

**Making Interlingual Meaning:  
Japanese Subtitles in English-Language Narrative Film**  
中間言語的意味の創造  
—英語の物語映画の日本語字幕—

名古屋大学学院文学研究科  
人文学専攻日本文化学専門  
KABARA Thomas John  
2019年12月

2019 年度名古屋大学学院文学研究科  
学位（課程博士）申請論文

**Making Interlingual Meaning:  
Japanese Subtitles in English-Language Narrative Film**  
中間言語的意味の創造  
—英語の物語映画の日本語字幕—

名古屋大学学院文学研究科  
人文学専攻日本文化学専門  
KABARA Thomas John  
2019 年 12 月



# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Part I The Literal Stance and Limited View of Subtitle Function</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>2 Subtitles, Cognition, and a Hierarchy of Semantic Channels</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.2 Directing the Audience’s Attention .....	16
2.3 Directing the Audience’s Inferences .....	19
2.4 The Channels of Expression .....	24
2.5 Hierarchy of Channels .....	29
2.6 Conclusion .....	42
<b>3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing: Tradition and Innovation in Audiovisual Translation in Japan</b> .....	<b>44</b>
3.2 Generating Authority in Professional Subtitling in Japan .....	47
3.3 Generating visibility through invisibility .....	50
3.3 New media, innovation and exoticization in anime fansubbing culture .....	54
3.4 The influence of amateur subtitling .....	59
3.5 Tradition through innovation .....	64
3.6 Conclusion .....	65
<b>Part II The Interpretive Stance and Expanded View of Subtitle Function</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles: How Film Subtitles Can Expand the Source Text</b> .....	<b>68</b>
4.2 Subtitling Loss .....	69
4.3 Subtitling “Growth” .....	76
4.4 Conclusion .....	80
<b>5 Addition through Subtraction: Translational Growth in <i>There Will Be Blood</i></b> .....	<b>82</b>
5.2 Condensing the Source Text of <i>There Will Be Blood</i> without Loss of Meaning .....	83
5.3 Addition through Subtraction: Semi-Translation and Ellipsis .....	88
5.3.1 Semi-Translation .....	88
5.3.2 Ellipsis .....	91
5.4 Conclusion .....	93

<b>6</b>	<b>The Jewelry Box Effect and Orthographic Enhancements in the Subtitles for <i>Bridge of Spies</i></b> .....	<b>94</b>
	6.2 Yanabu’s Jewelry Box Effect .....	95
	6.3 Highlighting Motifs, Officialese, and Multi-Layered Meaning.....	98
	6.4 Conclusion .....	105
<b>7</b>	<b>Referential Chunks in <i>The Post</i></b> .....	<b>107</b>
	7.2 Jewelry Boxes in <i>The Post</i> .....	108
	7.3 Referential Chunks in <i>The Post</i> .....	109
	7.4 Conclusion .....	118
<b>8</b>	<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>120</b>
	<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>125</b>
	<b>Notes</b> .....	<b>133</b>
	<b>Works Cited</b> .....	<b>135</b>
	Print.....	135
	Audiovisual Media.....	142

# Acknowledgments

This research project was made possible by a scholarship from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT) of Japan. This scholarship provided the opportunities for me to present the research that serves as a basis for this dissertation at international conferences at Norwich University in 2012 and 2014, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London in 2017.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Fujiki Hideaki for his continued assistance in preparing this dissertation. I would also like to thank the editors of the academic journals *TranscUltrAL* and *Philologia* in which portions of this dissertation have been published. I would especially like to thank Professors Nana Sato-Rosserg and Akiko Uchiyama for the hard in work and diligence in editing the scholarly volume *Diverse Voices in Translation* in which Chapter Three of this dissertation has been published.

Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation to Professors Paul Lai and Chad Nilep of the Mei Writing Department of Nagoya University for giving me the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience in the world of academic writing and publishing.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family members who have offered the insight and patience during this long journey.

# Abstract

This dissertation argues that the power to produce meaning in narrative films with interlingual subtitles is a negotiation between language and image, author and translator, and translator and audience, where subtitles reinforce but sometimes challenge not only the way audiences construct a coherent narrative in their minds but the inferential reasoning processes they use to interpret that narrative as well. To substantiate this argument, this dissertation focuses mainly on Japanese subtitling of English language films for two reasons. First, the inherent differences between English and Japanese languages amplify the limitations of film subtitling, providing a good testing ground for the power these subtitles have over a narrative. Furthermore, the professional subtitling culture of Japan, as its practitioners demonstrate unusual power, visibility, and professional leadership not seen in other subtitling industries around the world. Their translations reveal both a limited view of subtitling, as seen in Chapter 3, as well as an expanded view, seen in the latter half of this dissertation. Chapter 1 argues for the need to rethink a prevailing assumption that the subtitling apparatus and common subtitling practices wrest control over the production of narrative meaning from the source text. Such criticism of film subtitling stems from three unwarranted assumptions: 1. viewers rely on subtitles alone to understand foreign-language films, 2. subtitles are made to provide contact with source text cultures, and 3. subtitles modify the source text to the point of loss. This dissertation challenges the first two assumptions in Part I: The Literal Stance and Limited View of Subtitle Function and (Chapters 2 and 3) and the last assumption in Part II: The Interpretive Stance and Expanded View of Subtitle Function (Chapters 4 through 7). Part I examines the view that the primary function of film subtitles is to convey narrative information. Chapter 2 contends that the role of film subtitles as conveyor of narrative information from the

source text is a fluid one. In order to make a coherent narrative, filmmakers not only direct the viewer's attention toward necessary narrative information, they also direct the viewer's inferential reasoning processes toward convergent conclusions. In a subtitled film, filmmakers cede partial control over attention and inferential reasoning to the subtitles. This disrupts the coherence of the source text. The breakdown in narrative coherence engenders a hierarchy of semantic channels: unlike in a non-subtitled film, the viewer of a subtitled film is confronted with options about where to look and what to believe when seeking the "narrative truth" of a film, and she must therefore prioritize one semantic channel over others. Chapter 3 argues that both laypersons and professional subtitlers have a limited conception of subtitling that prioritizes the relaying of narrative information in service of contact with the source text culture or emotional experiences functionally equivalent to the source text. Through a comparison of the professional subtitling practices of Japan with the amateur fan subtitling practices found in North America and Europe, this chapter shows that amateur fan subtitlers' attempts to provide viewers with close contact to the source text culture are based on a conservative view of translation that actually exoticizes that culture, while professional subtitlers' narrow focus on providing "easy-to-understand" translations artificially limits the potential of film subtitling. Part II of this dissertation advocates for an expanded view of subtitling that sees it not merely as a means to convey narrative information, but as a means to cultivate new ways of using inferential reasoning. Chapter 4 argues for a new perspective on film subtitling that allows for growth rather than loss. Despite the severe constraints placed on the translation found in film subtitling, subtitles can promote what Christiane Nord calls "qualitative growth." It does so by transferring the "poeticness" of the source text into new configurations in the target text. These new configurations lead target viewers through new reasoning routines to make inferences about the text in ways that are not available to source text viewers. Chapters 5 through 7 provide examples of film

subtitling that produce this qualitative growth. In Chapter 5, a close analysis of the Japanese subtitles for the 2007 film, *There Will Be Blood*, demonstrates how the very necessity for source text condensation in subtitling leads the target text viewer to draw inferences from a base of knowledge that includes both source culture and target culture. Likewise, Chapter 6 analyzes the subtitling strategies for the 2015 film *Bridge of Spies* and argues that the film's subtitles prompt viewers to make inferences in ways the source text viewer cannot through what Yanabu Akira calls the "jewelry box effect." Specifically, the unconventional use of quotation marks throughout the film signals to the viewer that the contents within bear thematic significance or multilayered meaning without revealing that significance or meaning, allowing viewers to draw their own conclusions. Chapter 7 examines the subtitling strategies for the 2017 film *The Post* and argues that by turning subtitles into referential chunks, the translation adds a new richness to the text that is unavailable to the source text viewer. Again utilizing quotation marks as signaling device, the film condenses meaning by leading viewers to intertextual, intratextual, or paratextual referents. These referential chunks import new meanings into the interpretational process for target text viewers by incorporating American socio-political history with Asian socio-religious history. Finally, this dissertation concludes in Chapter 8 by proposing an empirical research plan that could test the degree to which target text viewers' reasoning routines deviate from those of source text viewers.

# 1 Introduction

“Terminate the Colonel’s command.”

How can we translate this sentence into another language, such as Japanese? In order to translate this sentence, we need to interpret it. Our interpretation depends on context. Even without context, we might recognize that the meaning of this sentence stretches beyond what the words say. Questions need to be answered, especially about the use of the word “terminate.” Answers to those questions are found in context.

The above sentence is a line of dialogue spoken by a character in Francis Ford Coppola’s 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*. In the film, the meaning is unmistakable if implicit: assassinate Colonel Kurtz, a U.S. military officer in the Vietnam War who has gone berserk. When the film was released in Japan, the Japanese subtitles for this line read 彼を暗殺せよ [*kare o ansatsu seyo* / Assassinate him],<sup>1</sup> according to Toda Natsuko,<sup>2</sup> the translator who wrote the subtitles for the film. Critics attacked Toda for this and other similar subtitles.<sup>3</sup> It is easy to see why. Something is lost in the translation. It is not meaning. The meanings of both versions are equivalent. Rather, it is subtlety and nuance. The opportunity for the audience to recognize implicit meaning under the surface has been stripped away.

From the above example, it appears interlingual subtitlers can wield considerable control over how a film is understood and appreciated through the power of their translations. This dissertation aims to uncover what role subtitlers have in the generation of meaning in an audiovisual text. When we watch a subtitled film, where does the story come from? Does the story come from the images and sounds? Does it come from the subtitles? Does it come from a combination of these elements, and is that combination balanced or does it favor one element over others? Behind these questions is broader question: who gets to tell the story? Is it the filmmaker or the

subtitled?

More specifically, what role does the subtitling apparatus play in the chain of expressive channels used to make meaning in audiovisual texts? What position does a professional subtitler occupy in the meaning-making process? And how do the techniques subtitlers use affect that meaning-making process? To answer these questions, this dissertation analyzes the status of subtitles, subtitlers, and their techniques in the meaning making process with an eye directed at Japan.

This dissertation argues that the power to produce meaning in narrative films with interlingual subtitles is a negotiation between language and image, author and translator, and translator and audience, where subtitles reinforce but sometimes challenge not only the way audiences construct a coherent narrative in their minds but the inferential reasoning processes they use to interpret that narrative as well. To substantiate this argument, this dissertation focuses mainly on Japanese subtitling of English language films. This language pair provides a sound grounding for this thesis for two reasons: the two languages are so distinct from one another, and the Japanese subtitling industry is exceptional compared with other subtitling industries around the world.

First, the inherent differences between the English-Japanese language amplify the limitations of film subtitling, providing a good testing ground for the power these subtitles have over a narrative. When source text language and target text language are similar (e.g., Spanish and Italian), the source text tends to act as a leash on the translation. But when there is a marked dissimilarity between the languages, the subtitler wields greater freedom and control over the target text, often interpreting and clarifying the source text, even if for no other reason than to avoid providing the target text audience with an incomprehensible translation. As the example at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, such is the case with Japanese subtitlers working on English-language films. Since it is the subtitling apparatus that confers this control, the

question becomes: what do these subtitlers do with this control? As part of the overall thesis, I will illustrate that their translations reveal both a limited view of subtitling, as seen in Chapter 3, as well as an expanded view, seen in the analyses of Part II.

Another reason I will focus my analysis on the situation found in Japan is that relative to the practices found in other countries, Japanese subtitling practices are exceptional. Professional Japanese subtitlers occupy an interesting position in the industry in that they wield more power than American and European counter-parts. For one thing, Japanese subtitlers have a union-like professional organization to protect their interests. Founded in 1983 by subtitler Shimizu Shunji, Japanese Screen Translators Association (JSTA) boasts 24 members (as of 2016), and its mission is to create a forum for interaction and exchange of information among translators while also providing a means of negotiating contracts and other professional matters with distribution companies in a manner similar to a labor union. While professional translator organizations certainly exist outside of Japan, few focus on audiovisual media translation<sup>4</sup>, making Japan's case an exception.

Additionally, some members of the JSTA have won fame through publishing books and magazine articles, appearing on television, giving lectures on film translation, or acting as interpreters to foreign movie stars like Tom Cruise. Toda Natsuko is a well-known name in Japan who has published several books on film translation, has made appearances on television shows, such as the NHK talk show *Eigo de shabera Naito*, and whose public appearances fill university lecture halls past capacity. It is fair to say she had garnered a degree of visibility as a film translator rarely if ever gained by English language film translators.

Moreover, Japanese subtitlers receive much more visible credit for their efforts than English subtitlers. A credit for subtitling is routinely displayed on DVD or Blu-Ray disc box covers and at the end credits of films in Japan. By contrast American DVDs of foreign-language films rarely provide credit for subtitlers. This is

symptomatic of what Lawrence Venuti calls the “translator’s invisibility” and indicates the norm of concealing the act of translation from viewers or readers. Insofar as Venuti’s concerns about translation “invisibility” are sound, American translation culture contrasts directly with Japanese translation culture in the sense that Japanese film translators can at least gain some recognition for their craft. Thus, it is fair to say Japanese film translators occupy a position of greater power as translators than their American (and European) counterparts.

On the other hand, subtitling practices are more rigid in Japan than they are in American and European cultures. In Europe and the U.S., far more experimentation with subtitling is visible than in Japan. Some of these experimental strategies, such as using different colored fonts or annotated subtitles, began as part of the subtitling repertoire of amateur translators who create unofficial and unlawful “fansubs” of mostly Japanese anime, but are now also found on official DVDs, as is the case with the *Pani Poni Dash!* DVD, which enables viewers to select conventional subtitles, subtitles with limited annotation, or subtitles with full annotation. Clearly, these metalinguistic strategies can make subtitling more visible in Venuti’s sense. But such innovative practices are simply not found in Japan and neither is the amateur subtitling culture that launched these innovations. Thus, while American audiovisual translators remain anonymous—often by choice as a way to avoid implicating themselves in copyright infringement—they also wield greater power over the final product by virtue of their freedom to experiment with the subtitling apparatus and, ironically, lack of professional standards.

But the issue is not so simple. The experimentation found in North America and Europe serves a conservative view of translation in which a translator’s task is to convey the original text, or **source text**, “faithfully”: both form and meaning must be retained as much as possible. So, traditions specific to the source text culture are often left untranslated in the translated text, or **target text**. For example, the Japanese terms

## Chapter 1: Introduction

“sempai” and “kohai” are integrated into the English subtitles of anime programs, since it is difficult to find suitable equivalents in English. In summary, the source text is seen as sacred. Thus, these translators are free to experiment with subtitling techniques, but their translations are shackled to the source text.

By contrast, JSTA subtitlers translate more freely, as their critics would no doubt agree. As a matter of professional standards, JSTA subtitlers refuse to fixate on specific meanings of specific expressions. Instead, their explicit goal is to convey the gist of the source text dialogue. And therein lies the problem. Their critics would be quick to point out that with this strategy, the subtitlers are interpreting the source text for the audience; and in doing so, they pilfer from the audience one of the great joys of engaging with a film, making one’s own interpretations and drawing one’s own conclusions. Moreover, the interpretations they serve to audiences may very well miss the point.

Japanese film scholar, Abé Markus Nornes, has written an extensive critique of film subtitling in Japan on this matter. In his essay, “For an Abusive Subtitling,” in which he argues for a wholesale radicalization of the subtitling apparatus, he claims that all subtitles are “corrupt.” By corrupt he means that these subtitles conform to Japanese culture and thus erase whatever artifacts of the source culture the original text bears. Nornes laments that viewing these films with corrupt subtitles creates the mere illusion that one is coming in contact with a foreign culture. Criticizing these Japanese subtitlers he states:

They accept a vision of translation that violently appropriates the source text, and in the process of converting speech into writing within the time and space limits of the subtitle, they conform the original to the rules, regulations, idioms, and frame of reference of the target language and its culture. It is a practice of translation that smooths over its textual

violence and domesticates all otherness while it pretends to bring the audience to an experience of the foreign (Nornes 2007: 155).

While he acknowledges that film subtitling is certainly hampered by technical issues, such as time and character count restrictions, etc., (for example, in Japanese subtitles a rule of 4 character per second has been the norm since the 1930s for reasons that probably have to do more with tradition than with reading speeds of the average Japanese moviegoer). Nornes argues that the issue is not the inherent challenges subtitling apparatus poses, rather it is the subtitlers' response to those challenges that "corrupt" the translation (Nornes 2007: 155). Those responses have been passed down and homogenized since the 1930s.

We can call this response "domesticating translation," another term coined by Venuti in the 1990s. It is a strategy that masks over the translation production processes. Jeremy Munday describes domestication as "translating in a transparent, fluent, 'invisible' style in order to minimize the foreignness of the target text" (Munday 2001: 146); the goal is for the reader not to notice he or she is reading a translation. Venuti sees domesticating translation as having a political element in that it reinforces the dominant norms and ideologies of the target culture.

As their bombastic language intimates, these critiques are simplistic. They stem from three unwarranted assumptions about viewing subtitled films: 1. viewers rely on subtitles alone to understand a foreign-language film, 2. a foreign film's purpose is to provide contact with a foreign culture, and 3. translations modify the source text to the point of loss. This dissertation challenges these assumptions.

For one thing, watching a subtitled film is an activity that requires far more than reading words at the bottom of a screen, and there is no reason to assume our understanding of the source text is dominated by those words. There are a multitude of inputs going into the meaning making process, and the audience must refer to all of

them to make sense of the film. This raises questions about how much influence subtitles have over a film's audience, which this dissertation explores.

Furthermore, subtitles do not necessarily exist to help the audience understand a film's source culture. Although many treat subtitles as a means of contact with the foreign cultures, this is a limited view of translation, where its sole purpose is to provide information (narrative, cultural, social, etc.) But sometimes a translation is made to mediate an experience rather than information.

Lastly, the above critiques arise from an assumption about translation in all its forms: Translation equals loss. While it is fair to say JSTA subtitlers try to make subtitles that are easily-understood by connecting them to the norms, values, and culture of Japan, this does not mean their end products replace the norms, values, and culture of the source text. If a subtitled film is "corrupt" translation, what is it corrupting? Information found in the source text? Authorial intentions? The above criticisms ironically emerge from a conservative view of translation, where the contents of the source text must remain unaltered in form or meaning.

In direct contrast, this dissertation argues that interlingual subtitling does not have a "corrupting" effect. The subtitling apparatus combined with the overall meaning-making apparatus of audiovisual media are too complex for this. Rather, interlingual subtitling is a negotiation between the source text and the target text culture that reinforces but sometimes challenges the images, sounds, and extratextual references of the source text while at the same time providing new ways to understand and interpret the source text. Subtitles do not corrupt, they add to the source text. In a sense, film subtitling actually helps the source text to grow. And this does not require ostentatious innovation like what we see in amateur-made subtitles. It is inherent in the apparatus and it can be found in conventional, albeit well thought out, subtitles. This dissertation uses several examples of Japanese subtitles for English language films to demonstrate this point.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

To make its case, this dissertation integrates insights from film studies, cognitive psychology, and translation studies. Film studies tells us about how films can construct a story in our mind. Cognitive research provides insight into how we react to what we see on a screen and how we come to understand it. And translation studies provides perspective on how audiovisual translation scholars conceptualize interlingual subtitling as means of communicating meaning. Mainly, research on audiovisual translation has taken three tracks: demarcating audiovisual translation from other forms of translation, examining viewer cognition of interlingual subtitles using eye-tracking studies, and exploring social phenomena like the fansubbing trend outlined earlier in this chapter. Chapter 2 utilizes findings from the former two approaches, while Chapter 3 offers a more thorough discussion of the latter approach. In combination, the insights from these fields establish the background for an analysis of the effect subtitling has on constructing the film's narrative.

This dissertation is divided into two parts: Part I: The Literal Stance and Limited View of Subtitle Function (Chapters 2 and 3) and Part II: The Interpretive Stance and Expanded View of Subtitle Function (Chapters 4 through 7). Part I examines the view that the primary function of film subtitles is to convey narrative information. Chapter 2 contends that the role of film subtitles as conveyor of narrative information from the source text is a fluid one. It begins by describing the meaning-making process in subtitled films. Meaning comes from a wide variety of sources both inside and outside the text. It also comes from both the producers of a text and the receiver. In non-subtitled films, the filmmakers steer our attention to the elements we need to see or hear in order to formulate a coherent story in our minds. They also direct our inferential reasoning about the story as well. They may steer us to converge on a single conclusion or diverge into a multitude of interpretations. But when subtitles are added to the mix, filmmakers lose control. The loss of control entails an unfolding of narrative coherence, which compels viewers to prioritize sources of narrative

## Chapter 1: Introduction

information in an effort to regain that coherence. Thus, a hierarchy of narrative inputs forms. This chapter explores where subtitles lies in this hierarchy of narrative sources.

Chapter 3 argues that both amateur and professional subtitlers have a limited view of the possibilities and impact of translation that prioritizes literal translation or functional equivalence respectively. This chapter compares the professional subtitling of Japan with the amateur subtitling cultures found in North America and Europe. Starting in the 1980s fans of Japanese anime began producing English subtitles (among other languages) for their favorite anime shows that had not been released on home video yet. These amateur subtitlers added their subtitles to imported or bootlegged videotapes from Japan and distributed them through a network of anime aficionados, thus creating a culture of amateur subtitlers. The professional culture is a highly conventionalized system that excludes innovation; while fansubbing culture, with its flouting of conventions, is an innovative alternative to rigid professional translation norms. But the situation is far more complex than this. The visibility (in the Venuti sense) professional subtitlers wield in Japan elevates the status of their translations; but it does so in the name of invisibility. At the same time, the innovations found in fansubbing can conceal a paradoxically conservative view of translation—one that maps traditional norms about faithful translations onto new translation devices and exoticizes the source culture. Specifically, fansubbers seek to convey as directly as possible detailed story information from the source texts for the purpose of fictional world-building. By contrast, the professionals aim to re-create an experience through translations that compensate for the untranslatable.

Part II begins with Chapter 4. This Part advocates for an expanded view of subtitling that sees it not merely as a means to convey narrative information so audiences can formulate a coherent story in their minds, but also as a means to displace the “poeticness” (i.e., the meaning beyond narrative information) of the source text, thus cultivating new ways for target text audiences to exercise inferential reasoning.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 4 argues for the possibility of a new perspective on film subtitling that allows for growth rather than loss. While conventional wisdom tells us that translation must necessarily entail loss (as in the common expression “lost in translation”), some translation studies scholars have argued that translation can yield significant originality in the target text. Christiane Nord, for one, argues that literary translators can claim authorial presence by actually causing the source text to “grow” in a way that is quantitative and qualitative. Although Nord’s idea applies mainly to literary translation, it raises questions about how this idea could apply to translations of other types of creative works, such as audiovisual translation. The format of interlingual subtitling between two disparate languages, such as English and Japanese, burdens translation with severe constraints and considerable loss of text is taken for granted. But what is lost? Meaning? Nuance? This chapter argues that these need not be lost in subtitling. In fact, by applying Nord’s model of source text growth to subtitling, we can see how subtitling produces new value to the source text.

Chapters 5 through 7 provide examples of film subtitling that produce the growth argued for in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, a close analysis of the Japanese subtitles for the 2007 film, *There Will Be Blood*, demonstrates that despite the severe constraints placed on the translation found in film subtitling, subtitles can promote what can be called “qualitative growth” by transferring the “poeticness” of the original into new configurations in the target text. These new configurations prompt viewers to interpret the content in new ways. Likewise, Chapter 6 analyzes the subtitling strategies for the 2015 film *Bridge of Spies*; and Chapter 7 examines the subtitling strategies for the 2017 film *The Post*. These films are linked by a theme of negotiation. In all three films, the central storyline revolves around semi-hostile parties engaged in political or business negotiations. The characters mistrust each other and therefore conceal information and speak mostly in ambiguous and heavily-coded language. These films are also linked by their Japanese subtitler, Matsuura Mina, who handles each of the

## Chapter 1: Introduction

films with similar techniques in order to compensate for the inevitable explicitation and uncover new opportunities for viewer to interpret the text.

Finally, Chapter 8 concludes this dissertation by summarizing the arguments made in Chapters 2 through 7 and recommending future research aimed at testing empirically claims about the way viewers use inferential reasoning while watching subtitled films.

In closing, with the explosion of file sharing and video streaming services available in the last decade, have made foreign-language audiovisual content more available and possibly more popular than ever. Although ratings data among streaming services like Netflix or Amazon are often kept secret, according to David Craig, professor of global media at the University of Southern California, “There’s every reason to suppose that younger American audiences are watching [foreign language content] on streaming platforms” (Kumar 2019). If true, interlingual subtitling must be taking on an increasingly important role in media industries. A greater understanding about how subtitling works is much needed. In the end, the aim of this dissertation is to provide the groundwork for this understanding.

**Part I**

**The Literal Stance and Limited View of  
Subtitle Function**

## 2 Subtitles, Cognition, and a Hierarchy of Semantic Channels

In a pivotal scene in Paul Thomas Anderson's 2007 film *There Will Be Blood*, the main character Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day-Lewis) negotiates a business deal with a Paul Sunday (Paul Dano). Daniel is a cunning and ruthless oilman looking for prospects in California in the early twentieth century. Paul is a naïve-seeming farmer eager to sell Daniel information about where to find oil. The two men strike a deal where Paul reveals the location of the oil for cash. Afterwards, Daniel warns Paul: "If I travel all the way out there and I find that you've been lying to me, I'm going to find you and I'm going to take more than my money back. Is that alright with you?" Daniel's threat is clear, but his final words are enigmatic. "Is that alright with you?" colors his threat with a hint of civility even friendliness. He is giving Paul a choice. He wants him to make an informed and rational decision. And yet his words intimate the violence of a gangster.

As Daniel delivers his final enigmatic line, he reaches out abruptly to shake Paul's hand. The gesture works in tandem with his words to create a complex character. He is cold-blooded but fair or, at least, he wants to present an image of fairness in order to gain leverage over Paul. Dialogue and image blend to create a coherent whole. Nothing is made explicit. Daniel's threat, his faux friendliness, his self-assurance must all be inferred from image and dialogue.

The Japanese subtitles for Daniel's final line read: 金を取り返すだけじゃ 済  
ません わかってるな? [*Kane o torikaesu dake ja sumasan. Wakatteiru?* / Taking  
my money back won't settle it. Got it?]. The translation is not entirely satisfying. The  
meaning is still clear if only implied just as in the original. But the paradoxical  
characterization of Daniel is missing. In the Japanese translation, he is only

communicating his own interests; he is not presenting a façade of polite and rational interaction. The richness of the original is missing and that richness suggests a theme about the dehumanizing effects of capitalism.

