitles (cf. Eisenschitz 1999: 35). In major feature films, one might speculate that because of the distrust shown by audiences and distributors towards subtitles, the tendency would be to reduce the amount of heterolingual dialogue and therefore of subtitles.

David MacDougall has suggested a contrasting scenario for ethnographic film: that the easy availability of subtitling 'may encourage [ethnographic] filmmakers to focus excessively upon dialogue and interviews, to the neglect of other forms of (nonverbal) social practice and personal experience', which could result 'not only in an inordinate emphasis upon speech, but upon speech and speaking situations of a very specialized kind' (1998: 175). This offers us two contrasting hypotheses for the way in which the availability of subtitles may affect script development and design. The relationship between script design and pre-planned subtitling would seem an avenue worth exploring in more detail.

A brief look at a small selection of films with subtitled heterolingual dialogue suggests that both sets of expectations may be met. *Incubus* (1965), *Sebastiane* (1976), *Men with Guns* (1997), *Passion of the Christ* (2004), *Apocalypto* (2006) and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006) are all entirely subtitled films made by anglophone directors and aimed on the whole at an anglophone audience. Looking at this eclectic list, we can immediately see how predominant 'non-spoken' or little-spoken languages are. *Incubus* was shot in Esperanto, reportedly with a view to capturing the 1960s art-film market. Both *Sebastiane* and *Passion of the Christ* are shot in obsolete languages, and *Apocalypto* in an indigenous one. All but one of the films are historical. The films clearly draw to different degrees on the prestige of subtitles, on the uncanny effects they make possible and on the authenticity they represent.

These films exemplify both the minimisation of dialogue and the heavy reliance on it that we postulated above as possible responses to the availability of subtitles as a mode of translation. Let us suppose that the average number of subtitles in a 90-minute feature film on DVD is 750, or just over eight subtitles per minute (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 25). This is a very crude estimate,[24] but sufficient for our purposes. Counting the number of subtitles in each film and the quantity of text involved, we find that the films fall into two distinct categories (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Subtitles per film

Films by date	Number of subtitles	Length (mins)	Words	Characters
Incubus (1965)	495	76	2,462	10,219
Sebastiane (1976)	345	90	1,715	7,710
Men with Guns (1997)	1,197	128	6,960	30,712
Passion of the Christ (2004)	484	121	2,742	11,768
Apocalypto (2006)	447	132	2,028	8,337
Letters from Iwo Jima (2006)	940	135	5,692	25,006

Two films (*Letters from Iwo Jima* and *Men with Guns*) have rather high subtitle and word counts. The other four (*Incubus*, *Sebastiane*, *Passion of the Christ* and *Apocalypto*) have very low subtitle and word counts, well below even the lower range for a feature film. This suggests the management of vehicular matching through the reduction of dialogue to a narrative minimum. In different ways, these four films are all about spectacle: the black-and-white imitation of European art film, the iconographic beauty of the saint's body; the violence of the *Passion*, pornographic in its explicitness; and the traditional spectacle of the historical epic in *Apocalypto*. By contrast, *Letters from Iwo Jima* and *Men with Guns* are most interested in the subjectivities of their characters. As one half of a diptych, *Letters from Iwo Jima* seeks to give 'the other side of the story'. Having told the story in *Flags of our Fathers* of the American soldiers portrayed as heroes, *Letters from Iwo Jima* is told from the point of view of the Japanese soldiers for whom the battle marked a humiliating defeat. The essence of the film is about delineating the humanity of what in most war films is a faceless enemy. In the film this will be primarily

achieved through dialogue, which will achieve thematic status in the 'civilised' English conversation at the dinner party attended by Baron Nishi in Los Angeles and his brief conversation, again in English, with the dying American soldier Sam.

John Sayles's *Men with Guns* is also an attempt 'to suggest another point of view' (Carson 1999: 223). The film is focalised through its naïve protagonist, Dr Fuentes, who departs on a trip up-country after the death of his wife, looking for the rural doctors he helped to train as part of a government programme. He finds that the doctors have been killed one after another by the 'men with guns'. Another important perspective is that of the indigenous characters who frame and people the film's action and in the face of whose incomprehensible languages (Tzotzil, Maya, Kuna and Nahuatl) Dr Fuentes realises the extent to which he too is a tourist in his own 'nation'. The dialogue, with its juxtaposition of Spanish and the indigenous languages of the film, is central to the film's double tactic of estranging the American viewer by shooting the film in Spanish with subtitles, and of estranging the film's protagonist by facing him with the indigenous nation he does not know or understand. Tellingly, the film reimagines the geography of Sayles's deliberately non-specific South American country (which evokes Guatemala in the 1980s) by identifying the steps of Fuentes's journey, not through the names of the villages he visits but through the crops the villagers harvest. Thus he meets the Cane People, the Coffee People, the Salt People, the Gum People and so on. The film constitutes a strong critique of the hegemonic structures calcified in national language. But the importance of dialogue to the narrative and Sayles's interest in the materiality of the film's languages make the film dialogue-driven to an extent which led some critics to dismiss it as didactic and its characters as archetypal (a criticism often levelled at Sayles and visible also in his 2003 *Casa de los Babys*) – a case of subtitled dialogue tending 'to make us conceive of films more in terms of what they *say* than in what they *show*' (MacDougall 1995: 89).

As we might expect, Mel Gibson's two films feature the second- and third-lowest subtitle count, at 484 and 447, correlating with Gibson's claims for *Passion of the Christ* about transcending language with visual storytelling. *Apocalypto* succeeds in refining this technique of visual storytelling even further.

It is reductive to equate the 'speech' of a film with its dialogue, but if we think of dialogue as an expressive resource in film with its own weight and valency, and if we think of the conflicting advantages and drawbacks of subtitling (the processing burden it places on the viewer,

against its affording us the opportunity to hear foreign speech), then it becomes critical to ask how the existence of subtitles might affect the planning of dialogue. If we break the figures for our corpus down further into subtitles per minute of film, words per subtitle and characters per subtitle, then we will be able to draw more solid conclusions about the respective density of dialogue in the six films (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Subtitles per minute; words; and characters per subtitle

Films by date	Subtitles per minute	Words per subtitle	Characters per subtitle
Incubus (1965)	6.51	4.97	20.64
Sebastiane (1976)	3.83	4.97	22.35
Men with Guns (1997)	9.35	5.81	25.66
Passion of the Christ (2004)	4.00	5.67	24.31
Apocalypto (2006)	3.39	4.54	18.65
Letters from Iwo Jima (2006)	6.96	6.06	26.60

Apocalypto turns out to have both the fewest subtitles per minute and the lowest word-per-subtitle count. *Letters from Iwo Jima* has the longest subtitles, but interestingly *Men with Guns* has by far the most – 9.35 per minute as compared to less than 7 for *Letters from Iwo Jima*, supporting the remarks above about the degree to which the film is dialogue-driven and the degree to which Sayles may have been seduced by the rhythm of subtitled dialogue.[25] This may also say something about the importance of language to Sayles's transamerican project. As both novelist and director, Sayles is heavily invested in the importance of language for communication and he has experimented extensively with vehicular matching in an attempt to share other transamerican viewpoints. His 1991 novel *Los Gusanos*, set among Cuban exiles in Miami, is densely bilingual. His 2003 film *Casa de los Babys* is also partly shot in Spanish.

Quantitative analysis, while it is a very blunt instrument with which to look at intercultural representations and communication through subtitling, is a tool with some potential. There remain questions to be asked not merely about the production of partial subtitles but about their consumption. Subtitled films require active watching of their viewers, who must process multiple parallel verbal outputs. Subtitling also imposes a certain rhythm on the source film. As David MacDougall has observed, it may create a passiveness whereby viewers 'become both word-oriented and dependent, so that if a scene appears in which there

is talk but no subtitles, we resist responding to it on a non-verbal level. We think there has been a mistake, or feel cheated by the filmmaker' (MacDougall 1995: 88). Subtitling might therefore close down the kinds of active listening to foreign-language dialogue which is potentially privileged by diegetic interpreting and by translating *mise en scène* (see Chapter 3). Subtitles, as the privileging of the 'overhearing' mode of film viewing, may also, as MacDougall has most pertinently warned,

> induce in viewers a false sense of cultural affinity, since they so unobtrusively and efficiently overcome the difficulties of translation. They may reinforce the impression that it is possible to know others without effort – that the whole world is inherently knowable and accessible. Subtitles, therefore, while they may create a fuller sense of the humanity of strangers, may also contribute to our complacency about them, perhaps sustaining a belief in the ability of our society to turn everything found in the world to our use. (1988: 89)

Here, MacDougall is speaking of ethnographic film, whose primary aim is the principled encounter with the Other. His observations are all the more relevant to the pseudosubtitles of popular film which people the screen with speakers of foreign languages saying what the subtitler has told them to say.[26]

Westerns and native American languages

The issues around vehicular matching and linguistic representation can hardly be better illustrated than by looking at the conventions for representing Native American languages on screen. Historically, such linguistic representations have shared in the stereotyping of Native Americans (Kilpatrick 1999; Meek 2006). The silent period saw some authenticising attempts (e.g. *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, mentioned in Chapter 1) but the pidgin English that was to plague Native American representations in the sound period and that we associate with iconic characters such as Tonto was already present in the intertitles of films such as Buster Keaton's *The Paleface* (1922). As Shohat and Stam put it (1994: 192), 'the "Indians" of classic Hollywood westerns, denuded of their own idiom, mouth pidgin English, a mark of their inability to master the "civilized" language'. Sometimes an alien-sounding language is used, but rarely a native one. In the case of the film *Scouts to the Rescue* (James, 1939), for instance, the Indians were given a Hollywood Indian dialect by running their normal English dialogue backwards. By printing the picture in reverse, lip sync could

be maintained and the backwards English presented as authentic Injun speech (Cady 1939).

A move away from such homogenising practices seemed highly desirable. The restoration of the materiality of indigenous languages seemed particularly imperative given the calculated policy of linguistic disenfranchisement that had been carried out via the Indian schools where Native American children were forbidden to use their own language. The explicit attribution of *Broken Arrow* which makes possible Cochise's fluent and articulate English speech (see p. 31) was a step forward.

The release of *Dances with Wolves* (1990) is a turning point. One of the most memorable features of the film is the inclusion of long sequences of subtitled Lakota Sioux dialogue with subtitles. *Dances with Wolves* was not the first film to do so. As early as *Soldier Blue* (Nelson, 1970) we find subtitles used to translate Native American dialogue.[27] *Windwalker* (1980), filmed partly in Cheyenne, and *Roanoak* (Egleson, 1986), much of whose dialogue was in Chippewa, also preceded Costner's film (Castillo 1991: 21, 23). Central and South American indigenous languages were subtitled in films such as Boorman's *The Emerald Forest*. But the huge commercial success of *Dances with Wolves* brought subtitles to a wide audience who were surprised and interested that Native American characters might have their own language, capable of expressing the full range of expression and emotion (affection, humour, irony, perplexity).

The cognitive impact of hearing the Lakota language spoken at such length and with 'a remarkable degree of success' (Kilpatrick 1999: 129) on screen left a lasting impression on viewers and put pressure on later filmmakers to follow suit. In the decade and a half since then, native American languages have been widely subtitled in films including *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* (Babenco, 1991), *Black Robe* (1991), *Last of the Mohicans* (Mann, 1992), *Geronimo: An American Legend* (Hill, 1993) *Windtalkers* (Woo, 2002), *The Missing* (Howard, 2003), *The New World* (Malick, 2005) and the mini-series *Into the West* (Spielberg, 2005). Other films with extended scenes in Native languages choose to use diegetic interpreting, even after the arrival of fashionable subtitles (*Thunderheart* (Apted 1992); *Last of the Dogmen* (Murphy 1995)). This refusal of subtitles is perhaps most marked in Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* (1995) whose Blackfoot, Cree and Makah dialogue is left untranslated as an in-joke for speakers of these languages (Rosenbaum 2001b: 159).

Though none of the films equals *Dances with Wolves'* 277 titles, several feature extensive titling. *Black Robe* has 184 titles translating Huron, Iroquois and Algonquin. *The Missing* and *Geronimo*, both partly filmed in Apache, have 100 and 84 respectively. In a letter to the *New York Times*, one viewer of *Dances with Wolves* asserts that 'having Sioux Indians speak in their own

tongue, with English subtitles, impels us to identify with them in a way that no other western to my knowledge has ever done' (Madeo 1991).

But what was this viewer, and the millions of others who saw the film, actually 'hearing'? Subtitles are considered a major step forward from the kinds of linguistic stereotyping typical of colonial Hollywood practices, but since the subtitles are in fact the source dialogue, they may find themselves reproducing and perpetuating those same stereotypes, with the added burden that through the processes of pseudotranslation, the subtitled speakers appear to be offering confirmation in their 'own' voices of the existing practices that were being attributed to them all along.[28]

Linguistic representations of Native Americans on screen have been described in a detailed study by Barbra A. Meek (2006) who relates dysfluent speech forms to different stereotypes of Native Americans. Meek identifies a particular kind of language she refers to as 'Hollywood Injun English' (ibid.: 95) or 'HIE'. HIE is characterised by the use of pauses, lack of tense, lack of contractions, the deletion of subject pronouns, articles and auxiliary or modal verbs and the substitution of subject pronouns. The cumulative effect of these linguistic features is to represent Native Americans as 'linguistically underdeveloped or lacking in grammatical competence' (ibid.: 100). HIE is further characterised by a vocabulary of cultural commonplaces (ibid.: 106–107) including 'chief', 'wampum', 'peace pipe', 'brave', 'squaw' and so on. There is also a tendency to use formal syntactic structures to express Native American nobility and metaphors of nature (107–109) to convey the common perception of Native Americans as ecologically hyper-aware.

It would seem obvious that one of the advantages of vehicular matching on screen would be the transcending of these linguistic conventions. Where dialogue is generated by native speakers of the ostensive source language, this might be the case, but where scripts are themselves written in English by scriptwriters likely to be familiar with the conventions of HIE, these conventions tend merely to be displaced into the subtitles. Subtitles may even exacerbate the problem of contractions, since they use fewer contractions than spoken speech does. Although the subtitles in the films listed above generally avoid the cruder forms of ungrammaticality identified by Meek, they share in the sententiousness characteristic of the 'noble savage':

- Have you heard all that I have said? (*Dances with Wolves*)
- I was just thinking that of all the trails in this life ... there is one that matters most. It is the trail of a true human being. I think you are on this trail, and it is good to see. (*Dances with Wolves*)

- A dream is more real than death or battle. (*Black Robe*)
- I have just seen my power. An iron horse comes over the desert. (*Geronimo*)
- Moving spirits don't make happy men (*The Missing*)

Many of the films also recycle lexical items which act as indexes for 'Injun' culture, including 'tomahawk', 'white man', 'chief', 'warrior', 'medicine man', 'hunting grounds'. In *Last of the Mohicans*, the villainous Huron Magua says at one point that 'You speak poison with two tongues'.[29]

Speaking of two tongues, the problem of linguistic competence is one which is always present and yet often disregarded in Westerns and other films featuring Native American languages. The films under discussion are generally written, produced and directed by Euro-Americans. Although the traditional practice of casting non-Native Americans in Native roles is increasingly considered unacceptable, Native actors still tend to be cast without regard to their own tribal origin or linguistic competence. The phenomenon of linguistic inaccuracy is not limited to Native American languages, but they are vulnerable to cavalier treatment. The problem of fluency is exacerbated by the small numbers of speakers of some Native languages, which makes it impractical to look for mother-tongue speakers for film roles (promotional epitexts for *The Missing* stressed that Chiricahua Apache has 300 fluent speakers left) and by the sheer phonetic and phonological otherness of the languages in question. Filmmakers may feel less pressure to achieve linguistic precision because the target audience is unlikely to have any competence in Native American languages.[30] The danger of this last situation is satirised in the film *Hot Shots!* (Abrahams, 1991) in which subtitled dialogue which is ostensibly in a Native American language soon turns out to be a macaronic non-language composed of Native American tribal names and other verbal material.

The second problem endemic to linguistic representations of indigenous peoples is their persistent location in the past. The final moments of *Dances with Wolves*, *Black Robe, Geronimo* and *Apocalypto* all emphasise the decimation of Native cultures, masking any connection with tribal communities or living languages today. This image of the 'Vanishing Indian' is recurrent in popular films and literature about Native Americans. The trope is particularly crudely reproduced in *Last of the Dogmen* (1995) whose plot is concerned with a 'lost' Comanche tribe, descendants of the survivors of the Sand Creek Massacre, who are discovered by a bounty hunter, having been living in a secret valley in

Montana for more than a century without any contact with modernity. The ethnolinguistic glee with which Professor Lillian Diane Sloane discovers the lost tribe, still speaking their native language, echoes the 'panoptic voyeurism' M. Elise Marubbio (2002) identifies in the subtitles to Michael Mann's *Last of the Mohicans*.[31] In becoming an exhibit in the ethnographic museum, subtitled indigenous languages risk joining costume, tipi design and rituals such as the Sun Dance as appropriated, often undifferentiated, elements of Native American culture which can be deployed as mimetic clichés – an idea supported by the incidence of subtitled indigenous dialogue found in films where Native American culture is not a major focus, including *Natural Born Killers* (Stone, 1994) and *Hidalgo* (Johnston, 2004). The particular danger of subtitles in relation to Native American languages is that they may become just another representational trope, like feathers or tomahawks, and that they will lose that sense of surprise, even paradigm shift, which was present in the subtitles of *Dances with Wolves* and which promised momentarily to reconfigure the linguistic landscape of their audience. This cannot but be the case where multilingualism is presented as solely existing in the past.

One film which makes some attempt to render a language in the subtitles that is fresh and free of some of the hoarier linguistic markers of Indianness is Ron Howard's *The Missing*. The film portrays a trilingual context in which English, Spanish and Apache are spoken. The subtitles feature contractions and idioms, humour and vulgarity to an unusual degree:[32]

- Where did you find this squashed penis?
- Chaa-duu-ba-its-iidan? Hasn't someone killed you yet?
- You still owe me three lion hides, you know.
- Forget the hides. Give us your horses and your guns and we'll call it even.
- Now look. You pissed her off.
- How can you tell? You people look pissed off all the time.
- Do you still go up north and fool around with that fat Zuni girl? ...
- No. She started to like me too much.

According to the extra feature 'Apache Language School' on the Region 1 DVD of the film, some detailed language work was carried out in order to prepare the script and coach the actors, with two language consultants working on the project, including the late Elbys Hugar. This film well illustrates the tensions between authenticity and

commodification. The philological approach to the language seems conscientious, and the extra feature suggests that the two linguist-consultants were closely involved with language coaching on set, and that some attempt was made at familiarisation with the Apache language. We are told that the film's Apache dialogue was comprehensible to Apache audiences when the film was screened. At the same time the casting of non-native speakers and the inclusion of language classes among the featurettes enacts a commodification of the Chiricahua Apache language which problematises the presence of the subtitled dialogue on screen.

If subtitles become fossilised as an expressive resource, filmmakers must look to other ways of managing language. The most thought-provoking, perverse engagement with the problem of the representation of Native American languages on screen which I have encountered in my research pre-dates the widespread use of subtitles for indigenous dialogue. Robert Altman's *Buffalo Bill and the Indians or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* (1976) focuses on Buffalo Bill Cody, played by Paul Newman, and on his Wild West Show, depicted as a star vehicle within a lucrative entertainment industry. The Sioux chief Sitting Bull, played by Frank Kaquitts, has agreed to appear in the show. In Arthur Kopit's source play *Indians*, on which the film was based, Sitting Bull speaks English in the usual portentous Injun style. In the film, Sitting Bull speaks to Cody only through an interpreter, William Halsey, played by Will Sampson. What is novel about the use of diegetic interpreting as it is deployed in the film is that Sitting Bull never speaks to Cody in his own voice. Instead he remains silent, and the only voice heard is that of Halsey.[33] Sitting Bull's 'dialogue' is rendered in English by means of Halsey's interpreting but his 'own' speech remains a structuring absence in these encounters. By this means Altman avoids the traps embedded in fossilised models of Native American screen speech, whether pseudo-subtitles, awkward and time-consuming diegetic interpreting, accented English or homogenising English. Paradoxically, for Sitting Bull silence speaks louder than words.

Subtitles and identification

One use of foreign languages on screen which the rather formalist approach I have taken here has neglected to discuss is the issue of identification. Just as the choice of code has important implications for identity construction in society, the choice of code on film reflects characters' own identities and belief systems. Perhaps more

importantly for our purposes, it also engages the spectator in a set of relationships with characters which will to some extent be inflected by language. There remains to be written the analysis of identification on the basis of sound and voice to match the extensive theorisation by Laura Mulvey and others of the relationship between identification and the spectator's gaze. If some characters on screen are to be looked *at*, and others to be looked *with*, then who is *listened to*, on screen, and who is *heard*? In the previous chapter I attempted at least to begin to address the question through Chion's distinctions between theatrical, textual and emanation speech on the one hand, and causal, semantic or reduced listening on the other. The design of characters' code-switching in popular film strongly suggests assumptions on the part of filmmakers about whom their audience is hearing and whom they are listening to.

Vehicular matching is assumed as the representational ideal. In his letter to the *New York Times*, Madeo (1991) asserts that the subtitled dialogue of *Dances with Wolves* promoted a new kind of identification with Native American characters. But it is not unproblematic. Sarah Kozloff (2000: 81) points out that having the Japanese camp commandant in *Bridge on the River Kwai (*Lean, 1957) speak English, by means of referential restriction, allows us greater sympathy with him than we can have, for instance, with the Vietcong characters in *The Deer Hunter* (Cimino, 1977) whose speech is matched but unsubtitled. This is a rather spurious comparison, because the Vietcong characters are written as unsympathetic, while Sessue Hayakawa's Captain Saito is written as a complex character with whom the viewer is invited to engage. The Japanese language does not prevent us from identifying with Lieutenant Kuroki in *None but the Brave*, or with Kuribayashi, Nishi and Saigo in *Letters from Iwo Jima*, or even with Toshiro Mifune's Captain Tsuruhiko Kuroda in *Hell in the Pacific*, whose dialogue is unsubtitled throughout. But Kozloff is right to see the issue of identification as an important one when considering narrational translation.

