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This is a contribution from *Between Text and Image. Updating research in screen translation*.

Edited by Delia Chiaro, Christine Heiss and Chiara Bucaria.

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From darkness to light in subtitling

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This paper focuses on the status of subtitling in Italy, an activity which is often neglected by researchers as well as audiences, notwithstanding its being on the increase thanks to DVD distribution, the proliferation of satellite channels and, more significantly, of film festivals.

In referring to Abe Mark Nornes' advocacy of "abusive subtitling", this paper wishes to bring the practice of subtitling in Italy out of the darkness, shedding light on some of the most interesting opportunities it offers for the diffusion of otherwise ignored cinematic products as well as for subtitlers' training and academic research. Drawing inspiration from the experience carried out at the Advanced School for Interpreters and Translators in Forlì, Italy, in the production of subtitles by students involved in an international film festival on human rights, this paper sets out to advocate the power of subtitling in Italy and strive to bring it out of its position of obscurity. Even though its force can still be felt on a limited scale, subtitling can go far in enhancing knowledge of extremely remote cultures and, from an academic perspective, it ought to encourage more systematic, interdisciplinary research while also contributing to students' individual and professional growth.

Keywords: darkness, light, subtitling, human rights, film festivals

The past few years have seen an increase in the attention devoted to audiovisual translation in Italy. However, most research has focused on dubbing, the traditionally dominant method for the transposition of audiovisual products. Research in subtitling has, in turn, been rather scanty and intermittent, favouring linguistic-oriented perspectives and ultimately yielding evaluations of the phenomenon which do not take into account the complex mechanisms which are involved at each stage prior and subsequent to the mere process of linguistic transfer.

The limited attention devoted to subtitling by Italian academics seems to reflect a more general tendency to neglect this activity, which is not often given proper consideration in theoretical and practical terms by the media and, as a consequence,

by audiences. Paradoxically, the latter are increasingly exposed to subtitled products, due to the increasing distribution of DVDs, satellite and digital television, and film festivals, all of which are on the increase at a national level. Therefore, it is true to say that subtitling in Italy still holds an “ancillary, even hidden position” (Nornes 2004: 448) not only, as again Abe Mark Nornes says, in the film or TV product’s journey from production to exhibition, but also within academic research and in viewers’ minds. It goes without saying that this hidden position is proportionally reflected in investments, subtitlers’ working conditions and, ultimately, its impact on the quality of subtitled products which circulate across the country.

These negative trends have been clearly revealed by the results of a market-oriented research on subtitling carried out at the School for Interpreters and Translators of the University of Bologna in Forlì, where students and researchers have been involved, since 2003, in a project aiming to evaluate the state of the art of subtitling in Italy as well as the quality of subtitled products, with a view to applying the information thus obtained to research and to create more targeted training schemes for subtitlers.¹

In making reference to this research project, as well as to one of its applications which involved students in the production of subtitles for an international film festival on human rights, this paper sets out to lay emphasis on the importance of subtitling in Italy. In particular, the power of subtitling will be revealed in connection with the diffusion of previously neglected films and realities, which have now been brought to viewers’ attention through film festivals and translated by means of subtitles.

In terms of theory, this paper is inspired by *Video for Change. A Guide for Advocacy and Activism* (2005). However, the main inspiration as well as the departure points for the analysis here undertaken are provided by Nornes’ (2004) insightful article² which, unlike most other essays on the subject, considers films and their translation for subtitling from a somewhat revolutionary, sociologically-imbued perspective. Therefore, borrowing Nornes’ words, this paper wishes to be an attempt to “bring subtitling from its space of obscurity” (*ibid.*: 452), showing the important contribution it can give to the diffusion of otherwise unknown cinematic products, to the spreading of direct cultural testimonies through unique translating experiences and, last but not least, to the training of translators or would-be subtitlers.

1. Most of the data gathered and analysed so far have been obtained through interviews and questionnaires which have been administered to almost all directors of Italian subtitling firms as well as to a number of professional subtitlers.

2. The article appeared for the first time in *Film Quarterly* in 1999, but it has recently been included in the second edition of *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited for Routledge by Lawrence Venuti (2004).