Nevertheless, the image of Daniel's quasi-friendly gesture remains unaltered in the subtitled version. It is there for viewers to observe and interpret. But the image and subtitle do not square up as nicely as the image and dialogue do in the original. The subtitled version is more contradictory than complex. Is Daniel supposed to be a tough-talking gangster or a just a businessman? This raises questions about how we understand a character or story when watching a subtitled film: where do we look when we are looking for meaning in a subtitled film? And how do we decide what is meaningful?

What makes viewing a film (subtitled or not) such a fertile experience is that meaning comes from a variety of directions. The words, images, sounds, performances of the actors, and our own knowledge and experiences come together to formulate narrative, characters, themes, and underlying messages in our minds. Add to that the input of subtitles translated from a foreign language, and the process becomes even more complex.

Indeed, the process of constructing a narrative seems almost hopelessly convoluted. For any given text, sources of narrative information are numerous, and each one affects the audiences understanding to a wide variety of degrees. For a literary text, the text itself, i.e., the words on the page, provide explicit information as well as implicit clues that lead the reader to infer basic narrative meaning. Cinematic texts add sound and image to the meaning-making apparatus. Extratextual sources, including paratexts and intertextual references also contribute to narrative construction. Moreover, in today's transmedia storytelling landscape, extratextual source do not just color audiovisual texts, they provide necessary information and fill in the blanks left in primary text in order to build a coherent narrative. To add to all this, foreign-language

media depend on translations (via subtitling or dubbing) as a narrative input.

When we watch a non-subtitled film, we combine the various elements providing story information to create a coherent whole. But when we watch a subtitled film, we read the subtitles first. Then we attend to the image. Does this mean we understand the story through the mediation of translation? If so, it is possible that this mediation affects our understanding of the explicit contents of the story. Moreover, it makes it likely that we interpret meaning, especially implicit, underlying meaning, through eyes of an interpreting medium, in other words, the translator. This would place a special authority over the text with the translator.

The goal of this chapter is two-fold. The primary aim is to examine how audiences construct a narrative from a subtitled film as compared to a non-subtitled film; but in addition, this chapter will provide the grounding for Part II of this dissertation, which discusses how subtitles can redirect the inferential reasoning processes of the audience. Taking a cue from cognitive psychology, I begin with a discussion of the task of formulating a narrative in the mind of the viewer using all of the sources of narrative input in films both subtitled and non-subtitled. Then, utilizing the research of audiovisual translation scholars, I explore how new narrative inputs (namely, interlingual subtitles) interact with the other inputs. Finally, I examine the presence of a hierarchy of narrative inputs that affect how we understand a film.

Ultimately, this chapter argues that the role of film subtitles as conveyor of narrative information from the source text is a fluid one. In order to make a coherent narrative, filmmakers not only direct the viewer's attention toward necessary narrative information, they also direct the viewer's inferential reasoning processes toward convergent conclusions. In a subtitled film, the filmmakers cede partial control of the narrative to the subtitling apparatus and this disrupts the coherence of the source text. The breakdown in narrative coherence engenders a hierarchy of semantic channels: unlike in a non-subtitled film, the viewer of a subtitled film is confronted with options

about where to look and what to believe when seeking the “narrative truth” of a film, and she must therefore prioritize one semantic channel over others. I call this **attentional prioritization** and **semantic prioritization**.

Overall, this chapter works in conjunction with Chapter 3 to establish the argument of Part I. The above framework is based on a view that assumes the primary function of film subtitles is to convey narrative information, directly or indirectly. In other words, subtitles are there for an audience adopting a literal stance. As Chapter 3 shows, different types of subtitling communities use this function for different goals: amateur subtitling communities use subtitles as a means of sharing information about source text cultures, while professionals use subtitles to guide viewers through the emotional experience of the source text. Both perspectives assume subtitles can affect the communication of narrative information but neglect the possibility of affecting inferential reasoning processes. Nevertheless, as Part II of this dissertation (Chapters 4-7) illustrates, subtitles are not merely as a means to convey narrative information, but as a means to cultivate new ways of using inferential reasoning.

## **2.2 Directing the Audience’s Attention**

In his book, *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures*, Noel Carroll argues that narrative films convey their stories by manipulating the viewer’s attention. Carroll suggests the **attention management hypothesis** as a way to describe how films work in our minds:

Motion picture makers communicate to spectators by controlling their attention. Through cinematic sequencing, the moviemakers select what the viewer sees as well as the order in which she sees it along with the duration of what she sees and the scale. The motion picture maker articulates her intentions to the audience by guiding our attention (Carroll 2007: 122).

Primarily, filmmakers achieve this control through editing and camera movement.

But filmmakers have many means of manipulating attention.

Film scholar, David Bordwell points out that a director can steer visual attention of viewers using any of the various tools of cinema, such as camera angles, framing, and editing, but also lighting, blocking, sound (including dialogue), etc. He gives the scene from *There Will Be Blood* described in the beginning of this chapter as an example. It is shot in a long single take from a wide angle and the camera remains nearly motionless throughout the scene. Bordwell points out that Anderson does not use editing or close-ups—the conventional way of manipulating attention—to draw our attention to places in the frame he wants to emphasize. Rather, Anderson uses the performers and their interaction with each other to direct our attention to specific parts of the image.

In an article on his blog, Bordwell demonstrates how this attention is manipulated by referring to a pilot eye-tracking experiment conducted by Tim Smith as part of the Dynamic Images and Eye Movement (DIEM) project. The experiment confirms Bordwell's hypothesis that "even in the absence of other compositional techniques such as lighting, camera movement, and editing, viewer attention during this sequence is tightly controlled by staging" (Smith 2011).

In his study, Smith recorded the eye-movements of eleven adults viewing the aforementioned scene from *There Will Be Blood*. An eye-tracking device was used to record **fixations**, where the eyes are mostly still and visual processing is occurring, and **saccades**, where the eyes move quickly from one point to another and visual processing ceases. The results of the study reveal two related findings: a high degree of **attentional synchrony** and a low degree of actual **volitional gazing**. In a previous study, Smith was able to demonstrate that viewers tend to look at the same parts of the frame at the same time when watching a moving image; this is what is meant by

**attentional synchrony**—viewers’ gazes tend to cluster around the same area of the frame. Significantly, this suggests that viewers of moving images yield little control over where they look and when, or to put it more technically, viewer gaze is controlled exogenously (Smith and Henderson 2008)<sup>5</sup>. In other words, how we look at an image is primarily controlled by factors external to us, factors which, in the case of audiovisual media, are usually controlled by a film director’s stylistic choices.

Smith’s study of *There Will Be Blood* confirms this. The study shows that his viewers’ gazes were highly controlled by Anderson’s direction (see **Fig. 1**). “By minimising background distractions and staging the scene in a clear sequential manner using basic principles of visual attention, P. T. Anderson has created a scene which commands viewer attention as precisely as a rapidly edited sequence of close-up shots” (Bordwell 2011).

Smith pre-emptively addresses objections that these kinds of eye-tracking studies may seem too reductive to capture the complexities of film viewing. But his conclusions about attentional synchrony and exogenous control are replicable and compelling: when people watch films they tend to look where the director steers their attention; this would logically reduce our visual volition, even when we watch a long take of a wide angle shot.

While Smith’s point seems obvious at first, it does offer new insight. In a conventionally composed scene according to Classical Hollywood Style using editing to combine medium shots with close-ups, it is only natural for viewers’ attention to be controlled by the filmmakers. This is entirely the point of making movies in this style, after all. But the key distinction in Smith’s research is that even in scenarios that may seem to give the viewer more leeway to choose where he or she looks (long takes of wide angle shots as in the example above), the long take and static shot give only the illusion of viewer volition. The filmmakers still steer the viewers’ attention consistently.

And to steer the viewers' attention is to steer their thinking. More specifically, steering their attention steers their processing of information. Through eye-tracking research we can measure the cognitive effort we concentrate on a task. This is known as the task-evoked pupillary response—a phenomenon in which the pupil dilates when confronted with a cognitively-challenging task (Beatty 1982). Thus, these studies do more than just measure when and where we are looking, they establish what we are concentrating our cognition on and how much how cognitive effort we are making. So, by establishing where we look and for how long and what our pupillary response is, studies like Smith's research above, can show us that when we watch a well-made film, such as *There Will Be Blood*, the filmmakers direct our attention and, in doing so, direct our cognition to their communication goals. This implies a quite passive model of viewership, but as I establish in the next section, the viewer is constantly supplying meaning through her own reasoning processes.

### **2.3 Directing the Audience's Inferences**

At its most basic level, a narrative is constructed from a combination of explicit narrative information and reader inference. Research in cognitive psychology shows us that inference is an essential process in the comprehension of any narrative text, including literary and cinematic. No text makes explicit every element necessary to construct a coherent narrative. Inference must be deployed for the inevitably implicit elements in a text. Inferential reasoning wields a major influence on how we generate meaning from a narrative text.

The bulk of research on inferential reasoning in reading focuses on text comprehension in so-called **monosemiotic** texts (i.e., written texts, see below for further discussion). These are texts that feature only one path to generate meaning (i.e., language), as opposed to audiovisual texts, which build meaning from multiple inputs. For these studies, inference is generally defined as “the act of deriving logical

conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true.” So, the research offers insights into how we understand what we read.

When we reading a story, we are almost constantly engaging our powers of inference. But the role of inference in reading comprehension is complicated. The conclusions we draw when reading come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some are simple and shared with most other readers, some are complex and different for each individual reader. Along one axis, researchers divide inference into two major types: **automatic inference**, where the process is fast and outside the reader’s control, and **strategic inference**, where the process is slower and at least partially initiated by the reader. As can be seen from the definition of automatic inference, even elementary reading comprehension tasks can be categorized as inference. This includes connecting a pronoun to its referent, known as **anaphoric inference**. But strategic inference involves more advanced reading routines, such as predictive inference, where the reader forecasts future events. For example, when we read about a dog snarling at a stranger, we can predict the dog will attack. We then proceed with the story and our prediction is either confirmed or denied.

With simpler inferential reasoning, readers will draw the same or similar conclusions from the hints provided; but with more complicated inferences, like predictive inferences, personal knowledge and experience play a greater role and individual differences will arise. Cognitive psychologists call this **convergent** and **divergent thinking**. Convergent thinking is used to connect ideas and find solutions to problems with a single well-defined answer. Conversely, divergent thinking is useful in solving problems with multiple ill-defined answers (Gerrig and Wenzel 2015: 379). For example, a reader exercises convergent thinking when encountering the sentence “The dog spotted the boy and snarled at him.” At a simple, grammatical level, the reader must infer the referent for “him” in an anaphoric inference; but since there is no room for leeway about who “him” is, we can expect capable readers to all draw the

same conclusion. On the other hand, the reader might exercise divergent thinking when making predictions about the events that will follow the above sentence. Some readers will guess the dog will attack, others may guess the dog will be pacified bearing in mind the adage about barks being worse than bites.

Any text offers a mixture of opportunities for convergent and divergent thinking for readers. Which type of thinking will prevail is often guided by the author of the text. This can be true of the director of a film, too. The aforementioned scene in *There Will Be Blood* prompts both convergent and divergent thinking. Daniel's line "I'm going to take more than my money back" provides a strong enough hint to lead viewers to draw the same conclusion about what Daniel means; but his unusual follow-up "Is that alright with you?" muddies the narrative. The viewer's thoughts can turn in several different directions. She may be tempted to try to ascertain narrative truth (Is Daniel really the type of person to follow through with this threat?). Or she may be tempted to search for and infer a major theme of the film (free market capitalism can make monstrous threats seem like rational free choices). The filmmakers have constructed a purposefully ambiguous narrative so as to support many inferential paths: some of which help the viewer understand the situation, others of which allow the viewer to interpret the situation.

Thus, inferencing processes affect not only how we understand a literary text and create a model of the narrative in our minds, they also affect how we interpret the text. The difference between understanding a text and interpreting is complex and is fraught with overlap; however, a general distinction can be made. Cognitive psychology researchers, Susan R. Goldman, Kathryn S. McCarthy, and Candice Burkett, have shown a distinct division in approaches to reading a text. They identify two approaches: a **literal stance** and an **interpretive stance**. "A literal stance orients readers to constructing what the text says based on the propositions and connections among them in the text, using prior knowledge to the extent necessary to create a

coherent representation of the situation referenced by the text” (Goldman 2015: 387). Meanwhile, an interpretive stance triggers the viewer to look beyond the surface of the text and probe for implicit meaning. Goldman, et al state that this stance “depends on integrating what the text says with prior knowledge of a variety of sorts, including knowledge of motivated human action, text genres and their characteristics, plot structures, character types, moral and philosophical systems, and pragmatic aspects of the communicative event” (Ibid 387).

Research confirms the distinction between the two stances. In a think-aloud study comparing a group of novice readers and a group of expert readers participants were asked to orally express their thoughts as they read a text. The two groups showed divergent approaches to reading. The novice readers (university undergraduates) expressed mostly text-based observations that helped them piece the story together. Meanwhile, the expert readers (university faculty in literature departments) made text-derived interpretations (Graves and Frederiksen (1991) cited in Goldman 2015: 393). Thus, according to this study, experts tend to adopt a more interpretive stance when reading, while less experienced readers focus more on generating a model of the narrative in their minds.

This concept of literal and interpretive stances can be applied to film viewing as well. For example, one viewer adopting a literal stance watching *There Will Be Blood* would attempt to reconstruct the film’s fabula in order to understand the truth about the film’s sometimes ambiguous events. While another viewer adopting an interpretive stance would look more closely at what the film is saying about capitalism or perhaps modern society, and how the film is saying it.

But in contrast to the above study, further research indicates the concept of literal and interpretive stances reflects a mindset more than a type of reader. In principle, any reader could adopt an interpretive stance. In another study, college students with no training in literary analysis were asked to write an essay after reading a short story. The

students were divided into two groups and given different essay prompts—one designed to elicit an interpretive response, the other designed to elicit a literal response. The students who were prompted to adopt an interpretive stance did so. According to these findings, “when readers who have had no training in literary analysis are given an external goal of making an interpretation, their responses appear more expert-like,” or in other words, they adopt an interpretational stance (McCarthy and Goldman, “Comprehension” 2015: 27). Thus, it appears that regardless of background or temperament, readers can be prompted to adopt an interpretive stance. This is significant, since narrative texts, including literary and audiovisual texts, attempt to direct the audience’s inferential reasoning processes. In other words, the author or director uses the tools of her chosen medium to lead audiences to adopt an interpretive stance the same way a researcher uses a test prompt leads a test subject to an interpretive stance and possible to a specific conclusion. I will call this reasoning process **directed inference**.

Thus, filmmakers communicate by controlling both our attention and our reasoning processes. They show us what they want us to see or guide our gaze toward what they want us to look at. In doing so, they steer not only our attention, but also our inferential reasoning. They may direct us to a single conclusion, or they may prompt us to adopt a more interpretive stance.

But there are many inputs in the meaning-making process for an audiovisual text. Watching and understanding a film is much more than a visual exercise, it, at the very least, also involves auditory input as well. While normally a filmmaker has as much control over the auditory input as the visual, the mere presence of multiple channels of expression complicates the notion of attentional control. What is more important: what we see or what we hear? Are they equally important? Adding extratextual sources of narrative information, such as paratext and translation, complicates the matter even further. And compounding that complication even further is the slipperiness of

translation in audiovisual texts.

#### **2.4 The Channels of Expression**

Carroll's attention management hypothesis differentiates between reading a written text and watching a film. He states explicitly that to view a film is not to "read" a film as the cognitive processes are different:

We process the flow of information delivered to us by cinematic sequencing through an iterated series of hypotheses to the best explanation where our abiding concern is the search for coherence. This involves something quite different than the exercise of rudimentary reading skills (Carroll 2007: 121).

For Carroll, a film must be understood holistically whereas a written text is understood by building meaning from smaller units (words) in combinations governed by rules (grammar). Since images are not decomposable as words are and there are no hard rules to film (only rules of thumb), the construction of meaning for the two media follow different paths.

But a film narrative is pieced together from different sources. Sound and image work together to form a coherent story. But does the fact that there is more than one source of narrative input upset this coherence? What about the presence of foreign-language subtitles in a film? Does this draw viewers back into reading territory, and, therefore, affects the cognitive processes that go into understanding a film? To understand how subtitles affect our thinking about a film, it is helpful to look at the how the various sources of narrative information in a film interact with each other.

Danish translation studies scholar Henrik Gottlieb has attempted to classify translations according to their media characteristics. For example, according to

Gottlieb, film subtitles are an example of what he calls a **diasemiotic** translation of a **polysemiotic** text. In his effort to formulate a taxonomy of audiovisual translation, Gottlieb has proposed dividing all source texts into two types: **monosemiotic** and **polysemiotic**. Monosemiotic texts are texts that use only one semiotic channel of expression (e.g., written language), whereas polysemiotic texts are texts that use two or more parallel semiotic channels of expression (Gottlieb 1997:143). While the term *semiotic* has been used in a variety of ways in translation studies and film studies, here, Gottlieb uses **semiotic channel** simply to refer to a channel of expression (Gottlieb 2004: 2019). Thus, a book, a medium which relies entirely on a single semiotic channel (written language) to convey meaning, would be categorized as a monosemiotic text, while a film would qualify as a polysemiotic text, since it features at least three semiotic channels, including image (non-verbal), sound (non-verbal), and dialogue<sup>6</sup>.

Gottlieb's taxonomy also offers several categories for translation types based on the characteristics of the media involved. Only two of these categories are relevant to the present dissertation: **isosemiotic** and **diasemiotic**. Iosemiotic refers to translation in which the same semiotic channel of expression in the source text is used in the target text. An example would be a translation of a non-illustrated novel where the written language of the source text is conveyed as written language in the target text. Foreign-language film dubbing would be another example. Diasemiotic translation, on the other hand, refers to translation where a semiotic channel of expression that is different from the one used in the source text is used in the target text. Gottlieb's quintessential example of this is film subtitling, as spoken dialogue is converted into written language (Gottlieb 2005: 36). Thus, as stated above, interlingual film subtitling can be classified as a diasemiotic translation (shifting spoken language in the source text to written language in the target text) of a polysemiotic text (audiovisual content).

Gottlieb's classifications raise some immediate issues, however. The first is the matter of how he classifies texts as monosemiotic and polysemiotic. The concept of a

monosemiotic text has been roundly criticized by Klaus Kaindl, who questions whether there is such a thing as a “monosemiotic” text in the strictest sense. He points out that even in the quintessential “monosemiotic” text, an unillustrated book, “the colour of the book cover, the paper quality, the layout and the typography already have semiotic qualities” (Kaindl 2013: 260). In other words, Kaindl finds the presence of *paratext* makes any text polysemiotic.

Generally, *paratext* is defined as the elements surrounding or forming a part of a text that comment on that main text. While this includes the aforementioned book covers, layout and typography (e.g., vertical vs. horizontal script in Japanese), as well as, title pages, blurbs on book flaps, etc., it also includes DVD covers, movie posters, commentary tracks in audiovisual texts. But according to Kathryn Batchelor, a paratext is not necessarily a physical matter. In *Translation and Paratexts*, she argues that Gérard Genette, a pioneer in recognizing the importance of paratext, views paratext as a functional element rather than a material element. Quoting Genette in *Seuils*, a pivotal volume on the discourse on paratext, she states, “anything that ‘provides some commentary on the text and influences how the text is received’...is part of the paratext” (Batchelor 2018: 10 quoting Genette 1987: 7). Thus, according to Genette paratext does not refer to specific material elements but rather a meaning-making function; and therefore, by definition, paratext affects the meaning of the text and how an audience reads it. For example, a film poster can situate a text in a particular genre, impacting our expectations about the film’s contents. Moreover, in the Japanese literary publishing world, translated books are almost always accompanied by *yakusha atogaki* (translator’s afterwords), which can provide the translator’s commentary on a text (Bilodeau 2019: 67). Indeed, the French word *seuils* (the title of Genette’s book on paratext) means threshold or entryway and is used as a metaphor for the materials that provide the reader with a text’s point-of-entry. Thus, if we assume readers must always engage with paratext when reading a written text, then Kaindl has a point that true

monosemiotic texts probably do not exist.

So does that make every text polysemiotic? This too is problematic. As mentioned above, Gottlieb defines audiovisual contents as polysemiotic. He borrows Frederic Chaume's definition of an audiovisual text to support this classification. Chaume states that "An audiovisual text is a semiotic construct comprising several signifying codes that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning" (Chaume 2004: 16). Ostensibly, Chaume is referring only to the signifying channels that are available to the viewer during the immediate process of viewing a film, in other words, the auditory, visual, and verbal output used to convey narrative information in a movie. This would include sound effects and music, cinematographic images and their arrangement, and character dialogue and narration, all of which combine to form coherent meaning. Thus, there are multiple channels of information as part of the text itself. But, like Gottlieb's definition of monosemiotic text, this conception of polysemiotic texts immediately raises some questions. Mainly, what is meant by "simultaneously" producing meaning? Do audiovisual texts include only the channels that convey information to the viewer during the viewing process, or could they also include *paratextual* materials that are only found outside of the viewing process? In other words, does the signifying code include external, extratextual channels that surely color the viewer's comprehension and interpretation of the audiovisual text? Does the movie poster outside the theater that situates the film in a particular genre count? Arguably, in the 21st century—an era of world-building transmedia—nearly all viewers will have engaged with paratext to some extent.

It could be argued that in Gottlieb's classification that monosemiotic and polysemiotic texts refer to only the channels perceived simultaneously and available to all audiences regardless of their background knowledge and experiences, since those background knowledge and experiences are bound to be so diverse as to be impossible to account for. A reader of a monosemiotic text will by definition read the words on the

page but not necessarily the blurb on the jacket cover; and a viewer of a film will by definition see the images on the screen but not necessarily the poster at the front of the theater. Perhaps this view is fair for viewing films in their original language within a limited scope; however, it appears lacking when analyzing interlingual film subtitling.

There are two issues at stake: first is the role translation plays and second is the role the subtitling apparatus plays. First, there is the fundamental issue of translation. What role does translation play in the presentation of a film or literary text? Are translations part of the primary text, the paratext, or are they texts in themselves? For his part, Genette sees literary translation merely as a source of paratextual input, since the translation is a product of the original text and would not exist without it. Translation studies scholars tend to disagree with this stingy view of the field, especially in regards to literary translation. According to Batchelor, Sehnaz Tahir Gurcaglar argues that translation products are texts in themselves. She points out that Genette's view of translation as paratext "fails to consider how translation may alter original texts" (Batchelor 2018: 29).

While referring to subtitles as texts in themselves is probably an overstatement, they cannot be paratext for two reasons. First, they are integrated into the core text, received semi-simultaneously with all other semantic channels, unlike textual commentary. Second, while it is true subtitles often provide interpretations of the source text to the viewer, they do not merely affect how the text is received the way a film poster or book cover does. Rather, they provide core text content. It is the main source of input for the viewer, not a supplemental source of reinforcement. Indeed, as Batchelor suggests, subtitles do not fortify the source text, they alter it. This is precisely the issue in the present dissertation. It is generally assumed that in audiovisual translation the source text will be altered significantly. The examples given at the beginning of Chapter 1 and this chapter demonstrate this. Such inevitable alterations are often lamented as content and poeticness "lost in translation." But as I

will argue later in this dissertation, such alterations are not necessarily a matter of loss. Sometimes they can result in growth that produces new text.

Alteration of the source text also implies conflict among the various channels of expression found in film. The words of a subtitle may not match the images, sounds, or dialogue of the source text. Even when they do match, viewers cannot read and explore the image and sound simultaneously. This must be done consecutively. So, what channel gets priority?

In summary, despite Kaindl's misgivings, it is probably fair to separate paratext from Gottlieb's other channels of expression, since they are experienced simultaneously, and they do not provide comment, they provide direct narrative information. Generally, these channels reinforce each other to form a coherent narrative. Subtitles, on the other hand, can be viewed as an additional semantic channel but one with characteristics that separate it from the other channels. First, although it appears concurrently with other channels, it is not experienced concurrently. Second, it alters the source text, generating new narrative information.

### 2.5 Hierarchy of Channels

The above framework raises questions about the existence of a hierarchy of channels in film. This includes non-subtitled films. If we assume such a hierarchy exists, then what channel do viewers prioritize unconsciously or otherwise? Viewers prioritizing one channel over another could refer to one of two things: 1. focusing more attention on a certain channel over any other channel throughout a film or at a given moment, or 2. consulting a certain channel and weighing its contents more heavily than the contents of any other channel when attempting to grasp the film's overall content (e.g., the story in a narrative film) or interpret that content. These two modes of prioritizing can be referred to as **attentional prioritization** and **semantic prioritization**. The presence of a hierarchy raises a further question: If a contradiction

arises in the content between two or more channels, which channel do viewers refer to as the most reliable source of information when attempting to grasp the meaning of the film?

In discourse on how viewers piece together the narrative of a non-subtitled film from various pieces of information we perceive during the viewing process, it is often assumed that viewers take in information from all semiotic channels more-or-less simultaneously since these pieces of information generally combine to form a coherent whole. However, occasionally conflict may arise between the information provided in the different channels resulting in a narrative contradiction. Invoking the usefulness of the concept of a cinematic narrator<sup>7</sup>, Seymour Chatman refers to this as “a conflict between two mutually contradictory components of cinematic narrator” and points out that this is unique to multi-channel media such as film, which has, what he calls, a *visual track* and an *auditive track* (1990:136).<sup>8</sup> Examples of this narrative clash can be found in films in which a voice-over narrator’s descriptions do not match the image information. This kind of conflict arises in a number of films, such as *Rashomon* (1950), *Badlands* (1973), *The Usual Suspects* (1995), *Fight Club* (1999) and *Memento* (2000). In these cases, what the viewer learns through narration clashes with what they see on screen; the viewer must then reconcile this difference by, in a sense, “selecting” which piece of information (the dialogue or the image) he or she will use to form a coherent narrative. Although, this “selecting” is almost never done consciously and is rather done automatically based on conventions of film narrative, genre narrative, film viewing, and our natural inclination to believe our sensory perception that is unmediated and unfettered by human intention.

Indeed, in the case of non-subtitled films, it is often assumed that image occupies the foremost position in film. In his account of Terrance Malick’s *Badlands*, Chatman describes a contradiction between Holly’s account of her escape with Kit and the visual information being displayed on screen. The visual information is patently more sordid.

In short, he notes a conflict between what is told and what is shown. He argues that this sort of conflict must be reconciled through a cinematic narrator and that narrator delivers the “true” story content visually. As he states, “the partially unreliable narration of *Badlands* arises explicitly from a conflict between two mutually contradictory components of the cinematic narrator. Normally, as in *Badlands*, the visual representation is the acceptable one, on the convention that seeing is believing” (Chatman 1990:136).