The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) exemplifies a form of language management which reflects the tension between the authenticity effect of subtitling and the presumed identification effect of the domestic language. The film draws on the subject matter of the Qin Emperor's Terracotta Army to rehearse the familiar tale of the awakening of the Mummy and the race to defeat him. A nine-minute prologue to the film narrates the Emperor's thirst for conquest. There is some brief dialogue in Mandarin with subtitles but most of the narration is carried by the English voiceover delivered by Michelle Yeoh. As we

might expect from a US–China coproduction, Mandarin has a prominent place on the film's overall soundtrack. The dialogue between the Chinese characters, including the Emperor and the revolutionary soldiers, is in Mandarin with subtitles throughout the film (total 126 titles), as is the dialogue between the Emperor's enemy, the immortal witch Zi Juan (Yeoh), and her daughter Lin (Isabella Leong), except when speaking to the American characters.

As the Emperor addresses his resurrected Terracotta Army at the Great Wall before the film's climactic battle scene, Zi Juan invokes the ghosts of the Emperor's prisoners buried under the wall to raise an opposing army. This creates a potential language problem for the narration. The film has set up axes of affiliation which position Zi Juan as an ally of the film's heroes (the 'good' Chinese character) and the Emperor as its villain, their enemy (the 'bad' Chinese character). How to differentiate between them? The two characters' speeches are edited in parallel and contrasted by shot angle (the Emperor is shot from below; Zi Juan from above); by setting (Zi Juan is underground; the Emperor is above ground) and by their addressees (the reanimated Terracotta soldiers versus the skeletons buried under the Great Wall). Language is also activated to underline the contrast between the two characters. This is achieved by a diegetically unmotivated code-shift by Zi Juan into English, while the Emperor continues to speak subtitled Mandarin. The sequence cross-cuts between the two, opposing English to Mandarin and crudely mirroring the binary structure of the film with its hackneyed parallelisms and axes of opposition (West vs East; good vs evil; present vs past; technology vs magic). Zi Juan and Lin then speak only English until the end of the film. The Emperor loses his ability to speak completely as he transforms into a series of monsters whose gruesome end leaves no room for verbalisation. Like other films examined in this study, *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* equates the foreign with the past. As the Dragon Emperor is defeated and the ghosts of the past summoned to oppose him are dissipated, there is no place for any language but English in the story world.

The question of identification and language use also seems to have been an issue in James Cameron's recent *Avatar*, which repeats the narrative of assimilation of the English speaker into the foreign culture seen in *A Man Called Horse*, *The Last Samurai* and *Dances with Wolves*. Jake Sully, in the body of his Avatar, comes to know and love an indigenous culture and to integrate into the tribe. Part of the integration is linguistic, as he learns the language of the Na'vi. But *Avatar* is dogged by the same problem as confronted the writers of *A Man Called Horse*.

As a protagonist, Jake needs to retain the audience's sympathy, while integrating into a community speaking a foreign language Na'vi. At a climactic point late in the narrative Jake confirms his allegiance to the Na'vi in a rousing speech urging them to rise up against the colonists from earth. The narrative requirement for him to identify as one of the Na'vi, and be accepted by them as a member of the tribe, and the narrational requirement for the audience to be stirred by his words find themselves in direct competition. Counter-intuitively, Jake shifts into English and his Na'vi rival Tsu-Tey, who learnt a little English at the mission school, interprets his English words to the Na'vi in a moment of apparently unconscious neo-colonial irony.

Film languages, untranslation and the multilingual imagination

It was argued in Chapter 3 that one of the functions of the foreign language in cinema is to provide a moment of suspense or mystery – to generate a 'disparity of knowledge'. Often, these disparities are swiftly resolved. The mysterious hieroglyph is deciphered, the dissimulating foreign speaker turns out to speak English; the interpreter steps in and smoothly interprets. These devices work because, as Michael Cronin has observed, 'the foreignness of the language of others generates its own enigmas, speculation, its own desire to know' (Cronin 2000: 58). Subtitles satisfy the desire promptly – too promptly, I suggested above. The desire to understand may also be left tantalisingly indeterminate, if no translation is immediately provided. Michel Chion (1992) has referred to the non-semantic use of foreign languages as 'wasted' language, as a way for cinema to de-emphasise the primacy of speech in favour of other signifying codes. Such use of language is anything but wasted, even if only a few of a film's spectators may be likely to enjoy it (the Blackfoot, Cree and Makah dialogue in *Dead Man*) – or none (the 'words in a foreign language' of *The Silence* (Bergman, 1963)). A case in point is the Irish film *Once* (Carney, 2006) which recounts a fragile relationship between an Irish street musician and a Czech immigrant. The 'Guy' (Glen Hansard) has discovered that the 'Girl' (Marketa Irglova) is married. 'Do you love him?' he asks. 'Miluju tebe,' she replies in unsubtitled Czech, and does not explain what she means. Nor does the rest of the film resolve this question and the viewer is left to speculate indefinitely. The 'Girl's' reply in fact means 'I love *you*'. This is, in the light of the rest of the film, a plausible interpretation. At the same time, the fact that she ultimately stays with her husband while the Guy leaves for

London invites the viewer to form other hypotheses. The untranslatedness of this one line inflects the viewer's reading of the two characters' relationship to a degree entirely out of proportion to the brevity of the utterance, illustrating Rainer Grutman's suggestion (1993) that the effect of heterolingualism is a function of the quality, rather than the extent, of the foreign language. Here the indeterminacy of the foreign language acts as a focus for our heightened appreciation of other cues for interpreting the nature of the protagonists' relationship.

Subtitles resolve the disparity of knowledge generated by foreign-language dialogue almost instantaneously, with a lag of no more than a frame or two. Subtitling has its own rhythm, of desire generated and satisfied so seamlessly that the viewer eventually ceases even to notice it. The tag-line for the film *Babel* said 'if you want to understand, just listen'. Ironically, the film's subtitling makes it possible for us to hear speech in the foreign language, but it may remove some of the incentive for us to listen. Deprived of subtitles, we are forced back on other signifying codes of cinema. Describing the conversation between Joe the American GI from New Jersey and the Sicilian girl Carmela in Rossellini's *Paisà* (1946), Siegfried Kracauer suggests that

> he soon supplements unintelligible words with drastic gestures and thus arrives at an understanding of a sort. But since this primitive approach is not achieved through the dialogue itself, the sounds that compose it take on a life of their own. And along with the dumb show, their conspicuous presence as sounds challenges the spectator empathically to sense what the two characters may sense and to respond to undercurrents within them and between them which would, perhaps, be lost on him were the words just carriers of meanings. (Kracauer 1997: 110)

James Boyd White has argued that one can learn to see 'not understanding' as a 'space for learning' (White 1995: 336). There is considerable evidence for the foreign language on screen activating what Azade Seyhan has referred to as a 'multilingual imagination' – from the explosion in interest in Japanese language and culture represented by the fansubbing [fan subtitling or volunteer subtitling] phenomenon to the long and often heated discussions on the Internet Movie Database around the use of untranslated language in mainstream film. The language does not even necessarily need to be authentic. The use of untranslated Chinese words and phrases in the television series *Firefly* (Whedon, 2002) and the subsequent feature film *Serenity*

(Whedon, 2005) led to a lively interest in Mandarin among its fans and generated further use of written Chinese in the sequels which appeared in graphic novel form.[34] By closing off certain forms of curiosity, by claiming to account for and carry across the foreign, subtitling is, in some ways, the mode of screen translation least able to accommodate this imagination.

Even an invented language can spark the imagination of its listeners. Vivian Sobchack has commented on the resonance of the most famous line of alien dialogue in cinema, from *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Wise, 1951), 'Gort, Klaatu barrada nicto':

> This sentence, through its internal rhythmic and grammatical structure, creates not only music but an extraordinarily imaginative resonance. The meaning of the sentence in its cinematic context is simultaneously accessible and elusive; the words and their order achieve a most delicate balance between sense and nonsense, between logical communication and magical litany. ... The words themselves are wondrous for they let us speculate endlessly. (Sobchack 1987: 146, 147)

The Internet Movie Database discussion boards are packed with responses to film which take the form of questions about untranslated language and requests for translations. This engagement and production of alternate translations must be considered strong evidence for the activation of a multilingual imagination.

It has been argued above that subtitles may act to perpetuate certain forms of representational inequality. Without an active engagement with the concrete forms of expression of another culture and a collaborative approach which seeks to enter genuinely into dialogue, subtitles become a lazy way of translating the words of the foreign language before we even demand it. In some ways one might advocate a retreat from subtitles in popular cinema, as a way of acknowledging our inability to 'access' cultures and the appropriativeness of 'presuming' that subtitles can grasp a language, or even that there is a language behind the subtitles to grasp. Jane Hill has theorised a type of use of Spanish by middle-class Anglo-Americans which she calls 'Mock Spanish'. This constitutes a strategy by which 'members of dominant groups expropriate desirable resources, both material and symbolic, from subordinate groups' (Hill 1995). Hill argues that while the use of Spanish by otherwise monolingual English speakers in the United States is positively connoted among those speakers, suggesting humour, cultural openness

and an easy, laid-back attitude to life, it is in fact a form of elite racist discourse which relies for its decoding on negative and stereotyped images of Spanish-speaking and Hispanic Americans. Hill examines various usages of mock Spanish on coffee mugs, greetings cards and other ephemera, and extending to uses of Spanish in films such as *Encino Man (*Mayfield, 1992) and *Terminator 2* (Cameron, 1991):

> in order to 'make sense of' Mock Spanish, interlocutors require access to very negative racializing representations of Chicanos and Latinos as stupid, politically corrupt, sexually loose, lazy, dirty, and disorderly. It is impossible to 'get' Mock Spanish – to find these expressions funny or colloquial or even intelligible – unless one has access to these negative images. (Hill 1999: 683)

Obviously films which choose to tell stories partly in Spanish, such as *Traffic* or *Men with Guns*, do not fall under this heading, but even a mainstream comedy such as *Bedazzled* (Ramis, 2000), in which Brendan Fraser plays an unwitting Colombian drug lord, complete with poorly inflected Spanish and subtitles, troubles the distinction between one and the other. The commodification of foreign languages on screen is a phenomenon of which we should be rightly wary. At the same time, we should also recognise the positive good that heterolingual dialogue in the public spaces of cinema can achieve in raising the visibility of multilingualism. There is ample evidence from the work of Géry d'Ydewalle and others that subtitled foreign languages promote language learning. It remains to be seen whether any link can be made between inauthentic and invented languages, though the experience of Klingon, Elvish and now Na'vi (Zimmer 2009) strongly suggests that foreign languages on screen may trigger a certain kind of multilingual imagination. It would be interesting to see to what extent meaningful links have been made with language recovery activity and subtitled Native American dialogue, with the involvement in mainstream films of consultant linguists such as Doris Leader Charge (*Dances with Wolves*), Elbys Hugar (*The Missing*) and Blair Rudes (*The New World*). Rudes (2006) has provided a detailed account of the minutiae of reconstructing the Virginia Algonquin language for *The New World* and of translating elements of the script for delivery by the actors. It is reported that the film was originally planned with minimal heterolingual dialogue and that the extensiveness of the Algonquin dialogue in the finished film was a function of how impressed the director was by the quality of the initial language work carried out (cf. e.g. Parker 2006).

The last twenty years have seen a number of changes to the ways in which foreign languages are treated on screen. As we have seen in this chapter, these changes are not unproblematic. Nor, however, are they necessarily only exploitative. We should not write off the linguistic set dressing, pseudo-original dialogue and invented languages of cinema any more than we should buy in to their authenticity effect. Further observation, and empirical audience-based research, will be necessary to show whether the growing acceptability of subtitled dialogue in mainstream film and television will be accompanied by better distribution opportunities for imported product. Only then, perhaps, will we be able to determine whether the subtitles of popular cinema facilitate openness to the foreign, as opposed to merely consumption of a simulacrum of it.

5
Where Are the Subtitles? Metalepsis, Subtitling and Narration

One of the purposes of writing this book has been to help restore to audiovisual translation the visibility which, like most modes of translation, it actively seeks to avoid. Both the authenticising subtitles discussed in the previous chapter and conventional post-subtitles depend for their effect on their almost subliminal impact. According to Donald Richie 'any oddity, any term too heightened, as well as any mistake, calls attention to this written dialogue. I won't even use exclamation points. The language should enter the ear as the image enters the eye' (quoted in Nornes 1999: 31). The subtitler Henri Béhar says that if subtitles 'aren't invisible, you fail. The titles should subtly give people the impression that they are understanding the characters speaking, not reading words on the screen' (quoted in Rosenberg 2007). Anecdotally, we know that this can be the case. If a translation is *too* visible, it becomes itself an object of scrutiny and its capacity to fulfil the function for which it has been commissioned is diminished. In the case of a time-bound translation mode like subtitling, too great an obtrusiveness will compromise the ability of the viewer to 'read' the audiovisual text and to process the subtitles themselves. The critical invisibility of subtitles is a necessary consequence of the transparency explicitly aimed at by subtitlers.

In this chapter I will look at subtitles which deliberately flout the rules of unobtrusiveness to comment on, subvert or otherwise make explicit the relationship between the source language and the subtitles. These relationships may be ludic, intertextual or narrational and will require us to interrogate further the place of subtitling in popular film.

Conservatism and innovation

Subtitles place a notable processing burden upon their viewers. Any factor which might decrease viewers' reading speed, such as inconsistencies, interruptions, illegibilities or unusual uses of language, is to be avoided. Reading speed will vary with age, literacy level and degree of habituation to watching subtitles. With all of these variables at issue, we should not be surprised that subtitling practice is extremely conservative. For instance, one of the most often-noted factors in subtitling is its difficulty in rendering differences in register. The need for subtitles to reflect a correct and standard version of the language for processing purposes means that misspellings, incorrect grammar and slang, all features associated with certain sociolinguistic registers, are difficult to replicate. Then there is the question of the cultural comparability of registers and dialects. A notorious example was Mathieu Kassovitz's influential French urban drama *La haine* (1995), filmed in a (sub)urban speech full of slang, *verlan* (a widely used form of back slang), Americanisms, Arabic lexis and deviant grammar (Jäckel 2001; Mével 2007). The original English theatrical subtitles by Alexander Whitelaw and Stephen O'Shea transposed many of the cultural references into North American ones, for instance turning 'ta mère, elle boit de la Kro[nenbourg]' into 'your mother drinks Bud[weiser]' (Jäckel 2001: 227) and rendered the slang and colloquialism in a US-inflected English very influenced by African–American vernacular English, which took British viewers aback and attracted considerable criticism in the UK. Jäckel (2001) also observes that the reorganisation of discourse characteristic of subtitles affects the characterisation of the three protagonists Hubert, Vinz and Said, who are differentiated both ethnically and linguistically in the source film but less differentiated linguistically in the first subtitled version. For the tenth anniversary Optimum DVD edition new subtitles in a more neutral form of English were produced (Mével 2007).

This example suggests not just the problems of a dialect-for-dialect approach to subtitling sociolinguistic variation but also the difficulty of subtitling in a non-standard or otherwise deviant form of the target language. The lack of formal, as well as dialectal, flexibility in subtitling practice is further illustrated in an anecdote related by the filmmaker Claire Denis. One scene from her film *Friday Night* (2002) features dialogue which is barely audible to the film's spectators. When subtitling the film, Denis asked the subtitler whether the subtitles could render the dialogue only partially, by omitting letters or words, in order to

reflect this auditory quality, and was told that this was impossible. Either the subtitles could reflect all the dialogue, or the dialogue could be left unsubtitled. As a result, the characters' dialogue is fully rendered in the subtitles (Denis 2004: 74–75), resulting in an explicitation relative to the source text.

Not only do subtitles often fail to represent difference in the source film, but the normalising drive of subtitles at times leads them to correct what are deliberate, functional errors or inconsistencies in the source text. In an early scene in the comedy *Volunteers* (1985), the Peace Corps volunteer Beth Wexler, played by Rita Wilson, attempts to explain basic medical concepts to a group of rural Thai women in what purports to be rudimentary Thai. We know the Thai is rudimentary from her halting pronunciation and from the English subtitles which reveal to viewers how Beth's painstakingly acquired Thai lets her down (Figures 5.1–5.3).

The topic of her carefully prepared speech is 'germs', but instead of addressing the villagers Beth finds herself addressing the germs directly. The villagers are rather perplexed when she declares her intention of killing them. The French subtitler of this scene for a Region 1 DVD release finds her- or himself unable to parse Beth's mistakes (perhaps because we are used to exculpating filmmakers for the mistakes in subtitles), and instead normalises them (ST =):

BETH [subtitled in ST]: Boiling water can kill you, germs.
BETH [subtitled in ST]: Germs are what makes sickness.
BETH [subtitled in ST]: And that is why we want to kill you.
French subtitle: Bouillir l'eau tue des microbes. [Boiling water kills germs.]
French subtitle: Les microbes causent la maladie. [Germs cause sickness.]
French subtitle: C'est pourquoi on veut les tuer. [That's why we want to kill them.]

The humour of the scene is lost and the unease in the villagers' faces at the end of Beth's speech remains unexplained.

As Abé Mark Nornes has pointed out in his essay 'For an Abusive Subtitling' (1999), the unobtrusiveness of subtitles can be ideologically dangerous because, as we noted in Chapter 4, subtitles are so strongly associated with authenticity. They may be 'vulnerable' to bilingual viewing, but most subtitles will be seen by people with a very limited ability to compare source dialogue and subtitles. For these monolingual

Figures 5.1–5.3 Beth's painstakingly acquired Thai lets her down…

viewers only overt reminders of the contingency of subtitles will make them aware of the gap between source and target languages and cultures. What Nornes calls 'corrupt' subtitling avoids such reminders. It 'smoothes over its textual violence and domesticates all otherness while it pretends to bring the audience to an experience of the foreign' (Nornes 1999: 18). The phenomenon of pseudosubtitling, discussed in the previous chapter, may be seen as an aggravated form of corrupt subtitling, but Nornes extends the notion of corruption to *all* subtitling whose ultimate aim is transparency. Nornes advocates instead an 'abusive' subtitling based on Philip Lewis's 'abusive translation' which 'values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own' (Lewis 1985: 41). Abusive subtitling resists the corruption inherent in current subtitling practices by consistently foregrounding the process of translation. It can be defined as 'the translator's attempt to experiment with language in ways that are analogous to the linguistic playfulness of the original scenario and its verbalization' (Nornes 1999: 30).

Most partial subtitling found in popular film adheres to the standard, 'corrupt' format, but recent years have seen a series of innovations (cf. Díaz Cintas 2005). One set of innovations has its origin in the fansubbing phenomenon which has attracted recent critical attention (Nornes 1999; Dwyer 2001; Hatcher 2005; Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006; Dwyer and Uricaru 2009). Fansubtitling, or fansubbing, is carried out by amateur subtitlers in order to make a given film or television programme available in translation to a wider audience, in a faster timeframe or in a more 'adequate' version. It was originally focused on the translation of Japanese anime, and was an oppositional response to the dubbing of anime for the anglophone market. Fansubbing is characterised by an intense engagement with the source culture and has historically made a point of foregrounding linguistic and cultural elements of the original film which might be elided by conventional subtitles. Fansubbers were often untrained and unconstrained by industrial norms or notions of best practice. They could also count on a niche audience of active viewers with an intense interest in the culture of the subtitled shows. Fansubbing as a result tends to be protean in form, using multiple colours, fonts and positions, and multiplying verbal material on screen, to the point where some fansub viewers complained that it had become impossible to process the images or follow the story.[1]

Some subtitling companies, such as Animeigo, use fansubbers' innovations, including headnotes and different colours, as in this screenshot from *Ambush at Blood Pass* (Inagaki, 1970) (Figure 5.4).

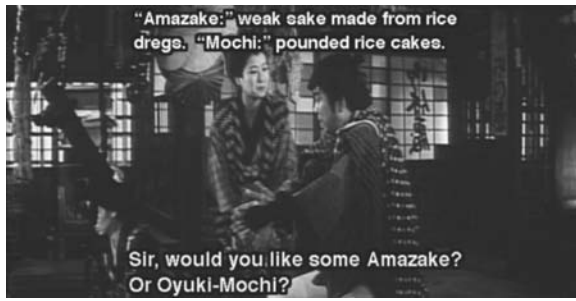

Figure 5.4 Headnote in *Ambush at Blood Pass*

Japanese genre films such as this are aimed at a niche market, but we have also seen innovation in recent mainstream films and television series, which we can relate to the greater prevalence of partial subtitling discussed in the previous chapter. One form of innovation relates to the position of the subtitles on the screen. In the television series *Heroes* (2006) which features substantial stretches of Japanese dialogue, subtitles appear beside the characters whose speech they convey, as in intralingual subtitling for the hard of hearing, or in the manner of the speech bubbles of comic books. This spatial variation is also used by Danny Boyle in his recent *Slumdog Millionaire*, whose subtitles for the Hindi dialogue appear in semi-opaque boxes in a range of different colours and take different positions on the screen. The use of different colours for subtitles themselves is known in intralingual subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing to distinguish between different characters, but has not yet become widely used in conventional interlingual subtitling.