1. From darkness to light in subtitling

Before briefly analysing two of the films which were featured in the 2005 edition of the Human Rights Nights³ (HRN) festival and their subtitling process, let us briefly go back to the rather narrow theoretical background this paper relies on.

When considering such huge and cogent issues as human rights, but also when venturing into the realm of film studies and audiovisual translation, the amount of literature available for study seems to be endless. However, the first two domains will be here only touched upon, while the latter will be assumed as a sort of distant background, because the focus of this paper is on subtitling from a rather unusual perspective. The practice of subtitling is here under investigation not in terms of technical and linguistic constraints, but rather its socio-cultural impact and its great value in the training of translators as well as in academic research. Therefore, what is sought and hopefully unveiled is the value of such an activity even in a typical dubbing country like Italy, where it allows for the appreciation of otherwise unknown audiovisual texts, occasionally through television but, most significantly, through cinemas and international film festival circuits.

The connection with Nornes' essay seems almost automatic, as its very essence is somehow naturally linked to the object and purpose of this paper. Nornes calls for research in subtitling which ought to explore the cultural and ideological issues at stake in this activity, which are the outcome of a complex interchange, a unique relation between the film, the subtitler and the audience.

Nornes' essay is centred upon the notion of corruption, which he proposes to fight by means of what he defines as abusive subtitling. Looking at the specific case of Japanese art films subtitled into English, Nornes denounces the widespread, "corrupt" attitude in subtitling which wants to make the translated product as transparent as possible, in order to "smooth over its textual violence and domesticate all otherness while pretending to bring the audience to an experience of the foreign" (*ibid.*: 449). In this sense, Nornes' approach seems to reflect a more general view of translation which was first expressed in terms of invisibility by Venuti

3. The Human Rights Nights international film festival, organized by the Cineteca di Bologna with the support of the municipality of the same town and a number of other institutions nationwide, saw its first edition in 2000. The main goal of the festival, whose success has been on the increase over the past years, is to provide a "forum for filmmakers who use their cameras as instruments of visual and verbal resistance against an unjust world" (www.humanrightsnights.org), promoting reaction by arousing the interest of large audiences. Human Rights Nights is recognized at an international level within the Human Rights Film Network, of which the Bologna festival is a founding member. Others within this network include the Amnesty International Film Festival (USA), the Festival International du Films sur les Droits Humains (Geneva), 3 Continent (Johannesburg), Seoul International Film Festival (Seoul) and DerHumALC (Buenos Aires).

(1995), in which the activity of translators operating in the Western world, especially in English-speaking countries, was denounced for their working towards the invisibility of the translation process and a sort of self-effacement of the translators themselves. As Venuti, and inspired by Derrida and Berman, advocates for self-conscious, visible and somewhat 'critical' translations, with the ultimate aim of highlighting the specificity of foreign texts, Nornes embraces this point of view and applies it to subtitling, laying emphasis on its strong cultural implications and its reflections on society. The minoritizing translation suggested by Venuti (1998) as a critical act, as a wish to highlight the foreign in each text, is somehow reflected in Nornes' abusive subtitling, which proposes to fight the corruption of current practices and "push the fact of translation [subtitling] out of the darkness" (2004: 448).

Going back to our object of study, the attitude advocated by Nornes becomes unavoidable, almost obligatory for subtitlers working on films which are centred on human rights. The experience of the foreign, the unknown, the obscure, is at the very core of these films and is thus perceived by those who are involved in the linguistic adaptation as well as by viewers.

Films which are centred upon the violation of human rights are not only a tool for action for the producers; they often aim to "turn viewing into action" (Gregory *et al.* 2005: 243), getting potentially large audiences involved in such a joint effort thanks to international distribution which is, in turn, made possible by subtitling. Therefore, built into the very essence of these films and the subtitling activity they require is an abusive power which, perhaps not always explicitly, aims to fight corruption and fake visibility, leading events, communities and whole cultures from darkness to light.