Peter Verstraten criticizes Chatman for this assumption about the necessity of a cinematic narrator and the power of image over all auditive information. Verstraten views this as an artificial hierarchy. He argues that the viewer cannot assume that the visual information is more accurate when seeking the “truth” of the story, but rather it is more “correct to say that Malick’s road movie concerns itself with the clash between the auditive and the visual tracks itself.” The contradiction is the point of the story, and its narrative truth is deliberately slippery and difficult to define.

Verstraten cites Alfred Hitcock’s *Stagefright* and Akira Kurosawa’s *Rashomon* as further examples of films that contradict a hierarchical structure. In these films, as in *Badlands*, what is seen and what is told come into conflict with each other and that very conflict is an important theme of the film. These films give us unreliable voice-over narration while also giving us unreliable images. He states his position succinctly: “if words can lie and images can comply with untruthful words, where does the true version of events reside?” (Verstraten 2009: 136-138).

Perhaps this is true in films that make a theme out of conflict between the auditive and visual tracks, such as the ones Verstraten cites; however, not all films with conflicting information in the auditive and visual tracks necessarily aim to develop a theme about the nature of our perception or “truth” in storytelling. In some cases, contradictions between the voice-over narration and the visual information of a film are used to illustrate the unreliability of the character giving the narration. In *Memento*

(2000), for example, a conflict arises between what Leonard, who suffers from anterograde amnesia, tells the other characters, including an off-screen presence throughout the film, and information shown on the visual track. Leonard tells two seemingly discrete stories about his wife's murder and about a man named Sammy Jankis. Toward the end of the film, after we have been told through Leonard's voice-over narration the full story of how Sammy Jankis accidentally killed his wife by injecting her with an overdose of insulin, we are shown a flashback from Leonard's mind that implies that he has transposed his own life story with Sammy's, and it may be his wife who suffers from diabetes. This in turn has implications about the true cause of his wife's death. This calls into question the reliability of not only Leonard's narration but also the flashbacks of Sammy Jankis and his wife we have been shown throughout the film. This is crystallized in one brief moment where Leonard's partner, Teddy, reveals to him that it was Leonard's wife who is diabetic. In an earlier scene, when Leonard is reminiscing about his wife, we are shown a flashback in which we see his wife combing her hair and suddenly exclaiming "ouch!" and a cut to a shot of Leonard playfully pinching his wife's naked thigh. When Teddy tells Leonard **his** wife had diabetes, we are shown a flashback staged precisely like the earlier scene except this time the film cuts to a shot of Leonard injecting an insulin needle into his wife's thigh, not pinching it. Notably, the scene reverses cause and effect relations: we are shown the effect (his wife saying "ouch!") and then the cause (Leonard's pinch/the pinch of the needle) in a way that mimics the structure of the film as a whole.

Since both versions come from Leonard's mind, and Leonard's mind is clearly not reliable, we are left wondering which story to believe: the story told in Leonard's quasi-voiceover narration or the brief visual flashbacks. On the one hand, we may not care. Unless we are invested in re-constructing the most accurate story of Leonard's fictional life, it matters little what the "truth" is about his wife and Sammy Jankis, as the film is constructing a theme that calls into question the reliability of memory and

belief. On the other hand, what the flashback images do show is the narrative “truth” about Leonard’s state-of-mind: whatever the truth is about his wife, Leonard is utterly confused and even his most cherished memories are not reliable even to himself. It is the visual track that provides this information through not only the flashbacks codes as Leonard’s thoughts but also the touch of doubt shown in Guy Pearce’s facial expression as he denies that it was his wife who was diabetic. In *Memento*, it is the visual track that conveys the extent of Leonard’s confusion; we even share in his confusion in a sense thanks to the contradictory flashbacks.

The very fact that Leonard is confused implies that there is something to be confused about. In other words, there is a narrative truth to be sought and discovered. His wife was either diabetic or she was not. Teddy was lying or he was not. The film simply refuses to provide answers. But that is because we share Leonard’s perspective throughout the film and his condition prevents him from discovering the truth. The point is not that truth is ultimately unknowable, but rather that it would be difficult to ascertain the truth if we had no long-term memory like Leonard.

The film’s unusual structure and how it is treated confirms this theme. Because its plot proceeds backwards, *Memento* can be called a “puzzle movie.” It invites reformulating the narrative elements into a coherent fabula (chronological order of the story) either in one’s own mind or even in physical form. In fact, some ambitious fans of the film have already reformulated it to play in chronological order and uploaded it onto the Internet; and the official region one limited edition DVD has a hidden feature, or “Easter egg,” that allows viewers to watch the film in chronological order. Referring to *Memento* as a puzzle film implies that with a bit of work the viewer can reformulate the plot into a coherent story, even if it refuses to answer all the questions it poses.

In the case of *Memento*, the search for narrative coherence is the search for narrative truth. The point of puzzling out the film’s fabula is to uncover the objective truth of the events of the fabula. And objective truth comes from the camera and

nowhere else. Indeed, in trying to reconstruct the fabula what choice do we have but to refer to the visual information that is not coded as a flashback from Leonard? The characters are all unreliable. Teddy, Natalie, and even the motel clerk all lie to Leonard. Meanwhile, Leonard has no functioning long-term memory, and as we discover late in the film, he willingly distorts his own written records of history for his own sense of satisfaction. He too is a liar. Therefore, we have no reliable record to the story events—leaving us with only the visual information that *feels* objective to construct the “true” story.

Thus, while some films (*Rashomon*, *Stage Fright*) thwart our expectations about the reliability of the visual track, we must believe what we see to make coherent sense of the story. Therefore, in two-track media, such as film, conflicts arising between the two tracks can be resolved and often are resolved by treating one track or another as an imperfect authority.

But does this mean that an essential hierarchy between visual and auditive tracks exists? What about when no conflict between the visual track and auditive track arises and instead they function together, reinforcing each other? Does a hierarchy form in that case? Perhaps it does not, at least not in non-subtitled films. If it is true that we perceive both tracks simultaneously to form a coherent whole in our minds, then a hierarchy seems illogical. Nevertheless, hierarchy seems to emerge when conflict arises between the two tracks, or when one track supersedes another track, as when subtitles command the attention of viewers at the expense of image information.

A lack of hierarchy would extend to subtitled films if the subtitles were complete or at least nearly complete translations of the source text dialogue and voice-over narration. However, it is widely accepted that subtitles are a limited translation, if they can be called “translation” at all. Gottlieb states that due to limitations on the number of characters that can be displayed per second and thus the necessity for “condensation” of the source text, “language professionals tend to disagree as to whether subtitling is

indeed translation, and even the subtitling industry is often reluctant to grant this type of language transfer the status of ‘real’ translation” (Gottlieb 2004). Using the same reasoning, practitioners in Japan bolster this idea with the often repeated mantra that “subtitling is not translation.” In fact, these subtitlers have produced a volume in 1992 dedicated to this idea entitled *Film Subtitling is not Translation*.<sup>9</sup>

In Japan, at least, the difficulty of producing film subtitles was recognized early. In February of 1931, the Japan office of Paramount Pictures distributed one of its American films, *Morocco*, with subtitles in Japan for the first time. Tamura Yoshihiko was commissioned to create the subtitles for the film. In the February 1, 1931 issue of the Japanese film magazine *Kinema Junpo* Tamura remarked on his first attempt at creating subtitles:

...when I translated the spoken words into Japanese, the translation came out too long no matter what. So, when a tried to translate the dialogue faithfully...the titles would appear even after the actors had finished speaking and the film had cut to the next scene...In translating everything, the audience would have their attention occupied by reading and would not be attentive to the screen, and at the very least, there is a chance they wouldn't understand the next scene (Tamura 1931, my translation).

Tamura limited his subtitling to an average of thirty titles per reel in the 92 minute film. Thus, the question of where viewer attention it directed was pivotal from the very beginning of subtitling in Japan. In 1931, Tamura made the decision to limit how much of the audience's time he was going to occupy with his subtitles, recognizing that audiences would invariably turn their attention to the super-imposed words at the expense of the image. In a sense, he directed viewers to prioritize the image over the

subtitles.

As noted earlier in this chapter, a filmmaker's task is to direct the viewer's attention. The significance of this for subtitled films is that all of the control a director can wield over where viewers look potentially disintegrates when subtitles appear, since viewers relying on subtitles will immediately and involuntarily look to them for information as soon as they appear. This has repercussions for who controls the viewer's gaze, the director or the subtitling apparatus. Note that we can only say that the subtitling apparatus controls viewer gaze and not the subtitlers themselves since they must follow strict rules about character or word count, and they can only translate the dialogue found in the source text. Although subtitlers make choices about how the original dialogue is translated, they cannot make decisions about length of the subtitles or the duration they remain on screen (other than severely limiting the number of subtitles as Tamura did. But audiences' demands for accurate translations preclude subtitlers from following Tamura's lead). Indeed, as a rule the appearance of a given subtitle does not extend beyond a single shot. As soon as the image cuts to a new camera angle, the subtitle from the previous shot will disappear. In the new shot there will either be a new subtitle or no subtitle. Thus, the first thing we look at when with every cut in a scene with much dialogue is the new subtitle: with every cut our attention shifts back to the subtitles. This would not necessarily be the case in scenes shot in a single take or with little cutting. In other words, the director can maintain control of the viewers' gazes when using long takes even in subtitled versions of the film.

Looking closely once again at the aforementioned scene from *There Will Be Blood*, but this time with subtitles, can test the above assumption about single takes. The scene in question lasts one minute and 45 seconds. As mentioned above, it is shot as a single take with a wide angle lens. All four characters in the scene have at least one line of dialogue, but some two-thirds of the thirty-six lines of dialogue is spoken

by one character, Paul, as he explains to the others where on the map oil has been discovered. Each of the 36 lines of dialogue is translated and rendered as 36 subtitles, averaging one subtitle approximately every two and half seconds.

Although the content of the dialogue is necessarily condensed, as is usual for subtitles, not much is lost in the translation. The content of the dialogue is mostly banal, covering the location of the oil, family composition, and names. The language used in this scene is simple and the actors deliver these lines slowly. At the end of the scene, Daniel (Daniel Day-Lewis) vaguely threatens Paul (see Chapter 5 for a more complete discussion).

With a few exceptions the subtitles appear one right after another, giving viewers little time to scan the image. Although this could be measured empirically, it is difficult to imagine that with the quick succession of subtitles, however simple they may be, the viewer's attention is anything but occupied with reading. The key moment described at the beginning of this chapter illustrates this well. As scene in **Figure 2**, toward the end, Daniel, abruptly raises his hand in a grand gesture. It is both threatening and mysterious and it provides a climactic moment in a tense discussion between the characters. As it turns out, Daniel is merely offering to shake hands with Paul as is customary when striking a deal. However, this is precisely when he delivers his vague threat to Paul ("I'm going to take more than my money back. Is that alright with you?"). This line summarizes Daniel's character nicely, but then again, as Bordwell points out, so does the simple hand-raising gesture: "Daniel's characteristic blend of bluff assurance, friendliness, and aggressiveness are packed into this single gesture" (Bordwell 2011). Thus, the source text dialogue and the image of the gesture dovetail into a coherent characterization of Daniel.

But in the target text, the line "Listen!" is uttered simultaneously with the gesture; thus, the subtitle *いゝゝゝ* [*iika* / Listen!] is also displayed simultaneously with the gesture. Of course, where the viewer looks at this particular moment is dependent on a

host of factors and an eye-tracking study would be provide empirical evidence, but with the factor of attentional synchrony and viewer tendency to look to the subtitles first for information, it is probably safe to say that when seeing this moment for the first time, a viewer would have his or her attention directed at the subtitle rather than Daniel's meaningful gesture.

Perhaps the viewer can take in the visual information as well as the subtitle all at once and combine them her mind into the same coherent whole that is there in the original. Eye-tracking research on subtitled videos seem to suggest this is the case. Numerous studies have been done using a combination of eye-tracking with questionnaires. Participants are asked to view a short video clip with foreign-language subtitles with an eye-tracking device. The eye-tracking measures not only where the viewer looks and for how long, but also how much cognitive effort a given task requires via the task-evoked pupillary response. Afterwards, they are given questionnaires to test their ability comprehend and retain both image and language information. This research shows that viewers do attentionally prioritize subtitles, but they take in considerable image information as well. In fact, some eye-tracking studies have shown that viewers regularly do have time and take advantage of that time to scan the image as well (Perego, Del Missier, Porta, and Mosconi 2010), (Bisson, Van Heuven, Conklin, and Tunney 2012). Additionally, viewers grasp information from both channels easily. When viewing a video clip, viewers were able to pay attention to both subtitles and image content and were able to recall information from both afterward, suggesting at least the possibility of taking in content from both channels adequately (Perego, Del Missier, Porta, Mosconi 2010). These studies also measure if we spend more time processing text or image or if we sacrifice cognition of image information in favor of subtitles. The answer is no. There is no apparent trade-off between text and image processing.

Other studies have expanded on this research to include even more cognitive tasks.

Specifically, they test viewers' ability to follow a subtitled video with annotated surtitles containing meta-linguistic information. According to one study, we do not sacrifice narrative comprehension or cognition of image information even when we are saddled with multiple textual inputs and cognitive load is increased. In these studies participants were shown foreign-language video clips either with standard subtitles or with annotated subtitles. Eye movement and fixation duration were measured with an eye tracking device (see **Fig. 3a** and **Fig. 3b**). Afterwards, participants were tested on the ability to retain information from the text or from the images. The findings show that when viewers watched the annotated video clips, they spent less time looking at image content and expended more cognitive effort processing the content, but they were still able to retain both graphic and textual information just as well as when viewing content with standard subtitles only (Kunzli and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011). In summary, the eye-tracking research suggests that viewers can and often do manage to perceive information from a wide variety of channels even if they are presented all at once, and they combine this information to construct a narrative.

But none of this research contradicts the idea of a hierarchy of channels; in fact, it implicitly confirms an important underlying observation: viewers take in each channel separately. The viewer reads the subtitle as an isolated piece of information and then, time-permitting, seeks further information or confirmation from the image. If the viewer has no time to scan the image, which, despite what the above findings suggest, can be the case, then by virtue of providing the only information fully perceived, the subtitles not only are attentionally prioritized but also semantically prioritized (i.e., they are what the viewer refers to when piecing together the "truth" of the story). In addition, if a conflict arises between the meaning of the images/sounds and subtitle, the coherence-seeking viewer must prioritize one source of narrative truth over another. This is in direct contrast to the view that non-subtitled films are understood holistically rather than as pieces of information coming from separate channels in non-subtitled

films.

In this sense, it is difficult to see anything but a hierarchy of semiotic channels in the subtitled film viewing experience. Rather than three semiotic channels (image, sound, dialogue) perceived more or less simultaneously and forming a coherent whole, only two channels (subtitles and sound) can be perceived simultaneously and one of those channels may conflict with the others. Thus, one (or perhaps two) channel(s) must be attentionally prioritized and semantically prioritized over the remaining other channels. To summarize, if we seek coherence, then we must prioritize.

Nevertheless, this does not guarantee that the subtitle channel is the one that is prioritized when grasping the meaning of a film. Some eye-tracking studies have found that viewers sometimes skip reading subtitles when more salient features in the image, such as motion, appears simultaneously with the subtitle (Bisson, Van Heuven, Conklin, and Tunney: 2012). Thus, viewers do exercise some control over which channel they attentionally prioritize.

Furthermore, subtitles are delimited by the other semantic channels, and as a result, they are usually designed to offer coherent reinforcement to the viewer. As Delia Chiaro points out, subtitles are leashed to the image channel. She argues that the translator is bound by the visual information on the screen and therefore any translation of spoken speech would have to conform to that information, a requirement not shared by an isosemiotic translation of a monosemiotic text (e.g., a written translation of a written work). She elaborates: “For example, in a novel, no matter how such features are conveyed for the target reader, the *idea* of the objects in question will remain in the reader’s mind and imagination; in contrast, with filmic products many references are in full view on screen, leaving the translator with little room to manoeuvre” (Chiaro 2009: 155). For example, if a Japanese film with English subtitles features a close-up of a bottle of green tea with the label in clear view and a character makes reference to the beverage in the source text dialogue, a subtitler would be bound

by that visual information when translating. She could not use a substitution strategy to translate the reference from green tea to, say, Coke. A translator of a monosemiotic text would be free to use a substitute since she need only consider the internal coherence of her translation. But a subtitler must respect coherence between two channels at once: image and written word. If not, a conflict between image and subtitle would arise.

Moreover, in cases where viewers are proficient in the language of the source text dialogue, that viewer can compare the meaning of that dialogue with the meaning of the subtitle. Indeed, it is not rare for viewers to critique subtitles for straying too far from the meaning of the source text (for well-known examples specific to Japan see Chapter 3 for a discussion of Tachibana Takeshi's article on Toda Natsuko's subtitles for *Apocalypse Now* or fan's vociferous complaints about the subtitles for *The Lord of the Rings*). Thus, even the presumably often ignored dialogue channel of a subtitled film can draw the attention of some viewers and even be used as a measuring stick for evaluating the accuracy of the translation. This is why Diaz-Cintas and Ramael refer to subtitles as a "vulnerable translation" (Diaz-Cintas and Ramael 57: 2007). With this vulnerability, the subtitles content must defer to the dialogue channel of the source text.

Thus, in the same way Tamura limited his subtitle count for *Morocco*, today's subtitlers often mute the authority of their work by redirecting the viewer to find meaning in image or, to some extent, source text dialogue. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say the subtitling apparatus redirects the viewer. While it is true subtitlers do make translational decisions, often those decisions are made for them by the cinematic apparatus. Nevertheless, as complaints about translation inaccuracies by fans and critics illustrate, subtitlers are bound to rewrite much of the source text in their work due not to their own professional arrogance but to that same subtitling apparatus that limits their choices. The next chapter will demonstrate just how far fans are willing to go to obtain subtitles that reflect the source text with minimal change, even if those

subtitles leave many culturally specific references untranslated. Such subtitles are designed to reinforce the source text semantic channels, but if any conflicting information were to arise between the source text image information or dialogue and the subtitles, the viewer would need to semantically prioritize the various channels and she may decide to prioritize the former two channels over the subtitles.

But this conception of audiovisual translation pigeonholes subtitling as a means of delivering source text information. Certainly, subtitlers both professional and amateur generally see subtitles this way. But the dissertation will demonstrate in Chapters 4-7 that some professional subtitlers use of subtitles as a means for more diverse ends.

### **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that in non-subtitled films, filmmakers form coherent narratives by directing the viewer's attention and directing their reasoning to draw, what I call, **directed inferences**. They do this by integrating all of the semantic channels (sound, image, dialogue) in a film into a coherent whole. However, in subtitled films, the filmmaker's power to direct attention and inference is disrupted by the subtitling apparatus, which adds a new semantic channel to the experience. Because this new channel comes from outside, it does not integrate with the core text fully. Unlike image and dialogue, subtitles are not taken in simultaneously with all the other channels. We read subtitles first and then engage with the image. Also, subtitles alter the source text dialogue. In doing so, they disrupt the coherence of dialogue and image formulated by the filmmaker, as in the example above from *There Will Be Blood*, where image, source text dialogue, and subtitle form a fuzzy match thanks to the subtitles lack of subtlety. This shifts the way the viewer makes inferences about the film. Nevertheless, this does not mean that subtitles necessarily mangle the filmmaker's intentions, or "corrupt" the viewing process. Rather, this new semantic channel builds onto the source text by adding a new source of narrative information.

The images, dialogue, and sound of the source text remain available for viewers to consult when forming the narrative in their minds. As a result, a two-fold hierarchy of semantic channels forms. The subtitling apparatus decides where the viewer will look first for narrative information, but then the viewer must decide where she can find “narrative truth” or the true story of the film. Thus, the role subtitles play in conveying source text information is a fluid one.

This chapter has utilized eye-tracking studies to support its argument, but one of the limitations of this research is that it treats the viewing of audiovisual media as an information-seeking activity. But information-seeking is only half the equation. The other half, as cognitive research on reading stipulates, is inferential reasoning. So far, I have argued that viewers look to subtitles and other semantic channels for basic narrative meaning, but I have not adequately treated how subtitlers can affect viewer inference-making. In fact, subtitlers can have a major impact on inferential reasoning. I will explore this issue in Part II (Chapters 4-7). But in the next chapter, I limit the discussion to the two opposing approaches to subtitling: one which sees audiovisual media translation as another tool for narrative information-seeking and the other which sees audiovisual translation as a means to deliver a target text functionally equivalent to the source text.

### **3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing: Tradition and Innovation in Audiovisual Translation in Japan**

In March 2002, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings* (*LOTR*) was released in Japanese theatres, earning nine billion yen (approximately seventy-two million US dollars) at the box office and making it the fourth-highest grossing film in Japan for 2002 (*Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan, Inc.*). But the film was not a complete success—at least not with fans of Tolkien’s original work. These fans found the Japanese subtitles unacceptable and used the Internet to enumerate what they considered inaccuracies and misrepresentations of the source material. They even went as far as to request that Toda Natsuko, the film translator who had been commissioned to produce the subtitles for the first film in the planned trilogy, be fired and prevented from translating the two sequels slated for release in Japan in 2003 and 2004. Director Peter Jackson even joined in the “fire Toda” chorus, after hearing this outcry. But the Japanese distributors did not capitulate entirely. They argued that Toda’s name and reputation were too profitable in Japan, thus quieting Jackson (Nornes 2007: 241). In the end, they struck a compromise with fans by hiring Seta Teiji, the translator of the Tolkien’s original novels, to assist Toda in producing the subtitles for the final two films in the trilogy.

While the *LOTR* incident was taking place in Japan, a new trend in subtitling practice was emerging outside of Japan. Thanks to the explosion of file-sharing networks in the early twenty-first century, groups of anime fans around the world started taking advantage of the ability to exchange their favorite shows more easily

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

than ever. But one problem was that not all fans spoke Japanese, and since much of the contents were being shared through unofficial channels, they had not yet been translated. Moreover, even if content did feature official subtitles, fans were often dissatisfied with the translations—mainly for not being “faithful” enough to the original. They wanted near word-for-word translations that kept culturally specific references intact even at the expense of target-text fluency. Thus, the fans distributing these contents took it upon themselves to provide the subtitles they wanted to see, created under the principles of translation they believed in. Over the last decade or so, this practice of amateurs creating subtitles for Japanese anime, usually called “fansubbing,” has blossomed in North America, Europe, China, South Korea and many other countries.

But the rise of fan influence raises questions about the role of professionalization of audiovisual translation and translation norms. Specifically, what are the effects of professionalizing the field on controlling the norms of interlingual subtitling; and what are the effects of fansubbing on transforming those norms? This chapter will explore this twofold question by comparing fansubbing culture to the professional subtitling culture of Japan, which sits squarely at center of these questions. Japan provides an unusual example of professionalization of the field; its media is at the core of the fansub movement, and yet it has not cultivated its own version of this new subtitling culture. Thus, an exploration of the situation of Japan can illuminate the core principles at stake.

This chapter argues that both amateurs and professional subtitlers have a limited conception of subtitling that prioritizes the relaying of narrative information in service of contact with the source text culture or emotional experiences functionally equivalent to the source text. The first half of this chapter will discuss the professional industry in Japan, including its unusual centralization, notability and open discourse. It will then illustrate how professional subtitlers use discourse to establish subtitling practices that

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

emphasize invisibility that seeks to hide the existence of translation through fluency (Venuti 1995). The second half will outline the practice of fansubbing Japanese anime and its relationship to new ways of consuming media, especially the custom of world-building through the acquisition of intertextual information. It will also discuss the lack of amateur and innovative subtitling practices within Japan and how that reflects on the influence professionals retain.

Through a comparison of the two approaches of professional and amateur subtitling, this chapter will demonstrate how, on the one hand, professionalizing the field yields a paradoxical relationship to visibility, where practitioners strive to make their translations unnoticeable to their audience, while arguing for this very norm openly and publicly. This has allowed them to maintain control over the norms of the field in Japan, as the lack of experimentation through amateur subtitling illustrates. Meanwhile, the practice of fansubbing has a contradictory relationship to innovative translational practices. With its flouting of conventions, fansubbing has been considered an innovative and liberating alternative to the top-down concept of translation found in the professional subtitling industry (Nornes 2007: 182). But, the innovations found in fansubbing can conceal an ironically conservative view of translation. What fans are seeking is translations that are more “faithful” to the original so that fans can have as direct access as possible to the “truth” found in the canonical texts that make up their favorite fictional worlds. In the end, what fansubbing provides is not a new set of norms for translating audiovisual texts; rather it maps traditional norms about word-for-word translation onto new translation devices (such as surtitle annotations). In some contexts, namely China, these norms act as a safeguard against censorship, but in other contexts, like North America and Europe, they tend to exoticize content. Thus, fansubs can but do not necessarily provide grounding for innovative translational norms.

#### **3.2 Generating Authority in Professional Subtitling in Japan**

Professional film subtitling in Japan poses a fairly distinct situation for the field of translation. It is highly professionalized and marked by a strong centralized authority, the notability of its practitioners and an open discourse about translation strategies. These characteristics work in concert to perpetuate tradition and confirm professional authority in the field.

With only a few members directing translation practices, the Japanese film subtitling industry is highly centralized. The majority of the translations for foreign feature films distributed in Japan are managed by a handful of professionals, most of whom are members of the Japanese Screen Translators Association (JSTA) [*Eiga honyakuka kyōkai*]. Founded in 1983 by subtitler Shimizu Shunji, the JSTA functions as a professional support group and quasi-labor union designed to protect its members' legal interests. Its mission is to create a forum for interaction and exchange of information among translators while also providing a means of negotiating contracts and other professional matters with distribution companies. Membership is highly selective, with only twenty-four translators admitted as of 2016. Joining requires the recommendation of two members and is limited to translators who subtitle films for theatrical release on a regular basis.

With so few practitioners, JSTA members are able to generate and enjoy a degree of notability not frequently found among translators. In many other contexts, such as North America and Europe, it is often taken for granted that translators will mostly remain anonymous, indeed invisible, to their audiences. Surveys of translators' cultural status bear this out. Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires (CEATL) conducted an international survey in 2010 on literary translator visibility and found that in the countries surveyed translators' names are routinely omitted from the cover of books and "translators are rarely invited to participate in radio and television shows devoted to the books they have translated." Kalinowski (2002: 50 quoted in

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

Bilodeau 2015: 64) summarizes the situation neatly when she notes, “the difficulty of ‘making a name for oneself’ in this domain retains a very literal significance.”

In contrast to the CEATL survey participants, Japanese literary translators enjoy greater status. Some translators even garner a degree of fame in the field. For example, Wakabayashi (2012: 43) refers to the translators of Paul Auster and James Joyce, Shibata Motoyuki and Yanase Naoki respectively,<sup>10</sup> as “star” translators due to the frequent appearance of their commentary in mass media.