Nornes predicted that abusive subtitling will make its presence felt in 'animation, comedies, the art film, and the documentary' (Nornes 1999: 32). Interestingly, however, it is mainstream dramas which have produced some conspicuous recent examples of formal innovation in subtitling. One of the more unusual subtitling experiments to date has been in the action thriller *Man on Fire* (2004). Directed by Tony Scott, the film has a pronounced visual aesthetic based on fast editing and a constantly moving camera. The action of the film, which concerns the kidnapping of a child in Mexico City and her American bodyguard's merciless

search for her kidnappers, incorporates a lot of incidental Spanish dialogue with English subtitles. Among the film's visual effects are several innovations in the way the subtitles are presented, prompted apparently by a combination of practicality (how to translate the Spanish); estrangement (how to distance viewers from some of the more violent scenes); and innovation (to have something to 'play with in the frame') (Scott DVD commentary). Subtitles shimmer to reflect emotion and change size to represent the volume of speech (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 The play of subtitles in the frame

Subtitles appear word by word or letter by letter; they are kinetic, entering from the edge of the image, moving rapidly across the screen and at times 'disappearing' behind objects in the image. In a director's commentary for the DVD release of the film the director refers to the subtitles as 'another character' in the film, a reflection of the changing status of subtitles, no longer necessarily what Amresh Sinha refers to as 'a product conceived as an after-thought rather than a natural component of the film' (Sinha 2004: 174).[2]

The Russian vampire fantasy *Night Watch*, released in the United States in early 2006 with English subtitles, features similar innovations. Bekmambetov's film is entirely Russian-speaking and subtitled for the English-language market: most of the film's subtitles adhere to a very standard format but call on visual devices where appropriate opportunities arise. So subtitles change size to reflect the volume of characters' speech; subtitles reflecting the call of the vampires appear in red; over a shot of a character in a swimming pool, the subtitles dissolve in the water; subtitles for the dialogue of a computer programmer are

'generated' by a blinking cursor and appear letter by letter across the screen. This was a very deliberate strategy by Bekmambetov, who also conceived the subtitles as 'another character' in the film, like Scott suggesting the presence of another speaking 'voice' and, indeed, possibly influenced by Scott's approach.

Viewer responses to the subtitles of these two films in the United States were very different. The niche market which was the target for *Night Watch* reacted with great enthusiasm to the theatrical subtitles, as did reviewers (e.g. Lane 2006; Vershbow 2006; Rosenberg 2007), while responses to *Man on Fire* were largely negative. *Premiere* magazine's reviewer called the subtitles for Scott's film 'pompously excessive' and said 'if your idea of a good time is watching a PowerPoint presentation, *Man on Fire* may be your cup of tea' (Hillis 2004). The subtitles of *Man on Fire* were seen to add little to the overall experience of the film and to be distracting. In *Night Watch* the subtitles were viewed as in harmony with the film's overall look, and fans responded very negatively to the Region 2 DVD release of the film which had conventional subtitles only.

There are several possible reasons for the contrasting responses to *Night Watch* and *Man on Fire*. Genre is one: Abé Mark Nornes has suggested that abusive subtitling may be more likely to take off with genre films because such texts 'are themselves transgressive or essayistic' (Nornes 1999: 32). The Russian vampire film is in a niche genre while *Man on Fire* with its big-name star and its $60 million production budget was aimed squarely at multiplex audiences. Film quality may have been an issue; reviewers found Bekmambetov's film a refreshing take on a tired genre. It broke the $1 million subtitle barrier at the US box office comfortably, while reviewers found *Man on Fire* poorly paced, irritatingly shot and excessively violent. Demographics were certainly an issue: the audience for the Russian vampire film were the kind of audience who are already disposed towards watching subtitled films and probably more used to reading subtitles.

Possibly one of the most important reasons for the negative reception of the subtitles in *Man on Fire* was that Scott subtitles not only Spanish dialogue, but English dialogue too. As was argued in the previous chapter, multiplex audiences have been increasingly exposed to subtitles in recent years, but these subtitles are contained within often clearly delineated sequences of foreign-language dialogue. To subtitle characters is to make them other, to set them apart. Many of the film's more negative reviews also mentioned the subtitling of the English into English as a

feature. A. O. Scott (2004) in the *New York Times* declared that the subtitles flashing 'across the middle of the screen, in a variety of sizes and type faces, not only translating the Spanish dialogue but also spelling out some choice lines of English as well' were 'mystifying, but also typical of the garish, extravagant literal-mindedness that governs *A Man on Fire* [sic]'.

Subtitling inevitably casts certain elements of the dialogue into relief, '[heightening] our awareness and [isolating] the importance of materials which would otherwise merge with its background of all-too-familiar experience' (MacDougall 1995: 88). The use of English, and in one or two cases captions, in the same font as the subtitles to identify characters and point up the importance of particular lines of dialogue was considered by viewers of *Man on Fire* to be patronising in its assumptions about their ability to process the plot markers in the film. For some viewers, it was the obtrusiveness of the subtitles, like a microphone boom showing, which was the problem, demonstrating the difficulties inhering in the use of abusive subtitling. We could compare the audience outrage that greeted Eric Kahane's French subtitles for *Monty Python's Flying Circus* shown on the television channel ARTE in 1992 (Léandri 1993). Kahane, an experienced translator, subtitler and dubbing scriptwriter, sought to match the verbal play of the original series with his own *trouvailles*, including non-standard punctuation and the lexicalisation of sound effects in the subtitles ('snif' for a character crying, for instance). The subtitler was considered by one outraged critic to have exceeded his brief by taking opportunities for comic play even at points where they were not present in the television series (a standard feature of abusive subtitling, which as Nornes suggests may incorporate 'polyvalencies and knots of signification that may not coincide precisely with the problem in the source text' (1999: 181)):

> Deux Espagnols qui parlent en anglais normal, traduits par '*yé souis content dé vous voir*', ça, ça ne sort que de l'imagination enfiévrée du traducteur. Autre exemple: un personnage, la tête en bas, qui dit '*good evening*' normalement en anglais normal est sous-titré par: '*riosnoB.*' ... les comédiens énumèrent des fromages de tous les pays. Pour la France, le texte dit '*camembert, brie ...*', le sous-titre traduit '*ceux-là vous les connaissez*' (Léandri 1993: 34). [Two Spanish people speaking normal English, translated by '*yé souis content dé vous voir*' ['I am happy to see you' strongly marked with a Spanish accent], is only a

> figment of the translator's fevered imagination. Another example: a character with their head down who says 'good evening' in normal English is subtitled *'riosnoB'* ['Bonsoir' = good evening, spelt backwards]. ... the actors are listing cheeses from around the world. For France, the text says *'camembert, brie ...'*, the subtitle translates 'you know those already'.]

Particularly in a media environment such as France where auteurism is deeply embedded, the notion that the translation would add to the text was anathema. Kahane's subtitles were later replaced with more conventional subtitles for DVD release.

The gradual accumulation in mainstream releases of subtitling innovations, while yet to reach critical mass, suggests that innovation will continue, though conventions for an overall 'kinetic' subtitle aesthetic have yet to become established. Whether such innovations inevitably represent 'abusive' subtitling, as Nornes argues (2007: 177), is not clear. On the one hand, these subtitles adhere to many of the formal criteria Nornes suggests are abusive, and they have helped to bring subtitling to the forefront of reviews and fan discussions. On the other hand, as director-driven digital effects rather than distributor-driven conventional subtitles, the subtitles may not have a significant impact on the wider subtitling industry. More seriously, the subtitles for *Night Watch*, *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Heroes* are designed not to achieve an alienation effect, but to support the immersiveness of the film or television viewing experience. As a result, they may not 'always direct spectators back to the original text' (Nornes 1999: 185) but instead simply represent a new incarnation of 'corrupt' subtitling – the result of popular cinema's protean ability to renew its techniques and devices to further its own interests. The subtitles for *Man on Fire* can be defined as 'abusive' inasmuch as they fail to achieve the immersiveness which was the director's intention; it will be interesting to see whether future filmmakers continue to take the risk.

Subtitling intertextualities

According to Díaz Cintas and Remael's definition of subtitling quoted earlier, subtitles translate 'the original dialogue of the speakers', 'the discursive elements that appear in the image' and 'the information on the soundtrack'. The range of intertextual relationships pertaining to the subtitles is thus a circumscribed one and it is ostensibly unidirectional. Subtitles respond to features of the source dialogue. Woe to the

subtitle (such as Eric Kahane's) which looks outside its source dialogue for inspiration. There are instances, however, of subtitles whose primary purpose is intertextual, rather than translational. In this case it is the subtitles themselves which drive features of the dialogue, reversing the usual source text–target text relationship. An obvious example is *Incubus*, shot in Esperanto with subtitles, partly as a low-budget way of achieving an uncanny effect but partly to cash in on the still-lively mid-1960s European art film market (Kellman 2009). The choice of Esperanto as the language of the dialogue is gratuitous, and the subtitles were a way of positioning the film to attract audiences used to watching black-and-white subtitled films by Bergman and other directors. Another 1960s reference is provided by the sequence of Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask* entitled 'Why Do Some Women Have Trouble Reaching Orgasm?'. This sequence is shot in Italian with subtitles as a homage to Italian film of the period. Jarman's *Sebastiane*, as was noted in the last chapter, is more interested in the estranging effect of the subtitled Latin than its reproduction as a language of the period.

Perhaps one of the most recognisable instances of subtitling in a popular film occurs in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (Gilliam and Jones, 1975). For an audience in the 1970s, the entertaining mock-Swedish subtitles which grace the film's credits not only commented on the general untrustworthiness of subtitles and subtitlers, but also recalled the 'translated' medieval aesthetic enshrined in art cinema by European auteurs such as Eric Rohmer (*Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*, 1965), Robert Bresson (*Lancelot du Lac*, 1974) and, pre-eminently, Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal,* 1957; *The Virgin Spring*, 1960). The subtitles, which begin by apparently providing a translation of the English credits into mock-Swedish, become progressively more outlandish. As Donald Hoffman observes, though the subtitles are still funny to an audience today, 'they are [now] funny without resonance, or, at least, without a specific resonance', because with the declining prestige of foreign-language art film, their audience is no longer one which associates subtitles with the Middle Ages (Hoffman 2002: 137). This loss of relevance might explain the resubtitling of the whole film for successive special editions of the DVD, which include among the bonus features: 'Subtitles for People Who Do Not Like the Film (taken from Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 2*)'. These subtitles are a collage of phrases from Shakespeare's play taken out of context and assigned on a roughly semantic or syntactic basis, with each subtitle containing at least one element in common with the dialogue track.

If there is 'a new kind of fidelity, namely, of the DVD to the film', as Richard Burt (2007: 228) sustains, then the Python team are having none of it. At their most (im)pertinent, the *Henry IV*, Part 2 subtitles force us to question our every assumption about the film. From its opening scene, the subtitles repeatedly contradict their 'speakers'. The beleaguered King Arthur, who has at times great difficulty in persuading his listeners of his credentials (here we remember Dennis of the anarcho-syndicalist commune), finds himself undermined by his translated self at every turn:

> ARTHUR: I am Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon from the castle of Camelot.
> [SUBTITLE: It is Robert Shallow, sir; a poor esquire of this country.][3]
> ARTHUR: King of the Britons! Defeater of the Saxons!
> [SUBTITLE: Duke of Norfolk! Archbishop of York!][4]
> ARTHUR: Sovereign of all England!
> [SUBTITLE: Most royal imp of fame!][5]

By belying the well-known and much-loved film dialogue, of course, the DVD merely adds another layer to the film's established tendency to undercut its own allusion, to paraphrase Day (2002: 131).

As a piece of inspired whimsy, these subtitles are on one level just another reflection of Monty Python's long-standing interest in the comic potential of translation. They function, however, on many levels. By recycling a text with a high cultural capital, the subtitles comment on the way in which they add value to the film text. They re-enact the projection of the contemporary onto the past, which is characteristic of historical film, by overwriting a purportedly tenth-century tale with fragments of a sixteenth-century retelling of fourteenth-century events. As an ostensible translation (or rather an instance of 'bound intertextuality', to use Theo D'haen's term) they illustrate the ways in which the Holy Grail textual material (and indeed the *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* textual material) has itself been renewed, rewritten and repackaged over time in a variety of media. Though these subtitles leave the original film text available to the viewer, that original is, as we will see, by no means intact. At a distance of nearly 30 years from the film's original release, these 'remixed' subtitles also echo the film's own trajectory within popular culture and the way in which expressions and exchanges from the film have been widely quoted within fan communities and beyond (see e.g. Smith 1999: 65–66).

At their most successful, the subtitles appear to recuperate *underlying* meanings, perhaps most explicitly in the well-known scene at Castle Arrrghhh in which John Cleese, in the role of a member of the castle's French garrison, flings insults at Arthur and his knights:

> You don't frighten us, English pig-dogs! Go and boil your bottom, sons of a silly person. I blow my nose at you, so-called Arthur King, you and all your silly English k-nnnnniggets. Thpppppt! Thppt! Thppt! [...] I don't wanna talk to you no more, you empty headed animal food trough wiper! I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries!

The speech is constructed around classic elements of the insult: explicit instruction, opprobrious epithet and references to antecedents. A popular perception that insults vary widely between languages and cultures allows the viewer of the unsubtitled scene to understand Cleese's dialogue as a series of spontaneous translations from the French, albeit in an exaggerated form. Since we are accustomed to subtitles explaining, clarifying and illuminating the dialogue on screen, the new DVD subtitles function as a kind of back-translation: here, at last, are the originals which may shed light on those outlandish Gallic slurs. The French knight is revealed to have practised a degree of self-censorship in his translation from French to English. Where he calls the King an 'empty-headed animal food-trough wiper' the subtitles reveal that he had in fact called him 'thou whoreson little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig!' (*Henry IV, Part 2*, Act II, scene iv). Where he says 'I fart in your general direction' what he had in fact said is 'I kiss thy neaf' (ibid.). The viewer may not be sure what 'neaf' means but it is without doubt both four-letter and Anglo-Saxon.[6] Perhaps most shockingly, the mild remark 'Go away or I shall taunt you a second time' turns out to be a positively bowdlerised translation of 'Away! Or I will ride thee o' nights like the mare' (ibid.). This effect of translational *mise en abîme* is perhaps best instantiated in the line 'Away, away, varletesses' from the scene at Castle Anthrax. The subtitle reads 'Away, varlets' (ibid., scene i), acknowledging Shakespeare's play as a source for the film's dialogue, and casting the subtitle as simultaneously original and translation. If the *Henry IV, Part 2* subtitles are frequently abusive in the literal sense they may also be considered abusive in Nornes's sense that they foreground the processes at work in textual transmission and rereading, and the instability of the categories of translation and original foregrounded in the previous chapter.

A less sophisticated but no less complex intertextuality links the Disney comedy *George of the Jungle* (Weisman, 1997) to its own intertexts through the play of subtitles. Towards the end of the film, George, a comic-heroic Tarzan figure who speaks in the classic tongue-tied manner in English, is moved to thank his brothers, the apes, for their help in defeating the film's villain Lyle Vandergroot. He addresses the apes in a series of hoots and squeaks which are subtitled in a medievalised English as 'My noble kinsmen, thou hast served me well' (Figure 5.6) and 'Now thy work 'tis done, but behold, how Shep doth dispatch these villains'.

These subtitles stand out for several reasons: their illogicality, given that throughout the film George has spoken to the apes in English; their (inaccurate) lexical and morphological archaisms; and their medi-

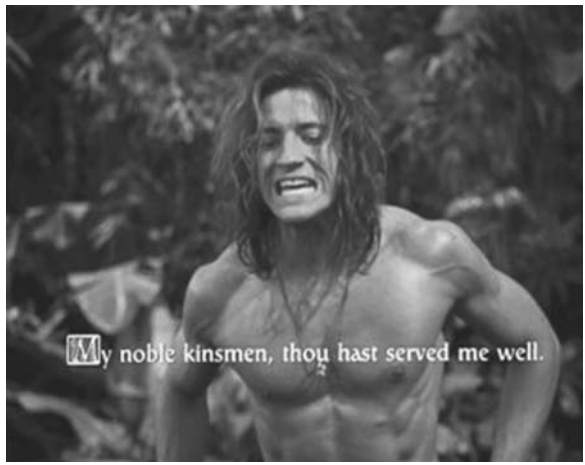

Figure 5.6 George addresses the apes

evalised typographical form. Elaborate capitals are combined with vestiges of uncial script. The showy font contrasts with the discreet sans serif font used elsewhere in the film's occasional subtitles. George's subtitles extract humour from the implausibility of the notion of translating between ape and human. Their excessive elaborateness ironically underlines the absence of any meaningful source text, but at the same time they explicitly evoke the multiple intertextualities at work in the film. One element of this is the medievalising English widely used

by writers such as Rider Haggard and Kipling to represent the speech of colonial subjects. The notion of animal language has its origins in Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan novels, which make much of Tarzan's ability to communicate with animals and go so far as to supply some words of animal languages (Morton 1993: 107–109). Such languages are also often presented in a medievalising form, as in Kipling's *Jungle Book*. The *matière de Tarzan* also boasts a more traditionally medievalist urtext in the form of Burroughs's early novel *The Outlaw of Torn*, an action adventure set in thirteenth-century England. As one critic has put it, 'Tarzan is Norman of Torn without the armour' (Galloway 1994: 103). All of these intertexts inform this moment of translation, which works well because of the established importance of language to the Tarzan narrative, and what is at first sight an arbitrary choice of ornamentation for the subtitles in fact reinscribes George within the translational transactions intrinsic to post-colonialism.[7]

The textual status of subtitles

The subtitles we have discussed in the last chapter and this one problematise an understanding of the translational and textual relationships obtaining between subtitles and their source films. Rather than a second-order, derivative relationship where subtitles are a supplement to the text according to which 'the original text remains intact beneath the subtitled overlay' (Kilborn 1989: 426), subtitles may be a primary meaning-making element in film. In the films we have looked at here, subtitles are an intrinsic part of the film text (Kilborn 1993: 646), but they are not usually considered to be so. It may be appropriate to think a little more deeply about the textuality of subtitles.

Audiovisual translation criticism has hitherto made a clear distinction between an unsubtitled source text and the subtitled target text.[8] Interlingual subtitles are not seen as belonging to the film text. They are part of the process of distribution rather than of production (de Linde and Kay 1999: 17). Writers and directors, like other creative artists, are unlikely to take the future translation of a film or television programme into account. The subtitles thus do not belong to the 'authorial' concept of a film. A film will probably be repeatedly resubtitled for different channels of release (festivals, theatrical release, television, DVD). It may be resubtitled for different audiences (for overseas audiences, for the hearing impaired, by or for fans) or for subsequent releases, as with the resubtitled versions offered by high-end home-viewing distributors

such as Criterion or Optimum.[9] Subtitlers may or may not be named on the subtitled print or DVD. Certainly, there is no tradition of attribution of subtitles in the UK or America, though some subtitlers' names do crop up in film histories – Herman Weinberg in the US, Mai Harris in the UK – usually because the subtitlers have also written about their work. In Japan, subtitlers have historically had a much higher profile (Nornes 2007: 163). The Criterion Collection Region 1 DVD release of Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* offers a choice of two subtitle tracks by Donald Richie and Linda Hoaglund. While raising the profile of translation, this 'choose your own' option also emphasises the contingency of subtitles. On most commercially produced DVDs, subtitles are optional and the viewer can choose whether or not to have them display at all. For technical reasons, subtitles may not always display properly. The status of subtitles themselves, like translation, is therefore unstable and temporary.

Subtitles seem to fulfil a fundamentally supplementary or paratextual function. By 'paratextual' I mean in the sense suggested by Genette of 'framing textual material' which is on the fringe or threshold of the text and which guides our reading of it.[10] The paratextuality of subtitles does not merely reside in their instability, but also in their organising function. Subtitles explain to us what the characters are saying and, like all translations, privilege certain readings of the film or television programme by potentially modifying the verbal expression of interpersonal relationships, by segmenting and summarising the dialogue. If we compare subtitling to the practice of interpreting, with which it shares certain points in common, it not only 'relays' but also 'co-ordinates' discourse (Wadensjö 2002). Where multiple characters' dialogues or multiple sets of visual and aural verbal material overlap, subtitles select and prioritise the most important information for the viewer.

Genette distinguishes between two orders of paratext according to their location in relation to the text: 'peritext', which is located 'within the same volume' (Genette 1997: 4) and 'epitext', which is 'located outside the book' (ibid.: 5). Peritexts include titles, prefaces or postfaces, chapter titles or notes. Epitexts include letters, diaries, promotional interviews, posters and external textual material which has in some way a framing function. The use of location to distinguish between peritext and epitext immediately presents a problem when we try to apply Genette's categories to film. Subtitles would at first sight seem to fall into the category of peritext, as they seem to depend on their proximity to film for their function. In order to signify, subtitles must be experienced cotemporally with the film text. From the spectator's

viewpoint, they are physically as well as temporally congruent with the film text. Superimposed upon the image, they exist in a stable and constant relationship with the position of the projected film. Where subtitles are burned into the film's emulsion, they become physically part of the film. Their position, centred low in the image, or, in certain display environments, immediately below the image, invites comparisons with footnotes, which are clearly peritextual.

But are subtitles on the same level, for instance, as other paratextual filmic verbal material such as credit sequences and captions? Credit sequences generally remain constant once a film has been released while subtitles tend, as we have said, to be redone and replaced. The shift from burned-in to player-generated subtitles removes the subtitles still further from the notional film text. Many people's film viewing experiences now involve downloads from the Internet, which may require synching the downloaded film to a downloaded subtitle stream, often from a different site. Partial subtitles may be lost entirely in this process, leaving viewers mystified. Sometimes partial subtitles may be introduced some way into a film's life, as in the case of *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!* (Jewison, 1971), which was released without subtitles for the film's sporadic Russian dialogue but which acquired subtitles later for distribution on DVD. Alternatively, subtitles may be withdrawn. Ken Loach and Mike Leigh have both at times offered theatrical prints of their films with subtitles for English-speaking audiences unfamiliar with British regional accents, but these subtitles do not make it as far as the DVD releases of the films. And as we have said, viewers may have more than one possible subtitle stream available.

Subtitles thus occupy a shifting location in relation to the film and the diegetic space. In films such as *Night Watch* or *Man on Fire* subtitles move 'behind' objects in the image and pose an interesting textual problem. They are non-diegetic, but incontrovertibly textual, both because of their (metaphorical) presence *within* the image and because of their enhanced cohesive relationship with their source text (as with the dissolving scarlet subtitles and blinking-cursor effect in *Night Watch*). In 3D cinema subtitles pose an ongoing technical problem; rather than being 'superimposed' on a two-dimensional image, the subtitles have to negotiate their position vis-à-vis the depth of screen (Keslassy 2009).