Several words which have been used so far (hidden, obscure, darkness, light) may have already captured the attention of the reader, pointing to one of the main aims of this paper. As a matter of fact, in the following pages an attempt will be made to explore the power of subtitling in Italy in terms of a passage from *darkness* to *light*. Darkness and light will be found to apply in various degrees to a number of elements which are at stake here: to the very nature of the films, to the trainee subtitlers' experience in translating them, to the value of such an experience in terms of training and research, and to the scope of subtitling in Italy.

Starting from an exploration of the very nature of the films, we shall embark on an evaluation of the subtitlers' experience in conjunction with some of the most meaningful and recurring features of these kinds of audiovisual texts, to finally discuss the great potential of these subtitling activities for academic training and research.

2. Human rights and films: Activism through production, distribution and translation

around the world, video is increasingly embraced as a tool to support education, reinforce cultural identity and encourage organizational and political participation.

(Gregory *et al.* 2005: 12)

Filmmaking has the capacity to transform the way people think, to orient choices and create social change. The most evident proof of such potential, which often translates into a strong impact over audiences, can be found in the supremacy of the USA over the last century, especially in the field of media production and distribution. Taking into account the film industry alone, Hollywood has been setting the standards for production and perception by international audiences, shaping tastes and expectations since its very early days.

However, a silent, albeit limited but potentially powerful revolution seems to have been spreading throughout the world over the past decade or so, favoured by the reduction of film production costs which has been brought about by the development of digital video and laptop editing (*ibid.*: 10). Although such a revolution has not yet systematically affected mainstream cinema, where the predominance of North American films is still largely unquestioned, it has fostered the creation of budget films and documentaries worldwide, stimulating recourse to audiovisual productions to assert cultural identities, display often hidden truths and, last but not least, denounce power asymmetries. Thanks to these technological advances, most countries have seen an increase in independent productions, which often amount to little more than amateur videos but, nonetheless, have been often supported in their diffusion by film festivals. As the authors of *Video for Change* suggest to would-be independent filmmakers, referring to this distribution channel as “a traditional way to get videos seen by a wide audience” (*ibid.*: 248), “the scale of a festival can range from fifty people watching three or four videos on a television monitor in a community centre, to a three-week event spanning seventy locations” (*ibid.*: 249).

In Italy, film festivals have been constantly increasing over the past few years, with a plethora of approaches and a variety of issues now being featured in the hundreds of festivals which are held throughout the country. Built into the very essence of festivals is the idea of bringing to light unknown audiovisual texts, their directors and their country of origin: cultural roots and values are normally much more emphasized in small-scale, independent productions than in mainstream cinema, which incidentally seems to be going towards an increasing cultural standardization and neutralization.

The passage from darkness to light is all the more evident when taking into account films which focus on the discussion of human rights, where audiences are involved in an experience of violations, abuses and forced obscurity. Making use of evocative imagery and editing, archive material but also artwork, the producers of these films wish to unveil often hidden, forgotten realities, drawing viewers' attention while also being aware of the fact that video can be a powerful source of evidence for whoever might be able to take a stance and seek to create change (*ibid.*: 209).

All of these features can be found in the films featured in the HRN international festival, held in Bologna as one of the main venues in an international circuit designed for unique, often artistically valuable cinematic products. The wish and need to push out of the darkness the important humanitarian issues these films are built around appears evident from the topics selected for the 2005 edition of the festival: freedom of expression, indigenous and minority rights, slavery and the plague of AIDS in Africa.

In the following paragraphs, only two of the 25 films featured in the edition described above will be taken into account, both of them having received huge acclaim by the Italian audience. The techniques used to shoot and edit the films were extremely different, just like the two issues they wished to portray: the lack of freedom of thought and action of women in southern Iran (Island of Qeshm), as featured in *The Other Side of Burka* (Mehrdad Oskouei, 2004), and the brutality of atomic bombs and the dangers of nuclear weapons in *Original Child Bomb* (Carey Schonevegel, 2004), the film which won the 2005 edition of the festival.

3. The multifarious language of the films and the subtitlers' experience

Before looking at some of the special features of these films, let us briefly discuss the students' experience as subtitlers for the HRN film festival in terms of a passage from darkness to light.