JSTA members have achieved a similar “star” status, as they enjoy an unusual amount of credit and media exposure as subtitlers. They are routinely credited on DVD or Blu-Ray disc box covers and at the opening or end credits of foreign language films released in Japan (see **Fig. 4a and 4b**). Conversely, the respondents of the CEATL survey generally receive no such credit. In fact, even the Voyager Company’s Criterion Collection DVD of the classic, *Rashomon* (1950), gives everything but credit to the translator who created the English subtitles on the box cover, which advertises a “New and improved English subtitle translation” without naming the translator (see **Fig. 5**). Box covers on North American DVDs do sometimes list credits of the voice actors who perform in the English dubbed version of films (see **Fig. 6**). But it is worth noting that these voice actors are established American actors (hence advertising their names on the DVD box cover as a selling point) and are not known for conveying foreign ideas into American culture the way that Japanese subtitlers are. Clearly, the translators in North America and Europe are just not seen as important. This is in direct contrast to the JSTA members. Their elevated position begins with making their names available and, eventually, recognizable. As a consequence of this recognition, as is the case with Shibata and Yanase, JSTA subtitlers enjoy many opportunities to air their views on audiovisual translation in mass media.

In fact, Japanese subtitlers began producing discourse about subtitling from its inception, and continue to do so today. Japan’s first subtitler, Tamura Yoshihiko, wrote

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

articles detailing his first assignment, *Morocco* (1930), in the magazine *Kinema junpō* [*The Movie Times*] in 1931. Shimizu Shunji, one of Japan's most prolific subtitlers, has published over fifty articles on subtitling in magazines like *Honyaku no sekai* [*The World of Translation*]. Toda Natsuko has written several books on the topic as has Ōta Naoko and Okaeda Shinji. Their writings are intended as manuals on subtitling practices: Okaeda's (1988) book is entitled *Sūpā jimaku nyūmon* [*An Introduction to Subtitles*] and Shimizu (1988) has published a compilation of his articles in a book titled *Eiga jimaku no tsukurikata oshiemasu* [*Lessons on How to Make Movie Subtitles*].

JSTA members have even garnered a certain degree of fame through their publications, appearances on television, lectures on film translation and interpreting for foreign movie stars like Tom Cruise. The aforementioned Toda is the quintessential example of this phenomenon. Having translated hundreds of high-profile Hollywood films for over thirty-five years, she has been dubbed the “queen of subtitling” in Japan. In addition to publishing several books on film translation, Toda frequently makes appearances on television shows, such as the NHK talk show *Eigo de shabera naito* [*Chat in English Tonight*],<sup>11</sup> and gives public lectures on subtitling that fill university lecture halls past capacity. And as the *LOTR* incident indicates, her name is even used in film marketing in Japan. Over the years, she has accumulated a degree of visibility in her capacity as a film translator that is rarely, if ever, enjoyed by film translators outside of Japan.

With the centralized authority of the JSTA and sufficient notability to propagate discourse through mass media, including television, this small group of subtitlers maintains a strong influence over the subtitling industry and its practices in Japan. Most high-profile translation work goes to JSTA members. Foreign film distributors in Japan rely heavily on members of the JSTA for subtitling feature films. As one spokesperson for Nippon Herald, a major distributor, explains, “We know who's best

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

for which film because we've known the (JSTA) subtitlers so long" (T. Lee 2002: 11). While the JSTA is not a monolith that monopolizes all audiovisual translation, its members do the bulk of feature film translating and that tends to place them in leadership positions. In fact, this high degree of centralization of professional subtitling has frustrated subtitlers on the outskirts of the industry. Some find the control JSTA translators hold over subtitling major films stifles innovation (*ibid.*).

JSTA members demonstrate and perpetuate their authority through discourse on the principles of subtitling, creating a set of subtitling rules that are widely disseminated and put into practice. Some of these rules are based on the inherent limitations of the subtitling apparatus and are shared in one form or another by all languages; other rules are constructed from assumptions about audience approaches to film viewing.

#### **3.3 Generating visibility through invisibility**

As a result of the aforementioned authority, professional subtitling culture in Japan has been conservative and slow to innovate. The basic principles professional subtitlers promote through their discourse is that translators must aim for *invisibility*. In other words, subtitles should be rendered so that the viewer remains unaware of the presence of translation and its practitioners. But at the same time, practitioners have advanced the professionalization of the field by making the principles behind its practice open and available for all to see. Thus, what arises is a multilayered paradox: the subtitlers actively promote the idea that translations should be invisible, but they do this through advancing the visibility of themselves and their discourse, which they are able to disseminate because of their ability to maintain authority in the field.

On the one hand, it is widely understood that subtitling is a limited form of translation. The physical apparatus imposes constraints on the way subtitles are created and displayed, regardless of language or culture. Most of these constraints revolve

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

around timing and character-counts. But the principles behind subtitling policies are based on the assumptions about the need for translators to take on subordinate roles and produce “invisible” translations—i.e. translations that read fluently and conceal the presence of translation.

In an attempt to normalize an international industry that at times can produce slapdash work, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) codified standards of practice in their “Code of Good Subtitling Practices.” Among these were the policies that (1) subtitles should appear and disappear in synchronization with the corresponding spoken source text dialogue and (2) viewers should be able to read the text without undue haste.

To effect the above codes of practice, foreign film industries around the world place limits on the number of characters that can be displayed per second. In Europe, fifteen to seventeen characters per second (CPS) appears to be standard. In Japan, where subtitles make use of *kanji* [Chinese characters], the standard is four CPS—a rule established in the 1930s which remains intact today. These CPS limits compel translators to create subtitles that condense the content of the source text dialogue.

Japanese subtitlers have recognized and abided the apparent necessity for condensation from the earliest days of screen translation. The first film to feature Japanese subtitles, *Morocco* (released in 1930 in the US and 1931 in Japan), included an average of thirty titles per reel in the ninety-two-minute film (Anderson and Richie 1982: 76). This amounts to 1.5 subtitles per minute.

In his various articles and books, Shimizu (1998: 68) has explicated why subtitles reduce the source text content so much, arguing that since subtitles appear so briefly on the screen before they are removed, they must be short and readily understood to ensure the viewer is able to grasp the storyline. He adds that this limits the language subtitlers can deploy, especially in a language like Japanese, which relies heavily on ideograms. He also warns against using uncommon *kanji* that could challenge viewers (*ibid.*: 17). Thus, not only does he insist that translators must inevitably omit source

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

text content, but that subtitlers must also limit the vocabulary used to express this truncated content as well.

Overall, the above concerns and the strategies they engender help to ensure the subtitler is seen in a subordinate position and that their translations remain unnoticeable. In his essay “Subtitling Japanese Films,” Richie (2011) explicitly states that his goal in making English subtitles for Japanese classics is to make sure the subtitles remain “invisible.” He reasons that subtitling should be a convention that remains muted, otherwise they “distract the viewer from the film itself” (*ibid.*: 232). Thus, he insists subtitlers and their work play a subordinate role in the presentation of film content, as do his Japanese counterparts, who have managed to pass on this principle to the present practitioners through discourse on subtitling.

Throughout this discourse, these subtitlers insist that their work is not actually translation and that subtitling must be invisible to film viewers. In her biography on working as a subtitler, Ōta Naoko recites the often-repeated mantra that “subtitling is not translation but summary” (2007: 15). Toda has written that subtitling is not meant to be a direct translation of dialogue; rather it should capture the “essence” of the original lines (1997: 121-2). Moreover, Shimizu, mentor to Toda, had a book dedicated to this idea entitled *Eiga jimaku wa honyaku dewanai* [*Film Subtitling is Not Translation*] posthumously published in 1992. Shimizu even refrained from identifying himself as a translator in his screen credits, preferring the title “Subtitle Supervisor” or something to that effect (1992: 59). Thus, Japanese subtitlers make an effort to differentiate their status from translators as well as their output.

Much of this JSTA discourse has come about as responses to criticism of their translations. These criticisms tend to attack the translations for not being literal enough. For example, Toda’s subtitles for the 1979 Francis Ford Coppola’s film *Apocalypse Now* were met with reproach from author and critic Tachibana Takeshi in the May 1979 issue of the Japanese magazine *Shokun!* [*Gentlemen!*]. Focusing on her

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

translation of the lines “Take care of him with extreme prejudice (sic)”<sup>12</sup> and “His methods have become unsound,” which Toda renders as *Kare o ansatsu seyo* [Assassinate him] and *Kare no kōdō ga ijō ni natta* [His actions have become irregular] respectively, Tachibana criticizes the subtitles for stripping away the subtlety of the source text dialogue. Bothered by this explicitation of euphemistic language, he concludes that “Nobody understands Coppola’s message” (Toda 1997: 115).

Soon after Tachibana publicly excoriated Toda’s translation, Shimizu posted a response in the magazine *Honyaku no sekai* [*The World of Translation*] defending Toda’s decisions. In his rejoinder, Shimizu (1992: 24) intimates that Tachibana’s criticisms demonstrate a simplistic view of subtitling, pointing out that a literal translation of “His methods have become unsound” [*“Hōhō ga fukenzen da”*] would be inappropriate as the Japanese is an unusual expression and audiences cannot be expected to grasp its meaning in the split-second the subtitle appears on the screen. According to Toda’s autobiography, Shimizu continues his case in an article in *Nihon eiga penkurabu kaijo* [*Japan Film Pen Club*] where he argues that word-for-word translations in film is an unrealistic standard due to the nature of subtitling—where text appears and disappears within a short period of time and “There’s no time to read and think,” thus the best subtitles need to be easy to grasp (Toda 1997: 115-116).

The idea that subtitles should be easy to grasp is echoed throughout the field, but it is not necessarily universally accepted. Filmmaker Harada Masato, who was commissioned to rewrite the Japanese subtitles for Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) after the director read a back-translated version of Toda’s subtitles and demanded that they be redone, disagrees with the “easy to understand” standard of Japanese subtitling. Echoing Tachibana, he states that as a filmmaker himself, he wants the nuances of dialogue translated more “faithfully” (Kamiya 2004).

Nevertheless, Toda and the other JSTA subtitlers continue to push the standard of “easy-to-understand” subtitles throughout their discourse. Moreover, they insist that

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

subtitles are part of an entertainment product designed to emotionally affect audiences (Toda 1997; Ōta 2007). These principles have the combined purpose of rendering the translator and the translation invisible.

But this emphasis on invisible translation is only half the story. Professional subtitlers in Japan, especially members of the JSTA, have enjoyed an unusual degree of exposure. It is challenging to think of translators, especially those who specialize in a field that takes great pains to hide the existence of its own product, as subtitling does, gaining the degree of recognition among the general public that Toda does. Moreover, the JSTA subtitlers have used this visibility to make the translation process and the rationale for their decisions transparent and available for anyone to see or even scrutinize. This openness by the JSTA subtitlers helps drive the profession.

Nevertheless, their work has been criticized for being stagnant, especially in comparison to amateur subtitles, which are seen as fresh and innovative (Nornes 2007: 182–4). Indeed, it is this same professionalization of the subtitling industry that prevents experimentation because over the years the JSTA members have turned traditional practices passed on from generation to generation into professional standards. Conversely, it is the amateur status of fansubbing that allows room for experimentation and innovation.

#### **3.3 New media, innovation and exoticization in anime fansubbing culture**

Anime fan culture initially emerged in North America and Europe in the 1980s. According to Pérez-González (2007), fans grew dissatisfied with the domesticated translations of their favorite anime and began demanding more faithful translations. Due to the limitations of the subtitling apparatus, distributors could not meet these demands, and so the fans took it upon themselves to create their own subtitles (*ibid.*: 69–70). This fansubbing culture flourished with the advent of file-sharing and high-speed internet in the early 2000s and coincided with the rise of new modes of

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

appreciating audiovisual media.

In *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Jenkins (2006) details a trend in how media is being consumed in the twenty-first century. He argues that media content is often spread across several platforms in order to create a fictional world that sustains multiple characters and stories. For example, the story of *The Matrix* trilogy is conveyed only partly through the actual films. To make better sense of the films, viewers needed to refer to extra-textual sources of information about *The Matrix* world, including comic books, video games, an animated series, etc.: some scenes in the films cannot be understood without reference to one of these other sources. This multi-platform world-building has two effects on how media is consumed: it encourages the participation of viewers in the creation process and it also promotes media consumption centered on information-seeking activities. Jenkins (2007) summarizes this succinctly in his blog:

This process of world-building encourages an encyclopedic impulse in both readers and writers. We are drawn to master what can be known about a world which always expands beyond our grasp. This is a very different pleasure than we associate with the closure found in most classically constructed narratives, where we expect to leave the theatre knowing everything that is required to make sense of a particular story.

These new modes of viewing and appreciation provide an environment that can propagate fansubbing culture, which is characterized by fans participating in the creation process and seeking out information about specific anime programs.

When creating subtitles, fansubbing groups incorporate insights and opinions from viewers generating a dynamic authorship between translator and user. According to Lee Hye-Kyung (2011: 1138), “there is a tendency to pay attention to viewers’

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

responses—either longstanding followers or more casual fans—taking their comments or download numbers seriously.” The fact that these amateur translators are translating for other members of their subculture—a subculture which exists primarily on filesharing sites on the Internet—and are therefore taking advantage of new approaches to audiovisual media consumption, prompts them to explore better ways to fulfil their ideal standards of translation, which are based on the principle that translations should be more “faithful” to the source text than professional subtitles made for general audiences. In other words, fansubbers are motivated to experiment with form and find new ways to create faithful translations to appeal to their target audience.

Since the rise of fansubbing culture, fansubbers have deployed a variety of techniques that are rarely found in professional subtitles available on official media. Elaborating on the work of Ferrer Simó (2005), Pérez-González (2006) provides an overview of common fansubbing practices that breach professional conventions. One practice is to exploit variations on font style, size and color for an assortment of functions, including distinguishing between two different speakers. Another practice is to use a variety of layouts, positioning titles all around the image rather than the traditional position at the bottom. This is done to indicate who is speaking or to avoid interfering with important image information. Finally, there is a tendency to leave culturally specific items untranslated and instead provide annotated explanations (Pérez-González 2006: 270–1). The last practice is perhaps the most telling way that fan subtitles push boundaries: the inclusion of the translator’s notes as surtitle annotations.

The use of surtitle annotation allows for the retention of culture-specific references (CSRs) in the source text—in other words, a reference “connoting different aspects of everyday life such as education, politics, history [...] place names, foods and drinks [...] as experienced in different countries and nations of the world” (Antonini 2007: 154). For example, in episode 100 of the anime *Detective Conan, Hatsukoi no*

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

*hito omoide jiken* [The Memories of First Love Case] (dir. Kodama Kenji, aired 1998), a subtitle for a line of dialogue reads: “I went all the way to Ginza to buy it,” while a surtitle simultaneously displayed at the top of the screen explains, “Note: Ginza is an expensive shopping district in Tokyo, equivalent to Fifth Avenue in New York” (see **Fig. 7**: fansubbed version translated by “Rika” and distributed by Anime-Conan). In episode forty-eight, *Gaikōkan satsujin jiken* [Diplomat Murder Case] (dir. Kenji Kodama, aired 1997) a subtitle reads: “Please wait in the tatami room,” with the surtitle annotation: “Note: Tatami room = a room with Japanese straw floor covering” (see **Fig. 8**: fansubbed version translated by “Lobato” and distributed by Anime-Conan).<sup>13</sup>

These annotations function the same way as footnotes found in isosemiotic translations where timing and CPS counts are immaterial. But fansubbing is not an isosemiotic translation; it is a diasemiatic translation, where traditionally speech and text are aligned (Gottlieb 2005: 36). Thus, the use of surtitles disrupts the flow and unconscious reading of conventional subtitles by steering viewer attention to multiple sites of information all at once. This defies conventional norms of subtitling that aim to redirect viewer attention back to image information as quickly as possible.

New approaches to consuming media allow for attention-diverting practices like simultaneous surtitle annotations, since any given text is no longer seen as an isolated source of narrative information. Traditionally, the source text is at the heart of any translation, even one as loose as interlingual subtitling. But fansub audiences do not consume these videos in a traditional way. As Pérez-González (2012: 18) states, “the focus has been placed on subtitling practices that [...] do not attempt to naturalize the world of the story by making it self-contained and closing it off from the space of the audience.” In anime fansubbing, the source text plays a paradoxical role: it is indeed the source of the information the subtitles must reproduce faithfully, but it is no longer the center of attention; rather, it is merely one piece of the puzzle in the world-building

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

process. In new media storytelling, outside sources of information that corroborate the source text dialogue and expand the fictional world are welcome and often necessary. Likewise, surtitle annotations provide nondiegetic content that supplements the diegetic content (source text dialogue) in the same way a video game might fill in narrative gaps in *The Matrix* stories. To viewers adopting this approach to audiovisual media appreciation, secondary texts that reroute attention from the story do not intrude on entertainment value, because viewers engaged in this mode of media appreciation are not looking for the linear, unobstructed satisfaction of traditional modes so much as direct access to information about a fictional world they are trying to reconstruct in their minds.

Unlike their professional subtitles, which try to reinforce a self-contained world of fiction, fansubs are designed to convey discrete information about fictional anime worlds (or the far off, “exotic” world of Japan) to be enjoyed well after the closing credits roll. As Díaz Cintas (2005: 30) explains, in fansub anime culture, “We encounter a new viewer avid for information and [...] more importance seems to be given to the actual cultural referent than to a “correct” translation. The consumer is genuinely interested in the foreign culture and language and the acculturation of terms is avoided.” What fans want is as direct access as possible to the source text, or rather, the culture that has produced the source text.

This has an exoticizing effect on subtitling. One reason fansubbing emerged was that fans criticized official subtitles for not being Japanese enough. According to Pérez-González (2007: 69), fans demanded “the right to experience first hand (sic) the cultural “otherness” that anime is imbued in.” This principle works its way into the fundamental practices of fansubbing. According to Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2006: 45), often the people doing the translations for fansubbed anime shared overseas are native speakers of Japanese, because “one of the overriding factors in fansubbing is the need to fully understand the Japanese source text, both linguistically

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

and culturally.” Presumably, fansubbing groups assume that the most accurate interpretation of the language and cultural elements in anime must come from a native of the culture, as outsiders do not have the same level of understanding.

By contrast, East Asian fansubbers share the same norm of rendering “faithful” translations in their subtitles, but the rationale behind this norm is quite different. For one thing, it is less likely that fansubbers in China or South Korea would look to Japan to find exotic culture. Rather, in China, the fansubbing culture seeks to produce and consume subtitles that are “more loyal and authentic translations of the original products,” but they do so to skirt censorship laws in China (Dang 2013).

This contrast highlights the difference in how fansubbing is used and how it could be used. On the one hand, fansubbing, at least in the West, is used to feed world-building activities that tend to exoticize its various sources. On the other hand, in other contexts, these same innovations could be used as a means to combat oppression.

#### **3.4 The influence of amateur subtitling**

Numerous websites, such as Baka Updates, Fansub TV and Anime Suki, catalogue links to fan-subbed content. As of 2015, Baka Updates lists over 1,200 fansubbing groups, while My Anime List registers well over 2,000. The legality of these groups’ activities is a point of contention as they violate copyright laws. Although some legal action has been taken against illegal sharing (*Japan Times* 2014), fansubbers have so far faced little resistance, as distributors tend to see file-sharing as a net benefit (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006: 44). They find it an effective way to promote anime fan culture and test the market demand for a particular anime program (Lee 2011: 1139–40). Thus, by enlarging the market and influencing what program are distributed, the mere existence of fansubbing culture impacts the industry and its official distribution channels.

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

Fansubbing culture's influence extends to the translation of licensed anime, as well. Some of the innovative practices deployed by fansubbers have been adopted by professionals working on licensed DVDs or Blu-Rays. For example, the official DVD for the anime *Pani Poni Dash!* allows viewers to select subtitles with annotation. The adoption of such techniques by some commercial distributors indicates that DVD producers are willing to take a chance on unconventional subtitling techniques originally formulated by amateurs (Caffrey 2009: 3).

Thus, fansubbers have wielded some influence over the industry. And while audiences/consumers always wield power over the products they consume, fansubbing represents a transfer of consumer power from the general masses, whose impact is based on sheer volume, to a subculture of expert consumers, whose impact is based on esoteric knowledge. Moreover, the subtitles they produce are marked by innovations that appeal to new ways of consuming media.

The situation within Japan is quite different, however. There, innovation in subtitling is hard to find, and the professionalization of the field coupled with the lack of amateur subtitlers ensures traditional practices are maintained. While amateur and unconventional subtitling does exist in Japan, these subtitles exhibit the same formal traditions of the JSTA members, suggesting a strong adherence to the standards JSTA members expound, giving further credence to their authority.

Fansubbing culture remains inchoate in Japan because the conditions that brought about anime fansubbing in other countries do not necessarily exist within Japan. For one thing, a lot of foreign media is readily available and most of it comes through commercial industry channels. One of the main reasons fansubbing emerged outside of Japan was that translated anime programs were so difficult to find. That is not the case, at least for English, Chinese, Korean or other popular foreign content, in Japan. This licensed content always features professionally-made subtitles. Although this does not guarantee consumer satisfaction with the translation, the factors that make translations

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

objectionable to anime fans abroad are not prevalent with foreign media in Japan: it is probably fair to say that in Japan, South Korean media or even English-language media lack the same “exoticness” that anime boasts in North America. Without the key ingredient of curiosity towards “otherness,” viewers may be less inclined to engage in world-building activities than their counterparts are in North America and Europe.

The amateur subtitling culture that does exist in Japan is limited in scope and scale. For example, one blogger has created “homemade” subtitles for the American TV show *Bones* <<http://kisocrew.blogspot.jp>>. But he and others like him may not enjoy the quasi-cooperation of media companies that non-Japanese fansubbers do. While the anime industry tends to ignore blatant copyright infringement because it gives their products greater exposure, foreign content, at least English-language TV shows, get plenty of exposure in Japan. So, media companies may not feel that “homemade” subtitling offers them any benefit. Thus, policing of such activities may be stricter and amateurs will likely feel discouraged about producing their own translations.

On the other hand, international video-sharing websites offer legitimate opportunities for amateurs to create Japanese subtitles for audiovisual content. The Singapore-based Viki (a play on the word Wiki), for example, is a streaming site with a Creative Commons license that allows volunteers to collaborate and add subtitles in any number of languages to copyrighted videos, including anime, Korean dramas and English-language television programs. Many of the videos available feature Japanese subtitles generated by anonymous volunteers in a fashion similar to fansubbing. Discussion boards on the site allow subtitlers to confer on specific translations or general translational practices, making the endeavor a more open and cooperative process—one of the central characteristics of fansubbing. However, the subtitles on Viki or similar sites do not typically display the innovation found in anime fan subtitles.

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

Also, some unconventional uses of subtitles can be found in Japan, and not just on obscure content, but on licensed DVDs of the same feature films JSTA members typically translate. Specialized DVDs of Hollywood films, such as *Forrest Gump* (1994), offer viewers what is called *chō-jimaku* [subtitles-plus], which display both Japanese and English subtitles simultaneously. Like surtitle annotations, these subtitles-plus DVDs subvert strict limits of character counts and flout principles of readability. They also engage the viewer in the new mode of viewing fansubbing audiences enjoy. But the purpose of these subtitles-plus DVDs is for English language learners to engage in listening practice. Viewers use the simultaneous English and Japanese subtitles to test what they hear and to confirm their understanding. So, while surtitle annotations and subtitles-plus text both supplement traditional subtitles, their end purposes are distinct: surtitle annotations are used to provide information about the fictional world to which the source text belongs, while subtitles-plus are used as an exercise tool for skills that have a real-world application.

Another trend is *uso-jimaku* [parody subtitles], where amateur-made subtitles superimposed over clips from famous films lampoon the original dialogue. Videos with parody subtitles can be found on video-sharing sites, such as the popular Japanese site Niconico. One parody subtitle video on Niconico features a clip of the famous scene from *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) where Gunnery Sergeant Hartman verbally abuses new recruits at basic training. The accompanying subtitles turn his vicious and obscene rant into a relatively innocuous discussion of anime. When Hartman asks a cadet where he is from, and the cadet answers that he is from Texas, Hartman screams, “Only steers and queers come from Texas.” Meanwhile, the parody subtitles read, *Tekisasu ni aru nowa meido kissaten to inchiki garō* [The only things in Texas are maid cafés and phony art galleries]. But, again, such unconventional subtitles are not meant to enhance the viewers’ ability to appreciate the source text or its fictional world in the same way as fansubbing. They are simply intended as jokes disconnected from the source text.

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

While it is true that amateur subtitling exists in Japan and that some experimenting is done, the degree of organization and the goals of these subtitles are quite different from fansubbing culture. It is possible that amateur subtitling culture in Japan will grow in the future, especially through websites like Viki, but the incentives that allow fansubbing culture to flourish in other countries do not exist in Japan. The ready availability of properly-licensed popular foreign media, lack of government censorship and fears of copyright issues may stifle the development of the same kind of extensive and prolific community we find with anime fansubbing. Without that community, the amateur subtitling culture that does exist in Japan may not be able to flourish or take on the same characteristics as anime fansubbing overseas. Specifically, it is not part of the information-gathering activities that are integral to world-building culture. And it is world-building culture that makes room for innovative subtitling practices since it is an innovative way of appreciating media content.

Certainly, the same world-building and information-gathering customs have taken root in Japan as much as anywhere. This is crystallized neatly in the *LOTR* incident mentioned in the introduction, where Tolkien fans viewed Toda's translation and complained vociferously about how much it deviated from not only the source text film itself, but also from the world J.R.R Tolkien had so thoroughly built. One of the most often-heard criticisms in this incident is that Toda admitted she had not even read the original books and therefore was not qualified to translate because she was not a proper "fan." The Tolkien fans in Japan, on the other hand, had become experts on Middle-earth; they sought translations faithful to the original in all its exotic "otherness;" they formed a community on the Internet; and they used their expertise to influence how their text of interest was going to be translated. This is all similar to the culture of anime fansubbers, except for the fact that the Japanese Tolkien fans did not endeavor to make the subtitles themselves. Instead, they called for more "faithful" subtitles by the professionals.

#### 3.5 Tradition through innovation

The disparity in fansubbing cultures in East Asia and in North America and Europe highlights the importance of taking a measured view of how liberating anime fansubbing truly is. The innovations we see in anime fansubbing are technical innovations that liberate translators from the conventions of condensed texts and character counts and allow them to provide viewers with more direct access the source text, which is what fans want. But fansubbing culture is a contradictory one. While it has freed practitioners from technical constraints and made their translations more visible, it tends to reinforce traditional conceptions of translation that treat the source text as a canonical text.