So subtitles trouble Genette's book-based distinction between peritext and epitext, and even the distinction between text and paratext. The subtitles for *Passion of the Christ*, for instance, are clearly pre-planned. The obsolete languages of the film's soundtrack have no primary 'target

audience', so (even if they are a compromise with respect to the initial conception of the film) the subtitles must be considered textual. The Region 2 'Director's Edition' of the film, however, contains no English subtitles, properly speaking. The only subtitle stream available has English subtitles for the hearing impaired which, with their identification of speakers and notifications that 'ominous instrumental music' is playing, offer quite a different viewing experience of the film. The DVD release of *Incubus* has very peculiar subtitles, positioned much higher on the screen than one would usually expect to find them and printed in a black box which obscures the image unhelpfully. This is not usual subtitling practice, but is due to the destruction of all known prints of the film in a fire. The only surviving copy, located at the Cinemathèque in Paris, had burned-in French subtitles. These had to be blocked out by means of the black box in order that English subtitles could be superimposed – an example of subtitles becoming an ineradicable element of the film text.

The location and textual status of subtitles has over the years become a source of play in the cinema, particularly in comic and parodic films. This tradition of ludic subtitling recalls the playful intertitles of the silent era (cf. Everson 1978: 126–141) and early experiments with making speech material on screen (Altman 2004: 167–168). An early example of comic pseudosubtitles can be found in the comedy *The Road to Zanzibar* (Schertzinger, 1941). Chuck Reardon (Bing Crosby) and Hugh Frazier (Bob Hope) find themselves prisoners of savage cannibals who speak an apparently mock-African language. This language, which is as unintelligible to us as to Chuck and Hugh, is provided with subtitles which ham it up for comic effect. 'You may think they're gods ... but I say they're a couple of phoney-baloneys,' says one tribal elder to another. 'If he's a god, I'm Mickey Mouse!' The Bugs Bunny short *Wackiki Wabbit* (Jones, 1943) gives us a more intriguing example. On an otherwise deserted Pacific atoll, Bugs camouflages himself in pseudo-Hawaiian garb to escape two starving sailors. His few words of (presumably) cod-Hawaiian are subtitled. A string of musical-sounding syllables is accompanied by the subtitle in upper case 'WHAT'S UP DOC?'. The next few syllables are subtitled, more perplexingly, 'NOW IS THE TIME FOR EVERY GOOD MAN TO COME TO THE AID OF HIS PARTY'. One of the sailors thanks him kindly for the warm welcome to the island – and finds his brief thanks subtitled 'OFA ENO MAUA TE OFE POPAA'. 'Gee, did you say that?' asks the other sailor in astonishment.

Here the subtitles become fully diegetic – not merely moving behind objects in the image but visible to the characters themselves.[11] The joke is, of course, in the preposterousness of a character being able to see

a text which, by definition, exists at a different level of the narration. Genette uses the term 'narrative metalepsis' (1983 [1980]: 234–235) to refer to transitions from one level of narration to another which involve transgression of the conventions of narrative framing, in other words transitions between diegetic levels by means other than narration. In film a classic example is the Looney Tunes cartoon *Duck Amuck* (Jones, 1953) where Daffy Duck gets into a knock-down, drag-out fight with the artist drawing the cartoon. Subtitling offers us many examples of 'diegetic subtitles' which are visible or tangible in some way to characters or other entities in the diegesis. It's a well-established device, used in parodic films such as *The Man with Two Brains* (Reiner, 1983), *Loaded Weapon 1* (Quintano, 1993) or *Austin Powers: Goldmember* (Roach, 2002).

The action blockbuster *Crank* (Neveldine, Taylor, 2006) introduces subtitles as decorative visual devices at several points. Chev Chelios (Jason Statham) finds himself looking at the subtitle to another character's line of dialogue. This brief scene interrogates the location of the subtitle in interesting ways. If the subtitle is, as subtitles are usually presumed to be, on the 'skin' of the film, or the screen, then it should display the same way whether Chelios or his companion is in the shot (Figures 5.7 and 5.8). But the conversation between Chelios and his interlocutor is taking place in a shot-reverse shot format (Bordwell 2007). The second shot is of course a point of view shot from *behind* the subtitle – in other words, from the point of view of Chelios's interlocutor. Rather than being located on the surface of the screen, the subtitle is revealed as being located in the diegetic space between the two characters. Although the shot is not from Chelios's point of view there is a subjective element in the blurred presentation of the subtitles. This lack of clarity results, as one critic has pointed out, from the subtitle's greater proximity to the camera (cf. Bordwell 2007). What is more interesting from our point of view is that Figure 5.8 represents a (disorienting) subjective experience of what it feels like to be subtitled.

In *Crank* the diegetic subtitling effect is gratuitous in that it serves no broader narrative purpose but, like the subtitles to *Man on Fire*, is generated by the film's overall hyperaesthetic. In its more extended form, the device is often cast as giving characters an opportunity to understand dialogue that is otherwise incomprehensible. In one scene in *Volunteers* two characters have deliberate recourse to an English subtitle when the strong accent of a third character makes it impossible to understand her (see also *Bugsy Malone* (Parker, 1976) and *Fatal Instinct* (Reiner, 1993)). This allows the subtitles to engage critically with their own apparatus. The principal

Figure 5.7 The subtitle from Chelios' point of view

Figure 5.8 Chelios from the point of view of the 'subtitled' character

function of diegetic subtitles can thus be argued to be a metadiscourse on the most salient feature of subtitling, which is its *overheard* quality.

As Sarah Kozloff (2000: 14–19) and others have observed, film dialogue shares with stage dialogue the quality of being 'overheard'. Films 'disguise

the extent to which the words are truly meant for the off-screen listener' (Kozloff 2000: 15–16) and use 'multiple addressing' (Burger, quoted in Bubel 2008: 56) to make dialogue functional in relation both to the characters in the diegesis and to the overhearing audience. As Bubel observes (2008: 67), utterances are designed for the overhearing audience, which

> mean[s] that the characters, for example, generally do not mumble, as this would close off personal common ground to the audience.... They also generally do not speak in a variety of language that is unintelligible to the overhearer; the code they share with the audience is part of the participants' common ground that is open to the overhearer.

Like many others, Bubel here presumes the basic monolingualism of film. In fact, as we have seen, it is very common in films for characters to speak in a language unintelligible to the overhearer. Any such flouting of Grice's cooperative maxim is the result of given aesthetic, political and commercial considerations and will be part of the film's overall language strategy. Translation may or may not be provided and this translation may or may not come with a certain delay.

We saw in Chapter 3 that the presence of diegetic interpreters may be generated more by the audience's need to understand than that of the other characters. Subtitles enact this overhearing function in an even more marked fashion. While diegetic interpreting serves two masters, the characters and the audience, subtitling serves only the audience; the characters in the diegesis must draw on their own linguistic knowledge or resign themselves to incomprehension.[12]

The tension between the diegetic and the extradiegetic in translating heterolingual dialogue is brilliantly pastiched in Stanley Tucci's *The Impostors* (1998). Unemployed actor Maurice has stowed away on a cruise liner. As he hides under a bed in the cabin of the first mate Voltri, he overhears one side of a radio transmission by Voltri in a mock-Balkan language. Voltri's words are subtitled for the viewers but not for Maurice. However, hiding under the bed he is able to see Voltri's subtitles which, here too, are located within the diegetic space. Like all parody, this scene requires a certain competence of the viewer (Hutcheon 2006: 19). In this case the competence rests on a shared perception of the location of subtitles – which we see is a rather indeterminate one. Voltri's subtitles are located not on the surface of the screen, but at a point in diegetic space which corresponds to the site of their first appearance on screen, in the air just below and in front of Voltri's bed (Figure 5.9). Of course, Voltri's subtitles are for the viewer, not for Maurice, so Maurice sees them back

to front, as we see from the point-of-view shot (Figure 5.10). Thinking fast, Maurice realises that if he looks behind him at the mirror-fronted wardrobe, he will be able to read the subtitles the right way around (Figure 5.11).

For Genette, these transgressions of the border between inside and outside, between the world of the diegesis and our world, have a fundamentally destabilising function:

> All these games, by the intensity of their effects, demonstrate the importance of the boundary they tax their ingenuity to overstep,

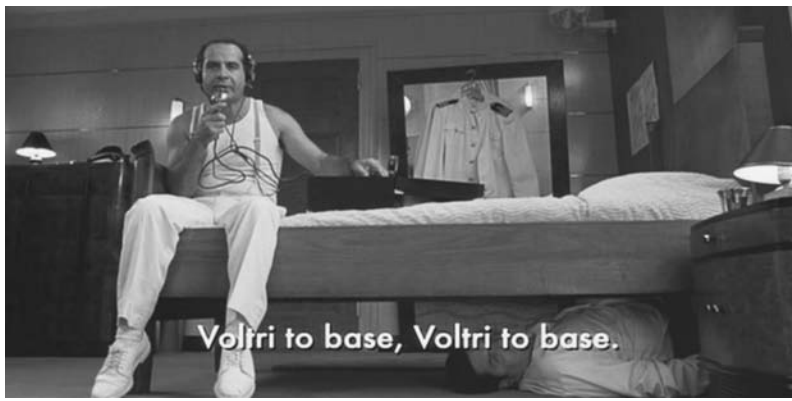

Figure 5.9 Establishing the location of the subtitles

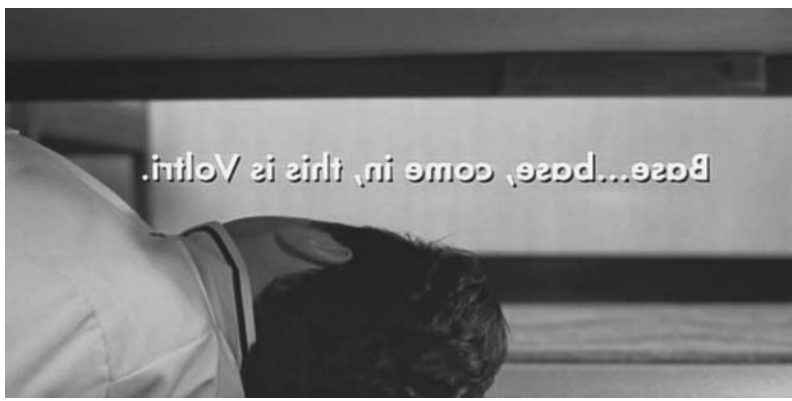

Figure 5.10 Voltri's subtitles from Maurice's point of view

Figure 5.11 Maurice succeeds in reading Voltri's subtitle in the mirror

> in defiance of verisimilitude – a boundary *that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself*: a shifting but sacred frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, the world of which one tells. Whence the uneasiness Borges so well put his finger on: 'Such inversions suggest that if the characters in a story can be readers or spectators, then we, their readers or spectators, can be fictitious.' The most troubling thing about metalepsis indeed lies in this unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narratees – you and I – perhaps belong to some narrative. (Genette 1983 [1980]: 236)

The set of narratives to which the audience of a subtitled film belongs combines several important assumptions. The cultural prestige of subtitling is assumed, as is the assumption that foreign languages offer a window on alternative subjectivities. The specularity of film also presupposes an assumption of our right to view, our right to consume visually. Unsubtitled dialogue, as suggested in the previous chapters, may present as mere sound, or alternatively as theatrical speech which resists our attempts at assimilation. Subtitles, by contrast, allow us to eavesdrop on languages we are not familiar with, and in doing so risk eliding the very questions of misunderstanding and incomprehension that they might be expected to foreground. Documentaries such as the recent Channel 4 series *Meet the Natives* cut conversations between speakers with no common language as though their bilingual conversations were perfectly mutually intelligible. Conversations which rely on

liaison interpreting are presented in the final edit as though the subtitles were available to the speakers on screen as well as to the audience. By replacing diegetic interpreting, and facilitating the presentation of bilingual dialogue where each language group perfectly understands the other and the heterolingual dialogue is subtitled for the benefit of the audience, subtitles in features such as Antoine Fuqua's *King Arthur* (2004; cf. O'Sullivan 2009) and *District 9* elide problems of cross-cultural communication and colonial linguistic encounters. The facile nature of such comprehension is lampooned in comic films and parodies where characters lacking a translation are forced to have recourse to the subtitles translating the heterolingual dialogue.

Translational narrative metalepsis in the form in which it has been presented here is an extreme, anti-naturalistic device which seems at first to be restricted to a small number of, mostly parodic, films. It is closely related, however, to more general narrative functions served by partial subtitles. Such subtitles may more properly be read as metasubtitles.

In a sense, all subtitles are metatextual because they constitute implicit comment by the subtitler on what elements of the text demand to be subtitled – minor characters whose speech rarely achieves theatrical status may, for instance, not justify subtitling if the film is dialogue-heavy and they are competing with many other voices (Nornes 2007: 168). The attenuation of profane or obscene language in a film constitutes a form of metatext, as do the headnotes of Animeigo DVD releases which imply assumptions about the limits of the audience's knowledge and the extent of their engagement with Japanese culture.

In Chapter 3 we saw examples of subtitles and diegetic interpreting offering competing accounts of foreign-language speech. It is the subtitles, rather than the dialogue, which manifest as the accurate translation and thus reveal what is *really* being said. But we also see, particularly in comedy or in experimental film, intralingual subtitles whose purpose is to comment on or to alter our understanding of diegetic speech. Simon Ellis's 2001 short film *Telling Lies* is recounted entirely through coloured, kinetic subtitles on a black screen against a dialogue track. The film takes the form of a series of telephone calls to and from a character called Phil. The subtitles are initially an accurate intralingual transcription of the dialogue but they swiftly begin to diverge as we realise that Phil's conversations with the other characters are all based on a series of untruths which are revealed in the subtitles. Scott Coleman Miller's 2005 short film *Uso Justo* is a more elaborate take on a similar device. In *Uso Justo* (the Spanish translates as 'Fair Use') Coleman Miller recycles an old Mexican medical drama with new English subtitles which tell a

completely different story about an experimental filmmaker coming to make a film in the Mexican town of Uso Justo. Its inhabitants have all heard about the film and are deeply suspicious. 'I find it intriguing,' 'says' one character, 'that an artist from east of the border is making an experimental film here in Uso Justo.' 'Have you ever seen an experimental film?' responds his companion. 'They can be very odd and unpleasant experiences.' Coleman Miller makes no effort to achieve a convincing simulacrum of translation through the development of reciprocal relationships between his dialogue and the subtitles. Instead, the film takes an affectionately parodic approach, under-subtitling the dialogue, inaccurately spotting the titles and introducing Spanish lexemes into the subtitles which are audibly missing any equivalent in the original dialogue. It is a testament to the aura of subtitles that they still constitute an effective parallel narrative which competes with the Spanish dialogue for the viewer's understanding of the storyline.

The classic example of metasubtitling is, of course, Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977; cf. Mera 1999). Early in Annie and Alvy's relationship they have a conversation at her apartment about photography. Their growing attraction and reciprocal insecurities constitute a clear subtext to their conversation, which is foregrounded through the addition of English subtitles. As Alvy bluffs nervously about photography ('you know, it's a new art form and, er ... a set of aesthetic criteria have not emerged yet'), the subtitle reads 'I wonder what she looks like naked'.[13] The common feature which all these films share is the 'override' function performed by the subtitles in respect of the diegetic speech. This is the characteristic of subtitling which makes pseudosubtitles most pernicious. Where the message conveyed by source dialogue and subtitles diverges, the epistemic claim of the subtitles customarily overwhelms that of the dialogue.

Metasubtitling and, or as, narration

It was argued above that the paratextual status of subtitles is rather fluid. Nevertheless, we can see a clear distinction between the status of conventional post-subtitles, which are consistent, recurrent, rhythmical and predictable in their relaying of the film's dialogue, and partial subtitles which are subject to a series of decisions taken in post-production, or even during production, about what elements of the film's dialogue require translation. These partial subtitles may also suffer from certain forms of textual instability. Partial subtitles are narrational in a way which post-subtitles cannot be. They allow us

to eavesdrop but only *at those points which a filmmaker chooses*. Partial subtitling therefore permits certain forms of focalisation (Genette 1983 [1980]: 185–194).

Focalisation, as Genette defines it, is a greater or lesser restriction of the narrative point of view. For Edward Branigan, focalisation 'involves a character neither speaking (narrating, reporting, communicating) nor acting (focusing, focused by) but rather actually *experiencing* something through seeing or hearing it' (1992: 101). Focalisation allows the viewer to share this experience. Where audience and character share a common language or languages, this is clearly straightforward. Where audience and character understanding of a language does not coincide, the situation is more complicated. If '[the] processes in the spectator's mind are considered to correspond with those in everyday overhearer situations, as when we listen in on a conversation between people sitting in front of us on the bus' (Bubel 2008: 69), a disjuncture will occur when the conversation overheard on the bus (i.e. in the film) takes place in a language which we do not speak.

We have mentioned Edward Branigan's notion of 'disparities of knowledge'. For Branigan, narrative 'comes into being when knowledge is unevenly distributed – when there is a disturbance or disruption in the field of knowledge' (1992: 66). Initially he focuses on visual information based on camera positions, but goes on to acknowledge the importance of aural/acoustic information:

> the knowledge we acquire need not coincide with 'visual' forms of knowledge nor on-screen knowledge even in simple cases. For example, our ability to learn from a conversation between characters may not be attributable to the position occupied by the camera. We may seem to hear from a diegetic place distant from the camera (e.g. from a point closer to the conversation so that the words are more distinct) or from a place we never see which is evidence that *another* disparity, which is not visible, has been put into play allowing us a unique access to the object *different from* the nominal visual access. (1992: 72)

The usual situation of 'overhearing' as outlined by Kozloff and Bubel obtains in monolingual, referentially restricted environments in which audience and characters share a single language. Where there is a disparity of knowledge caused by heterolingual dialogue, one of several situations may result. One or more characters in the diegesis may be in a similar position to the audience, not understanding the heterolingual

dialogue. This situation may be prolonged, or it may be relieved through the provision of a diegetic translation which will relieve both audience and character incomprehension, allowing the audience to 'overhear'. The double audience of diegetic interpreting makes possible vehicular matching in films such as *A Man Called Horse* and *Shōgun*.

Alternatively, the characters in the narrative may already understand the heterolingual dialogue while the viewer does not. This may prompt covert forms of diegetic interpreting such as the bilingual, verbally redundant dialogue of *That Night in Rio*. Dialogue is constrained by the necessity of accounting for the heterolingual dialogue. By contrast, a film such as *District 9* subtitles its heterolingual dialogue, allowing the audience instant access to alien speech and avoiding the requirement for verbal redundancy. Alternatively again, in a situation where *neither* audience *nor* the focalising characters understand the heterolingual dialogue, the audience's incomprehension may be relieved by subtitles, while the characters are left without an available translation. Subtitles can thus allow the audience to *eavesdrop* on dialogue not available to the characters, producing dramatic irony. Here we may speak of eavesdropping rather than of overhearing (cf. Bubel 2008: 61–62) since the translation is provided extradiegetically rather than diegetically.

Often, characters in the diegesis may differ with respect to their competence in the foreign language for purposes of narrative complication or dramatic irony. In other words, some characters understand the heterolingual dialogue and others do not. This is part of 'the "emplotment" of multilingualism and translation' which characterises the 'intrinsic potentialities of the narrative genre' (Delabastita and Grutman 2005: 24). In such a case, the choice of whether or not to subtitle will depend on whether or not the narration is focalised through a character who can understand or a character who cannot. Subtitling thus becomes associated with point of view. In the first season of *Lost*, whether or not the Korean characters Jin and Sun are subtitled depends on whether or not the viewer is meant to share the point of view of one of the Anglo characters when listening to them. When they speak to each other alone, their dialogue is subtitled. When they speak to each other in the presence of one of the other characters, the narration is focalised through the overhearing non-Korean-speaking character and their dialogue is unsubtitled.

The play of translation and non-translation, of linguistic access denied and permitted, is central to the narrative trajectory of Francesco, protagonist of Turkish–Italian filmmaker Ferzan Özpetek's feature *Hamam* (1997). The Italian Francesco finds himself the reluctant owner

of a Turkish bath in Istanbul bequeathed to him by his aunt who had moved there many years before. The film opens with an unsubtitled sequence in Turkish showing Perran as she carries a tray upstairs to Francesco's now elderly aunt, who is never seen in the film. A crash while Perran is out of shot signals that something alarming has happened. The viewer will later infer that Perran has found the old lady dead in her bedroom. She leans out of the window and calls to her husband and her neighbours in Turkish. A sequence of female neighbours come to their windows or balconies to answer her. No part of this scene is subtitled, though later exchanges in the film in Turkish all have subtitles. Later Francesco backs out of the sale of the *hamam* at the last minute, having decided to restore it instead. He has incidentally discovered from the middleman promoting the sale, Zozo, that the whole quarter is to be razed to build a commercial precinct. The scene where Francesco changes his mind about selling is immediately followed by a scene which parallels the film's opening sequence. Perran throws open the shutters and calls to her neighbours to tell them of Francesco's discovery, warning them not to sell their homes to Zozo. This is a turning point in the film, one of whose principal concerns is the importance of community. The neighbours come to their windows in a sequence which is a slight variation on the opening sequence. This time the entire exchange is subtitled. Although Francesco is not explicitly a bystander in this second scene, and is certainly not present in the film's opening scene, the focalisation of both scenes is aligned with Francesco's narrative trajectory, initially ignorant of and resistant to involvement in his aunt's Turkish affairs, then, gradually, learning to speak Turkish, strengthening his ties to his aunt's legacy and becoming part of the community around the *hamam*. This recapitulation of a sequence which was linguistically opaque for the non-Turkish speaking viewer marks the point of belonging, the point where Francesco ceases to be a visitor in Istanbul and becomes emotionally invested in the fabric of the city.

The shift in focalisation in *Hamam* is well flagged, and assumes a structuring role in the film due to the length of the two scenes and the balance of repetition and variation in the sequence of shots, recognisably similar but not identical. Similar structural play on focalisation can be found in a film like Hal Hartley's *Flirt*, with its identical storyline played out three times by different characters in different languages, or in Alfred Leslie's more experimental film *The Last Clean Shirt* (1964), with its tripartite structure which repeats the same shot sequence three times, once without subtitles, once with subtitles for the

(gibberish) dialogue of the female character and once with subtitles for the thoughts of the male character.