First of all, the very opportunity to try their hands at 'real' subtitling and cope with often hard but realistic working conditions resulted in an *enlightening* experience in the personal and professional growth of the students involved. Working hand in hand with the organizers and also being involved in the launching of titles during screenings, trainee subtitlers acquired self-confidence in linguistic and technical terms as well as a high degree of personal satisfaction, as was revealed by a questionnaire given to each participant after the completion of the project. In their answers, all of them praised the value of the experience; some of them gave prominence to the acquisition of technical expertise and self-confidence, while others laid emphasis on the intense emotional involvement it implied. Clearly,

coping with burning humanitarian issues and being responsible for their best possible expression through condensed strings of text to match powerful images implied reflecting upon, and bringing to light, often obscured values and emotions, on a personal level but also with a view to making them visible to large audiences.

In order to get a better glimpse of the nature of this subtitling experience, let us take into account the two films mentioned earlier, making reference to the constraints they imposed on the subtitlers from a broad viewpoint where linguistic, ideological and socio-cultural features are all equally and simultaneously involved. Therefore, we shall not linger on the quality of the Italian subtitles, nor propose strictly linguistic-bound reflections, but rather see the subtitlers' efforts as more complex actions which yield a strong socio-cultural value and, ultimately, bring about the passage from darkness to light.

3.1 Original Child Bomb

The first film under scrutiny is *Original Child Bomb (OCB)*, based on a poem by Thomas Merton and defined by critics as a poem in its own right, or rather as a series of poetically constructed sequences on the brutality of bombing. The film has enjoyed great success worldwide, contributing to bringing the issue of nuclear weapons and testing to the fore in many countries and contexts.⁴ Its main feature is its structural and semiotic complexity, which certainly increases its effectiveness, but also makes the subtitler's task harder. As for the language used in the film, there is great variation in terms of register as well as mode of expression, with a frequent shift from oral to written form or a mixture of the two.

The film opens on a sequence of images dominated by nuances of grey, with flowers and other symbols moving across the screen while a narrating voice utters short sentences which appear on screen as if emerging out of an old-style typewriter. In this first part, the subtitler's task is first of all constrained by the text appearing on screen, but also by its strong emotional density as well as by its great relevance in setting the context for subsequent developments. Figure 1 features a screen shot from the opening sequence of the film: we can clearly see the layout and notice that the English text uttered by the narrator is not fully transcribed on screen therefore requiring an integration by the subtitler (the Italian subtitles for the text in Figure 1 are featured in Table 1).

4. For this, see the "Take Action" section of the film's official website (www.originalchildbomb.com), with a number of links to associations and commissions which are active in the field of the reduction of nuclear weapons and have connections with the creators and producers of the film.

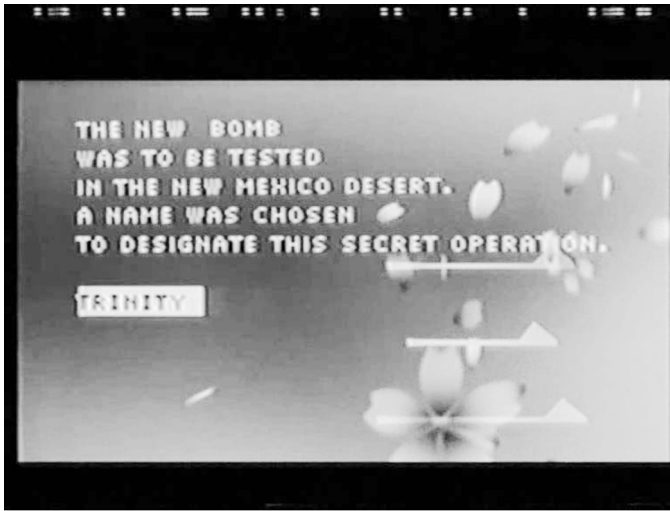


Figure 1. Shot from the initial sequence of Original Child Bomb

Table 1. Original Child Bomb: Italian subtitles accompanying the scene in Figure 1

[10.31]
3) La bomba
doveva essere testata...
...nel deserto del New Mexico.
Si scelse un nome per designare
Questa operazione segreta:
il nome era “Trinity”.