The underlying principles behind fansub translations lack rigorous self-examination. Indeed, their emphasis on faithfulness to the source text is the default position for lay-person critics such as Tachibana. Although the source text is only one piece in a world-building puzzle, the information it provides is considered canon and therefore it must be delivered completely unmolested. Thus, despite the translation and translator visibility fansubbing culture engenders, ultimately the foundation for all translation activity harks back to a belief in the sacredness of individual words found in the source text. Whereas in conventional subtitling a reference to a *tatami* room in the dialogue “Please wait in the *tatami* room” may be simplified to “the next room,” in fansubs, the word *tatami*, which has not entered the lexicon of the average English speaker, must be kept in the translation in order to capture the same level of precision as the source text.

While fansubbers and their audience strive to acquire an understanding of the source text and the source culture, this effort is paradoxical: the seeking of knowledge relies on a fascination with the unfamiliar, a situation which makes pre-existing knowledge almost undesirable. This self-contradicting combination of fascination and

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

expertise in the source text limits translation to a rather conservative conception of the practice. In fansubbing culture, translation is less about the deliberate transformation of translational norms as it is about source text access.

#### **3.6 Conclusion**

Japanese anime has provided the origins for the new translation culture of fansubbers around the world. While it is true that today amateur subtitling is done in a variety of linguistic and cultural contexts, it was the attempts of Western audiences to capture the “exoticness,” the “otherness” of anime that led amateurs to seek alternatives to professional subtitling and to invent the fansubbing practices and culture that has now exploded into an international phenomenon. In other words, although amateur subtitling may very well have developed without Japanese anime, the innovative techniques anime fansubbers employ may never have come about without anime.

But as new ways of appreciating media develop, amateur subtitling continues to grow into an international phenomenon. Indeed, the fansubbing of Japanese anime has become entrenched as a practice in China and South Korea. But the rationale behind fansubbing in East Asia appears to differ from their North American and European counterparts. This opens up the possibility of using the technical innovations fansubbing has developed for translations that do not view the language of the source text as immutably sacred nor the source text itself as part of an exotic “other.”

Conversely, while audiovisual subtitling has established itself as a respected profession within Japan, the innovative audiovisual translation practices flourishing outside of Japan are scarce within its borders. Professional subtitling culture in Japan has been a bastion of traditionalism, with policies from the 1930s still prevalent today. But this professional culture has its critics. The attack is two-pronged: some decry deviations from the source text (*LOTR* fans, Tachibana), others denounce its conservatism in an age of new media viewership (Nornes 2007). But rather than

### 3 The Cultures of Professional Subtitling and Fansubbing

responding to these criticisms by exploring the possibilities of translation, Japan's professional subtitlers have co-opted them, utilizing them as a starting point to "educate" the public about the difficulties of subtitling. And while the digital revolution allows for some flexibility in subtitling, there is little indication that Japanese audiovisual translators will take advantage of it.

Nevertheless, the establishment of a professional culture should be encouraging to those seeking greater translator visibility. Even though JSTA subtitlers have received a healthy amount of criticism, they still have established a receptive audience. Moreover, no profession can maintain standards of quality without an entrenched tradition. While there is always room for new ways of expressing translation, especially in an environment in which the ways we appreciate media are expanding, the professionalizing of any field is inevitably met with resistance to changes in accepted practices. Lastly, working within the formal traditions ignored by fansubbers need not be a barrier to quality translation. As I will show in subsequent chapters, traditional subtitling can still produce fresh perspectives on the source text that allow it to "grow" in new ways. And ironically, it is these subtitling strategies working within the confines of traditional practices that produce opportunities for viewers to participate in the meaning-making process in ways that the faithful translations of fan-subbers providing explicit cultural information cannot.

**Part II**

**The Interpretive Stance and Expanded View  
of Subtitle Function**

## 4        **Negotiating Growth in Subtitles: How Film Subtitles Can Expand the Source Text**

Conventional conceptions of audiovisual translation suggest that interlingual subtitling must entail loss. The need to concentrate spoken language from the source text into short, readable snippets of target text reduces verbal content, while the frequent deployment of explicitation strategies deprive audiences of opportunities to draw their own inferences and make their own interpretations of the text. Nevertheless, some translation studies scholarship has argued that translation can actually cause source text to, in a sense, grow. According to Christiane Nord, literary translations can promote what she calls “qualitative growth” where literary subtext is expressed in new ways (Nord 2011: 27). This idea applies to film subtitling as well. This chapter will detail the problem of translational loss in subtitling and explain Nord’s idea of “qualitative growth” and how it applies to subtitling. Referring to the inferential reasoning processes necessary to understand and interpret a film detailed in Chapter 2, this chapter argues that subtitling can generate qualitative growth by transferring the “poeticness” of the source text into new configurations in the target text which lead target viewers through new reasoning routines to make inferences about the text in ways that are not available to source text viewers. I call this redirecting of inferential reasoning “displaced poeticness.” .

In the chapters that follow, I argue that Japanese subtitler Matsuura Mina makes use of traditional translational devices in her subtitles for films, including *There Will Be Blood* (2007), *Bridge of Spies* (2015), and *The Post* (2017), to reproduce opportunities for viewers to make inferences about ambiguous dialogue even while

reducing verbal content.

### **4.2 Subtitling Loss**

The problem of translation and loss is a cardinal concern in translation studies. Whenever the topic of translation arises in lay settings, the issue of how much is lost seems quickly to follow. This is especially true in creative genres, such as literary translation, and even more so with genres that place strict constraints on translation strategies, such as audiovisual translations. But what do we mean when we say something is lost in translation? Of course, there are numerous answers to the question, and none are completely satisfying. However, it is probably fair to say that two major concerns with translation are loss of source text meaning and what could be called loss of source text “poeticness.” For the purpose of this study, “loss of meaning” simply refers to the loss of explicit meaning from the source text. Loss of poeticness, on the other hand, refers to a loss of subtlety and nuance that enrich the source text. More specifically, the loss of poeticness means the loss of opportunity for viewers to read beyond the surface, literal meaning of the text and make inferences about inexplicit meaning in the source text. As mentioned in Chapter 2, inference is the act of deriving logical conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true, and when we read a written work or watch a film, we are nearly constantly engaging with inference. But common approaches to translation in audiovisual subtitling reduce the opportunities to exercise our powers of inference. Thus, it is “lost in translation.”

Such losses of explicit and implicit meanings have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Interlingual subtitling entails basic quantitative loss due to the inherent constraints on the film translation. In subtitling among European languages, for example, word counts are reduced by 40 to 75 percent compared with the source text dialogue (Antonini 2005: 213). The dramatic drop in word count implies that subtitles must either condense the content of the original dialogue into fewer words or

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

simply omit some content altogether.

A brief example from the *Bridge of Spies* illustrates both of these two types of reduction. Early in the film, James Donovan (Tom Hanks), attorney for an American insurance company, is appointed to serve as defense counsel for Soviet spy Rudolf Abel (Mark Rylance) for his 1957 trial in the U.S. During a pretrial discussion in his chambers, the judge proceeding over the trial reprimands Donovan for taking his duties of defending the alleged Russian spy too seriously. The judge tells him, “This man has to have due process, but let’s not kid each other.” The Japanese subtitles read, 裁判はあくまでも形式的なものだ [Saibatsu wa akumade mo keishikitekina mono da / The trial is just a formality]. The source text dialogue contains 13 words, while the Japanese subtitles contain 15 characters. One Japanese character is not equivalent to one English word, but it is common to equate two Japanese characters with one English word. Using this estimate, it appears that the content has been reduced by approximately half. This is only one example, but it is typical of the subtitling apparatus and it illustrates the two aforementioned strategies at work in subtitling: **condensation** and **omission**. The colloquial expression “but let’s not kid each other” is condensed to “just a formality,” and “This man has to have due process” is omitted altogether.

The omission of “due process” illustrates a more literal sense of loss prevalent in subtitling. The words and thus the entire concept have been removed from the translation. Explicit meaning is lost. However, when we talk about something being “lost in translation,” we often mean something other than a literal loss of content. The expression “lost in translation” refers to a loss of poeticness, or a loss of subtlety and nuance that allows viewers to adopt an interpretive stance and read beyond the surface, literal meaning of the text and integrate prior knowledge of motivated human actions, character types, moral and philosophical systems, text genres, etc. to make inferences about inexplicit meaning in the source text.

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

Such is the case in the above example from *Bridge of Spies*. The circumlocutious phrasing the judge uses (“Let’s not kid each other”) clashes with the directness of the subtitles (“The trial is just a formality”). The former invites the viewer to infer the judge’s attitude about the trial, while the latter states his view explicitly, thus stripping away an opportunity for the viewer to interpret meaning. In this case, the source text viewer can infer the meaning quickly and intuitively based on knowledge of social and historical context, genre convention, and nonverbal cues, such as the actors delivery of the line. The Judge’s inferred meaning here is not very subtle, but in more enigmatic dialogue the viewer may need to work harder to infer meaning. Either way, what is “lost in translation” is the opportunity to make such inferences. More specifically, the type of inference used here is called **elaborative inference** as it provides additional clues about the situation, the motives of the characters, and the historical context. Research shows elaborative inference is not necessary for readers to begin to comprehend a text; rather, it emerges in a more advanced stage of reading (Cook and Guéraud 2005: 274). Readers making elaborative inferences gain supplemental information from a text by applying their general world knowledge. In summary, elaborative inferences are made with an interpretive stance rather than literal stance.

In this same sense, the judge’s “Let’s not kid each other” line of dialogue is not necessary to comprehend the narrative. The narrative moves forward without this line. Nevertheless, the line enhances the narrative by inducing viewers to exercise inference. We may infer from this line that Abel’s trial is a formality: a show to demonstrate to the American public and world that the U.S. criminal justice system is just and fair. We may also infer that the judge is in total agreement with this pragmatic view of the proceedings. Furthermore, we may infer that the judge’s view was common at the time as he tries to goad Donovan into conforming to the prevailing consensus on the issue with his choice of expression: “let’s not kid each other.”

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

The Japanese subtitle that explicitly states the trial is “just a formality” makes the first inference moot and conceals the judge’s attitude about the proceedings as he is stating a fact regardless of how he feels about it. As for the third inference, to be fair, the subtitle does allow the viewer the opportunity to imagine that this view was common in that context, but there is little clue to this in the Japanese. Inferential reasoning is not a random guess, but rather a logical conclusion drawn from evidence, as in the source text (“let’s not kid each other” means that everyone knows this trial is for show). Thus, in this subtitle there is a loss of poeticness that eliminates opportunity for inferential reasoning and replaces it with explicit meaning and random guessing.

As the above example demonstrates, the main culprit here is the use of **explicitation**. Explicitation is a common translation technique and refers to “the process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation” (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995: 8). In other words, explicitation is a strategy where the translator makes inferences and interprets the source text for the target text viewer, eradicating the opportunity for the viewer to infer or interpret on her own. This technique is prevalent in all translation. In fact, Shoshana Blum-Kulka argues that “explicitation is a universal strategy inherent in the process of language mediation” (1986: 26).

The strategy is certainly found in audiovisual translation. Initially, Olivier Goris noted a tendency toward explicitation in film dubbing translations, but, since then, others have found the same tendency in subtitling (1993: 182). According to Jan Pedersen, subtitlers often deploy explicitation as a means of keeping the character counts down while avoiding loss in meaning (2005: 116-117). In Japanese subtitling, as mentioned above, practitioners aim to summarize the dialogue rather than reproduce it. When faced with oblique language in the source text dialogue, subtitlers make their own interpretation and turn that interpretation into explicit language in the subtitles.

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

Through this process of summarization, subtitlers convey the denotative meaning of the source text while injecting their own interpretations quite directly into the target text, thus forfeiting any poeticness (i.e., the opportunity to make inferences about the source text). Or as Henrik Gottlieb puts it, explicitation “may imply sheer banalization of the text, which may in the end lose the very qualities that fascinated the source-language audience, and justified its translation in the first place” (“Texts” 2001: 22) In summary, explicitation is seen as a necessary evil in translations of cultural works, especially audiovisual translation.

In the aforementioned *Bridge of Spies* scene, explicitation in the subtitles eliminates the chance for target text viewers to make elaborative inferences based on historical context. Another thing that can be lost through explicitation in subtitles is the opportunity to discover nuance in a film’s characters. We can see this in the map scene from *There Will Be Blood* discussed in Chapter 2. During this scene, Daniel’s words and gestures capture ambiguousness to his character that is erased by the subtitles. The muddiness of his intentions is most striking when he raises his hand to Paul in a vaguely threatening manner and says, “If I travel all the way out there and I find that you’ve been lying to me, I’m going to find you and I’m going to take more than my money back. Is that alright with you?” This enigmatic line along with the sweeping gesture crystallizes Daniel’s character in a brief moment. Similarly, his line of dialogue is both polite, inquisitive, and the threatening all at once (see discussion in Chapter 2).

The translation of Daniel’s key line captures the denotative meaning behind his threat but misses some nuance behind the dialogue. Matsuura Mina’s subtitles read: 1. “*Harubaru dekaketeiki uso dattara*” [If I go all the way out, and it’s a lie]/ 2. “*kane wo torikaesu dake ja sumasan wakatte’ru na*” [Taking my money back won’t settle it. Understand?]. The subtitles capture the vague threat of Daniel, but they fail to replicate the enigmatically polite aggression behind his use of complete sentences and less than coarse language. His final question (“Is that alright with you?”) resists the more

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

predictable and rhetorical question that usually comes after this kind of vague threat (“Understand?”, “Got it?”, etc.). The Japanese subtitles provide the more predictable ending “*Wakatte’ru na*” (“Understand?”); however, the line in the spoken dialogue is more unusual in that it almost invites a response. Typically, “Is that alright with you?” is used to illustrate a speaker’s genuine interest in the opinion of the listener, but that is not the case here. It intimates the illusion of politeness, as do the rest of Daniel’s lines and his handshake which is both hostile and well-mannered at once. It may be impossible to create subtitles that capture the mock politeness buried in the use of complete sentences and less than rough language. Complete sentences are probably not an option for Matsuura in this case. Although, it would be easy to reproduce this mock politeness in Japanese (e.g., “*Yoroshii deshou ka?*”), a phrasing that makes use of honorific forms), that does not necessarily violate guidelines about succinctness in subtitling: the above expression is only one character longer than the one used in the actual subtitles. Perhaps Matsuura feared such juxtaposition would be too jarring. But of course that is the whole point. The character, it would seem, is meant to be enigmatic.

Matsuura’s subtitle for this key line acts as an explicitation in the sense that when Daniel says, “Is that alright with you?” he really means “Got it?” in the rhetorical sense. At least, that is one interpretation of the line. And therein lies the essence of loss of poeticness in subtitling: it is not meaning that is lost, but rather the opportunity to infer meaning, whether it is meaning about the historical context or about a character. Thankfully, Matsuura provide other opportunities for audiences to exercise their powers of inference in other parts of the scene.

Perhaps the most famous case of explicitation in Japanese subtitling comes from the 1979 film, *Apocalypse Now*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Tachibana Takeshi, roundly criticized the lack of subtlety in Toda Natsuko’s subtitles for the line “Terminate the Colonel’s command”, which she rendered as 彼を暗殺せよ [*kare o*

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

*ansatsu seyo* / Assassinate him]. Tachibana was bothered by the inability to capture the euphemistic nature of the original. In this subtitle, what is lost is not meaning but rather the poeticness of the source text—the subtlety and nuance. The above explicitation strips away the unnerving shadowiness of the source text phrasing. But what is really lost when we relinquish this poetic subtlety? What does the poetic subtlety bring to an audience? It provides an opportunity for the viewer to infer implicit meaning based on context (“terminate command” actually means assassinate) and draw directed conclusions about the characters (these military officers in Vietnam are hypocritical). So when viewers watch the Japanese subtitled version of the scene, they no longer have the opportunity to process in their own minds the source text meaning and produce their own interpretation.

One reason for the necessity of explicitation is the mismatch between source culture knowledge and target culture knowledge. Nord argues that in literary texts language relies on an **expressive function** (Nord 1997: 80). The expressive function is “the use of verbal or nonverbal communicative signs to manifest a person’s feelings or attitude towards the objects of phenomena of the world” (Nord 1997: 138). Thus, the expressive function of a text allows characters to reveal motives and feelings implicitly, as in the above scenes in *Bridge of Spies*, *There Will Be Blood*, and *Apocalypse Now*. In translation, the point of reference that helps communicate these motives, feelings, etc. implicitly are not always available in translation and therefore must be made explicit.

This is true of both literary and audiovisual translations alike, where translators must account for the target audiences’ lack of source culture knowledge. What differs between the two is the strategies used to reconcile this gap. To compensate for this issue, literary translators have a handful of options, including using footnotes and weaving explanations into the body of the text. However, subtitlers normally do not

have these options. They must work within the boundaries of CPS limits and, therefore, most often rely on explicitation as a solution.

Abé Mark Nornes argues that such simplifying solutions have a corrupting effect. He claims that subtitlers, especially Japanese subtitlers, are beholden to an underlying and pervasive ideology of simplifying source texts for target text audiences, and the only solution is a radicalization of subtitling practices (2004: 448).

But despite the frequent use of explicitation and its inherent limitations, loss and corruption are not inevitable even in conventional subtitling. Rather, Nord's idea of translation growth argues that translation brings new opportunities to interpret a text and see it in a new light. Furthermore, a close analysis of the subtitles from *There Will Be Blood*, *Bridge of Spies*, and the 2017 film *The Post* illustrates how audiovisual translation, even with constraints as severe as subtitling, can actually make a source text grow.

### **4.3 Subtitling “Growth”**

Although some translation scholars have made the attempt to connect translation with authorship aesthetically, legally, and socio-politically (Pym 2011: 31), conventional views routinely deny the idea that translators produce original content. Perhaps equating translation with conventional notions of authorship is too bold to gain a foothold outside (or even inside) the field, but Christiane Nord takes the term “author” in a slightly different meaning and attempts to rescue translation from being seen as an inherently reductive activity that entails loss. Taking a historical sense of the word “author” that means growth, she applies it to translation and argues that a translator can be considered an author in the sense that he or she is “someone who causes a source text to grow” (2011: 22).

Nord's argument is predicated on a functionalist theory of translation. She takes her cue from Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiss's Skopos theory, which views

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

translation as a purposeful activity in which the translator's goal is to replicate the purpose of the source text in the translation. At a textual level, this entails reproducing the overall purpose of the source text. If the source text is meant to inform its audience about medicine, Korean politics, or film history, the target text should do likewise. If the source text is meant to entertain through humor, then so should the target text. So, the task of translating a text is an exercise in extracting the information of the source text and successfully conveying it in the target text. And "a translation, therefore, is an offer of information presented in a target language-and-culture about (certain aspects of) an offer of information which is or was produced in a source language-and-culture (Nord 2011: 25 quoted from Reiss and Vermeer 1984: 76). In summary, the functionalist approach views translation as a two-fold task of communicating information and comprehending information, where translation production and reception is a cognitive activity for both translator and receiver. As such, the primary goal of the translator is to deverbalize the contents of the source text (i.e., separate the meaning from the words) and reverbalize them in the target text; whereas the goal for the receiver is to grasp the reverbalized contents without reference to the source text. To Nord it is the act of reverbaling that allows for growth.

With the functionalist approach in mind, Nord describes translational growth in practical terms. As with translational loss, Nord's notion of "growth" has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. She describes four types of growth via translation: quantitative, qualitative, functional, and personal. **Quantitative growth** refers to the fact that a translation makes a text available to more than just the source culture audience. Thus, the audience literally grows in number. This brings about new ways of viewing the source text, because, as Nord states, "New and different audiences...facilitate new interpretations" (2011: 25). The idea of new interpretations is at the heart of Nord's **qualitative growth**. By qualitative growth, Nord means that a target text expresses the realities of the source text using "new linguistic forms (by

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

borrowing, coining neologisms or creative ways of paraphrase)” (Ibid: 28). *Functional growth* is the idea that different the translation strategies produce different results, and, thus, the source text takes on different forms in translation, such as literal, literal with notes and glosses, fluent in the target text language but nevertheless visible, or perhaps fluent but invisible. Finally, personal growth means the translation can induce receivers to reflect on their own cultures and see them anew (2011: 28). This dissertation focuses on qualitative growth (i.e., new ways of interpreting the source text).

Nord’s model applies mainly to literary translation. Nevertheless, it raises questions about what is gained in translation in other forms of creative media. Could her ideas apply to audiovisual translation? The idea of translator’s causing a source text to “grow” rather than shrink through loss of meaning is put to the test when applied to audiovisual translation—a form of translation that is so limited that some rather not refer to it as translation at all. Furthermore, Nord’s growth refers to the producer of the translation only, as it is part of a debate about translation and authorship. As mentioned above, for Nord, the translator’s reverbalizing of the source text is what allows for growth. However, I would add that it is more than the translator’s act of reverbalizing, it is the receiver’s act of comprehending reverbalized content that allows translation to grow. As this dissertation establishes in Chapter 2, the inferential reasoning of the receiver is an essential part of the meaning making process. This inferential reasoning is guided by the “author” of the source text (i.e., it is directed inference). But in translation, inferential reasoning can be guided by the translator instead. When translator reverbalizes the text, she may also alter the inferential path the receiver takes in order to grasp the text.

The act of interpretation is the key here. As argued above, subtitling almost necessarily entails reduction in content. Reduction in content presumably entails reduction in meaning and poeticness, and therefore, a reduction in the opportunity for new interpretations. But this need not be the case. As my analyses of the subtitles for

#### 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

*There Will Be Blood*, *Bridge of Spies*, and *The Post* demonstrate, explicit source text meaning can be maintained while the poeticness can be transferred to reach new audiences. This can be achieved through a translation technique I call **displaced poeticness**. Displaced poeticness is a type of compensating technique where an opportunity to exercise inferential reasoning in the source text is replaced with a new opportunity to use inferential reasoning in the target text. The new opportunity for inferential reasoning in the target text may lead the audience to the same conclusions as the source text, but the reasoning routine of the target text audience deviates from the reasoning routine of the source text audience. And this new reasoning routine prompted by the target text creates new ways of interpreting and appreciating the source text that could only exist in translation.

Ironically, it is the severe constraints on subtitling that engender this **displacement**. The constraints force the subtitler to restructure source text language, and it is this restructuring that establishes a new way for audiences to engage with and make inferences about the source text. This aligns with Nord's qualitative growth, in which new receivers can "even discover 'items of the information offer' which were not available to the source-culture audience" (Nord 2011: 25). The twist here is that instead of new "items of the information offer," what is being made available is new opportunities for the receiver to apply knowledge to the text and make inferences which are not available to the source-culture audience. I want to propose that this new way of making inferences about the source text can be considered "qualitative growth" in Nord's sense.

To test the limits of Nord's idea, this paper will closely analyze Japanese subtitles from three films: *There Will Be Blood* (2007), *Bridge of Spies* (2015), and *The Post* (2017). Due to the inherent difference between the two languages, English-Japanese translations tend to amplify translational challenges and, therefore, provide a good testing ground for Nord's notion of "growth." Furthermore, this test requires texts

## 4 Negotiating Growth in Subtitles

dense with dialogue that provide viewers with the opportunity to read beyond the surface and make inferences about text and subtext. In other words, there must be ample opportunity for loss of source text meaning and poeticness in the target text.

The three films selected fit the above criteria and, thus, place severe constraints on the translation, creating many opportunities for loss of poeticness. All three feature prominent scenes of negotiation between semi-hostile parties involved in either a business transaction or a political exchange. The negotiating characters do not trust each other fully and feel the need to conceal information. The dialogue in these films is, therefore, fraught with ambiguous and heavily coded language. This poses an interesting challenge for a subtitler as she must try to capture the sense of evasion prevalent in the language of the source text while giving enough clear information for the target text viewer to follow the story. Indeed, subtitling for these films is a negotiation between the viewer's need to pull together a coherent story in their minds (literal stance) and their need to exercise their powers of inference to interpret ambiguous meaning (interpretive stance). Thus, these films are particularly suitable candidates to apply Nord's idea because they are fraught with ambiguous dialogue and rich in opportunities for interpretation.

The next three chapters will demonstrate that despite the translational constraints and challenges of translating challenging film dialogue from English to Japanese, the Japanese subtitles in the above films actually promote "qualitative growth" of the source text by displacing its poeticness into new configurations in the target text, prompting viewers to interpret content in new ways.

### **4.4 Conclusion**

Criticism of film subtitling often targets loss of content and loss of poeticness. Complaints about the lack of subtlety in the subtitles for *Apocalypse Now* (Chapter 1) and the translation inaccuracies in *Lord of the Rings* (Chapter 2) illustrate this. But

such critiques adopt a narrow view of subtitling and audiovisual media. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, the intratextual language of film dialogue is only one semantic channel in the complex meaning making apparatus. And even this single channel branches out to extratextual sources to develop or complete its meaning. Source text dialogue often requires the viewer to refer to extratextual or intertextual knowledge to make proper inferences about the narrative. For *Apocalypse Now*, knowledge of military history and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the novel on which the film is based, inform our understanding and interpretation of the film. For *Lord of the Rings*, knowledge of the comprehensive fictional world of the original novels, helps make the story more coherent. In short, a film's dialogue not the final word on the matter.

Despite their severe constraints, interlingual subtitles do provide a new semantic channel to generate meaning. Subtitles provide not only narrative information but also a link to the target text culture and all of its history, values, etc., that add to the process of understanding and interpreting a film. But these links do not merely extend to target text culture referents. Rather, the links alter the paths of inferential reasoning necessary to the comprehension of any text. As Chapter 2 argues, all texts require inferences from the audience, and in a non-subtitled film, the filmmaker directs our inferential reasoning. But in a subtitled film, those reasoning paths can be redirected by the subtitles. In this sense, the source text can grow not by delivering new information, but by stimulating the viewer to use new inferential reasoning routines to understand and interpret the film.

## 5           **Addition through Subtraction:** **Translational Growth in *There*** ***Will Be Blood***

Chapter 4 discusses how audiovisual subtitlers must deal with the inherent constraints on audiovisual translation by condensing the contents of spoken dialogue in their subtitles. A common assumption is that this condensation of the source text results in two type of losses: denotative content (explicit meaning from the source text) and poeticness (opportunities for viewers to engage in interpretational inference). The former is the inevitable outcome of reducing the source text to fit the subtitle constraint, but the latter stems from the deployment of explicitation, a translation strategy that turns implicit meaning from the source text into explicit language in the target text.

Nevertheless, Christiane Nord has argued that literary translations can actually promote what she calls qualitative growth. Applying Nord's model to audiovisual translation, this chapter argues that interlingual subtitles can promote qualitative growth as well. A close analysis of the Japanese subtitles for *There Will Be Blood*, demonstrates that a loss of poeticness is not inevitable; rather subtitles can condense the source text dialogue without sacrificing denotative content or poeticness.