The demands of narrative focalisation can also prompt a more fluid shift between subtitled and unsubtitled dialogue. Where a film's heterolingual dialogue is subtitled throughout for an English-speaking audience, moments of unsubtitling stand out as shifts of focalisation. The Spanish dialogue of Sam Peckinpah's *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974) is subtitled in English, with the exception of one or two remarks. Bennie is in search of the bounty on Alfredo Garcia. He is accompanied by his girlfriend Elita, an old flame of Garcia's with a vested interest in not locating him. Lack of subtitles marks a moment of linguistic emplotment in the narrative when Elita enquires of a furniture vendor on the street where Garcia is:

> BENNIE: Where are we?
> ELITA: We can ask for him at a place they make furniture.
> BENNIE: That's it. There.

Elita has a conversation of several turns in Spanish with the furniture vendor before returning to the car, where Bennie is anxious to know what she has discovered.

> BENNIE: What's he say?
> ELITA: No luck.
> BENNIE: Yeah?
> ELITA: No luck at all. I guess we came all the way for nothing.

What Elita is hiding (badly) is that she did not ask the furniture vendor where Garcia was, but only asked a general question about the furniture. The narration, having allowed the viewer to eavesdrop on the Spanish dialogue up until now, abruptly withdraws this facility in order to preserve the ambivalence of Elita's behaviour. Like Bennie, who was unable to hear the conversation, we doubt that she is telling the truth, but unless we speak Spanish we cannot be entirely certain.

Similarly marked effects can be produced, not by the withholding of subtitles but by their unexpected deployment. *Autumn Moon* (Law, 1992) is the story of an alienated Japanese tourist and a schoolgirl who meet by chance in Hong Kong. Since he speaks no Cantonese and she no Japanese, their friendship develops almost entirely through the medium of English, which they both speak fairly well. Their dialogue is characterised by frequent code-switching; Japanese and Cantonese

lines of dialogue are rendered with subtitles. When Tokio visits the home where Pui Wai lives with her grandmother, he sees her folding paper cranes. Their conversation about the paper cranes takes place as usual in English:

> TOKIO: In Japan, when my friend is sick, I make this, a tradition. Wish him good health.
> PUI WAI: No. He's not sick. I just wish him good mark in this year examination. Very important.
> TOKIO: A Chinese tradition too?
> PUI WAI: [...] I don't know. [...] I believe, I pray for him every day. I make – *zi hao* – for him every day and don't eat meat for him, he will get good luck.

Pui Wai can't find the English word for *zi hao*, cranes, so she code-switches for a moment into Cantonese. This word is subtitled in the Region 1 HVE/Image Entertainment DVD release of the film (see Figure 5.12). As non-Cantonese-speaking viewers, we have been in the same position as Tokio in understanding Pui Wai. The position of the viewer-overhearer and the character have been aligned until that one word is subtitled for the viewer. The effect is a metaleptic one, which jerks the viewer between diegetic levels in a disorienting way as our focalisation momentarily diverges from Tokio to an omniscient narrator who

Figure 5.12 A single word subtitled in *Autumn Moon*

is in a position to gloss foreign lexical items in the dialogue. The suture generated, according to Trinh T. Minh-ha, by the hypnotic rhythm of subtitling is broken here in a moment of aesthetically and figuratively abusive subtitling.

The facility of this metaleptic shift between diegetic and extradiegetic translation or interpreting is foregrounded in an early scene in *Bride and Prejudice* (Chadha, 2004). The white American businessman William Darcy (Martin Henderson) has accompanied his friend Balraj Bingley (Naveen Andrews) and Bingley's sister Kiran (Indira Varma) to Amritsar for a wedding at which Balraj is the best man. As they enter the house where one of the wedding events is taking place, a meeting between the male and female guests heralds one of the elaborate song and dance numbers typical of Bollywood film. A series of translations is performed for the benefit of Darcy – and by extension for the benefit of the English-language viewer – by his two companions, who as NRIs (non-resident Indians) have both distance from and access to the events of the wedding. As the music begins for the first big number and the dancers assemble, Kiran compares what Darcy is about to see with 'the Indian version of American Idol', and her brother, who enthusiastically joins the dancers, to 'the Indian MC Hammer'. The song is performed initially by the male wedding guests only. The first verse is sung in unsubtitled Hindi. Darcy enquires of Kiran as to what they are singing, and is told 'Oh you pretty girls, fluttering temptingly like kites without string'. The next shot features a group of young women running down the central staircase towards the camera to join in the dance. Offscreen we can hear the men's song continue, now with subtitles:

> Oh, these girls are
> sharp as knives
> They move too fast
> for us to grab
> Behold, their beauty
> can sting like a bee

Here Kiran's oral translation of the song's opening line serves as a transition into the subtitles and a correlative for them, foregrounding the process of translation required to translate the song for Darcy and by extension for the non-Hindi-speaking viewer. Here in Bubel's words the utterance is 'designed for the overhearer' (2008: 67) and 'the code [the characters] share with the audience is part of the participants' common ground that is open to the overhearer'. The subtitles are implicitly

'standing in' for a diegetic interpreting process which is not fully carried through (indeed which would be very cumbersome on film and is rarely attempted). Later in the scene the subtitles will be withheld for a further turn as Kiran slips back into her role as diegetic interpreter, flirtatiously interpreting a particularly romantic line for Darcy.

This is the classic scene of subtitling metalepsis; where the scene shifts from an 'overheard' sequence where the characters' understanding is aligned with that of the audience, to a sequence in which subtitling offers the viewer an access which the characters themselves do not have. This is the scene parodied in *The Impostors* and other films with ludic subtitles.

While the presence of multilingualism on screen may foreground processes of translation, too easy an availability of subtitles can paradoxically de-emphasise the role of language in intercultural communication. Michael Cronin has suggested in a recent analysis of multilingualism in *Babel*, in the *Star Wars* trilogies and in other films that subtitling both releases audiences from the graft of translation and reminds them of its necessity. Although through subtitles 'the spectator takes on the role of interpreter experiencing the joy of connectedness without the pain of connection, the time and effort necessary to master languages ... the very availability of the subtitles themselves indicates the limits to any omniscience that might be assumed by their readers' (Cronin 2009: 106). This is well put, but also depends on the design, rhythm and performance of the subtitles in any given film. Subtitles perform the erasure of their own presence with a greater or lesser degree of success.

If for Kozloff and Bubel film dialogue is essentially 'overheard', we can posit a distinction on the basis of cases like these between the position of overhearer and that of eavesdropper. From the translational point of view, the overhearer brings their own linguistic competence to bear on the dialogue, while the eavesdropper benefits from the provision of omniscient subtitles which remove the burden of translation while maximising the erasure of its presence. Partial subtitles are inherently metaleptic. Even before the self-reflexive games and sight gags of popular parody, partial subtitles override the boundary between the diegetic and the extradiegetic, suggesting a qualitative experiential difference between watching a 'foreign film' with subtitles and watching a film in which subtitles play a partial role. It is the existence of conventionally subtitled dialogue in Michael Haneke's *Code Inconnu* (2000) which makes possible the final scene in which unsubtitled signs leave the viewer reaching for a translation which never comes, acutely

underlining one of the film's principal themes: that of the contingency of human communication.

It has been argued in this chapter that subtitles are textually and spatially unstable, and that partial subtitles are inevitably narrational in a way which 'impartial' subtitles are not. Both the intrinsic apparatus and the modes of deployment of subtitling would benefit from further research and reflection by scholars in many branches of research. Scholars of film and media studies, psychology, neuropsychology and translation studies might all be well placed to refute the suggestion in an influential article by Virgil Grillo and Michael Kawin that 'film critics would do well ... to guard against too "intellectual" a response to what is simply a translation device' (1981: 32).

6
Translating Multilingualism on Screen

We have seen in the course of the preceding chapters how imbricated cinema is with translation, and how these processes of translation can manifest in the 'final' film as multilingualism in various forms: code switching and code-mixing, diegetic interpreting, sequences of subtitled or unsubtitled foreign-language dialogue and so on.

Of course the 'final' film text is not final. If all goes well it will in turn become a source text to be translated for overseas exhibition and distribution. At this point multilingualism becomes both a product of translation and a problem for translation. Among the many critics who have considered the problems of translating multilingual texts is Jacques Derrida who repeatedly returned to the topic in his writings on translation (Derrida 1985, 1987). In the essay 'Des Tours de Babel', confounded by the babelic wordplay of *Finnegans Wake*, he points out the limitations of translation theory in respect of polyglossia:

> notons une des limites des théories de la traduction: elles traitent trop souvent des passages d'une langue à l'autre et ne considèrent pas assez la possibilité pour des langues d'être impliquées *à plus de deux* dans un texte. Comment traduire un texte écrit en plusieurs langues à la fois? Comment 'rendre' l'effet de pluralité? Et si l'on traduit par plusieurs langues à la fois, appellera-t-on cela traduire? (Derrida 1985: 207–208)
>
> let us note one of the limits of theories of translation: all too often they treat the passing from one language to another and do not sufficiently consider the possibility for languages to be implicated *more than two* in a text. How is a text written in several languages at a time to be translated? How is the effect of plurality to be 'rendered'? And what of translating with several languages at a time, will that be called translating? (ibid.: 171)

One of the theorists Derrida is referring to is Jakobson. Elsewhere, Derrida points out the way in which Jakobson's tripartite categorisation of translation as intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic 'presumes the existence of one language and of one translation in the literal sense, that is, as the passage from one language into another' (Derrida 1988: 100). As we have shown in previous chapters, this monolingualism is always already a construction. The assumed monolingualism of film is belied by films themselves and by the proliferation of case studies of multilingual literature and film. Nevertheless, the notion of the monolingual text is a persistent one. In the wider world 'implicitly or explicitly, translation is still approached as the *full* transposition of *one* (monolingual) source code into *another* (monolingual) target code for the benefit of a *monolingual* target public' (Meylaerts 2006: 5). We may therefore expect multilingual texts to be subject to various kinds of monolingualising pressure when they are translated.

The first step in translating a multilingual text is to acknowledge that the text contains more than one language. Film exhibitors and distributors have not, historically, shown themselves eager to do this. Trailers for subtitled films are notable for the absence of subtitles in them (Rich 2004); instead, distributors use voiceover and cut to avoid dialogue in an attempt to conceal the fact that films have been shot in another language. DVD offers interesting challenges here. Publication of films on DVD usually involves identifying the various language options available. These may include different language soundtracks (original and one or more dubbed soundtracks) and multiple subtitle tracks. A quick glance at an arbitrary selection of titles suggests that the standard categories used by the bigger distributors tend to mask multilingual dialogue. English is identified as the sole film language on the covers of my Region 2 DVDs of *Ten Canoes*, *Inglourious Basterds*, *Two Days in Paris* (Universal), *Kill Bill 1* (Miramax), *Dances with Wolves*, *Slumdog Millionaire* (Pathé), *Syriana* (Warner Brothers), *Babel* (Paramount Vintage) and *The Kite Runner* (Dreamworks).[1] Of course DVD language information is presented in a standardised format to allow viewers to identify whether a DVD release is in an original-language and/or dubbed or subtitled version, but one might have expected, in a situation of growing filmic multilingualism, that more effort would be made to adapt the standard categories, particularly in relation to films like *Inglourious Basterds* whose linguistic strategy is very marked. This raises the question of whether the non-acknowledgement of multiple languages on the cover of a DVD is part of the general tendency by the

distributors to de-emphasise the presence of subtitling in mainstream films. Little else would seem to explain the 'English-language' label given by Sony Pictures Classics to their DVD of Christian Carion's First World War drama *Joyeux Noël*, shot in French, English and German, which had been nominated in 2006 for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film.

Arthouse distributors, whose audiences are supposed to be more accepting of subtitles, seem more inclined to acknowledge multiple languages on a film's soundtrack. Tartan DVD releases of *Black Book*, *Japanese Story* (Brooks, 2003) and *La Spagnola* (Jacobs, 2001) acknowledge the multiple languages of the films' soundtracks (respectively Dutch/German/English; English and Japanese; English/Spanish/Italian). The Artificial Eye release of Loach's *Land and Freedom* identifies the film languages as 'English & Spanish with some subtitles'. The FilmFour release of *Monsoon Wedding* identifies the main soundtrack as Hindi/English. The BFI release of Visconti's *La terra trema* lists the languages as 'Italian and Sicilian language, English subtitles'. *One Day in Europe* (Peccadillo Pictures) exhaustively lists the film's many languages: Russian, Turkish, English, French, German, Spanish, Hungarian and Galician.

But practice is variable. Columbia Tristar DVDs of *Double Vision* (Chen, 2002, shot in English and Cantonese) and *Green Dragon* (Bui, 2001, shot in English and Vietnamese) identify both films as English-language only, but the same distributor's DVD release of *Dark Blue World* specifies that 'audio is a Czech, English, German mix'. Not all independent distributors are as careful. Thom Fitzgerald's *3 Needles*, which scrupulously matches the languages of its different sequences, is identified on the Wolfe Video Region 1 DVD as English language. Surprisingly, Egoyan's *Calendar*, released on DVD (Region 1) by Zeitgeist Video, is also identified as English language – perhaps a reflection of the fact that the Armenian and other languages in the film are not subtitled, and therefore not fully realised as foreign languages (see Chapter 3). Pressure may be exerted by the notion of 'national cinema', as in the case of Pabst's bilingual *Kameradschaft* which is identified as a German-language film on the German UFA Klassiker DVD release – an ironic attribution, given the film's explicit language policy.

Within the architecture of the DVD, menus list the linguistic options available, and here too we can see the pressures exerted by the multiplication of languages. Silvio Soldini's 2002 feature *Brucio nel vento*, a Swiss–Italian coproduction, adapted from the novel *Hier* [*Yesterday*] by the francophone Hungarian writer Agata Kristof, tells the story of Tobias

(Ivan Franek), a Czech immigrant in a Swiss factory. The film contains dialogue in both Czech and French. One reviewer of the Italian DVD struggles to describe the linguistic architecture of both film and DVD:

> In DVD, *Brucio nel vento* offre un curioso pacchetto linguistico, che nasce proprio dall'ambientazione e dalla cornice linguistica del film: essendo il protagonista uno straniero, la versione audio italiano (l'altro audio, chiamato nel menu 'lingua originale' è un mix di francese e ceco, ndr) vede doppiata la sua lingua, ovviamente, con l'italiano, e mantiene il francese sulla bocca dei protagonisti di contorno. La sottotitolazione in italiano, quindi, oltre che per tutto il film (in italiano e in italiano per non udenti) è opzionabile anche solo nei momenti in cui gli attori parlano francese. (Gattuso 2002)
>
> [The setting and linguistic background of *Brucio nel vento* make the DVD language options a curious mixture: the protagonist is a foreigner, so the Italian audio version (the other audio version, referred to in the menu as 'original language' is a mixture of French and Czech – Ed.) dubs his dialogue, obviously, into Italian, and retains the French dialogue of the characters around him. The Italian subtitles can be selected for the whole film (both Italian and Italian for the hearing impaired), or can be selected for the French dialogue only.]

Like other coproductions this film, shot in French and Czech by an Italian director, sits outside the national-cinema paradigm which assumes a clear link between language and nation and which lies at the root of industrial systems such as award categories (see pp. 110–112). The reviewer must draw on the film's narrative structure to construct the film's linguistic architecture.

The narrative is focalised through the film's Czech protagonist. Flashbacks to his past are in Czech, as are his interactions with other Czech immigrants in the film's present. His interactions with Swiss characters are in French. The protagonist has also begun to write in French and is consulting a Swiss therapist. This allows for French voice-over at several points in the film. The language options on the DVD offer two soundtracks: either the 'lingua originale' (original language, in the singular) or the Italian dub. The 'original language' version is in French and Czech; the Italian dub in Italian and French. There are four subtitle options: 'italiano per non udenti', 'italiano per i dialoghi in francese nella versione italiana', 'italiano per la versione originale' and 'nessun sottotitolo' [Italian for the hearing impaired, Italian for the French dialogue in the Italian version, Italian for the original version,

no subtitles]. The flexibility of the DVD format makes it possible to meet the needs of the film's heteroglot potential audience. The DVD imagines Italian monolingual spectators who will need subtitles for non-Italian dialogue, but by offering unsubtitled versions, it also envisages bilingual viewers who may speak both Italian and French, or both French and Czech. The technical capabilities of DVD thus create a space for multilingualism which goes beyond the treatments possible in theatrical exhibition or on videotape. Although until recently such treatments could have been considered 'anomalous' (O'Hagan 2007: 161), they are now becoming common enough to constitute changing norms in the linguistic architecture of DVDs.

But elaborate explanations are required in order to describe these different possibilities to readers of the review. The diverse forms which heterolingualism takes in film has probably contributed to the failure to develop a vocabulary, and therefore a taxonomy, for multilingual film. This is a critical as well as an industrial problem. If, as John Mowitt says, the ' "oculocentrism" of film theory may have had a self-defeating role to play in the struggle to pose the problem of ... "foreign film languages" ' (Mowitt 2005: 51) it is a problem that studios and distributors also have yet to solve.

Dubbing multilingual film

Once one has identified and acknowledged the multiple languages of a film's soundtrack, then comes the problem of how these should be translated when the film is distributed overseas. Both dubbing and subtitling are, in their different ways, problematic. Dubbing historically erases the sound of the foreign voice, and, in the case of multilingual film, may erase or reduce the coexistence of languages (Heiss 2004; Corrius Gimbert 2005). The most famous instance of the elision of multiple languages from a film's soundtrack is probably Godard's *Le Mépris*. Set in Italy and filmed on location, the early sequences of the film include long interpreted dialogues between the French screenwriter Paul Javal (Michel Piccoli), the American producer Jeremy Prokosch (Jack Palance), the German director Fritz Lang, playing himself, and their Italian interpreter Francesca Vanini (Georgia Moll). Javal has been asked to do some additional scriptwriting for Prokosch's troubled project, the *Odyssey*, directed by Fritz Lang. Javal speaks only French, Prokosch only English. Lang moves easily, and sometimes quixotically, between German, French and English. The interpreter Vanini is the only character to speak French, German, Italian and English and her presence

is essential for all communication except that between Paul and his wife Camille. The polyglossia of the script is carefully designed, in a film one of whose themes is the capacity of cinema to render the great translated literature of the ancient world. Stephen Taylor has described Godard's 'gimmicky and yet astonishingly successful approach to the cliché-battered communication problem' as the construction of a 'miniature Babel', constrained by

> a set of rules worthy of a Parker Brothers game ... In Prokosch's presence, the semi-privacy in which Paul and Camille may carry on their disputes depends wholly on Francesca's declining to translate their French. Similarly, Lang and Prokosch often argue their conflicting interpretations of the *Odyssey* while Paul has only Lang's occasional French wisecracks to save him from total bafflement. When Prokosch talks about the film to Paul ... Lang, who is usually within earshot and abhors both Prokosch and his opinions, is compelled to listen to each statement twice, first the English, then Francesca's almost sardonically demure rendering into French. (Taylor 1965: 7–8)

Interpreting in the film thematises not just the difficulty of interpersonal communication but also the adaptation of Homer, the adaptation of the novel by Moravia on which the film is loosely based, the battle between high culture and commercial utilitarianism, and the polyglot history of the cinema itself (Balfour 2004).

The interpreting gives the film's dialogue a ponderous rhythm where casual remarks acquire an unexpected rhetorical weight. One of the reasons why Jean-Luc Godard included these extensive scenes of interpreting in *Le Mépris* is said to have been to make it impossible to dub the film (Stam 1989: 74; Betz 2001). If this was his intention, he failed. His coproducer Carlo Ponti produced a substantially shortened, dubbed Italian version from which Godard had his name removed (Betz 2001: 39). A dubbed English version was also produced, which is available on the Momentum Pictures Region 2 DVD of the film. In the English version the film's polyglot dialogue is entirely rendered into English.

In Godard's original film, Vanini's interpreting is sometimes approximate. Spectators with both French and English have the added pleasure of seeing where Vanini paraphrases rather than rendering precisely. Here Francesca is interpreting for Javal and Prokosch (Table 6.1). The knowledge of when to paraphrase is part of the interpreter's job, but Vanini sometimes oversteps her brief, for instance when she interprets 'On this, my last kingdom' as 'C'est la fin du cinéma' – which will be

Table 6.1 ST and English dub of *Le Mépris*

Original version	**English dubbed version**
PROKOSCH: Only yesterday there were kings here.	PROKOSCH: Only yesterday there were kings here.
VANINI: Hier il y avait des rois. [Yesterday there were kings.]	VANINI: He's in one of his moods.
PROKOSCH: Kings and queens! Warriors and lovers!	PROKOSCH: Kings and queens! Warriors and lovers!
VANINI: Des princesses, des amoureux ... [Princesses, lovers ...]	VANINI: He loves the stage. You know he used to be an act-
PROKOSCH: All kinds of real human beings!	PROKOSCH: All kinds of real human beings!
VANINI: Toutes les emotions humaines. [All human emotions.]	VANINI: [line omitted as face out of shot]
PROKOSCH: Feeling all the real human emotions. Yesterday I sold this land.	PROKOSCH: Feeling all the real human emotions. Yesterday I sold this land.
VANINI: Hier, il a vendu tout.	VANINI: Yes, he sold everything.
PROKOSCH: And now they're gonna build a five and ten cent store, Prisunic, on this ...	PROKOSCH: And now they're gonna build a five and ten cent store on my land.
VANINI: On va construire des Prisunic. [They're going to build Prisunic.]	VANINI: As usual he's exaggerating.
PROKOSCH: On this, my last kingdom.	PROKOSCH: On this, my last kingdom.
VAN.: C'est la fin du cinéma. [It's the end of cinema.]	VANINI: He thinks it marks the end of cinem-
PROKOSCH: I tell you it is the end of motion pictures (partly audible)	PROKOSCH: I tell you it is the end of motion pictures.