The second part of the film offers viewers the accounts of several Japanese people who witnessed the atrocities of the Hiroshima bombing. This series of scenes is provided with English subtitles for the Japanese speech (see Figure 2), which accompany a highly varied sequence of images featuring drawings, rough sketches and real-life shots with characters in full colour moving against a black-and-white backdrop.

Table 2 contains a few English subtitles and the corresponding Italian translation. It is worth pointing out that the use of punctuation has, in the original English subtitles, been adapted to serve a specific purpose: the dots are not used to signal a syntactically uninterrupted passage from one subtitle block to the next, but rather to convey emotions and highlight the auditory effect provided by the tone of voice of the female speaker, who cries while she recounts her own, tragic memories of the bombing. In this case, the subtitler decided to preserve such a

meaningful choice, in spite of the more commonly acknowledged subtitling conventions which use suspension points for the deferral of subtitled discourse. She only decided to eliminate some of the suspension points in order to enhance readability for the Italian viewers and, whenever possible, to use them for the double function of signalling an uninterrupted discourse between two subtitle blocks as well as conveying the speaker's feelings.

Table 2. Original Child Bomb: English subtitles and their Italian translation

[30.36]	
I saw so many corpses drifting in the water...	Vidi tanti corpi andare alla deriva.
Countless bodies came floating...	Corpi che galleggiavano...
I couldn't bear to look.	non riuscivo a guardare.
People without heads...people without arms...	Gente senza testa, senza braccia...
...people with their guts hanging out...	...gente sventrata,
...without eyes...	senza occhi...



Figure 2. Tales of Japanese survivors as subtitled in Original Child Bomb

The final part of the film brings the effects of these atrocious events to the present, with comments and opinions expressed by several American students filmed in a classroom. As can be expected, the settings are made to change again, with no special

effects being used in what looks like a handheld camera sequence. The subtitler was, in this case, faced with new challenges, mainly due to the total lack of written material on which to base her translation (no dialogue list had been provided and no subtitles appear on screen), but also due to the great speed at which students take turns and speak in the sequences, often using very informal slang expressions.

3.2 The Other Side of Burka

The second film from the HRN festival which is here analysed is *The Other Side of Burka* (*OSB*), an Iranian production centred upon the denunciation of the rights denied to women in some parts of southern Iran, particularly in the island of Qeshm. The film, released in 2004, has won its young director Mehrdad Oskouei great acclaim and a number of international awards. Often defined as a documentary rather than a feature film, *OSB* focuses first and foremost on the testimonies of women who, on a small, faraway island, are made to wear a special kind of burka, a pinching mask of black bands pressing against the eyebrows and nose, and ending in a point just above the mouth, which looks like a muzzle for dangerous animals.⁵

In structural terms, this film is totally different from *OCB*: it is constructed around the brave, short monologues delivered by a number of women which are interwoven with family life scenes and shocking declarations by men,⁶ as well as with evocative landscape images. The photography, editing and dialogues, though simple and straightforward, contribute to producing a very intense emotional effect on the subtitler as well as the viewers.

OSB was shot in Farsi and the version which was shown at film festivals carries English subtitles. The latter appear to have been rather hastily produced, probably by non-native speakers of English with a limited knowledge of subtitling; they feature a large number of mistakes in grammar and syntax as well as in the use of subtitling conventions. The meaning of the English subtitles is often unclear, obscure, and left the Italian translator with a number of open, often radical choices.

With the two sequences taken from *OSB* and commented below, the passage from darkness to light (implied in subtitling films which denounce the abuse of human rights) should be made more evident, appearing in a twofold guise.

The first excerpt aims to highlight some of the linguistic and technical difficulties the trainee subtitlers are often faced with in the adaptation of films which

5. For more insightful comments on *The Other Side of Burka*, reference can be made to Amnesty International's American website and its review of the film (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest/weho/2005/05262005.html>).

6. "As the saying goes a woman is like footwear," a grieving husband says in the film "when one pair is gone, you can find another one. But what am I supposed to do with the children?"[7:20].

come from all corners of the world and are frequently supplied with no dialogue list. In these cases, the translators can only rely on the pivot titles in English. The second sequence, on the other hand, is primarily aimed at providing a glimpse of the emotional as well as ideological burden placed on the subtitlers working on this and similar films, underlining the importance of bringing to light strong, intense messages regardless of the grammatical and syntactic mistakes.