In her subtitles of *There Will Be Blood*, Matsuura Mina makes use of two strategies that reduce translational loss: **semi-translation** and **ellipses**. As shown later in this chapter, her use of these strategies prevents loss of denotative meaning and at the same time provides opportunities for the target text viewer to interpret the film in new ways. While it is true that semi-translation and ellipses tend to reduce source text content, when skillfully employed, as in this case, they prompt target text viewers to use their knowledge of not only the source culture, but also the target culture to infer meaning from ambiguous dialogue. This is something viewers of the untranslated

source text cannot do, since there are no ellipses or semi-translations in the source text and calling upon target culture knowledge while watching the source text is a non-sequitur. Thus, watching the subtitled version of the film involves new ways of grasping the source text, which, in turn, makes the original grow in the Nordan sense.

## **5.2 Condensing the Source Text of *There Will Be Blood* without Loss of Meaning**

In Japanese subtitling, the principles proposed by practitioners (emphasis on summarizing the essence of dialogue and use of easily understood language) aim to ensure that at least a sense of the narrative remains available to the target text viewer within the constraints of four CPS. The resulting translation is a pared-down, condensed version of the source text. But what exactly is sacrificed? Presumably, the condensation of the source text necessary in subtitling reduces the volume of information on offer: subtitlers must omit much language thus omitting meaning. However, this need not always be the case. A close analysis of the subtitles from the map scene from *There Will Be Blood* demonstrates how subtitles retain denotative meaning while still condensing the source text.

In the scene in question, Paul (Paul Dano), a young rancher, uses a map to explain to oilmen Daniel (Daniel Day-Lewis) and Fletcher (Ciarán Hinds) where they can find oil near his family ranch. The scene is dialogue-driven but the language simple. The content of the dialogue is mostly straightforward conversation about the location of the oil, family composition, and names. With the exception of a handful of lines, traditional translational challenges are few. However, since this is a diasemiotic translation, the target text must be condensed for time. The entire dialogue from this brief scene, the corresponding Japanese subtitles, and a back-translation can be found below (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1:** *There Will Be Blood* (2007) map scene transcript and Japanese subtitles by Matsuura Mina (total run time: 1:45). The lines of dialogue are divided according to their corresponding Japanese subtitles as they appear on the screen.

	Chara.	ST Dialogue	TT Dialogue	Back-Translation
1	Paul	This is us here	ここがうちだ	We are here.
2	Paul	Spur station here at Little Boston	支線の駅はリトル・ボストン	The branch line station is <i>Ritoru Bosuton</i>
3	Paul	The Sunday Ranch is what you're looking for	その土地は“サンデー牧場”	That land is the “ <i>Sande-Ranch</i> ”
4	Paul	There's a sheep trail that takes you there	羊の道を行けば着く	If you go on the sheep trail, you'll arrive
5	Paul	It's a mile out of town headed west, not far	町から西へ 1.6 キロ 遠くはない	1.6 km westward from the town, not far
6	Paul	Just through a small pass near the base of the hills	丘のふもとから山道を上がればいい	You should go up the mountain road from the base of the hills
7	Paul	Go past the church and just follow the sheep trail	教会を過ぎ そのまま羊の道を進む	Pass the church and proceed on the sheep trail as is
8	Daniel	Where's Standard buying up?	スタンダード・オイルが買ったのは?	As for the ones <i>Sutandādo oiru</i> bought?
9	Paul	Here and here	こことここだ	Here and Here
10	Daniel	And your family name is Sunday, yes?	君の名字はサンデーか	Your family name is Sande-?
11	Paul	That's right	そうだ	That's right

	Chara.	ST Dialogue	TT Dialogue	Back-Translation
12	Daniel	How many is in your family?	家族は？	As for family?
13	Paul	My father and mother and sisters and my brother Eli	父親と母親 妹たち 弟のイーライ	My father and mother younger sisters and brother <i>I-rai</i>
14	H.W.	How many sisters do you have?	妹は何人？	How many sisters?
15	Paul	Two	2人	Two
16	Daniel	What's your name?	君の名は？	As for your name?
17	Paul	Paul	ポール	<i>Po-ru</i>
18	Fletcher	Does any of your family know about the oil that you say is there?	家族で石油のことを 知ってるのは？	As for those who know about the oil in your family?
19	Paul	I don't know. My uncle always said there was oil there	どうかな 叔父は 石油があると言って たけど	I wonder...My uncle said there was oil, but
20	Paul	But I don't know what they heard or what they think	その後のことは知ら ない	After that I don't know
21	Fletcher	What do you grow?	作物は？	As for crops?
22	Paul	It's goats. It's a goat farm. I told you nothing grows but weeds	うちはヤギだけ 言 ったろ？ 雑草しか 育たない	I told you as for us, it's only goats. Only weeds grow
23	Fletcher	Is there water?	水は？	As for water?

	Chara.	ST Dialogue	TT Dialogue	Back-Translation
24	Paul	It's salty. You drill a well, it's hard not to get salt water	塩分が強い 井戸を掘ると 塩水が出てくる	It's salty. If you dig a well, salt water will come out
25	Paul	The oil is there	石油はある	There is oil
26	Paul	I'm telling you	間違いない	There's no mistake
27	Paul	I want to go now, so...	じゃもう帰る	Well, I'll go home
28	Daniel	You can stay tonight	泊まっていけ	Stay
29	Paul	No, I want to go now. I wanna leave	やめておく 帰りたい	I'll pass. I want to go home
30	Daniel	Listen, Paul	いいか ポール	Listen, <i>Po-ru</i>
31	Daniel	If I travel all the way out there and I find that you've been lying to me	はるばる出かけていき 嘘だったら	If I go all the way out, and it's a lie
32	Daniel	I'm going to find you and I'm going to take more than my money back. Is that alright with you?	金を取り返すだけじゃ 済まさん わかってるな?	Taking my money back won't settle it. Understand?
33	Paul	Yes, sir	はい	Yes
34	Daniel	Alright then	よろしい	Good
35	Paul	Nice luck to you, God bless	幸運と神の加護を	Good luck and God be with you
36	Daniel	And to you, young man	君にもな	You too

	<b>Chara.</b>	<b>ST Dialogue</b>	<b>TT Dialogue</b>	<b>Back-Translation</b>
		<b>Word Count: 254</b>	<b>Charact. Count: 389</b>	<b>Word Count: 195</b>

Although the language of the map scene is simple and highly translatable—even when working in languages as disparate as English and Japanese—some reduction is necessary due to the subtitling format, and word/character counts for this scene bear this out. As mentioned above, word counts reduce drastically when moving from spoken dialogue to subtitles and *There Will Be Blood* is no exception. The source text dialogue has a word count of 254, whereas the subtitles have a character count of 389. While the source text word count and target text character count appear similar, they do not reflect the typical calculations found in isosemiotic English-to-Japanese translations. Using the rough but fair estimate of two Japanese characters per English word, we can see that the content has been reduced by approximately one quarter. If one source text (English) word should equal two target text (Japanese) characters, then we would expect a total of 508 target text characters. In actuality, there are 389 target text characters, or 76 percent of 508 expected characters.

The reduction in quantity of content, however, does not amount to a reduction in meaning. Despite the condensed volume of the target text subtitles, there are no major omissions, as the back-translation demonstrates. Even culture-specific references (CSRs) are retained in the subtitles. Indeed, Matsuura’s subtitles preserve the source texts’ references to the names of Little Boston and Standard Oil. In other words, the wording in the subtitles may be altered, but all major elements are still present. Thus, while the subtitles reduce the source text content quantitatively, they do not reduce the denotative meaning.

So, how do the subtitles condense the text without omitting source text

information? The subtitles feature a mixture of ellipsis and semi-translation.

### 5.3 Addition through Subtraction: Semi-Translation and Ellipsis

While explicitation can strip away the poeticness of a source text, other translation strategies can reproduce its function in new ways. Matsuura's subtitles for the map scene show how well-chosen strategies (that could very well have been selected for technical reasons rather than aesthetic) can replace the opportunity to make inferences about the source text. In other words, semi-translation and ellipsis give an incomplete picture of the source text, allowing a puzzle to emerge in the target text. The audience engages with this puzzle with inferential reasoning, but the reasoning path is different from that of the source text audience. The way in which the reverbilized target text content prompts audiences to make inferences in new ways is what I call displaced poeticness.

#### 5.3.1 Semi-Translation

As mentioned above, culture-specific references (CSRs) are a major challenge to subtitlers and the CSRs in *There Will Be Blood* are no exception. In the aforementioned map scene, there are two CSRs of note: a reference to an obscure place, Little Boston and a reference to a historical American company, Standard Oil. A subtitler could adopt a number of strategies to handle these challenges, including *generalization* and *omission*. But here, the references remain mostly intact in the subtitles. Matsuura elects to transcribe these CSRs into katakana—the Japanese script used primarily for foreign loan words—rendering them as *Ritoru bosuton* and *Sutandādo oiru* (see lines 2 and 8 in **Table 1**). This strategy can be called *semi-translation* since it performs half the work of a translation. And this use of semi-translation enlists the viewers powers of inference in ways the source text does not.

The transcribed compound term リトル・ボストン [*Ritoru bosuton*] has no

established meaning in Japanese. This is in contrast to similar compound katakana terms like *bāgen sēru*, which is defined in the Kenkyusha Dictionary as “bargain sale.” And while the compound term [スタンダード・オイル] *Sutandādo oiru* is an established translation of Standard Oil, it is unlikely the 100-year defunct company, which never had a presence in Japan, has wide recognition in the target culture today. Nevertheless, all four of the individual words used to compose these terms are likely to be familiar to viewers in the target culture. The two words of the latter subtitle, *oiru* and *sutandādo*, are recognized in Japanese dictionaries as discrete words—*oiru* meaning oil and *sutandādo* meaning standard or criterion. Likewise, *Bosuton* is a well-known city and every school child in Japan knows the word “little” or its Japanese-transcribed form *ritoru*. In that sense, these subtitles could be called semi-translation, since they combine recognized Japanese words into unrecognized pairings. But, viewers well-versed in American geography and economic history notwithstanding, these pairings convey little to the audience directly.

To grasp these subtitles, the target text viewer must either call upon previous knowledge about geography or historical oil companies in the U.S. or, alternatively, surmise from the grammatical and narrative context that these terms refer to the names of a place and a company. Naturally, one could say the same thing about source culture viewers as well, since Little Boston, California is a fictional town and Standard Oil has been defunct since 1911. But this kind of inference is not exactly the same as what happens when reading the Japanese subtitles. Source culture viewers can be expected to have the background knowledge to recognize English-language naming patterns, such as the one found in Little Boston, but the same assumption cannot be made of target culture viewers. Thus, the process for target text viewers begins with a different grounding. Because the subtitles are rendered in katakana, they prompt viewers to recognize them as proper nouns. (One of the major uses of katakana is for transcribing proper nouns from cultures where written language is not based on Chinese ideograms).

But the use of katakana casts a wide net. The names could refer to anything, including people. Recognizing they are names to a town and an oil company requires more steps. In the case of *Ritoru bosuton*, context provides a clue. The subtitles read 支線の駅はリトル・ボストン [*Shisen no eki wa Ritoru bosuton* / The branch line station is *Ritoru bosuton*]. Thus, the context makes it clear the new term refers to a proper noun and not a common noun, and that the proper noun is the name of a place. But this obviousness depends on the linguistic conventions of the target text language, namely the orthographic conventions of katakana usage.

One could make the case that transcribing these CSRs into katakana is the natural choice for a subtitler. If this were a literary translation, where character count is not as strict, this position would be reasonable; however, since this is film subtitling, where character counts are stringently self-regulated, one can see the usefulness of employing other strategies that could have lessened the burden on readers and avoided disrupting the flow of the subtitles. A common strategy in dealing with CSRs in film subtitling, for example, is to **generalize** the CSR to a broader category (i.e., generalization) (Chiaro 2009: 157). In this case, that would mean generalizing the references to Little Boston to the Japanese word for “town,” *machi*, and Standard Oil to “oil company,” *sekiyu gaisha*. Using the general term for these two CSRs rather than the lengthy transliterations would reduce the character count by six characters each. Furthermore, in addition to relieving the viewer from reading several more characters in a limited time, generalizing these CSRs would also unburden them from hastily ascertaining their meaning.

But here, Matsuura makes a different move. She does not shy away from challenging viewers and invites them to use previous knowledge of American geography and business to grasp or at least infer the meaning. The type of inferential reasoning in these cases requires convergent thinking rather than divergent thinking. There are singular answers to the questions: what is Little Boston? and what is

Standard Oil? The conclusions are the same in both source text and target text. Nevertheless, the inferential routines are different for source text audiences and target text audiences. The difference lies in what background knowledge we call upon to answer these questions. For the former, source text viewers rely upon source culture knowledge. Conversely, for the latter, target text viewers rely upon a combination of source culture and target culture knowledge to decipher meaning. In that sense, we can say that this sort of subtitling can bring qualitative growth to the source text in the form of displaced poeticness.

### 5.3.2 Ellipsis

Another strategy Matsuura deploys in order to reduce character count and ensure subtitle-spoken dialogue synchrony is ellipsis—the omission of a clause whose meaning is inferable from context. In a number of instances Matsuura elides the ending of lines of dialogue, rendering them as clipped sentence fragments. These elliptical constructions restructure the source text language to make explicit content implicit.

Over the course of the map scene, Daniel, Fletcher, and H.W. prod Paul with several questions. These questions are given in complete sentences in the source text. Matsuura condenses them in the subtitles. Specifically, Matsuura utilizes an elliptical construction frequently found in Japanese conversational speech, in which the final part of the sentence is elided and the inquiry ends with the open-ended topic marker *WA* (は), which can be loosely translated in English as “as for.” This kind of elliptical construction relies on context to fill in the rest of the meaning. For example, the subtitle for “Is there water?” (line 23) is “水は？” (*mizu wa?*), literally, “As for water?” This is a more succinct way to ask about the presence of water than the more literal translation “水はありますか” (*Mizu wa arimasu ka*) which expands a brief snatch of dialogue into a seven-character subtitle pushing the limits of the four character per second rule. Matsuura uses the same elliptical constructions to condense the source

text at lines 8, 12, 16, 18, and 21 as well.

Such constructions reduce the quantity of language from the source text, but it would be hard to call the results omissions. In the most literal sense, these constructions are omitting individual words, such as the Japanese for “how many,” “what is,” “is there,” etc. This does create a vagueness to the interaction, but because such vagueness fits in with common modes of interaction in the target culture, the viewer follows the conversation nonetheless. So when Daniel asks Paul, “As for family?” (line 12) in the subtitles, there is little doubt he is asking about the composition of Paul’s family (rather than, say, whether his family has joined him on his journey) since content of the question as well as the elliptical phrasing used in the subtitles, are quite common in contexts similar to the one given in the map scene.

The inferential reasoning required to grasp elliptical constructions is quite different from the reasoning necessary for grasping the semi-translations above. For the former, viewers rely on knowledge of the target culture, in other words, conventions of conversational Japanese that have been mapped onto the source text. While this could be considered a domesticating effect, if we compare it to the example of Daniel’s vague threat to Paul, we can see that it shares a similar function. The unusualness of Daniel’s line “Is that alright with you?” prompts source text viewers to call upon their knowledge of social interaction in the source culture as a way of measuring the sincerity and hostility buried behind this line. Similarly, the above elliptical constructions prompt target text viewers to call forth knowledge about the target culture (what does someone mean when she asks “As for family?” in a Japanese context?) and combine it with their understanding of the text in front of them (Why is Fletcher interested in knowing about water?) to draw inferences about the characters and their intentions from the subtitles. This exercises the viewers’ powers of inference in a similar way that interpreting Daniel’s intentions when saying “Is that alright with you” does. But unlike the source text, it requires viewers to use knowledge of both

source text and target culture. Thus, as is the case of semi-translation, this strategy can promote qualitative growth to the source text.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

As this chapter's analysis of the subtitles of *There Will Be Blood* demonstrates, the constraints on subtitling result in the need to condense source text dialogue, but they do not necessarily result in loss of denotative meaning or poeticness. While it is true certain subtitling strategies, such as explicitation, can strip away poeticness in the name of conveying the source text's implicit meaning, other strategies, such as semi-translation and ellipses, reproduce poeticness from the source text insofar as they prompt target text viewers to make inferences about the ambiguous subtitles in a fashion that is similar to the way source text viewers make inferences about the ambiguous dialogue of the source text. But this reproduced poeticness displaces the reasoning path toward the conclusion. In fact, this kind of displaced poeticness can even make the source text grow in the sense that they allow the source text to reach a wider audience and that audience makes inferences to interpret the text calling upon broader background knowledge resources that include both the target culture and source culture. In other words, subtitles require an understanding of both source and target languages and cultures as a matter of course, while the source text need not ask that much of its viewers. In this way, quality subtitles can bring to the source text qualitative growth.

## 6      **The Jewelry Box Effect and Orthographic Enhancements in the Subtitles for *Bridge of Spies***

Chapter 5 shows how Matsuura Mina uses certain translation strategies in her subtitles for *There Will Be Blood* to compensate for loss of poeticness in the target text and generate new opportunities for viewers to apply their powers of inference to interpret the film. These new opportunities are what Christiane Nord calls source text growth.

This chapter will expand on this idea to examine whether Matsuura uses comparable techniques in other films with similarly ambiguous dialogue. To this end, this chapter analyzes Matsuura's Japanese subtitles for *Bridge of Spies* (2015). As with *There Will Be Blood*, the dialogue in this film is fraught with ambiguous and heavily coded language. This poses an interesting challenge for a subtitler as she must try to capture the sense of evasion prevalent in the language of the source text while giving enough clear information for the target text viewer to follow the story. Indeed, subtitling for this film is a negotiation between the viewer's need to pull together a coherent story in their minds (i.e., take a literal stance) and their need to exercise their powers of inference to interpret ambiguous meaning (take an interpretive stance). Thus, this film provides another suitable test for the idea that subtitles can make the source text grow.

The analysis in this chapter will show that despite a reliance on explicitation similar to that of *There Will Be Blood*, Matsuura's subtitles for *Bridge of Spies*, also generate Nord's qualitative growth. But in this case, it is through the strategic use of orthographic enhancements and reliance on what is known as the jewelry box effect that the subtitles provide opportunities for interpretations that are not available in the

source text.

## 6.2 Yanabu's Jewelry Box Effect

Japanese subtitlers often utilize conventions of written Japanese to enhance their subtitles. With the unique characteristics of Japanese script, they can clarify the meaning of standard subtitles, but they can also recreate ambiguity found in the source text. This effect is based on what Yanabu Akira refers to as the *kasetto kōka* or “jewelry box effect.”<sup>14</sup>

The **jewelry box effect** refers to a situation where a reader encounters a neologism written in kanji where the meaning of a new word is unclear, but the reader nevertheless understands that the term bears importance. It is similar to the way a person might look at a jewelry box without opening it and predict its contents are something of value (Yanabu 1982: 38). These neologisms are examples of *honyakugo* (translation words) created to translate foreign concepts into Japanese. An example of the jewelry box effect is found in the *honyakugo* 自由 (*jiyū*), a translation of the term “liberty.” Yanabu argues that *jiyū* has had a confused mixture of positive and negative meanings throughout its history. To a small minority of intellectuals in Meiji-era Japan, *jiyū* meant liberty in the same sense as John Stuart Mill's “liberty;” however, Japanese conservatives understood it as meaning self-indulgent and willful based on the traditional Chinese meaning, where the *honyakugo* 自由 (*jiyū*) and its accompanying kanji came from (Yanabu 1982: 189). The reason for the confusion, according to Yanabu's theory, is that the term *jiyū* was established as a Japanese word before it had a fixed meaning.

Offering numerous other examples, Yanabu argues that historically many such neologisms have been adopted without a clear understanding of their meaning, and it is only over time that a meaning has materialized. In summary, with Yanabu's jewelry box effect, “the signifier (form) comes first and the signified (concept) emerges later

(Wakabayashi 2019: 74). In the case of *honyakugo*, the signifying form is the neologism's kanji, which act as a jewelry box.

Yanabu's assertions about *honyakugo* and the existence of *kasetto kōka* lack rigorous empirical evidence, but they are nevertheless an indispensable part of research on Japanese translation (Takeda 2012: 13). This dissertation argues that his concept of jewelry box effect need not be limited to neologisms represented in kanji. Rather, in audiovisual texts, orthographic enhancements to subtitles, whether they include neologisms or not, can create a jewelry box effect. Thus, this chapter and the next chapter apply the metaphor of the jewelry box effect to audiovisual translation.

While it is true that film subtitling may not be as fertile a ground for introducing new concepts into Japanese as literary translation (Yanabu's original subject of research), subtitles do provide similar situations that lead viewers to encounter expressions and read them as significant without necessarily grasping their meanings. This incites in the viewer a sense of curiosity and arguably an interpretive stance. But Japanese subtitlers have made use of this jewelry box effect not through coining new words as *honyakugo*, but through highlighting key, but commonly-used words in their subtitles. The strategy involves adding orthographic signs to standard subtitles to communicate the presence of multi-layered meanings.

One technique Japanese subtitlers use to enrich the viewing experience is supplementing subtitles with *furigana*. In written texts, *furigana* is commonly used to indicate the readings of rarely-used kanji or unconventional readings of common kanji, and it is usually used to the same effect in film subtitles despite the character-count limitations. But occasionally *furigana* is utilized in more creative ways.

An example can be found in the film *The Human Stain* (2003). In this film, the main character, an American university professor, Coleman Silk (Anthony Hopkins), is accused of using politically incorrect speech in his class. After noticing that two of his students have been absent the entire semester, Coleman asks if they actually exist or if

they are “spooks.” The word “spook” usually refers to a ghost, but it can also be used as a derogatory term for an African-American. We later learn that one of the students Coleman is referring to is in fact African-American. Upon learning this, the viewer is tasked with making an elaborative inference: about which sense Coleman is using the word “spook.” This inference can later be confirmed or thwarted. Although context soon makes Coleman’s intentions clear (he claims he had never seen the student in question), the ambiguity of the word becomes a major plot point, as Coleman’s superiors accuse him of using it in the racially insensitive sense and threaten punishment.

In order to capture this ambiguity, the Japanese subtitles exploit the furigana reading aid. The subtitle reads as follows.

スプーク  
幽霊か？

Typically, the kanji compound 幽霊 is read as *yūrei* and means ghost. However, here the presence of furigana above the kanji indicates the characters should be read as “*supūku*,” a translation for “spook.” Since the use of the word “spook” becomes a key point of contention later in the film, the Japanese rendition *supūku* also becomes key for the Japanese subtitles. It highlights the term, indicating a special thematic importance.

The effect of the combination of the standard subtitle with the furigana is contradictory. On the one hand, the standard subtitle is an *explicitation*. Since the kanji compound 幽霊 means ghost, it erases the ambiguity found in the original, and, thus, eradicates the chance for the viewer to interpret the text on her own. Indeed, the subtitles do the interpreting for the viewer and make “ghost” the only meaning available: it clearly indicates Coleman is talking about ghosts, not African-Americans. On the other hand, the presence of furigana supplementing the standard subtitle thwarts this straightforward interpretation. It prompts the viewer to note the unusual reading and raises doubts about the intended meaning. While the meaning of 幽霊 (*yūrei*) is

clear, the word *supūku* has no established meaning in Japanese other than ghost. Bearing in mind the redundancy of including the *supūku* reading over the everyday word 幽霊 (*yūrei*), the viewer is left asking what the word is supposed to mean and how it is differentiated from 幽霊. In this sense, it recovers the ambiguity of the source text by placing two competing interpretations in the same subtitle, wherein one interpretation is obvious while the other one is open to interpretation. This effect is different from the one the source text has on its viewers. Since “spook” has two established meanings in English, the viewer merely asks which meaning is intended. And, as mentioned above, the context makes Coleman’s intended meaning clear. Thus, there is little mystery in the source text. By contrast, the subtitles create a sense of mystery to the target text that is not present in the source text. The film does not define the neologism *supūku* for the viewer.<sup>15</sup> In that sense, the presence of furigana here has a jewelry box effect in that it hints at a multilayered significance to the subtitle without revealing the contents inside.

This clever use of furigana is only one way Japanese subtitlers can enhance their own standard subtitles and effect source text growth. For her part, Matsuura uses a different orthographic enhancement to indicate the presence of multilayered meaning in her subtitles for *Bridge of Spies*: Western-style quotation marks.

### **6.3 Highlighting Motifs, Officialese, and Multi-Layered Meaning**

In *Bridge of Spies*, a New York attorney, James Donovan (Tom Hanks), negotiates a prisoner exchange between the U.S. and both East Germany and the Soviet Union. The deal Donovan brokers returns Soviet spy Rudolf Abel back to the USSR in return for Francis Gary Powers, pilot of a U-2 spy plane shot down over Russia, and Frederic Pryor, a student studying economics in West Germany who is arrested by the East German police without reason. Because the sensitive nature of the negotiations and the fact that the parties involved are representatives of states embroiled in a cold war, the

characters use cryptic language and vacillate between sharing and concealing information with each other. Thus, the dialogue of *Bridge of Spies* tends to be encoded speech and, therefore, difficult to translate.

As in the example above, Matsuura's subtitles tend to make explicit the cryptic language the characters use. Nevertheless, she manages to recover opportunities for target text viewers to infer meaning through strategies that can only be found in translation, not in the source text. By using quotation marks to highlight specific snippets of the subtitles, Matsuura prompts the viewer to recognize marked text as thematically significant and use their powers of inference to interpret the meaning of the dialogue the subtitles stand for. Matsuura deploys the strategy throughout the film and uses it for three distinct purposes: 1. to indicate an expression will be a motif throughout the film, 2. to indicate a character is speaking in officialese, or 3. to prompt the viewer to recognize the dialogue as the encoded speech of espionage gamesmanship.

First of all, Matsuura uses quotation marks to highlight thematically significant text. An early scene introduces the character of Donovan as he negotiates with another insurance lawyer over a claim. In this scene, Donovan insists that an accident in which five people are hurt qualifies as a single incident, not five separate incidents. He repeats the line "one" three times for emphasis: "One, one, one." Matsuura's subtitles read: "1 つ 1 つ 1 つ" [*hitotsu hitotsu hitotsu*] with quotation marks (see **Fig. 9a**). The phrase "one, one, one" becomes a motif throughout the film, with Donovan using it several times in different contexts. In a later scene, Donovan is arguing with a CIA agent about what makes them Americans, and he argues that it is "just one thing, one, one, one." Again the subtitles read "1 つ 1 つ 1 つ" [*hitotsu hitotsu hitotsu*] with quotation marks (see **Fig. 9b**). Finally, in a scene where Donovan is negotiating with Wolfgang Vogel (Sebastian Koch), an East German official, for the exchange of prisoners between the U.S., Soviet Union, and East Germany, Donovan asserts the

trade is not two deals but one deal: “We’re not trying to do two different things here. It’s one thing. One, one, one.” As in the previous scenes, the subtitles read: “1 ∩ 1 ∩ 1 ∩” [hitotsu hitotsu hitotsu] with quotation marks (see **Fig. 9c**). Matsuura’s use of quotation marks here is similar to the use of furigana in *The Human Stain*: it prompts viewers to recognize that the expression has a multilayered significance without indicating what that significance is. Thus, through this usage, the quotation marks have a jewelry box effect.