Prokosch's next line. One imagines that Vanini has heard Prokosch, who loves the sound of his own voice, deliver these little orations before. In her trimming and reorganisation of the discourse she is interpreting, her decision-making about what is relevant and what not, Vanini recalls the role of subtitling itself.

The challenge for the English dub is to manage the repetition of the turns of the dialogue in the sequences in which Vanini interprets. There is some limited space for simply omitting remarks when the actors' faces are out of shot, but these opportunities are sporadic. On the whole, the scene is terribly exposed to the listening spectator. Since the film removes the interpreter's role entirely, Vanini becomes, ironically in the light of the film's classical theme, a sort of Greek chorus, interrupting with repetitions and variations on what Prokosch has just said: 'Yesterday I sold this land'/'Yes, he sold everything'. Her relationship with Prokosch is also inflected by the coinages of the dubbing

scriptwriter. In the polyglot source text the relationship between Prokosch and Vanini, described by Taylor as the American producer's 'translator, secretary, and doubtless a good deal more' (1965: 7), remains rather implicit. In the dubbed version Vanini is much more proprietary of Prokosch, interjecting superfluously into his conversation with Javal and glossing his remarks with little explanations of his moods and his interests. The subversiveness of Vanini's translations disappears. What is in the polyglot source text one of her more provocative renderings, 'c'est la fin du cinéma', becomes in the English dubbed version a reasonable response to Prokosch's melodramatic description of the Cinecittà lot as his 'last kingdom'. While Vanini's more accurate translations must be reworked for the English dub, the looseness of this translation paradoxically privileges the dub, which is indeed, for some cinephiles, the end of cinema, the loss of the voice. But most of Vanini's translations have some substance to them, and these are the ones most damaged by the process of dubbing into English. As the film proceeds, Francesca's recapitulations of the dialogue of other characters become ever more fatuous. To borrow Prokosch's bitter observation at the end of the test screening, 'You cheated me, Fritz. That is not what is in that script'.

The erosion of multilingualism in dubbing reflects the general tendency towards discursive levelling characteristic of translation. Antoine Berman identifies twelve 'deforming tendencies' operated by translation on source texts. These are rationalisation, clarification, expansion, ennoblement and popularisation, qualitative impoverishment, quantitative impoverishment and the destruction of rhythms, underlying networks of signification, linguistic patternings, vernacular networks (which may also be exoticised), expressions and idioms, and the superimposition of languages (Berman 2004: 280). By 'superimposition of languages' Berman is referring to 'the relation between dialect and a common language, a koine, or the coexistence, in the heart of a text, of two or more koine' (ibid.: 287) – in other words, the coexistence of languages. What happens in translation is that 'the relation of tension and integration that exists in the original between the vernacular language and the koine, between the underlying language and the surface language, etc. tends to be effaced'. Berman presents several examples of translation where a single language is used to translate two or more languages in a source text. This may involve the flattening out of transposed linguistic features reflecting an 'underlying' language, or the homogenisation of two national languages both present in a text. The result is that translations can become both 'homogeneous and incoherent' (ibid.: 285).

This mixture of homogeneity and incoherence is most likely to be found when the target language is one of the languages used in the source text. An example held up to ridicule by Jacques Lourcelles is the Italian dub of Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia*. The film was originally shot in English with some Italian dialogue. The results of its dubbing into Italian are not happy:

> La version italienne est particulièrement monstrueuse. Elle a au moins le mérite de souligner, plus qu'aucune autre, la monstruosité de tout doublage. N'y figure pas l'une des meilleures scènes du film (Sanders constatant que tout le monde fait la sieste et n'arrivant pas à faire comprendre qu'il veut un verre de vin) car elle était littéralement indoublable. La scène entre Sanders et la prostituée (Anna Proclemer), conservée dans la version italienne, est totalement absurde dans son texte. Sanders (ou plutôt son doubleur italien) dit d'abord ne rien comprendre à l'italien, puis se met à parler avec son interlocutrice italienne, qu'il comprend parfaitement, un italien non moins parfait. (Lourcelles 1992: 1586–1587)
>
> [The Italian version is particularly monstrous. It has at least the merit of underlining, more than any other example, the monstrosity that is dubbing. One of the best scenes of the film (in which Sanders realises that everyone is taking a siesta and fails to make his request for a glass of wine understood) is missing because it was literally undubbable. The scene between Sanders and the prostitute (Anna Proclemer), retained in the Italian version, is entirely absurd in the context. Sanders (or rather his Italian dubbing actor) first says he understands no Italian, then begins to speak to his Italian interlocutor, whom he understands perfectly, in perfect Italian.]

To call a film 'undubbable' here is to say that it cannot be reduced to a single language, but, as we have seen, the impossibility of dubbing individual sequences, or their incoherence, may not stand in the way of the production of dubbed versions. The translation of multilingual source films has been theorised in terms of 'third languages' (see e.g. Corrius Gimbert 2005) where a language is implicated in the translation which is neither the ostensible primary language of the source text nor that of the target text. In such cases, the 'third' language can potentially remain unchanged in both source text (ST) and target text (TT). This is not the case when an ancillary language in the source text is also the target language, as with the Italian dubbed version of *Viaggio in Italia*, which already features Italian dialogue in its source version. Because *Viaggio in Italia*

thematises language contact and incomprehension between speakers of English and Italian, when dubbing the film for an Italian target audience these scenes must be omitted, adapted (changing the topic of the dialogue completely) or dubbed into Italian while the distributors hope for the best, with the mixed results held up to derision by Lourcelles.

Challenging though it is, *Le Mépris* by no means exhausts the problems of multilingualism in audiovisual translation. When we dub already partially subtitled multilingual film, further interesting problems arise. In Chapter 5 I argued that subtitles are characterised textually by ephemerality, but sometimes also by a physical inseparability from the film text. A burned-in subtitle cannot be removed; it is fixed on the screen and must either be blotted out and overwritten (as in the case of *Incubus*) or worked around. Earlier examples of partial subtitles in American films tend to be burned into the available prints, and interfere with the further translation of these films in various ways. Sydney Pollack's 1974 Japanese–American coproduction *The Yakuza* is one such film. The film has a self-consciously bilingual language policy. The dialogue is predominantly in English, but characters frequently switch codes for a few turns into Japanese: a marked strategy in the mid-1970s. This Japanese dialogue is subtitled in English in a particularly large and screen-filling font (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 His English is good?

The film opens with a sequence preceding the opening credits in which the gangster Kato Jiro introduces himself to Tono, a potential employer. The sequence begins in Japanese. After a few turns, a rather tenuously motivated diegetic switch to English takes place, apparently

as a way of testing Kato Jiro's English level. Lines in square brackets are English subtitles to the Japanese dialogue:

KATO JIRO: [Please receive my introduction.]
AKIYAMA MASARU: [First receive ours.]
KATO JIRO: [Impossible. Your position is higher.]
AKIYAMA MASARU: [We will receive your words.]
KATO JIRO: [I am Kato Jiro. I was born in Osaka and belong to no clan.] [I am a free agent.] [I specialize in work of an international nature.]
AKIYAMA MASARU: [We are impressed by your politeness.] [I am Akiyama Masaru, a humble *kobun* of the Tono Clan.] [We extend our best regards.]
TONO: *Asks sidekick* [His English is good?] *In English* Where do you stay in Los Angeles?
KATO JIRO: Usually downtown.
TONO: Is that your favourite part of the city?
KATO JIRO: No. I like Westwood.

For the dubbing scriptwriter, the immediate problem for translation in this scene is the switch from Japanese to English. The question about Kato Jiro's competence in English is asked in Japanese. Like the preceding Japanese dialogue, it is subtitled in English. These subtitles form an ineradicable part of the film print.

The audio options available on the Warner Brothers Region 2 DVD of this film include French and Italian dubbed versions. These take slightly different approaches to the code switching in the film. The French dubbed version leaves the Japanese audio intact, with, of course, its subtitles, and switches into French when the characters speak English. No effort is made to translate the Japanese dialogue or its English subtitles. The odd result is that both the Japanese dialogue and the English subtitles become part of the film's 'linguistic landscape', like the occasional Japanese characters visible in the image.

The Italian dub is more radical. It dubs almost all the dialogue, leaving only a trace of Japanese here and there on the soundtrack.

The Italian dub ignores the film's bilingualism and dubs both the English and the Japanese dialogue. This will involve ignoring the presence of the subtitles and (presumably) hoping that the audience does not understand English.

The dub alters the overall coherence of the opening scene by providing the spectator with much more contextual information. In the original

Table 6.2 The Italian dub of *The Yakuza*

Italian dubbed version	**English back-translation**
KATO JIRO: Chiedo l'onore di presentarmi.	I ask for the honour of introducing myself.
AKIYAMA MASARU: È nostro dovere farlo per primi.	It is our duty to do that first.
KATO JIRO: Non è possibile. Siete in una posizione superiore.	This is not possible. Your position is superior.
AKIYAMA MASARU: Allora ti invitiamo a parlare.	In that case we invite you to speak.
KATO JIRO: Grazie per la tua gentilezza. Il mio nome è Kato Jiro, di Osaka. Non appartengo a nessun gruppo. Svolgo un'attività indipendente. Sono specializzato in missioni di carattere internazionale. Sono disposto ad eseguire l'incarico che Tono vorrà affidarmi.	Thank you for your courtesy. My name is Kato Jiro, from Osaka. I do not belong to any group. I work independently. I am specialised in missions of an international character. I am prepared to carry out whatever task Tono entrusts me with.
AKIYAMA MASARU: Ti ringrazio per la sollecitudine. Se ora mi permetti mi presento io. Il mio nome è Akiyama Masaru. Qualcuno ci ha fatto il tuo nome. Ricevi i nostri omaggi.	Your politeness is appreciated. If you will permit, I will now introduce myself. My name is Akiyama Masaru. Somebody gave us your name. Receive our respect.
TONO: Cosa te ne pare? Tu, sei pratico di Los Angeles?	What do you think? Are you familiar with Los Angeles?
KATO JIRO: Ci vado spesso per lavoro.	I often go there for work.
TONO: Attualmente hai impegni particolari?	Do you have obligations at the moment?
KATO JIRO: No. Sono a tua disposizione.	No. I am at your disposal.

film, the meaning of this scene only becomes clear in retrospect. Kato Jiro is being entrusted by Tono with a message for an American businessman in Los Angeles, George Tanner, who has reneged on a deal. Tono gives Kato Jiro a sleeve cut from his kidnapped daughter's shirt as part of the message. The Italian dub adds the information that Kato Jiro has been referred to Tono by a mutual acquaintance, and that in introducing himself Kato Jiro is accepting the commission.

Tono's question about the quality of Kato Jiro's English is now superfluous, because the Italian dub removes the bilingual element from the film. Instead of asking whether Kato Jiro's English is good, in Italian Tono asks his henchman what his general impression is of Kato Jiro. In the English source dialogue Tono then asks a couple of very indirect questions of Kato Jiro as a way of introducing the topic of his

forthcoming trip to Los Angeles. This signals the cultural element of indirectness and also creates a 'disparity of knowledge' which the viewer will only be able to satisfy in the next scene which follows the credits. Instead of the question 'Where do you stay in Los Angeles?' with its assumption that as an international operative Kato Jiro will be familiar with the city, in the Italian version Tono asks him much more directly whether he is familiar with the city. In the English dialogue it is left implicit that Kato Jiro is entering Tono's service; in the Italian version his willingness to undertake the commission is specified twice.

Dubbing can take advantage of the inaudibility of the source dialogue to rewrite and more or less adapt the source dialogue (which is what makes dubbing so effective as a mode of censorship). At the same time, this dubbing is 'vulnerable' to the fact that the English subtitles remain on the screen. It is interesting that the dub diverges entirely from the source dialogue only after the English subtitles have disappeared from the screen. The use of Japanese in the film contributes to an impression of authenticity, but even more importantly inflects the characters' relationships with each other. Characters switch codes to express respect, solidarity and intimacy. The removal of the bilingual layer from the film's dialogue eliminates this interpersonal level and also excises a feature which differentiates the film from other films of the period in the same genre.

Subtitling multilingual film

As a discursive strategy, multilingualism falls foul of the law of standardisation suggested by Gideon Toury. Toury formulated standardisation as a translation 'law' which says that 'in translation, textemes tend to be converted into repertoremes'. However original or unusually written the source text, target texts tend to use a language which is part, in Toury's words, of an 'institutionalised repertoire'. 'In translation, target-language items are normally selected on a level which is lower than the one where textual relations are established in the source text' with the result that 'translated texts normally tend towards greater standardization than their source texts' (Toury 1991: 188). The pull exerted by the monolingual convention may be strong enough to prevail over the innovative or alien elements of the source text. The French passages in Tolstoy's famously multilingual *War and Peace*, for example, are routinely erased in translation or represented by trace phrases (see e.g. Chan 2002: 51–52).

In subtitling, technical factors as well as general translation tendencies contribute to an even greater discursive levelling. Subtitles, being a 'partial' form of translation according to Henrik Gottlieb, segment dialogue into short sentences; they elide markers of interpersonal relationships, gestural language, tag questions, repetitions and exclamations. They operate heavily according to a principle of relevance. Because in order to be processed at a suitable speed by the viewer they must adhere to certain norms of linguistic consistency and correctness, they tend to standardise registers, sociolects and dialects. In *Black Robe*, Jesuit priest Father Laforgue speaks Algonquin apparently with absolute fluency, according to the subtitles which render his dialogue. But when they come to the tribe of Mestigoit, one of the Indians dismissively says (in the subtitle to his indigenous dialogue) that Laforgue 'can't speak properly'.[2] There was no indication in the subtitles to Laforgue's Algonquin speech, up to this point, that he spoke anything but correct Algonquin.[3]

Given the difficulty subtitles have in rendering variations in register or dialect, we may expect that they will have difficulties rendering multiple natural languages coexisting within a single film. As we have seen in the course of this book, polyglossia in films comes in many narrative shapes and sizes. Characters may use lots of borrowing (*Zoot Suit*) within an otherwise monolingual film; a film may include one or more scenes of foreign-language dialogue with incidental subtitles (*Natural Born Killers*; *Sherlock Holmes*). Characters in separate language communities may speak separate languages, as in *Beyond the Clouds*, *Night on Earth* or *3 Needles* where, broadly speaking, characters in the different countries each speak their respective national languages. Characters speaking different languages may come into contact, prompting scenes of functional multilingualism (where characters have bilingual or multilingual competence, as in *A Talking Picture*), diegetic interpreting (*Treasure of the Sierra Madre*) or simple incomprehension (*Lost in Translation*). Often these different situations are combined, as in *La grande illusion* which features two characters who codeswitch very easily (Boeldieu and von Rauffenstein); one character (Maréchal) whose inability to speak another language means that he has to rely on the linguistic competence of other characters; and one character (Rosenthal) whose knowledge of English and German allows him to act as an interpreter for Maréchal after their escape from the camp. Gesture or props may be called upon to achieve communication where linguistic resources fail. Characters may mix codes within sentences or switch codes from sentence to sentence.

As we have seen, dubbed films tend to contain less linguistic diversity than their source films. What happens when this multiplication and juxtaposition of languages is subtitled? We can identify several general tendencies. On the whole, unsubtitled foreign-language use in the source film (*One, Two, Three*; *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*) is left unsubtitled in the target-language version. This can lead to paradoxical effects when one of the multiple languages of the ST is also the target language. In *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, the extended scenes in Spanish may be perfectly understood by a Spanish speaker while remaining opaque to a non-Spanish speaking domestic audience. Watching the film with Spanish subtitles, the experience is different. Where Walter Huston's character Howard interprets the Spanish dialogue diegetically for his companions the Spanish subtitles to Howard's English translation recapitulate and double what a Spanish-speaking audience has already understood.

The biggest problem for subtitles is that subtitling offers limited means for distinguishing between different source languages. Vehicular matching in subtitles, where the subtitles might codeswitch alongside the dialogue, is extremely rare. Subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing often deploy explicit attribution. In *Green Dragon* the subtitles tell us that a character has switched codes by saying [*Speaks Vietnamese*] but no attempt is made to transcribe the spoken Vietnamese in the subtitles. While subtitles allow us to hear the different languages of the dialogue, they are all represented as identical in the subtitles. There is the option simply not to subtitle a subsidiary language, thus leaving it phonically Other. This would be usual in cases where the subsidiary language is already an unsubtitled foreign language for the domestic audience. Alternatively, a secondary or occasional language of the narration can be subtitled in italics, as is the case with the Shanghainese dialect in the theatrical print of *Lust, Caution* shown in the UK. Otherwise, subtitles tend to render all languages into the single language of the subtitles. In the Australian film *La Spagnola*, characters speak Spanish and Italian within the same conversation and appear to understand each other perfectly. The subtitles abet them in this by translating all their dialogue alike into English. When D. W. McKiernan says of Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* that the film's dialogue, in English, Hindi and Punjabi, 'slips effortlessly between languages' and 'has the effect of keeping the monolingual English-speaking audience on its toes and constantly aware of the hybridity of this segment of Indian culture' (McKiernan 2008: 148), I am not sure that I agree. To me – an English-speaking viewer with no knowledge of South Asian languages – the film's code-mixing is very striking, but it nevertheless only takes place *bi*laterally, in other words,

shifting between English and foreign language(s) whose number I am not in a position to identify and which are subtitled indistinguishably in English. In the case of *Men with Guns*, we are told that the film is shot in Spanish with some English and four indigenous languages, Kuna, Tzotzil, Maya and Nahuatl, but again for this viewer it was not possible to differentiate one indigenous language from another, and there is no clue given by the screenplay. The three subtitled languages of *Night on Earth* (French, Italian and Finnish) seem to a speaker of European languages phonetically distinct enough to be distinguishable despite the uniform English subtitles throughout (and of course each section supplements linguistic specificity by other geographical and cultural markers) but this may not be the case for a speaker of a non-European language, for instance.[4]

This expressive deficiency of subtitling means that subtitles will have difficulty rendering when a character changes language. While interlingual subtitling turns monolingual source films into multilingual viewing experiences by virtue of the coexistence of spoken dialogue and written subtitles, it reduces the multilingualism of multilingual films in that multiple languages are represented within a single language. When one is 'adrift on an alien sea of indecipherable phonic substance' in Stam's memorable phrase (1989: 68), it can be difficult to hear the difference between languages. This can have implications for following the plot.

A poignant example of how subtitling can homogenise important linguistic shifts in a film is provided by Pabst's 1931 film *Kameradschaft*. Having established the use of vehicular matching in the film, where the French and German characters each speak their own language in the opening prologue, the action moves backwards and forwards throughout the film between the two language communities and the two languages. In the dark of the mine the French and German characters are distinguished aurally, by the languages they speak, sometimes more than they are differentiated visually. The use of French and German is fundamental to the film's binary structure, from the rather heavy-handed symbolism of its opening sequence which features a quarrel over a game of marbles between two boys, one German-speaking, the other French-speaking, to the two speeches in the closing sequence, one in French and one in German, which convey the film's internationalist message.

Images of barriers recur in the film: the border crossings where unemployed German miners looking for work on the French side are turned back by the border guards; the walls between the two mines,

at once firebreak and national boundary; the gates to the mines which close to keep out the distraught families of the buried French miners; and, at the beginning of the film, the line in the earth drawn by the two boys playing marbles. The film's central sequence is the one where all these barriers are broken down as the German rescue team comes to the aid of the trapped French miners. The two trucks carrying the German miners race across both border checkpoints, under fire from the French border guards who only belatedly realise what their mission is. For them the gates of the mine, closed against the pressure of worried miners' wives, are opened. 'Colonne de sauvetage allemande [German rescue team],' announces Wittkopp, the leader of the Westphalian team, in French. The strength of emotion generated by this spontaneous and selfless offer of assistance in the face of deep-rooted national hostilities is conveyed through the French team leader's response in heavily accented German: 'Wir danken für Ihre Hilfe [We thank for your help].' A pan and zoom follows to a close-up of the two characters shaking hands which lasts several seconds. The fact that their hands are bare, although they are otherwise wearing head-to-foot safety suits including gas masks, underlines the allegorical nature of the contact.

Here the switch of language must be understood in the context of this meeting of bare hands. It evokes commonality and solidarity, the effort to cross borders and overcome national hostilities. This switch of languages is experienced very differently in different subtitled versions of the film. In the UFA Klassiker DVD released for the German market, the German remains unsubtitled and subtitles in German are supplied for the French dialogue. The German viewer experiences the film's multilingualism. Both German and French viewers would experience the moment of the exchange of languages. The English-speaking viewer watching a copy of the film subtitled in English has less access. Not only the juxtapositioning of languages, but the crucial code switching in this pivotal scene is unavailable to viewers unless they have some knowledge of the languages involved.

This is a problem to be solved for subtitling, and one imagines that, in the future, it may be addressed through use of colour and font. An innovative, if problematic, solution is offered by the recent action blockbuster *War* (Atwell, 2007). The plot of the film concerns a feud between Chinese Triads and Japanese Yakuza in San Francisco, and includes frequent exchanges in both Chinese and Japanese with subtitles, in line with the shift towards vehicular matching described in Chapter 4. To differentiate clearly between scenes in Chinese and scenes in Japanese

for viewers with no knowledge of either language, the opening subtitle of each scene flashes momentarily in the characters of the source language before morphing into conventional white English subtitles (see Figures 6.2 to 6.5).

As a further aid to understanding, the two languages are colour-coded, the Chinese as yellow and the Japanese as red. This is reinforced by similarly colour-coded captions elsewhere in the film specifying the locations of the action. It is an ingenious solution, and unfortunate that the colour coding of the Chinese as yellow and the Japanese as red rehearses objectionable national and racial stereotypes.

We have said that subtitling tends to reduce rather than promote screen multilingualism, but in certain circumstances it can enhance it. By subtitling foreign-language dialogue rather than leaving it as part of the acoustic landscape, as was the tendency in earlier decades of the last century, or homogenising it to English, subtitles make linguistic differences visible on screen. By translating the dialogue, they constitute it as language and thus bring multilingualism into being (see Sakai 2009).