Table 3 shows several examples of pivot titles from *OSB* and gives evidence of the semantic obscurity and ungrammaticality which had to be tackled by the subtitler. This sequence of titles accompanies the testimony of an old Iranian man, the father of three young women who committed suicide within a very short time. The man is trying to justify the events leading to the death of his youngest daughter. The pivot titles are anything but clear and they display a non-standard, inconsistent use of subtitling conventions which the Italian subtitler has strived to redress.

Table 3. The Other Side of Burka: The pitfalls of interpreting incorrect pivot titles

[8.42] I saw “Ali” & “Molla Omar” arguing. I asked what was going on.	Vidi Ali e Molla Omar che litigavano, e chiesi quale fosse il problema.
Ali was saying, “ Be careful & don’t let your	Ali diceva “Stai attento, non lasciare...
wife leave the house” & “Omar” said, “	...che tua moglie esca di casa”. E Omar rispose:
She is my wife & you as a brother are not allowed to meddle with my life”.	“È mia moglie e tu, da fratello, non dovresti intrometterti”.

Table 4 contains the titles matching some of the lines uttered by two of the women documented in the film. In terms of subtitling conventions, these two short excerpts still reveal several uncommon features, but the message conveyed by the English wording is nonetheless straightforward and effective. The short, incisive sentences strengthen the emotional impact of the images (see Figure 3), where close ups of unsmiling women wearing their face masks and veils are juxtaposed with shots of their daily lives.

The Italian translation for the subtitles in Table 4 reflects the simple and straightforward wording of the English version. However, if in this case the subtitler did not need to go beyond the English words in order to clarify the meaning of the utterances, the perception of what lies beyond these statements has left a mark on her, as was stated in the questionnaire she submitted after the completion of the project.

Table 4. The Other Side of Burka: The burden of emotional words in translation

[11.35] The local women here consider it WRONG TO come in front of a camera, But we do so to make others UNDERstand that we are here & we are alive We breathe & we are human.	Stare davanti a una telecamera, per le donne locali, è sbagliato, Ma noi lo facciamo PER dimostrare che siamo vive, CHE respiriamo e che siamo umane.
[13.19] I am 19, I got married At the age of 12.	Ho 19 anni. Mi sono sposata a 12.
[14.45] For a 7 year old girl who goes to school growing up means the elevation of the jail bars. The older she gets, THE tighter they become.	Per una bambina di 7 anni CHE va a scuola, crescere comporta finire dietro le sbarre di una prigione. Più cresce, e più le sbarre diventano strette.

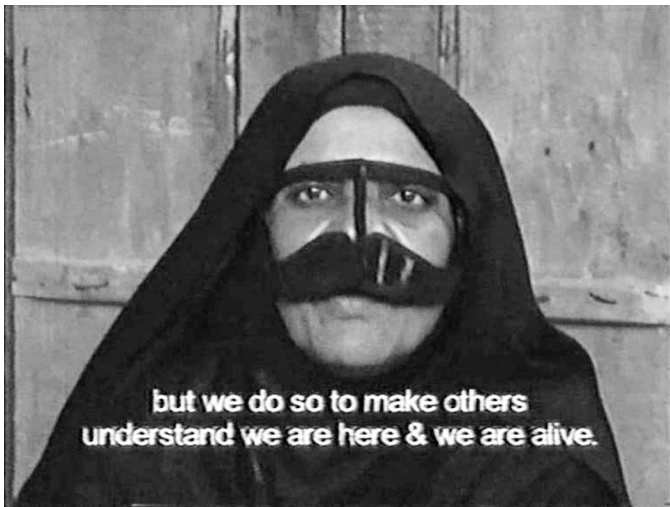


Figure 3. A woman speaking out on her rights in The Other Side of Burka

This section has involved a more direct observation of the nature of films which bear potentially abusive power, their multifarious language and the trainee subtitlers' efforts. However one more reflection is necessary. In a paper where a few