The source text viewer and target text viewer are both prompted to adopt an interpretational stance and infer special significance to the original line of dialogue and the subtitles respectively. The reasoning routine necessary to infer the significance behind the repeated expression is similar for both types of viewers. They may both grapple with why the film insists on emphasizing the same words three different times, conjuring up hypotheses and searching for confirmation or contradiction. However, there is still a difference in how source text viewers and target text viewers engage with these routines. For the source text viewer, this reasoning routine emerges only after the film has established this “one, one, one” theme. The source text, provides no signals that the dialogue will be thematically significant, other than Hanks delivery of the line—which is not particularly emphatic. In this way, the theme is something the viewer must recover by the end of the film. The source text rewards observant viewers who recall the line being said early in the film and recognize it as a theme later in the film. It depends on viewers recalling prior inter-film information and relies on a sense of latent familiarity with the line. By the end of the film, viewers can search for and gradually come to grasp the dialogue’s significance. This is a common way of uncovering themes in literature and film.

The situation is different for the target text viewer. For her, the importance of the “one, one, one” dialogue is discernible from the beginning of the movie when the line is first uttered. While the denotative meaning of the subtitle “*hitotsu, hitotsu, hitotsu*”

is obvious when adopting a literal stance, the presence of highlighting quotation marks pushes the viewer toward an interpretational stance when normally such banal language would not. The viewer starts searching for thematic significance immediately, unlike the source text viewer who cannot recognize the theme until much later. Because of this, the target text viewer does not need to recall previous dialogue to make sense of the theme; rather, she must retain the gist of the dialogue in the back of her mind and search for confirmation throughout the film. In this case, the target text viewer makes a predictive inference when seeing the highlighted subtitles: she must predict this dialogue will have greater significance later in the film. The quotation marks act as a jewelry box. While the subtextual meaning of “*hitotsu, hitotsu, hitotsu*” is unclear, the reader nevertheless predicts that it will bear importance later in the film. Thus, the source text viewer’s interpretation process and the target text viewer’s interpretation process differ significantly.

Another way Matsuura uses quotation marks is to indicate in shorthand that the speaker is using *officialese* in discussing an official position with far-reaching implications. Here, *officialese* refers to language that used by government bureaucrats specifically crafted to avoid personal responsibility or divulging key information. In a negotiation scene between Donovan and Ivan Schischkin (Michael Gor), a Soviet agent, Schischkin warns Donovan about how the U.S. government’s actions will be seen by the Soviets. He comments on the actions Francis Powers, the American pilot, was caught taking photographs from a U.S. spy plane: “People in my country would consider that an act of war.” The subtitles read: 我が国の人々はそれを“戦争行為”と見なす [*Waga kuni no hitobito wa sore o “sensōkōi” to minasu*], with the expression *sensōkōi* or “act of war” in quotation marks. The quotation marks serve two purposes here: they highlight the text, and they attribute the idea of “act of war” not to the speaker Schischkin, but to unnamed Soviet figures. It is an official term used by government agents. Schischkin’s phrasing suggests he is not responsible for the position. Rather

that it is an inevitable conclusion. Viewers are encouraged to infer from background knowledge that the official position is one government officials will be forced to adopt based on the culture of bureaucratic officialdom and that it will have far-reaching implications.

Unlike with the “one, one, one” motif, the source text viewer immediately grasps the special significance to this dialogue. The actor’s somewhat emphatic delivery and the denotative meaning of the expression “act of war” lend it special gravitas. And given the historical context of the scene in which this line is given, the implications are clear: full-scale war between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Thus, source text viewers use this historical background knowledge to make a swift predictive inference.

But the target text viewer undergoes a different reasoning routine. The quotation marks in the subtitles make the need to search for underlying implications more obvious, while not necessarily explicating those underlying implications. They stop the target text viewer from reading the subtitles literally and prompt them to rethink the expression and make an elaborative inference about its origins and predictive inferences about its implications. Thus, the quotation marks of the Japanese subtitles set this particular expression aside from the rest and encompass it in a jewelry box. And it is the jewelry box itself that shifts the target text viewer into an interpretational stance. In other words, target text viewers are given a visual cue, whereas source text viewers are given no specific cue.

The third way Matsuura uses quotation marks in her subtitles is perhaps the most significant. Throughout the film, she deploys quotation marks as a means replicate the multilayered meanings behind certain source text dialogue. For one thing, she uses quotation marks to indicate the presence of irony in several scenes. For example, midway through the film, Donovan asks CIA Agent Hoffman for a new coat after having his coat stolen by East German thugs. Hoffman asks Donovan how he lost his coat, and Donovan replies with exasperation, “You know, spy stuff.” The subtitles

read: “スパイ稼業”の宿命だ [“*Supai kagyō*” *no shukumei da* / It’s the fate of “spy business”]. Later in the film, Donovan reveals to Hoffman that he spent the previous night in an East German prison after an argument with a Vogel. With the same exasperation as the previous scene, Donovan says, “Vogel arranged for me to spend some time in the East.” The subtitles read ヴォーゲルの“手配”で東側の留置場に [Vōgeru no “*tehai*” *de higashigawa no ryūchijō ni* / I was in a detention center of the East side by Vogel’s “arrangement”]. Vogel himself speaks sarcastically when criticizing the Soviets for not helping East Germany recover from WWII. He tells Donovan, “Our Russian friends have decided that we should not rebuild our capital city.” The subtitles read: “ソ連の友人”は我々の首都を再建するなと [“*soren no yūjin*” *wa wareware no shuto o saikennsuruna to* / “Soviet friends” said they won’t rebuild our capital], with the expression ソ連の友人 [*soren no yūjin*] or “Soviet friends” in quotation marks. In the above examples, the quotation marks cue the viewer to read irony into the dialogue.

Matsuura also uses quotation marks to reproduce the gamesmanship of the source text dialogue. In the aforementioned negotiations between Donovan and Schischkin, Matsuura uses this strategy for several lines of dialogue (see **Table 2** below).

**Table 2:** Dialogue excerpts from the negotiation scene between Schischkin (S) and Donovan (D), with Japanese subtitles. “Ch” stands for character.

	Ch	Original Dialogue	Japanese Subtitle	Back-Translation
1	S	If we release Powers, it is only to promote good will between our countries.	パワーズの釈放はあくまでも米ソの— “友好の証し”	The release of Powers can only be a Soviet-U.S. “proof of friendship.”
2	S	So, it cannot be an exchange.	従って“交換”であつてはならない	So, it cannot be an “exchange.”

3	D	No, the just won't work for us at all. See, we need this to be an exchange.	それでは困る あくまでも“交換”で はなくては	That's trouble....if it's not definitely an “exchange”
4	D	You can call it what you want, but an exchange it must be.	細かいことは構わな いが“交換”だ	I don't mind the details, but it's an “exchange.”

With the quotation marks, Matsuura makes explicit the oblique nature of the conversation. The quotation marks here function to indicate that there is a double meaning to the expressions they surround, giving the viewer a clear signal that the words are meant to be evasive. Target text viewers share this understanding with source text viewers but for different reasons. When source text viewers watch this scene, they apply their knowledge of the source culture to make snap judgements about the underlying meaning in dialogue like “it cannot be an exchange.” Specifically, they likely rely on their knowledge of spy movies, which often feature this kind of evasive, indirect dialogue. Target viewers, on the other hand, may approach this scene differently. Although there is little reason to assume target text viewers have no knowledge of English-language spy movie conventions, the presence of quotation marks alter the interpretational process. It is true that when watching this scene, target text viewers might apply previous knowledge about spy movie dialogue to interpret the underlying meaning behind the subtitles, but the quotation marks direct their attention to specific points in the subtitles and induce them to re-evaluate meaning. For example, the subtitle in lines two through four of **Table 2** features the subtitle 交換 [*kōkan*], or “exchange,” in quotation marks. Without the quotation marks, the viewer may read the subtitle literally and think Schischkin is actually refusing the exchange. But with the quotation marks, the viewer re-interprets the meaning as insinuating that Schischkin has concerns about the image such an interaction would project to the citizens and

government of the Soviet Union. Thus, the quotation marks direct target text viewers not to read the subtitles literally, but rather read them as a sign of the character's underlying intentions.

With this usage, the quotation marks subvert the jewelry box effect. The standard subtitles present the viewer with a recognizable and comprehensible expression: *kōkan* is a common everyday word. In other words, they give viewers a full look at the contents inside the jewelry box. But the presence of quotation marks undermines the otherwise clear meaning of the word and reveals it to be an illusion. *Kōkan* does not mean “exchange” here; rather, it means something else, perhaps the *appearance of an exchange* presented to Soviet citizens and bureaucrats. So, the quotation marks act like an inverted jewelry box. Normally, the box conceals the precious contents inside, but in this case the contents have already been revealed for all to see. Instead what the jewelry box shows is that the contents are an illusion. And this motivates the viewer to seek and infer a true meaning.

Thus, the difference between the source text and target text is in how they exercise the viewer's power of inference. With the source text, the viewer recognizes the need to look beyond the surface of phrases such as “it cannot be an exchange” from prior knowledge of genre convention, historical context, or narrative context. Meanwhile, the presence of the quotation marks in the target text prompt the viewer not to use their knowledge of spy film genre conventions, etc., but to make quick, snap inferences about the characters' intentions from ambiguous orthographic signs. In other words, the quotation marks create a mystery for viewers to puzzle over. This mode of inference is not available to the source text viewer.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

Like all interlingual film subtitling, Matsuura Mina's subtitles for *Bridge of Spies* relies on explicitation as a way of guiding the viewer through the complex narrative.

Moreover, this explicitation provides viewers with the translator's interpretation of the source text, thus eliminating the opportunity for viewers to use their own powers of inference to interpret the text themselves. In other words, Matsuura's explicitation strategies result in loss of poeticness.

Nevertheless, some of Matsuura's other strategic choices actually generate opportunities for target text viewers to experience and interpret the text in ways the source text cannot. In using orthographic enhancements, specifically Western-style quotation marks, Matsuura's subtitles produce what Yanabu calls a "jewelry box effect." Originally, Yanabu intended the jewelry box effect to refer to neologism imported from foreign cultures that had no meaning to Japanese readers but still seemed to have importance. Likewise, in the case of Matsuura's subtitles, the quotation marks signal to the viewer that the contents bear thematic significance or multilayered meaning; and they do so without revealing that thematic significance or meaning to the viewer. Thus, this strategy prompts viewers to search for thematic or ironic meaning behind the subtitles. But the inferential paths to the conclusions deviate from the path of the source text viewer. In this sense, Matsuura's subtitles generate new opportunities for target text viewers to draw inferences in ways source text viewers cannot, thus bringing about what Nord calls "qualitative growth."

## 7 Referential Chunks in *The Post*

Matsuura Mina's use of quotation marks in her Japanese subtitles for the *Bridge of Spies* demonstrates how subtitles can create a jewelry box effect, inciting the interpretive process in the viewer. The jewelry box effect is a semantic package for the viewer, but the contents (meaning) of the package are unclear—and thus open to interpretation. This effect is not present in the source text. As a result, the interpretive process has a different basis for source text and target text viewers.

In a similar fashion, Matsuura makes unconventional use of quotation marks in her subtitles for the 2017 film *The Post*. Like *Bridge of Spies*, *The Post* is a story of secrecy and negotiation. The film details the 1971 episode in which the Washington Post debates whether to publish articles based on the contents of illegally acquired secret government documents about the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Matsuura's subtitles uses quotations marks frequently throughout the film to serve a variety of functions, some straightforward and others more sophisticated. Not unlike her subtitles for *Bridge of Spies*, the quotation marks for this film often create a semantic package for the viewer. But those packages are not always jewelry boxes. They serve other purposes as well.

This chapter discusses the major functions of quotation marks in the Japanese subtitles for *The Post* and argues that these orthographic enhancements are used to package ideas into both open-ended jewelry boxes and narrowly-defined **referential chunks**. Here, a referential chunk refers to a short but semantically-dense expression that directs the audience to an intratextual or extratextual reference that enhances the meaning of said expression. Both of these strategies displace the inferential reasoning paths for target text viewers, thus generating Nordian growth.

## 7.2 Jewelry Boxes in *The Post*

Matsuura uses quotation marks for both conventional and unconventional functions in *The Post*. For example, for more conventional purposes, she uses them to indicate indirect speech throughout the film. As *The Post* revolves around newspaper reporting, the characters frequently refer to and quote reported speech. Early in the film Daniel Ellsberg, the man who steals the Pentagon Papers and makes them available to the press, reads aloud passages from the documents in voice-over during a montage sequence. The subtitles for the passages he reads are all in quotation marks. Instances like these arise frequently in the film, and Matsuura handles them in a similar fashion each time.

Conversely, Matsuura also deploys quotation marks for a variety of less conventional purposes. In handful of cases, she uses them to generate a jewelry box effect just as in *Bridge of Spies*. As in *Bridge of Spies*, quotation marks sometimes highlight particular subtitles as a signal to the viewer that they contain a motif. In one brief exchange towards the end of the film, Katharine Graham (Meryl Streep), owner of the Washington Post, argues with Post board member Arthur Parsons (Bradley Whitford) about the legacy of the newspaper, which was once owned by Graham's father and then her husband after her father's death. Parsons urges her to reconsider publishing secret documents because "the legacy of the company is at stake." The subtitles use quotation marks to highlight "legacy": 会社の“遺産” [*kaisha no "isan"* / "legacy" of the company]. Graham retorts that the company has been a part of her life for a long time, and she does not need a "lecture on legacy." The subtitles once again make use of quotation marks: 今さら“遺産”の話は結構よ [*imasara "isan" no hanashi wa kekkō yo* / No need for the talk about "legacy" at this point]. As with the use of quotation marks in the subtitles for the "one, one, one" motif in *Bridge of Spies*, the use of quotation marks for *isan* (legacy) indicates a mini-motif for the viewer. It

cues the viewer to take special notice of the term *isan* and track its usage during the scene.

Another use of quotation marks in *The Post* is to indicate a character is speaking in officialese. As with the “act of war” dialogue in *Bridge of Spies*, characters in *The Post* sometimes speak for the official positions held by the government or other official bodies. Specifically, in the same scene as above, Fritz Beebe (Tracy Letts), chairman of the Washington Post, insists that the legal repercussions of publishing the secret documents—a prison sentence for Graham—would qualify as a “catastrophic event” for the newspaper, referring to a term in the in the Post’s prospectus to its investors, which states that the issuance of stock would be canceled if such an event occurred. The subtitles for Beebe’s dialogue read 起訴は“非常事態”の条件を満たすそうだ [Kiso wa “hijō jitai” no jōken o mitasu sō da / An indictment would apparently qualify as a “catastrophic” condition]. Similar to Schischkin’s term “act of war” in *Bridge of Spies*, Beebe is speaking in officialese. He is referencing the official language of a contract (“catastrophic event”) between the Post and its investors. And as with Schischkin’s term, the subtitles utilize quotation marks to indicate to the viewer that Fritz is speaking about an official position rather than a personal view and to intimate that this official position can have a serious impact on the characters.

In the above examples, quotation marks serve as jewelry boxes: they prompt viewers to search for a theme or an underlying implication to the expression contained in the quotation marks, but those meanings are left implicit and open to interpretation. Matsuura merely indicates that something more meaningful can be found, but what is found is open to interpretation.

### 7.3 Referential Chunks in *The Post*

In addition to the above functions, the quotation marks in the subtitles of *The Post*, serve a purpose not seen in *Bridge of Spies*. Matsuura deploys quotation marks in order

to package sophisticated ideas into what can be called referential chunks. The term **chunk** comes from cognitive psychology and refers to various information elements organized into a coherent, meaningful whole in order to facilitate memorization. Likewise, the term **chunking** refers to the process of organizing separate information into a whole. For example, if asked to memorize a list of animals, we may organize those animals into discrete categories (e.g., farm animals, wild animals, pets, etc.) in order to remember them better. George Miller, one of the founders of cognitive psychology, coined the term chunking, and originally it was used to theorize about human capacity for short-term memory. Miller pointed out that chunking allows people to lessen the cognitive load necessary to commit separate items to memory.

Translation studies has adopted the term chunking but uses in a slightly different way that adopts the perspective of the translator rather than the receiver (as is the case in cognitive psychology). In a translational context, chunking refers to categorizing a single cognitive unit not in order to memorize it but to convey the unit's meaning in translation. A cognitive unit or **translation unit** is language that conveys a whole unit of meaning, which can be defined in a variety of ways. Although there is considerable debate about what constitutes a translation unit (some would argue only a full clause should be considered a translation unit), given the condensed nature of audiovisual translation, for the purposes of this chapter a translation unit will be a single word or phrase.

For audiovisual translators, chunking up and chunking down are common strategies to deal with culture-specific references (CSRs); **chunking up** refers to replacing a CSR in the source text with a more general category in the target text (also known as **generalization**, see Chapter Five), while **chunking down** refers to replacing a general reference with a more specific item in the target text (Chiaro 2009: 157). For example, translating the Japanese word *yōgashi* (Western candy) as M&Ms would be chunking down. Thus, in audiovisual translation, the concept of chunking deals with

fitting cognitive units into categories and exploiting those categories to convey references unfamiliar to target text viewers. Thus, the point of chunking is not to facilitate one's own memorization of disparate facts (the way George Miller proposed), rather its function is to help target text audiences quickly grasp a sense of the source text's denotative meaning.

In this chapter, however, chunking refers to packaging CSRs containing information pertinent to the narrative into a single unit to convey to the receiver. Specifically, Matsuura uses quotation marks to bundle intratextual and extratextual references rich with meaning as a means to generate poeticness. These bundles can be called "chunks" and they prompt the audience to search for connotative meaning behind the denotative meaning of the expression displayed in the subtitles.

This strategy differs from the aforementioned jewelry box effect in two major ways. For one, the jewelry box effect packages an expression that has no established meaning and is therefore open to interpretation. Conversely, referential chunking packs the expression with established meaning borrowed from another text, or, at least, another part of the source text. Moreover, whereas the jewelry box effect prompts more divergent inferential reasoning, with multiple interpretations available to the viewer, referential chunking induces more convergent inferential reasoning that leads the viewer to a specific interpretation.

In *The Post*, Matsuura's referential chunks lead viewers to intratextual and extratextual referents. An example can be found in her use of quotation marks in her subtitles of the aforementioned secret documents stolen from the government, known as the Pentagon Papers. These documents reside at the center of the story and are mentioned throughout the film. Matsuura's quotation marks lead viewers to both intratextual and paratextual references.

The first reference to the Papers in the film is a close-up shot of a New York Times headline that reads "Key Texts from Pentagon's Vietnam Study." A subtitle is

presented during this close-up that reads: ベトナム調査文書 [*Betonamu chōsa bunsho* / Vietnam Study Documents]. There are no quotation marks in this subtitle. The Pentagon Papers are subsequently discussed by several characters following the headline shot, but the references to the Papers are sometimes implicit. In the same scene, Washington Post editorial writer Meg Greenfield (Carrie Coon) refers to the papers as “the study.” Later in the scene, executive editor Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks) commands his reporters to “Find those pages!” Several scenes later, journalist Ben Bagdikian (Bob Odenkirk) refers to “the McNamara study” in a telephone conversation. For each of these lines of dialogue, the subtitles use the expression “文書” [*bunsho* / document] with quotation marks. For example, Bradlee’s line “Find those pages!” is translated as “文書” を入手しろ [*bunsho o nyūshu shiro* / Get those documents].

Notably, Matsuura deploys quotation marks around *bunsho* inconsistently. In a scene soon after the headline close-up, Bradlee listens to a news program on the radio which mentions “the study” with the subtitles reading この調査文書 [*kono chōsa bunsho* / these research documents] without quotation marks. Furthermore, a later scene features nondiegetic excerpts from the actual Nixon tapes, where President Richard Nixon is consulting with advisors and divulges that he wants to prosecute the people who gave “it” (the study) to the newspapers. Once again, in this case, the subtitles use the term *bunsho* without quotation marks, making the somewhat cryptic “it” explicit.

This irregular usage suggests that the quotation marks accompanying the term *bunsho* has a two-fold purpose: it ties dialogue to an intratextual referent and it keys the viewer to an extratextual reference. For the former, Matsuura’s use of quotation marks connects *bunsho* to a previous reference to the term within the film. All of the above examples appear within approximately ten minutes of the first mention of the Pentagon Papers (which is also the first appearance of *bunsho* in a subtitle) seen in the

New York Times headline. The strategy thus directs viewers to make anaphoric inferences (connecting a person or object in one sentence to a person or object in another sentence in the same text). The quotation marks cue the viewer to read the subsequent usage of *bunsho* as specifically referring to the *Betonamu chōsa bunsho* from the New York Times headline subtitle.

The use of the term *bunsho* results in functional equivalence and implicitation in the target text, even as the quotation marks are an explicitation. When Greenfield and Bradlee knowingly refers to “the study” and “those papers” respectively, the subtitles mimic the general opaqueness with the term *bunsho*. But when Bagdikian explicitly says the “the McNamara study” in a later scene, the subtitles actually make the reference more implicit by translating it as nothing more than *bunsho*. Thus, the first two subtitles are functional equivalents that capture the slight ambiguity of the source text, while the last instance is an **implicitation** (a strategy where an explicit statement in the source text is turned into an implicit statement in the target text).

However, while the use of the expression *bunsho* in the last instance is an implication, the use of quotation marks surrounding the term has a separate effect. The highlighting of *bunsho* here cues the viewer to not only infer a referent, but also to call upon extratextual knowledge, especially from paratextual materials. The term *bunsho* arises in several paratextual sites the viewer is either guaranteed or likely to encounter. The most obvious of these is the Japanese title for the film: ペンタゴン・ペーパーズ／最高機密文書 [*Pentagon pēpāzu/Saikō kimitsu bunsho* / *Pentagon Papers/Top Secret Documents*]. Another site is in the film summary on the Japanese DVD box cover which clearly states the nature of the *bunsho*. The summary explains, “The Pentagon produced documents objectively investigating and analyzing the Vietnam War...One day, those documents were leaked” (my translation).

This paratextual commentary provides a basis of knowledge for making inferences when prompted by the quotation marks. This contrasts with a jewelry box

effect, where a key point to the film is packaged by the surrounding quotation marks containing a key term. In a jewelry box, the contents of the key term are ill-defined, but in the case of *bunsho*, the term is clearly defined within the film as well as the paratextual materials. Thus, the term *bunsho* is frequently packaged in a referential chunk that prompts convergent inferential reasoning similar to the convergent inference prompted by the repeated use of expression like “the study” in the source text. The difference is the referent is defined by the expression itself in the source text, but in the target text, the quotation marks define the referent and thus the expression.

In other cases, Matsuura dispatches quotation marks to direct viewers not to a specific intratextual or extratextual referent, but to a general narrative pattern. For example, about midway through the film, journalist Ben Bagdikian meets the source of the leaked documents, Daniel Ellsberg, in a motel room and discusses the contents. Ellsberg explains that all the previous U.S. presidents, including Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, knew the war would be unwinnable for the U.S. but pursued it anyway. Bagdikian asks about Nixon, the current president. Ellsberg claims Nixon is simply continuing the war for the sake of his own reputation, saying he is “too afraid to be the one who loses the war on his watch.” The subtitles read: “戦争に負けた大統領”になるのを恐れて [“*Sensō ni maketa daitōryō*” ni naru no o osorete / afraid to become “the president who lost the war”]. The quotation marks package Ellsberg’s assertion into a single narratively dense referential chunk. Their presence leads viewers to a tangential narrative, which they construct in their own minds. In this narrative, Nixon would be labeled as “sensō ni maketa daitōryō” or “the president who lost the war” and his presidency would be seen as a failure in the minds of the general public—an idea which would itself become a cognitive chunk, easy for the public to digest, remember, and disseminate. The target text viewer may imagine the American news media calling Nixon “the president who lost the war;” this idea entering the consciousness of the American public; and the public then adopting this label and constructing an

unfavorable image of his presidential legacy, solidifying his reputation as a failure. In this way, the quotation marks pack an entire narrative into this single chunk. However, unlike the other examples in this chapter, they do not lead viewers to a specific referent. Rather, they lead viewers to a tangential narrative, where a public figure's reputation depends on a single major decision.

While this appears to engender more divergent, creative thinking, it actually leads viewers to a single well-defined conclusion. The quotation marks do prompt the viewer to construct a tangential narrative about President Nixon. The entire narrative is an elaborative inference that explains the motives of the key figures involved in the controversy. But this narrative converges on a singular answer to the question why the Vietnam War was continued after decision-makers had realized it was unwinnable. The quotation marks lead the viewer to a familiar narrative template. If the template were not familiar, Matsuura could not rely on quotation marks. She could not package the idea into a chunk.

Both the source text and target text lead the viewer to infer a firm conclusion. The inferential process is similar for both, but the foundation is different. In the source text, the viewer is prompted by phrasing (“...to be the one...”), while in the subtitles, the viewer is prompted by the visual cue of the quotation marks. Plus, it is questionable whether a phrase like “to be the one” pushes viewers to build a whole tangential narrative. It is true that this expression is used to package ideas in a sentence, but its function here is mostly to illustrate a point about a long line of leaders unwilling to do the right thing. The quotation marks in the target text, on the other hand, are more fertile. They raise questions: who is saying this? why? etc.; and the answers engender a whole tangential narrative. Thus, even while the conclusions drawn are the same, the process of reaching those conclusion progress along separate paths.

Finally, Matsuura's referential chunks also provide textual density in more conventional ways. In one instance, she uses a Japanese idiom to condense and enrich

the target text at the same time in a scene where no equivalent idiom is present in the source text. After Bagdikian acquires the Pentagon Papers from Ellsberg, he brings them in boxes to Bradlee and the rest of the Washington Post staff to pore over and find material for news articles. The boxes contain over 4000 pages of unnumbered documents in complete disarray. Realizing this, the six-person staff grumbles that they have too little time to research the documents and prepare articles for publication. Bradlee scolds them for taking the opportunity for granted. The dialogue and Hanks's performance makes his reaction to his staff clear. With a hint of exasperation, he tells his staff, "Hey, hey, for the last six years we've been playing catch-up and now...we have the goods. We don't have any competition." For these lines, the subtitles make the situation slightly more explicit: 6年間一番手を目指してきた...最高のネタが手に入った。競争相手はいない [6-nenkan ichibante o mezashitekita...saikō no neta ga te ni haitta. kyōsō aite wa inai / For six years we've been aiming to be first...we've got the top story. There are no competitors]. Both source text and target text use this dialogue to provide context to the situation and summarize the background story hinted at throughout the film. The Washington Post is a small newspaper striving to compete with the major American newspapers, like the New York Times. But the New York Times has been beating the Post to the story for the last six years.