This visible multilingualism can have further ramifications. Where multilingual dialogue is already partly subtitled for a domestic audience, these 'textual' subtitles can find themselves competing for

Figure 6.2 Chinese characters morph into English 1

Figure 6.3 Chinese characters morph into English 2

Figure 6.4 Chinese characters morph into English 3

Figure 6.5 Chinese characters morph into English 4

space with conventional 'paratextual' subtitles when a film is subtitled for overseas distribution. *The Yakuza*, whose dubbed versions we discussed in the last section, also offers several subtitle tracks on the same DVD. At the points where the forced English subtitles appear on screen the French and Italian subtitles are displaced to the upper portion of the screen. Here, the mechanisms of translation only permit supplementation, and not substitution. In Turkish–Italian director Ferzan Özpetek's *Le fate ignoranti* (*Ignorant Fairies*), shot predominantly in Italian, there is one scene where two bilingual Turkish characters switch code into Turkish to discuss a painful family memory. The Italian subtitles for this scene are burned into the print of the film used for the Region 2 British DVD release of the film. The DVD of course presents the whole film with English subtitles. As a result, in the scene under discussion, the two sets of subtitles are superimposed. Unusually, the English subtitles are not even displaced to the top of the screen (Figure 6.6).

The English subtitles (in yellow) are almost superimposed on the pre-existing white Italian subtitles. The spotting is slightly different, so the English and Italian subtitles appear and disappear at slightly different intervals, tantalising the bilingual English and Italian speaker

Figure 6.6 Two sets of overlaid subtitles compete for space

with some access to both sets of subtitles. The viewer is further teased because the two sets exhibit a degree of linguistic variation. Emir tells Serra that the policeman who hurt her has been arrested (the first the viewer has heard about this element of her past). The Italian says: 'Ma lo condanneranno? [But will they convict him?]' The force is that of somebody who cannot believe that the brutal system which mistreated her will now punish the abuser. The answer is 'sicuramente Sì [surely yes]'. The English, on the other hand, says 'how long is his sentence?' and the response is 'he won't be let out soon'. Here the implication is that Serra might be worried for her safety or that of others, with the abusive policeman at liberty again. Pragmatically they are two quite different translations. In juxtaposing two such clearly different translations (albeit only accessible to a bilingual audience) the film undercuts any understanding of subtitles as a relatively transparent filter over the film, emphasising instead the element of interpretation (Table 6.3).

The family house which is being demolished so that a block of flats can be built is 'la nostra casa' (our house) in the Italian subtitles, but 'our old house' in the English subtitles, suggesting a slight but significant shift of emphasis in the characters' relationship with their past in Turkey. In Italian, Serra responds to the news that the policeman has

Table 6.3 Bilingual subtitles in *Le fate ignoranti*

Italian subtitles	**English subtitles**
È da quando sei arrivato che hai una cosa da dirmi/ma non ci riesci.	You've wanted to tell me something since you got here.
Non una, due cose! La prima è che la nostra casa/la stanno abbattendo e al suo posto ci costruiranno un palazzo.	They're tearing down our old house to build an apartment building.
Tutto sta cambiando.	Everything is changing.
Quel poliziotto che ti ha fatto del male è stato arrestato un mese fa.	A month ago they arrested that policeman that hurt you so badly.
Halil?	Alyl?
Si.	[No subtitle]
Per quale motivo?	On what charges?
Torture e sevizie agli arrestati.	Torture and abuse of prisoners.
Ma lo condanneranno?	How long is his sentence?
Sicuramente Sì perché ha perso tutti i suoi appoggi politici.	He won't be let out soon, he lost all his political backing.

been arrested by checking his identity: 'Halil?' The response is 'Yes'. This is not subtitled in the English, presumably on the grounds that the positive response is clear from Emir's body language. The two languages use two different transcription conventions to render the policeman's name, 'Halil' in Italian, 'Alyl' in English, reminding us of the contingency of identity and the constructed nature of culture.

From a technical point of view this superimposition of subtitles is a production slip-up, but rather than an error, I suggest it will be more productive to consider it an integral factor in translating heterolingual film, foregrounding the representational issues associated with audiovisual translation as well as the translational paths taken by film. These are some of the ways in which audiovisual translation affects filmic textuality, foregrounding the technical and logistic conditions of travelling film. Here the subtitles create a sticky or 'thick' moment of translation. Their slightly varying in- and out-times mean that for a few frames here and there only one subtitle holds the screen and our attention ('si', for instance, is unaccompanied by a corresponding 'yes' in English). Their not-quite-superimposition leaves us free to attempt to process what we can of both sets, which makes us aware that the subtitles are performing intercultural translation by juxtaposing two slightly different translations of the Turkish dialogue.

Dubbing and subtitling: monolingualism to multilingualism

Dubbing and subtitling are usually complementary audiovisual translation strategies which have historically not often been used in combination. This is now changing (see e.g. Heiss 2004). The result of audiences' perceived resistance to subtitles is that filmmakers and distributors think very carefully about language in the distribution of film. Both dubbing and subtitling may be deployed in theatrical exhibition to meet the needs of different audiences. For instance, in anglophone markets, subtitled prints might be exhibited in metropolitan centres where audiences are presumed to be more 'sophisticated' and open to subtitling, and dubbed prints might be used for provincial theatrical circuits. Both dubbed and subtitled VHS prints of the same film might circulate (see e.g. McDonald 2009).

DVD, of course, has made these decisions unnecessary by making it possible for the same product to include both a dubbed and a subtitled version. Not only allowing viewers to choose which to watch, but allowing them to switch back and forth between them for entertainment or for pragmatic purposes (volume level; background noise) or just for the entertainment of watching both versions together and spotting the divergences between the subtitling and dubbing scripts.

A recent trend has been to involve both dubbing and subtitling in the translation of the same film. This is a useful way of rendering multilingual films which were already partly subtitled for their target audience (Heiss 2004). While ten years ago one critic could say that 'c'est doublage *ou* sous-titrage; les deux ne coexistent pas, en principe, sur un même film [it's dubbing or subtitling; the two do not in theory coexist in the same film]' (Lambrechts 1999: 114), this is now becoming a common device for rendering partly subtitled source material, even in highly dubbing-oriented countries such as Italy. On the Italian DVD of *Ten Canoes* the English voiceover is re-recorded in Italian, but the Ganalbingu dialogue is retained, with Italian subtitles. On the Italian DVD of *Man on Fire* the English dialogue is dubbed in Italian but the Spanish dialogue is retained with Italian subtitles which reproduce the striking digital effects used in the original film.

There have also been experiments in using a combination of AVT methods to render monolingual films. An early example is Max Ophüls' *Le Plaisir* (1952), an adaptation of three short stories by Maupassant, filmed in French. The film begins with a narrating voiceover spoken in the character of Maupassant, played by Jean Servais.

This voice recurs throughout the film, both to link the three stories to each other and to comment at intervals on the action. For the release of the film in English, the French dialogue in the individual sections was retained but the voiceover was re-recorded in English by Peter Ustinov.[5] The voiceover casts Maupassant as his own adaptor, seeking a way to represent his stories for a modern-day audience. The text is slightly reworked to take account of the extra layer of translation. Ustinov speaks with a noticeably French accent, casting himself as doubly translated:

> On a cherché divers moyens de vous présenter trois de mes contes. J'ai pensé que le mieux était que je vous narre moi-même ces histoires. J'ai toujours aimé la nuit, les ténèbres. Je suis ravi de vous parler d'un obscurité, comme si j'étais assis à côté de vous, et peut-être que c'est vrai. Vous devinez mon angoisse, car ces contes sont anciens, et vous êtes terriblement modernes, comme on dit quand on est vivant. Enfin, nous verrons bien. Voici la première histoire [...]
>
> [Several different ways were tried of presenting my stories to you. I thought the best was to tell you the stories myself. I have always loved the night, the shadows. I am delighted to speak to you from the dark, as if I were sitting beside you, and perhaps it is true. You [can] guess at my anxiety, because these stories are very old, and you are terribly modern, as the living put it. Well, we will see. Here is the first story ...]
>
> [...] I have always loved the night, the hours of darkness. That's why I am so grateful to be able to speak to you in the dark. They wanted to photograph me; after all, **this is a photographic m-medium, can one say that?** But that I didn't allow. An author's pleasure is to be heard, not seen. I thought the best thing might be if I just told you these stories myself, as if I were sitting beside you and, well, who knows, maybe I am. **I will try to speak English, but I have not had as much practice as I would like.** Perhaps you can guess my anxiety. These tales are rather old and you are so very modern, as we all call ourselves while we are still alive. Anyway, be patient with me. Here's the first story.

The interpolations (in bold) represent faltering word choices by the narrator who is not entirely sure of his English. Later on in this introductory section he describes the clients of the Palais de Danse as 'people of all classes, who liked big, noisy fun, a little *debauché*, as we say, debauched, a little rough ...'. In a letter to the *Times* Denis Forman, director of the

British Film Institute, suggested that 'attention might be paid to the possibility of combining interpolations in English with a more imaginative use of the subtitle' (Forman 1953) and mentioned *Le Plaisir* with Ustinov's voiceover as a successful example. Here the textuality of the film itself is at stake, since Ustinov's voiceover, rather than superimposing itself over the source film, recalibrates the role of the existing extradiegetic narrator.

Forman's letter to the *Times* was part of a lively debate taking place in the 1950s about the relative values of dubbing and subtitling in UK film distribution. While arthouse audiences declared themselves strongly in opposition to dubbing (Butler 1971: 120), Forman also acknowledges that 'the past few years have shown that the only foreign-language films which have been distributed more widely than in a dozen or so specialized cinemas have been provided with English speech dubbed on to Italian or French lip movements'. This mixed message still prevails today. English-speaking audiences are vocal in their advocacy of subtitling rather than dubbing, but subtitled films do not attract large audiences. In a recent article on distribution of foreign-language films by the speciality divisions of the major studios, Paul McDonald observes that 'dubbing reveals an interesting paradox at work in foreign-language distribution: language differences limit the market for imported films but the preservation of those differences remains essential to the market' (2009: 372).

What is clear from the data discussed in Chapter 4 is that partial subtitles are much less of a barrier to a film's success. If a combination of dubbing and subtitling can be used as a translation strategy for multilingual films in territories where dubbing is widely accepted, then might such strategies also potentially have traction in the anglophone market? Distributors are now exploring translation possibilities which build on audiences' thirst for authenticity combined with a perceived greater tolerance for partially subtitled films, or at least for subtitling as a decorative device.

One such example is the French slasher horror film *Haute tension* (*High Tension*, 2003). The US distributor for this film, Lion's Gate, recognised that this violent and gory film, containing many intertextual references to classic horror films, could aspire to a mass audience. For this to happen it needed two things: an R rating, rather than the NC-17 originally granted, and a solution to the translation problem. Some 30 seconds of excisions solved the first problem (Murray n.d.), but the second remained intractable. Subtitles would restrict the film to the arthouse circuit, while dubbing might alienate an increasingly prestige-conscious

core audience seeking an ever more authentic horror experience and highly conscious of what Dennis Tedlock has called 'anatopisms', or the allocation of languages to speakers which are perceived as out of place (Tedlock 1990: 139). In the end, Lion's Gate chose to release multiple versions of the film: a theatrical cut of the film which was partially dubbed and partially subtitled and a further, entirely dubbed, release. The Region 1 DVD also contains a version which is entirely in French with subtitles.

Both the theatrical versions slightly modify the film's diegesis. The protagonist of the film, Marie, and her friend Alex have driven down to Alex's family's isolated farm for a study break. In the French source film, the action takes place entirely in France and entirely among French characters. For the purposes of the hybrid dubbed/subtitled version, Alex and her family are rewritten as American expatriates, who have invited their daughter's French friend Marie to stay for the weekend. At an opportune moment early in the film when the characters are out of shot, Alex reminds Marie in a voiceover that her family's French is even worse than her own, and so Marie will need to speak English to the family in the course of her stay. The conceit of recasting some characters in a different nationality allows Marie's conversations with Alex and her family to be plausibly in English, while Marie's own thoughts and her conversations with other French characters in the film remain in French, with subtitles.[6]

The film has very little dialogue: 338 titles in its hour and 27 minutes for the fully subtitled French-language version – a very small quantity of dialogue for a feature film. Most of the dialogue is in the early expository scenes, and the proportion of subtitles to dubbing in the hybrid version is not large (only 94 titles present in the hybrid translation). Marie's character, played by Cécile de France, speaks a mixture of French and English in the hybrid version. De France dubbed her own dialogue, which allows for vocal continuity and mitigates some of the potential for vocal mismatches which is the source of some audience objections to dubbing. This, therefore, is an adaptation which takes place at a diegetic level rather than the extradiegetic level at which audiovisual translation conventionally takes place. The hybrid dubbing/subtitling approach adopts the device of the English learner in a heterolingual situation, thus imitating films which make a conventional use of vehicular matching. It also provides a linguistic counterpoint to the revelation, late in the film, that the psychopathic killer whom Marie is following in an attempt to rescue Alex is in fact Marie herself. The killer is portrayed throughout the film by two actors, de

France and Philippe Nahon. Marie speaks English to Alex, while Nahon speaks French.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this approach is that it echoes the uses of partial subtitling identified in previous chapters as increasingly characteristic of mainstream filmmaking. One might cautiously posit a gradual convergence of production strategies and distribution strategies, both of which support multilingualism as an ideal combination of the cultural capital of subtitles and the accessibility of dubbing.

Surprisingly, having gone to such lengths to produce three different versions of the film for three different sections of the market, Lion's Gate then made a serious production error with the DVD subtitles on the Region 1 release. Three different language options are available (entirely subtitled; entirely dubbed; and hybrid) but a single set of subtitles is used for all three versions. The hard-of-hearing subtitles for the English dubbed version are also used for the French subtitled version of the film and for the French sections of the hybrid translation. This ignores the different functions of SDH and interlingual subtitles, and worse still it ignores key textual differences between the dubbed and subtitled versions. The subtitles to the integral French version thus include the addition of an initial caption saying 'Southern France' though this is redundant in the French version. The subtitles also include extra expository material explaining Alex's family's American background and poor knowledge of French, despite the fact that there is no dialogue at that point in the French version of the film, so when watching the French version the subtitle simply appears eerily and disappears with no counterpart in the dialogue and no coherence relative to the French narrative. These subtitles also ignore different translation choices in the subtitles and in the dubbed translation, notably of the insults which Marie and Alex exchange in the car during their journey to the farmhouse. A charitable view would be that these problems are a product of the innovativeness of the translation strategy but in fact this disregard for the specificities of audiovisual translation is fairly typical for North American DVD producers. It is relatively common for distributors to be unaware of the difference between SDH and interlingual subtitling. Even the subtitles for one DVD edition of *Passion of the Christ* are SDH rather than interlingual, and the viewer has no option to dispense with the descriptions of music, sound effects and so on in the film.

Another issue which not uncommonly arises in subtitles for multilingual film is that because distributors usually use templates for the subtitles, they do not always take account of translation issues in relation to individual language pairs. This results in interesting anomalies such as

the Region 1 DVD of Friedkin's multilingual *Sorcerer*. The DVD includes subtitles in French and Spanish, but disregards the fact that quite a long sequence of the film is in French already. This French dialogue is subtitled in English which, as with the subtitles in *The Yakuza*, are not removable. When watching the film with the French subtitles provided on the DVD, a curious situation obtains where the French dialogue for the French sequence is subtitled in English in the lower portion of the screen, while the upper portion of the screen contains redundant French subtitles for the (perfectly comprehensible) French dialogue.

Multilingual film complicates the question of filmic textuality. The translation is not simply a superimposition (subtitles, voiceover) or a substitution (dubbed dialogue) but creates a new text in which source text and translation mode interact. With viewers increasingly sensitive to all aspects of AVT from menu structure to fonts and kerning, and online fan communities quick to pick up on and record anomalies in DVD language architecture, it seems likely that film exhibitors and distributors will pay more attention to these issues in future.[7]

Notes

Introduction

1. The English translation is that provided in the subtitles to the UK Region 2 DVD release of the film.
2. The rewarding of Christoph Waltz for his polyglot performance as Hans Landa at the 2010 Academy Awards recalls other Oscar-winning multilingual performances such as those by Robert de Niro in *The Godfather Part II* (Coppola, 1974) and Meryl Streep in *Sophie's Choice* (Pakula, 1982).
3. This understanding of film goes back to the era of silent film, to D.W. Griffith's famous affirmation of film as the universal language. For a useful account of the semiotic understanding of film as language, see Monaco (2000: 152–227).
4. I speak here of film and not of television for the sake of convenience only. This is not to undervalue the relevance of these questions to television, and indeed vice versa. The large volume of studies in existence on the audiovisual translation of television texts attests to the applicability of these issues to television too. From a mimetic standpoint, television addresses many of the same issues of language representation. Although the bulk of the exemplification in this study will be drawn from the cinema, reference will also be made where applicable to television usage.

1 Mimesis and Film Languages

1. There are, of course, examples of 'intralingual' translation where films are post-synchronised with more easily comprehensible accents (e.g. *Mad Max* for the American market). This recalls the silent-era practice of altering the intertitles for American films distributed in the UK (Maltby and Vasey 1994).
2. The practice never entirely stopped, however; it was a feature of European co-productions in the early 1950s (Jäckel 2003), and there have also been recent experiments in India.
3. Figures vary widely from country to country. Average costs across Europe are €2,700 to subtitle a film and €31,300 to dub it (Media Consulting Group and Peacefulfish 2007).
4. Cf. Betz (2001). There are, as Betz points out, distinctions to be made here between 'art film' and popular genres such as spaghetti Westerns, kung fu movies and anime, which have traditionally been screened in dubbed versions for English-speaking audiences.
5. Cf. also Eisenschitz (1999: 32).
6. The film's dialogue was designed to be unsubtitled for Anglophone and Japanese audiences, but was fully subtitled or dubbed in other territories.

7. For a fascinatingly detailed account of the script and documentary translation processes for the US–Japanese co-production *Tora! Tora! Tora!* see Nornes (2007: 38–52).
8. It is worth noting that this was a question even before the arrival of sound; see Nornes (2007: 97).
9. See the Introduction for a gloss on the use of 'foreign' language here.
10. John Ford famously used Navajo actors to portray other Indian tribes, but the practice is also present in more recent cinema: in *Last of the Mohicans* (1992) Wes Studi, a Cherokee actor playing the Huron character Magua, speaks Cherokee throughout, and Russell Means, a Sioux actor playing the Mohican Chingachgook, speaks Lakota rather than Munsee Delaware (Marubbio 2002: 151–152).
11. In this case the actor playing Sean is simply speaking in random babbles; similar effects can be achieved by running the dialogue track backwards, or by otherwise distorting it. For an extended version of this device see *Coupling*, series 1, episode 5, 'The Girl With Two Breasts' (09/06/00).
12. Jack Hawkins, who plays the film's chief villain Colonel Galcon, is critical of the 'quite absurd' waste of money, time and effort involved: 'I am ashamed to say I never mastered it, and when I did grasp the pronunciation I forgot the words. Much of the action took place in my office ... and I was able to overcome the problem by having my lines written in "top secret" files, on the blotter on my desk, and on "official bulletins" pinned around the wall telephone' (Hawkins 1973: 95).
13. I distinguish here, of course, between heterolingual intertitles reflecting multiple diegetic languages and bilingual or multilingual intertitles aimed at polyglot audiences (see e.g. Nornes 2007: 106–108).
14. I follow Meek (2006) in using 'Injun' as opposed to 'Native American' or 'American Indian' to refer to the set of representative clichés characteristic of Hollywood representations of Native Americans.
15. The film was eventually shot in Italian.
16. The role of sound mixing has yet to be studied in relation to foreign languages on screen but is a promising avenue of research.
17. Verbal transposition is also found, of course, mimetically representing non-native-like language use. A notable recent example is *Everything is Illuminated* (Schreiber, 2005).
18. Alfred Hitchcock, for one, found it an unedifying experience. In 1930 he shot a multiple language version in English and German (*Murder!/Sir John greift ein*! [aka *Mary*]) and found that although he spoke German 'I didn't know cadences of speech ... and I was lost on the set. The actors sounded colloquial to me, but I really couldn't understand what they were saying'. An improvisational approach to the translation of the script also created problems: 'I would explain the meaning of the scene to the actors and suggest that they make up their own dialogue ... The result wasn't good: there was too much faltering' (McGilligan 135–136).
19. Arnold's source novel features a good deal of explicit attribution. The use of vehicular matching in films based on literary properties would seem to merit further research.
20. In a more recent study Jacquelyn Kilpatrick observes astutely that while the linguistic policy of the film, unusually, confers full articulateness on

Cochise and the other Apache, Jeffords's fluency in Apache is implausible and fundamentally disingenuous (1999: 58–59).

21. Again, non-naturalistic narratives may be more comfortable with such effects; see e.g. the 1980s British situation comedy *'Allo 'Allo,* in which the dissonance between narrative English and narrating English is used to great comic effect.
22. This lack of subtitling is a strategic decision, at least according to the undated 'shooting draft' of the film available at www.dailyscript.com (*Spanglish* shooting draft script, p. 1).

2 The Dream of Instant Translation

1. See Paul Ricoeur (2006: 8–10) on the necessity of renouncing the 'fantasy of perfect translation' in order to come to terms with and welcome the foreign.
2. See also R. John Williams's article 'Global English Ideography and the Dissolve Translation in Hollywood Film' which came to my attention at a late stage in the preparation of this manuscript.
3. Interestingly, a Chinese colleague tells me that the Chinese script carries the meaning its bearer ascribes to it, rather than the manipulated meaning ascribed to it by the English 'translation'.
4. For example, the homage use in the 1967 film *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, set in the 1920s.
5. In fact, only the first three chapters of the novel reproduce the Kitāb, but the novel deliberately blurs the dividing line between the source texts, casting the whole narrative as an edition of a single manuscript, and buttressing this with paratextual apparatus including a detailed introduction and copious footnotes.
6. As Kitching explains (2002), Norwegian was chosen over Swedish, which would have been appropriate to represent an eastern Scandinavian language variety, because Swedish intonation patterns are perceived in the United States as odd.
7. The scenes of language learning were substantially edited down from the material originally scripted and shot. As a result, the length of time represented by the campfire scenes was unclear to many viewers and some commented on the implausibility of Ibn Fadlan picking up Norse 'overnight'.
8. In McTiernan's DVD commentary to the Special Collector's Edition of *The Hunt for Red October*, the director cites Kramer's film as the inspiration for his use of the translating close-up.
9. It is interesting to compare the treatment in Terrence Malick's version of the Pocahontas narrative *The New World* (2005), which includes an extended account of language contact and language learning, and the rather more perfunctory treatment in James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) which also draws heavily on the Pocahontas narrative.
10. Bhuvan and his friends speak Hindi. The English subtitles are given in square brackets.