words and their metaphorical value, darkness and light, have been assumed as mainstays in the description of processes whose implications go well beyond operations of linguistic transfer, one more word needs to be highlighted. When referring to the trainee translators' active involvement in subtitling for the HRN festival, the word 'experience' has been recurrently used, and not by chance. Besides acquiring technical expertise, students taking part in this project were brought to an awareness of important socio-cultural issues by being involved in the linguistic and cultural adaptation for the benefit of a potentially broad audience. Moreover, throwing light on the often obscured violations which are denounced in the films has also led to a personal 'enlightenment', which incidentally has not failed to touch those involved in the supervision of the project.

4. Subtitlers' training and research: Opportunities and hopes

So far darkness and light, as well as the passage from one state to the other, have been referred to the films' construction and distribution as well as to the students' experience in subtitling for festivals featuring cinematic products with a highly emotional, socio-cultural value.

However, as mentioned earlier, darkness and light can also refer to the insights the overall activity provides for the trainers of translators, as well as for researchers who wish to go beyond the analysis of linguistic and technical constraints and highlight the potentially abusive power of subtitling, with all its implications and in all its forms.

As for subtitlers' trainers, supervising projects such as the one which has been briefly described implies a number of advantages. First of all, it enables them to offer students hands-on practice, thus providing the best possible completion for classroom training. Secondly, by following each stage of the project, trainers get the opportunity to monitor the development of students' performances, to directly evaluate their requirements and shortcomings and to provide constructive feedback. Moreover, by administering a questionnaire to the students after the completion of the project, trainers can obtain information which can subsequently be applied to improve course design as well as the management of all practical activities. Finally, it goes without saying that the possibility to come into contact with such valuable, original films and documentaries has an ideological and emotional impact on trainers as well as trainee subtitlers. By supporting the latter in the complex task of subtitling films on human rights, by coming to grips with previously unknown situations and shedding proper light on them, trainers themselves realize the value of such an enlightening experience, the films' potential and also the importance of non-corrupt, abusive subtitling even in a typical dubbing country like Italy.

In terms of academic research, the advantages of studying this kind of experience, taking into account the enormous growth of film festivals and the flourishing of productions which call for activism⁷ in Italy and beyond, ought to encourage a certain shift in focus, or rather a broadening of the theoretical framework which is commonly applied to the study of subtitling.

If it is undeniable that linguistic-oriented analyses can give an important contribution to the diffusion of research in audiovisual translation in general (whose scope is still limited in Italy as in a number of other European and non-European countries) the need to put subtitling in a broader context, taking into account cognitive, socio-cultural and ideological factors can do much more to push this activity out of its position of obscurity. Deeper, more complex and systematic research, with insights from disciplines such as cultural studies and sociology, can truly help bring to light the relevance and potential of subtitling, perhaps going as far as reflecting on market conditions and leading to an increase in attention from critics and viewers.

Undoubtedly, the project briefly discussed in this essay is very limited in scope, as is the amount of research presented in this paper, thus making the statements above appear rather optimistic and somewhat presumptuous at this early stage. However, the main goal here pursued is to open up new paths of research and lay emphasis on some extremely important, too often neglected implications of subtitling, especially in this new millennium.

To support our views and hopes let us refer to the final words of Nornes' essay, in which he states that "time is ripe for abuse" and foresees that "it is likely that abusive translations will begin with animation, comedies, *the art film*, and *the documentary*" (2004: 467), thus somehow confirming what has been maintained so far with reference to films and documentaries featured in film festivals, within and outside Italy.

Having perceived the potential abusiveness inherent in subtitling experiences such as the one here described, and having considered their socio-cultural and ideological value as well as the positive effects on translators' practice, training and research, we can only hope that similar projects, which see the joint effort of young translators, academics and professionals, will flourish in the years to come while their systematic investigation contributes ever more to a passage from darkness to light.

7. Gregory *et al.* (2005: 4) introduce the notion of 'video advocacy', which they define as follows: "[...] the process of integrating video into an advocacy effort to achieve heightened visibility or impact in a campaign. 'Advocacy' itself is the process of working for a particular position, result or solution."