3 Before and Beyond Subtitles

1. Sound quality is a not uncommon issue with foreign languages on screen, and was a challenge in carrying out some of the dialogue transcription for this book.
2. 'The spoken word is most cinematic if the messages it conveys elude our grasp; if all that actually can be grasped is the sight of the speakers' (Kracauer 1997: 107).
3. The viewer's inability to distinguish between a 'real' language and a competently produced invented language prompts the flippant remark by one French reviewer of Jacques Sévérac's early sound film *Sirocco* (1930), which featured unsubtitled Arabic dialogue, that 'the language was gibberish invented for the film' (quoted in Slavin 1998). See also pp. 18, 205, n10 for examples of the use of one language to represent another, particularly in the case of indigenous languages.
4. Interestingly, a French subtitled version of the film does translate for the viewer at this point, radically rewriting our experience of the film (reported in *Cahiers du cinema* 154, April 1964, p. 48).
5. Its existence is supported, for instance, by the strong evidence that watching subtitled films and television promotes language learning, particularly in relation to lexis (cf. d'Ydewalle and Van de Poel 1999; van Lommel, Laenen and d'Ydewalle 2006).
6. The subtitles for this scene are taken from the Criterion Collection DVD release of the film. Among the extra features is a montage of several of the scenes containing stretches of German dialogue, subtitled to show the excess of the foreign-language dialogue in relation to the English script.
7. As with the previous example, these subtitles are taken from the Criterion Collection DVD.
8. We can imagine diegetic translation on screen, but the cognitive processes, as opposed to the physical actions, of written-to-written translation are, like those of writing, rather difficult to represent on screen. Translations of written text in film are generally verbalised in some form.
9. This is a transcript based on the film; the detail of the dialogue varies quite a lot with respect to the film's published script (cf. Naremore 1979: 191–194).
10. Another film where the cumbersomeness of liaison interpreting is deployed for the purposes of building suspense is M. Night Shyamalan's *Lady in the Water* (2006), which extends the device to include one scene of interpreting mediated by cellphone.
11. Neither is it present in the original script, where Howard's interpreting is much closer to the Spanish.
12. This is most commonly found in Russia and some countries in Eastern Europe. It has been tried in Anglophone countries too (see e.g. 'An Experiment in Translation' 1943; Gardner 1965) but never achieved popularity.
13. This narration was designed specifically for the English-language audience, but also for other language communities; it allowed, for instance, for the re-recording of the narration in dubbing countries such as Italy while protecting the Ganalbingu dialogue, which remains subtitled rather than dubbed. I have not seen the Italian theatrical release of the film but on DVD the film

is presented with an Italian narration framing the original Ganalbingu dialogue with Italian subtitles. Such a resistance to dubbing is unusual in Italy. There are also two other versions of the film in which narration as well as dialogue is in the indigenous language. One version has English subtitles, the other, which was the first version of the film to be screened for the actors and crew, has no English subtitles (Starrs 2007).

14. Having said that, some narratives seem to use an English-language voiceover as a way of introducing and softening the effect of homogenisation (*America, America*; *Woman on Top*; *Heaven and Earth*; *Alive!; King Arthur; Savage Innocents; Soldier of God*)
15. The use of voiceover to provide an English threshold between the foreign language and the viewer is closely allied to its use in Anglophone trailers for foreign-language films. Such trailers consist of specially cut montages of imagery which usually incorporate written English (critical plaudits, tag lines) and often music with English lyrics and frame it all with the totalising English voiceover typical of this genre. Such trailers, edited by distributors have become infamous for entirely eliminating heterolingual dialogue from the trailer (Rich 2004).
16. In another excellent example of 'counter' translation, Egoyan's *Calendar* achieves a striking effect from its opening credits by giving us credits in English and then translating them into Armenian.
17. Another example of a film with an indigenous-language voiceover is Philip Noyce's 2002 *Rabbit-Proof Fence* whose initial and final voiceovers are in an Aboriginal language with English subtitles, though the characters' dialogue in the film is almost exclusively in English.

4 Subtitling and the Ethics of Representation

1. The rhythm of subtitles is uncannily illustrated by Alan Licht's conceptual soundwork 'Rashomon Piece' (2004) in which a small audience watched Kurosawa's *Rashomon* with the sound turned down while reading the subtitles aloud.
2. On its original theatrical release, one viewer of *Von Ryan's Express*, which has a few subtitled sequences (a total of 66 subtitles for a running time of just under two hours), was overheard to say, 'What do they think this is, a foreign picture?' (Sonnenfeld 1966).
3. This distinction seems problematic to me in that subtitling also, as we have outlined above, constitutes a potentially radical reorganisation of the verbal source material. Nevertheless we can distinguish between subtitling – which is, broadly speaking, additive – and dubbing, which is substitutive.
4. Unless otherwise specified, box office figures are taken from the Box Office Mojo website, http://boxofficemojo.com.
5. Subtitle counts for feature films vary hugely. For an 'average' (90-minute) feature film, estimates range from 900–1,500 (Shulevitz 1992) for theatrical prints; 600–1,000 (Finney 1996: 22) and 700–800 (Laroche 2008) for television viewing. Television reading speeds are slower and subtitles fewer (cf. Packham 1988). A film with 900 subtitles for theatrical release may have 750 for DVD release and 650 for television (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 25).

A recent estimate by an English to French subtitler gave 1,000 as an average (Samuel Bréan, personal communication). See also Note 24.

6. Dirk Delabastita is an honourable exception (Delabastita 1989: 195).
7. Anna Sofia Rossholm's work (2006: 64–76) on the early sound period gives the most comprehensive account of filmic multilingualism to date.
8. Here I am assuming some English-language element of the films. There are of course hundreds of bilingual and polyglot films which contain no English, but English is always an element of 'Hollywood multilinguals' and in non-English-speaking territories it is a significant 'internationalising' language, the use of which may make a film saleable beyond its own national borders (cf. Woods 2004).
9. The text of the poster reads: 'YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE. To dramatize the diverse backgrounds of the principal characters in "SORCERER", two of the opening sequences were filmed in the appropriate foreign languages – with sub-titles in English. Other than these opening scenes, "SORCERER" is an English language film.'
10. All media may be held to have diegetic or mimetic characteristics, as David Bordwell points out (1995: 1–16). Nevertheless here I use a heuristic distinction between a medium which *predominantly* tells and one which *predominantly* shows.
11. See Gilbey 2008; also the Internet Movie Database discussion boards for *The Reader*, e.g. posts dated 11 July 2009 ('what is the point of English with German accents?'), 8 July 2009 ('Who thinks this movie is only watchable in GERMAN?'), 4 August 2009 ('Why texts in letters and books are in English?').
12. Internet Movie Database discussion boards for *Botched*, post dated 1 October 2007: 'Strange how no one actually speaks Russian?!?'.
13. Tellingly, it is the partial setting of the film in an English-speaking environment which makes possible the bilingual shooting script. Benioff says in one interview that 'it's not the kind of movie like *Schindler's List* where you assume they're all speaking one language, and you can kind of have that willing suspension of disbelief and say "Well, it's been translated by the magic of cinema ..." or whatever, into English' (Rocchi 2007). For Benioff, the polyglot situation of *Schindler's List* with its Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew and German has become monolingual, because the languages involved are all not-English, and therefore, for Hollywood's purposes, foreign. His remark also vividly illustrates the mimetic inadequacies and the domesticating effect of homogenisation.
14. 'They have a television deal which allows them to sell every DreamWorks movie to one of the networks for 8 million dollars or something – but there's a contract stipulation that says if the movie is primarily in a foreign language, the network is not under obligation to buy the film. So right off the bat, by making that decision, they would lose 8 million dollars' (Rocchi 2007).
15. 'The effect of declamation in an unknown language is almost negligible, and the reaction to the stimulus must be referred to music rather than to poetry' (Vaughan Williams 1920: 88).
16. The two tribes in the film, the Invisible People and the Fierce People, were 'invented' tribes combining features of different indigenous communities of the Mato Grosso (Boorman 1985: 73).

17. It can also be seen as part of the development of subtitling as a representational trope of indigenous peoples.
18. Boorman routinely loops all his dialogue, and the looping here seems as carefully done for the indigenous as for the English dialogue. While in other films by Boorman, such as *Excalibur*, the effect of the looping can be uncanny, here it is unexpectedly domesticating: the lip-synching is so close that at times the 'Tupi-speaking' actors seem to be speaking English.
19. 'Pseudotranslations' are defined by Gideon Toury as 'texts which have been presented as translations with no corresponding source texts in other languages ever having existed – hence no factual "transfer operations" and translation relationships' (1995: 40). See also Bassnett (1998: 27–28).
20. Heterolingual dialogue is usually conspicuous by its absence from scripts. It may be the result of: multilingual collaboration at the stage of script development; a multilingual scriptwriter (the Spanish dialogue in *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* was reportedly written by its director John Huston and is reproduced without translations in the published script); or be improvised by the actors on set.
21. Benioff says of the translation processes around the dialogue and subtitles: 'It was a smaller movie, it was kind of all in the family and Khaled's father ended up being the one who translated the English screenplay into Dari for the actors. Then I translated it back during post-production for the subtitles. Most of the time, it was from the original script. Sometimes I wrote one thing and then it got translated and I was sitting there with an Afghan woman who would tell me what the literal translation was, and sometimes it was very different from what the original screenplay said. Every now and then it was a lot better, but other times I could write my line. It was nice because usually as the writer, the actors take the lines and play with them and it's out of your hands. This was the first time I could sort of reassert control over that' (Sandor 2007).
22. In this case, as was typical in the period, *mise en scène* conveys the main thrust of the dialogue, but some phrases are too garbled to decode.
23. The distinction is Juliane House's. Subtitling and dubbing have been respectively considered 'overt' and 'covert' forms of translation (see e.g. Heiss 2004) because subtitling presents itself in parallel with its source while dubbing seeks to mask its translated status. Subtitling, by juxtaposing a written target text (TT) with the spoken source text (ST), makes the translation process highly visible. Dubbing, by contrast, aims via lip-synching and sound mixing for the most perfect match possible; the ideal being that an audience would not notice that a film was dubbed. As we can see, subtitling does not rule out covert translation processes.
24. Films are more densely subtitled than in the past (cf. Eisenschitz 1999; Nornes 2007). The first subtitled feature shown in London was *Kameradschaft* in January 1932 with 70–80 titles (Low 1997: 100). (For purposes of comparison, the same film broadcast by Turner Classic Movies a few years ago had 570 subtitles). In 1937 Charles Jarhblum suggested that the range lay between 220 and 700 titles and cited the 1935 French film *Escale* with its 400 subtitles as a 'happy average'. In a short article on the US subtitling industry, Robert Shelton (1958) estimated the title range at 750 to 1,200 for a feature film. See also note 5.

25. Empirical research is almost completely lacking in this field, but for the purposes of comparison we may draw on an MA thesis by Helen Gardner (2008) which gives quantitative data for three Godard films with English subtitles. *À bout de souffle, Une femme est une femme* and *Pierrot le fou* have between eight and ten subtitles per minute on DVD.
26. A striking example of inaccurate translation is provided in the British film *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987). The film contains one (subtitled) exchange between Rani and Rafi, Sammy's father, furious at finding Rani and her female partner in Sammy's bed. Amresh Sinha sees the divergence between source dialogue and subtitles as 'only an example of supplementary excesses of translation from one language into another that lacks the equivalent word' (2004: 187), but these 'imaginative, free translations' could also be seen as cavalier appropriations of dialogue where the specificity of the foreign language on screen is subordinate to the narrational demands of the subtitles. Similarly, describing Harry Lime's 'accident' in *The Third Man* the porter says that Harry Lime was 'gleich tot'. Anna interprets this as 'quite dead' rather than its proper meaning of 'dead instantly' – translating thereby not the porter's story but the film's major narrative concern – is Harry Lime really dead?
27. This is the earliest instance I have come across in my research but there may well be other, earlier ones.
28. Richard Donner's *Maverick* contains a clever pastiche of this ventriloquism in the form of a subtitled conversation in which Bret Maverick, convincing his Native American friend Joseph to play along, instructs him to engage in a series of threatening actions so Maverick can pretend to outwit him, thus earning the gratitude of the other characters.
29. The 'Lakota phrasebook' page on the website for the mini-series *Into the West* is also illustrative of this tendency. It contains just over a hundred items grouped under the headings 'Greetings, Animals, Elements/nature, Colors, Numbers, Direction, People, Spirituality, Food and "Misc."'. The relationship between Native Americans, spirituality and nature is heavily emphasised. 'Misc.' lists 14 items including bow, arrow, spear, headdress, feather, gun, medicine, pipe, tipi and moccasin. The glossary is in itself a positive addition to the website, but one feels that an opportunity for subverting the viewer's expectations about what Native Americans think and speak about has been missed.
30. A counter-example is offered by Jarmusch's *Dead Man*, which strives for linguistic accuracy and foregoes subtitles in order to privilege the viewing experience of speakers of the indigenous languages involved.
31. Even such a principled filmmaker as John Sayles is not immune to this collector's zeal. In interviews around the release of *Men with Guns* the point was made that the indigenous language spoken by the Panamanian actress whose voiceover frames the narration had 'never been spoken in a movie before' (Carson 1999: 228).
32. The subtitles for *Apocalypto* and *Ten Canoes* deploy humour in similar ways to subvert the viewer's expectations.
33. Sitting Bull does speak once in his own voice in the course of the film, when he addresses the President of the United States in what seems to be an indigenous language. This short speech is untranslated and is not understood by the President or, apparently, by any other character.

34. The language is not extensive (Kevin Sullivan counts 97 words or phrases in the original show – Sullivan (2004a: 199)) but it was seen as one of the distinguishing features of the show, which ostensibly presented a multicultural universe colonised by an Anglo-Chinese alliance. The lack of authenticity of the language and the clear contextual meaning of most of the language did not dim fans' curiosity: 'After only a few episodes had aired, fans in online communities were begging for weekly translations, and Mandarin-speaking fans would try to provide them. Translation debates sometimes followed' (ibid.: 204). The 'authentic' Chinese amounts to a few words ('What', 'little sister', 'thank you') but the fan response was out of all proportion. Firefly language sites proliferated. The most comprehensive resource is Kevin Sullivan's 'Firefly-Serenity Chinese Pinyinary' at http://fireflychinese.kevinsullivansite.net/.

5 Where Are the Subtitles? Metalepsis, Subtitling and Narration

1. Some fansubbers have called for a more 'professional', less abusive approach to their work; see, for instance, the five-part video essay 'The Rise and Fall of Anime Fansubs' by OtaKing, which can be found on YouTube at the time of writing.
2. Nornes contrasts the treatment of the subtitles in the film with French DVD subtitles which are produced in a standard format which ignores all the play of the source film. This may be the case with the subtitles for the North American DVD release of the film (to which, from the typography of the subtitles, it seems likely that Nornes is referring) but it is not the case, for instance, for the Italian Region 2 DVD release of the film which reproduces in Italian the same formats and the same ludic approach as in the source film – another indication of translation being taken into account earlier in the production process. The Italian DVD of the film even adds an extra layer, since the film's English dialogue is conventionally subtitled while the Spanish and other subtitled dialogue of the source film is abusively subtitled to match the ST. The Italian viewer therefore has to move rapidly between different modes of subtitling viewing. An incidental outcome is that the heterolingualism of the source film is maintained in the subtitles because the two languages present on the soundtrack are represented by subtitles in very different styles.
3. *Henry IV*, *Part 2*, Act III, scene ii.
4. Ibid., Act IV, scene i. The Archbishop is a character in the play.
5. Ibid., Act V, scene v.
6. He or she might be disappointed to discover that it means 'hand'.
7. On the relationships between translation and post-colonialism, see Cheyfitz (1991) and Bassnett and Trivedi (1999).
8. The question of what the 'text' of a film might be and at what point of the production or exhibition processes it comes into being is itself a thorny theoretical question (see e.g. Rubinstein 1987), whose complexities are outside the scope of this book. For the purposes of our discussion I am taking the 'text' of a film to be the film as exhibited or released for retail purchase prior to the process of interlingual translation as conventionally understood.
9. Ironically, in the search for a subtitled version which offers as complete an account of the source dialogue, captions and sounds as possible, films are

subtitled more and more heavily, the subtitles competing ever more energetically with the images for the viewers' attention.

10. My use of the term is also post-Genettian in the sense that it does not only consider paratextuality as an authorial device but includes under this heading paratextual elements added by other agents in the publication and distribution of a cultural artefact.
11. This is the earliest example of diegetic subtitling that I have seen, but it may well not be the first.
12. Interestingly, our critical apparatus for talking about 'hearing' film is still so underdeveloped that critics routinely cast this 'overhearing' function of subtitles in visual terms. Thus Henrik Gottlieb argues that subtitles '[provide] the audience with a birds'-eye view of the scenery' (1994: 101) and M. Elise Marubbio speaks of the 'panoptic voyeurism' of subtitled indigenous dialogue in Mann's *Last of the Mohicans* (2002: 141). Michael Cronin also speaks of the replication by subtitling of 'cinema as panopticon' (2009: 116), 'as if the all-seeing eye of the camera was paralleled by the all-understanding ear of the reader of subtitles' (ibid.: 106).
13. The subtitles for this scene were omitted from at least one Region 1 DVD release of the film – another testament to the unstable textual status of subtitles.

6 Translating Multilingualism on Screen

1. Unless otherwise specified, all DVD releases discussed in this section are Region 2.
2. This is a form of explicit attribution, since it contradicts what the subtitles, at least, have been conveying in the film thus far.
3. On the discursive levelling of 'incorrect' language use in a documentary see Kaufmann (2004).
4. The point is also made by Christine Heiss (2004: 215).
5. For the German release of the film, a similar voiceover was given to the actor Anton Walbrook, another close friend of Ophüls, but the dialogue of the film was also entirely dubbed (Criterion Collection DVD notes).
6. Problems of narrative amnesia arise in the fully dubbed version, which still uses the conceit of Alex and her family as Americans in France, including the extra dialogue explaining why Marie will need to speak English to them – and which then goes on to dub the remaining French characters in North American-accented English. Thus despite the fact that all three characters involved are French, the scene at the petrol station between Marie, the killer and the cashier is dubbed into English.
7. Where English is the predominant language of the narrative, incidental subtitles for other languages can get lost in transit. A laboratory error meant that some prints of *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* exhibited in New York in March 2000 were missing English subtitles for the film's occasional French dialogue (Shirkani 2000). More commonly, on DVD release the language options for a film may not take into account the need for partial subtitles for short stretches of non-English dialogue. This was the case, for instance, with the Lionsgate Blu-Ray release of *Stargate*.

Filmography

13th Warrior, The (John McTiernan, 1999)
*1492: Conquest of Paradise (*Ridley Scott, 1992)
3 Needles (Thom Fitzgerald, 2005)
30 Days of Night (David Slade, 2007)
Alive! (Frank Marshall, 1993)
All Quiet on the Western Front (Lewis Milestone, 1930)
Ambush at Blood Pass (*Machibuse*, Hiroshi Inagaki, 1970)
America, America (Elia Kazan, 1963)
American Gigolo (Paul Schrader, 1980)
Amistad (Steven Spielberg, 1997)
Anatahan (Josef von Sternberg, 1953)
Annie Hall (Woody Allen, 1977)
Apocalypto (Mel Gibson, 2006)
Atlantis: The Lost Empire (Gary Trousdale, 2001)
Atonement (Joe Wright, 2007)
At Play in the Fields of the Lord (Hector Babenco, 1991)
Austin Powers: Goldmember (Jay Roach, 2002)
Australia (Baz Luhrmann, 2008)
Autumn Moon (Clara Law, 1992)
Avatar (James Cameron, 2009)
Babel (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006)
Babettes Gæstebud (*Babette's Feast*, Gabriel Axel, 1987)
Bedazzled (Harold Ramis, 2000)
Bananas (Woody Allen, 1971)
Battle at Elderbush Gulch, The (D.W. Griffith, 1913)
Battle of Britain (Guy Hamilton, 1969)
*Before Night Falls (*Julian Schnabel, 2000)
Beyond the Clouds (Michelangelo Antonioni, Wim Wenders, 1995)
*Be With Me (*Eric Khoo, 2005)
Big Steal, The (Don Siegel, 1949)
Bitter Tea of General Yen, The (Frank Capra, 1933)
Black Book (Paul Verhoeven, 2006)
Black Robe (Bruce Beresford, 1991)
Blood, the last vampire (Hiroyuki Kitakubo, 2000)
Blue (Derek Jarman, 1993)
Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan (Larry Charles, 2006)
Border, The (Tony Richardson, 1982)
Border Blues (Rodion Nahapetov, 2004)
Botched (Kit Ryan, 2007)
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Kingdom, The (Peter Berg, 2007)
Kite Runner, The (Marc Forster, 2007)
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Paleface, The (Buster Keaton, 1922)
Paisà (Roberto Rossellini, 1946)
*Passion of the Christ (*Mel Gibson, 2004)
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Private (Saverio Costanzo, 2004)
Reader, The (Stephen Daldry, 2008)
Red Sun (Terence Young, 1971)
Rendition (Gavin Hood, 2007)
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Road to Zanzibar, The (Victor Schertzinger, 1941)
Roanoak (Jan Egleson, 1986)
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Ten Canoes (Rolf de Heer, 2006)
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That Night in Rio (Irving Cummings, 1941)
Third Man, The (Carol Reed, 1949)
Throne of Blood (Akira Kurosawa, 1957)
Thunderheart (Michael Apted, 1992)
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