But it is the next subtitle that captures Bradlee's feelings in this scene. In the next line of dialogue, Bradlee points out that "There's dozens of stories in here." The subtitle reads: "宝の山"だ ["takara no yama" da / it's a "mountain of treasure"]. Here, Matsuura replaces the literal language of the source text with figurative language that enriches the subtitles. The idiom *takara no yama* encapsulates Bradlee's response to his staff's complaints succinctly. The expression comes from an abbreviation of a Buddhist proverb: 宝の山に入りながら手を空しくして帰る [Takara no yama ni irinagara te o munashiku shite kaeru] which means to go home empty-handed despite a mountain of treasure. Not unlike the above example about label President Nixon as

the one who lost the war, this subtitle and its quotation marks packs in a lot of content for the viewer. Whereas the expression *takara no yama* by itself is an expression as straightforward as the English expression “treasure trove,” the quotation marks lead the viewer to recalibrate their understanding and search for a deeper significance. Left unhighlighted, the viewer could read the subtitle as a simple statement of fact as straightforward as the source text dialogue: “there’s dozens of stories in here.” But the presence of quotation marks prompts the viewer to refer to prior knowledge of Buddhist proverbs and infer the regret Bradlee is trying to convey. While a reading Bradlee’s feelings is perhaps open to multiple plausible interpretations, the intertextual reference to Buddhist proverbs requires more convergent thinking.

Replacing literal language with richer figurative language is not an uncommon translation technique. In the above example, it is the expression itself that packs in considerable meaning. However, using quotation marks as a signaling device is an unusual technique specifically suited to audiovisual subtitling. It encourages viewers to think quickly, to observe the fact that the text is highlighted, recognize the intertextual reference, and infer a connection between the reference and the situation currently on screen. It is true that the source text does the same thing. This film abounds with intertextual references in the dialogue that pack in considerable meaning for the viewer. And viewers follow a similar inferential reasoning routine: observing the reference and inferring a connection to another text. Nevertheless, target text viewers do follow a slightly different path. In this case, that path begins with visual cues rather than verbal cues and sends to viewer to an ancient Asian text for meaning rather than a contemporary American one.

Matsuura creates these referential chunks and uses them to similar effect throughout the film. When Bradlee argues that publishing the Pentagon Papers is a matter of “freedom of the press,” the subtitles read “報道の自由”の問題だ [*hōdō no jiyū no mondai da* / It’s a matter of “freedom of the press”]. Also, when Post reporter

Howard Simons (David Cross) states, “I think Jefferson just rolled over in his grave,” the subtitles read “建国の父たち”が驚く [“*Kenkoku no chichitachi*” *ga odoroku* / “The founding fathers of the country” are surprised]. Both examples package an intricate idea into a coherent whole through referencing a common socio-political or historical concept. The quotation marks mimic the elevated rhetoric of the source text dialogue. Throughout the source text, characters eschew hard-nosed pragmatism in favor of patriotic idealism as in the quotes above. The subtitles highlight this idealism. The colorful reference to Jefferson in the source text is explicitly chunked up as it were to the entire group of founding fathers erasing the synecdoche of the original as well as its vivid, although trite, imagery. But the high-minded idealism is retained and packaged for the target text viewer to find.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

While Matsuura uses quotation marks in *The Post* for a variety of purposes, the most original and significant is to package subtitles into referential chunks. These referential chunks condense meaning by leading viewers to meaningful referents be they intertextual, intratextual, or paratextual. Source text viewers make similar inferences, too, but the path leading them to the referent is different. For source text viewers, the language of the dialogue guides them to the referent; while on the other hand, it is the presence of quotation marks that lead the target text viewer to the referent. And, as in the example about Nixon’s reputation, sometimes the inferential path of the target text can be even more generative than the source text.

Moreover, some referential chunks import new intertextual meanings into the interpretational process for target text viewers. Some quotation marks in the subtitles direct source text viewers to references to Buddhist scripture. The intertextual reference fills in the packaging of the quotation marks in the ostensibly simple subtitles with meaning that encapsulates the situation or emotions of the characters. In the

source text, the situation and emotions of the characters is captured in dialogue and performance, but in the target text they are captured through intertextual references not readily available to the source text viewer. Such intertextual references also create a new blend of meanings incorporating American socio-political history with Asian socio-religious history. These new blends are what Christiane Nord refers to as qualitative growth.

## 8 Conclusion

When fans criticized Toda Natsuko's subtitles for *The Lord of the Rings*, they were concerned about inaccurate story information. According to them, the information conveyed in the subtitles failed to match the information from the film's dialogue. But the problem for them was greater than a few snippets of misinterpreted dialogue. Toda lacked knowledge of the world Tolkien had built. She was not an expert; in fact, she had never even read the novels that built that world. How could she help them reconstruct Tolkien's world in their own imaginations?

These fans may have had a point. On the one hand, a handful of loose translations of source text dialogue is trivial for even a fan. However, if the goal of viewing the films is to take part in a Jenkinsian world-building process, then faithful translations are necessary. When translations deviate from the source text, narrative coherence breaks down. This narrative coherence depends on story information from a variety of narrative sources being assembled piecemeal like a puzzle. If one of the pieces does not fit, the puzzle is no longer a complete whole. The fans apparently felt someone so disengaged in Tolkien's world as Toda could not or did not render a translation that maintained the narrative coherence they wanted.

Critiques of audiovisual translation like the one above assumes what researchers in reading cognition refer to as a **literal stance**, where readers reconstruct a story in their mind using prior knowledge to create a coherent representation of the situation in the text. The emphasis in a literal stance is on building a coherent state of affairs. This is important to not only a basic understanding of a story, but also the construction of a fictional world in the minds of the audience. If a translation conveys story information that does not match the source text story information, the coherence of the fictional world may be compromised.

## 8 Conclusion

But this is only one way in which audiences enjoy stories. An audience may also adopt an **interpretive stance**, where viewers look beyond the surface of the text and probe for implicit meaning. The opportunities a text provides to a viewer to look beyond the surface and exercise her powers of inference can be called the text's "poeticness." If a translation does not replicate these sites of inference, the poeticness of the source text is lost. But a loss of story information and a loss of poeticness are two different things. This can be seen in Tachibana's critique of Toda's subtitles for *Apocalypse Now*, where Toda rendered the cryptic source text dialogue "Terminate the Colonel's command" as *Kare o ansatsu seyo* ("Assassinate him") in Japanese. Tachibana was concerned about the lack of subtlety in the subtitles, and he has a point. Toda's explicitation eliminates the poeticness of the source text: the target text viewer no longer has the opportunity to use her powers of inference to decode the implicit message in the sentence "Terminate the Colonel's command." Moreover, this line also brims over with thematic resonance as well, as Tachibana's critique hints at. One of the major motifs of the film is the hypocrisy of the U.S. military establishment. As assassination target Colonel Kurtz points out, "We train young men to drop fire on people, but their commanders won't allow them to write 'fuck' on their airplanes because it's obscene." But it bears mentioning this is only my interpretation of the line. By eliminating the poeticness of the above dialogue, Toda is relieving the viewer of the opportunity to not only decode the encoded language, but also to recognize its thematic importance and connect it to other parts of the film to infer a message behind the narrative. Put in the terms of cognitive psychology, the viewer cannot engage in convergent inferential thinking to ascertain the meaning of a cryptic line of dialogue, nor can she engage in divergent inferential thinking to interpret an underlying thematic implication to this dialogue and an overall message behind the film.

In summary, criticism of film subtitling splits into two avenues: the failure to deliver accurate story information and the failure to reproduce the poeticness found in

## 8 Conclusion

the source text. But such criticisms are simplistic. For one thing, a film does not merely deliver information; it directs the viewer's attention to information. Likewise, a film does not deliver poeticness; it directs the viewer's inferential reasoning. As such, subtitles, insofar as they are part of the meaning-making process, do not merely deliver information or poeticness; they direct the viewer's attention and inferential reasoning. In this dissertation, I have argued that the former is an ironically conservative view of translation that unrealistically reduces the role of the translator to a conduit to the narrative truth of the source text, either factual truth or emotional truth. Conversely, the latter concern is one that views the translator as an empowered figure, imbued with the authority to interpret the source text for the audience.

But this dissertation argues that assumptions about interlingual audiovisual subtitling necessarily offering little more than a corrupted version of the source text are unfounded. In actuality, film subtitling can make the source text grow. One way it makes the source text grow is by directing viewer inference through displaced poeticness—where a translation shifts the opportunity for a target text audience to exercise inferential reasoning from its original position in the source text to a new position in the target text, allowing for a reasoning routine that deviates from the reasoning routine of the source text audience. The new reasoning routine prompted by the target text engenders a new way of interpreting and appreciating the source text, one that could only exist in translation. In *There Will Be Blood*, the very fact that the subtitles need to be condensed leads the target text viewer to draw from a broader base of background knowledge that includes both source culture and target culture to make inferences. In *Bridge of Spies*, the jewelry box effect prompts viewers to make inferences in ways the source text viewer cannot. And in *The Post*, turning subtitles into referential chunks adds a new richness to the text that is unavailable to the source text viewer.

## 8 Conclusion

The idea of displaced poeticness can be tested empirically. Future research could look into how viewers watching subtitled films use inferential reasoning while engaging with the text. A study similar to the reading comprehension think-aloud studies of Graves and Frederiksen (see Chapter 2) could add insight into the way viewers handle the displaced poeticness of the target text. Test participants could be divided into two groups: one group fluent in the language of the source text watching an unsubtitled version of a film clip, and another group not proficient in the source text language watching a subtitled version. The two groups could engage in a think-aloud activity in which they orally verbalize thoughts occurring to them as they watch the clip. The output of the two groups could be compared.

Another question that can be asked is: how is inferential reasoning affected by language pairing? This dissertation has focused on Japanese subtitles of English-language content because the languages pose special challenges to the aims of literal translation or formal equivalence. Thus, audiovisual translations tend to stray from the source text. But what happens when working with similar languages? A think-aloud study could be conducted where participants are given subtitled content with similar language pairings, and another set of participants are given subtitled content with highly-contrasting language pairings. This and similar experiments could offer insight into the modes of reasoning viewers use to understand and enjoy audiovisual content.

But the goal for the present dissertation is to elucidate a broader claim about subtitling: when written translation and audiovisual media meet, the result is an amalgamated negotiation between language and image, author and interpreter, and interpreter and audience. In other words, the power to direct the audience's attention and thinking traverses a winding path between language and image, author and interpreter, and interpreter and the audience themselves. It would be difficult to give exact answers as to where this power lies at anything other than a micro-level (via the

## 8 Conclusion

kind of cognitive research mentioned above). But at a macro-level, it is in a constant state of negotiation.

## Appendix

**Figure 1:** Using a scene from *There Will Be Blood* (2007), Smith’s study on the DIEM Project illustrates how viewer gaze is primarily controlled exogenously. The circles indicate where and for how long viewers are looking. Notably, gazes cluster around one character’s face, suggesting viewers have a high degree of *attentional synchrony* and thus a low degree of control by viewers.



**Figure 2:** A simple hand gesture by Plainview provides the climax for the scene and summarizes the main character of the film. “Daniel’s characteristic blend of bluff assurance, friendliness, and aggressiveness are packed into this single gesture.” However, the simultaneous appearance of the subtitle re-directs viewer attention.



**Figure 3a:** Eye-tracking research (Künzli & Ehrensberger-Dow 2011) has tested if viewers can manage the cognitive load of reading both subtitles and surtitles while also attending to image information.

(a) subtitle condition

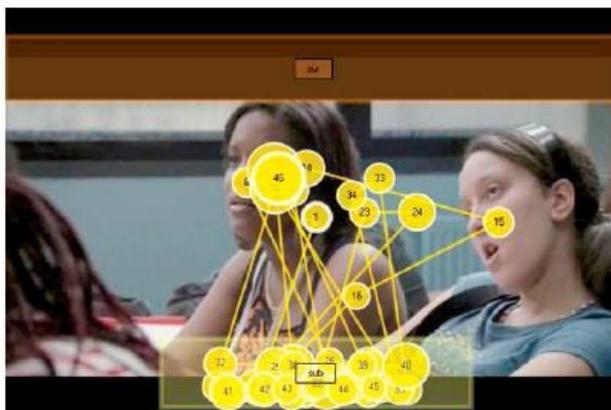


(b) surtitle condition

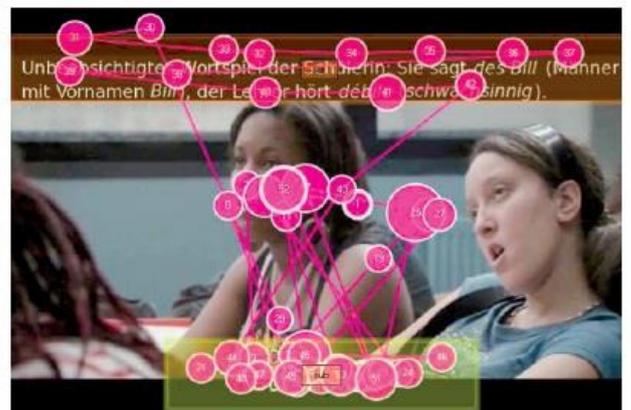


**Figure 3b:** Research results (Künzli & Ehrensberger-Dow 2011) suggest viewers can read both subtitles and surtitles and still have time to engage with image information. Larger circles indicate longer eye fixations.

(a) subtitle condition (participant a22)



(b) surtitle condition (participant b21)



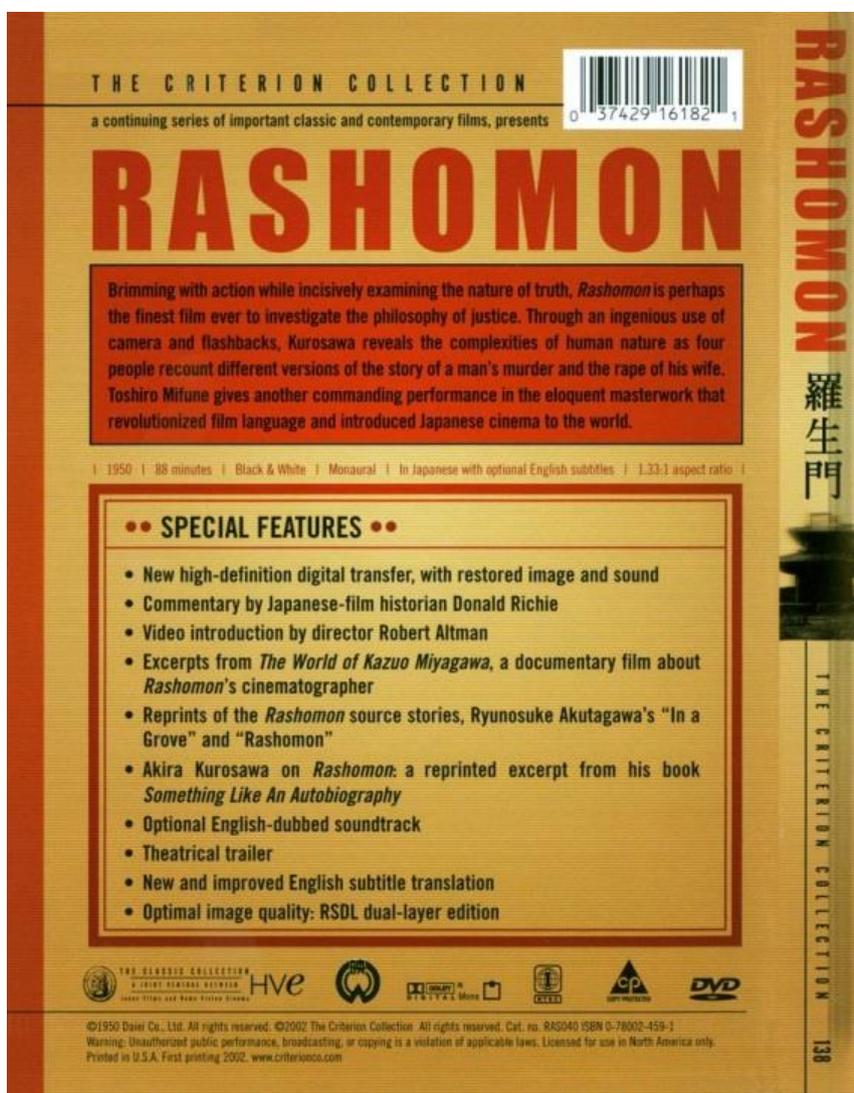
**Figure 4a:** The DVD box set for the Harry Potter series. Back cover displays credit for translator for the Japanese subtitled and dubbed versions (see **Fig. 1b**).



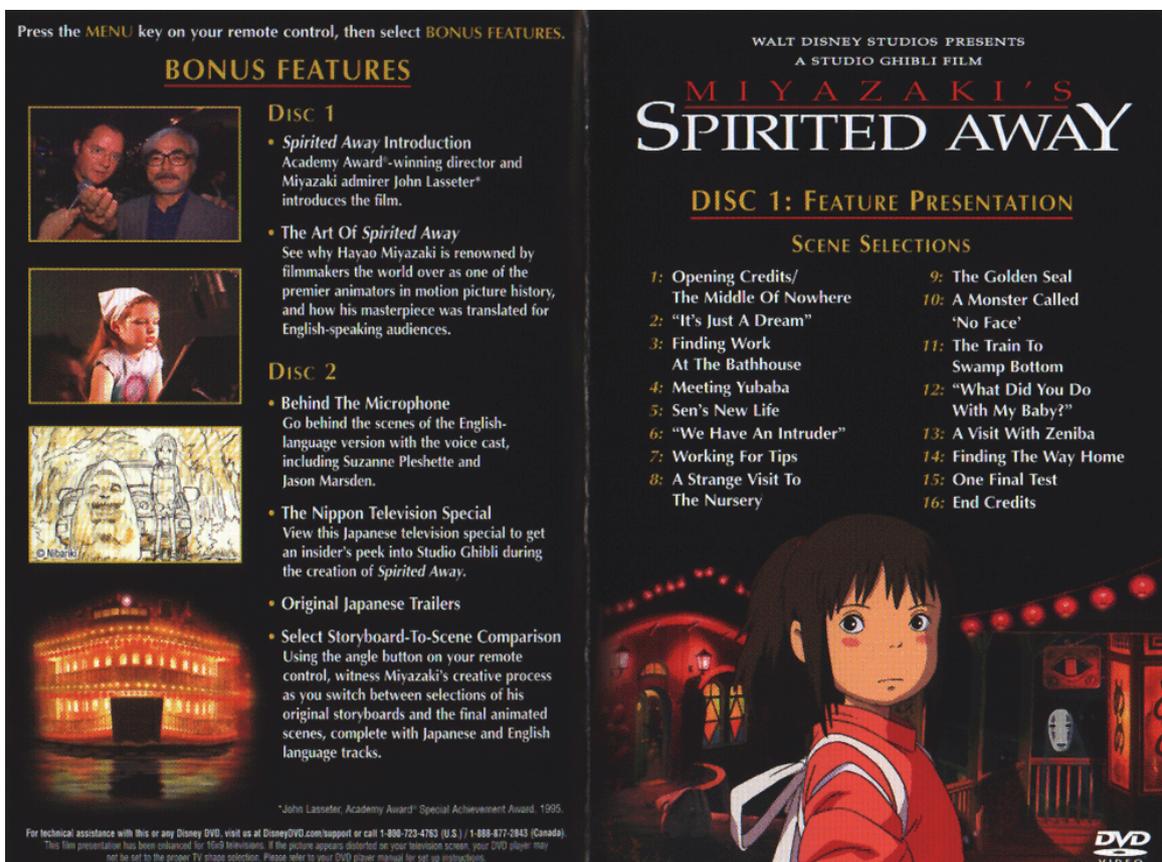
**Figure 4b:** Left-hand side of Harry Potter DVD Box cover (back): 字幕・吹替翻訳・・・岸田恵子 [Subtitle and Dubbing Translation: Kishida Keiko].



**Figure 5:** The DVD box cover for the Kurosawa Akira classic, *Rashomon* (1950), lists “New and improved English subtitle translation” as one of the disc’s bonus features, however, it lists no credit for the translator keeping him or her anonymous.



**Figure 6:** The DVD box of Miyazaki Hayao’s *Spirited Away* (2001) lists a bonus feature called, “Behind the Microphone,” that introduces the cast of established American actors performing for the English dubbed version.



**Figure 7:** In episode 100 of *Detective Conan*, entitled *Hatsukoi no hito omoide jiken* [The Memories of First Love Case], surtitles are used to explain a culturally-specific reference. The subtitles were produced by a fansubber called “Rika.”



**Figure 8:** Surtitles are also used in a fansubbed version of episode 48, entitled *Gaikōkan satsujin jiken* [Diplomat Murder Case].



**Figure 9a:** Matsuura Mina uses quotation marks to establish a motif visually in her Japanese subtitles for *Bridge of Spies* (2015). See also **Fig. 6b** and **Fig. 6c**.



**Figure 9b:** A later scene helps establish the motif.



**Figure 9c:** A scene at the end of the film confirms the motif.





# Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> All English translations in square brackets are by the author of this dissertation. This includes back-translations and titles of movies, books, magazines, etc.

<sup>2</sup> All Japanese names in this dissertation are given in Japanese name order (surname, given name).

<sup>3</sup> Actually, Toda inaccurately recalls the line as “Terminate the Colonel with extreme prejudice” in her autobiographical account in *Jimaku no naka no jinsei*. Nevertheless, the point remains that she was criticized for her translation.

<sup>4</sup> One notable exception is the Norwegian Association of Audiovisual Translators with approximately 140 members.

<sup>5</sup> This does not hold true for static images, however (ibid).

<sup>6</sup> Subtitles constitute a fourth channel in A/V texts, according to Gottlieb.

<sup>7</sup> David Bordwell argues that a notion of a cinematic narrator adds little to the discussion, and it is enough to say a disparity between sound and image arises without lending it artificial agency (2008:129).

<sup>8</sup> For this dissertation, Chatman’s “track” can be thought of as interchangeable with Gottlieb’s “channel.”

<sup>9</sup> Japanese title: 映画字幕は翻訳ではない [Eiga jimaku wa honyaku dewanai]

<sup>10</sup> Shibata, a former professor of American literature and literary translation at the University of Tokyo, has translated over one hundred literary works from a wide variety of authors from English into Japanese. He also founded the literary journal *Monkey Business*, which introduces modern American literature into Japan. Yanase’s translation of Finnegans Wake has won praise for its inventiveness.

<sup>11</sup> Toda Natsuko was a regular guest on the program, which broadcast on NHK from

---

2003 to 2009. Toda also appeared on other NHK programs, including *Shinema nabigēshon* (2003 to 2004), and she has appeared on programs on other television networks as well, such as *Sawako no asa* (TBS 2014), *Matsuko no shiranai sekai* (TBS 2015), and *Daun taun nao* (Fuji TV 2016).

12

The actually line is “Terminate the Colonel’s command.” The line is said by Colonel Lucas (Harrison Ford) to Captain Willard (Martin Sheen) followed moments later by “Terminate with extreme prejudice” said by Jerry, a civilian (Jerry Ziesmer). See Endnote 3.

13

Given the nature of fansubbing and its flouting of copyright laws, fansub creators and distributors often use pseudonyms.

14

Yanabu’s term *kasetto* comes from the expression “cassette,” French for jewelry box.

15

Although some target text viewers may be familiar with the English equivalent or may understand the reference from having read the Philip Roth novel, the subtitle in the film does not depend on that extratextual knowledge for its offer of information.

# Works Cited

## Print

Anderson, Joseph L. and Donald Richie. *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1982.

Antonini, Rachele. "The Perception of Subtitled Humour in Italy: An Empirical Study."

*Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 18.2 (2005): 209-225.

Antonini, Rachel. "SAT, BLT, Spirit Biscuits, and the Third Amendment: What Italians Make of Cultural References in Dubbed Texts." *Doubts and Directions in Translation Studies: Selected Contributions from the EST Congress, Lisbon 2004*, Eds. Yves Gambier, Miriam Shlesinger, and Radegundis Stolze. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007. 153-167.

Batchelor, Kathryn. *Translation and Paratexts*. Routledge, 2018.

Beatty, Jackson. "Task-Evoked Pupillary Responses, Processing Load, and the Structure of Processing Resources." *Psychological Bulletin* 91 (1982): 276-292.

Bilodeau, Isabelle. "Bending Conventions: Agency and Self-portrayals in Japanese Translator Commentary." *Japan Forum* 31.1 (2019): 64-85.

Bisson, Marie-Josée, Walter J.B. Van Heuven, Kathy Conklin, Richard J. Tunney. "Processing of Native and Foreign Language Subtitles in Films: An Eye Tracking Study." *Applied Psycholinguistics* (2012): 1-20.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. "Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation."

## Works Cited

- Interlingual and Intercultural Communication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies*. Eds. Julian House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1986. 17-35.
- Bordwell, David. *Poetics of Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Bordwell, David. "Hands (and Faces) Across the Table." Weblog post. *Observations on Film Art*. February 13, 2008. Accessed February 12, 2014.
- Bordwell, David. "Watching you Watch *There Will Be Blood*." Weblog post. *Observations on Film Art*. February 14, 2011. Accessed September 12, 2019.
- Caffrey, Colm. 2009. "Relevant abuse? Investigating the Effects of an Abusive Subtitling Procedure on the Perception of TV Anime Using Eye Tracker and Questionnaire." PhD thesis, Dublin City University.
- Carroll, Noël. *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007.
- Chatman, Seymour Benjamin. *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1990.
- Chaume, Frederic. "Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two Disciplines at Stake in Audiovisual Translation." *Translators' Journal* 49.1 (2004): 12-24.
- Chiaro, Delia. "Issues in Audiovisual Translation." *Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*. Ed. Jeremy Munday. New York: Routledge, 2009. 141-165.
- Cook, Anne E. and Sabine Guéraud. "What Have We Been Missing? The Role of General World Knowledge in Discourse Processing." *Discourse Processes* 39 (2005): 365-78.
- Dang, Li. "China's Fansubbing Community: a Jianghu of Underground Heroes— (1) Ten Years' Ups and Downs." *Citizens Media at Manchester*, December 6, 2013. Accessed December 15, 2015. <https://citizenmediamanchester.wordpress.com/2013/12/06/chinas-fansubbing-community-a-jianghu-of-underground-heroes-1-ten-years-ups-and-downs/>

## Works Cited

- Diaz Cintas, Jorge. "Back to the Future in Subtitling." *MuTra 2005-Challenges of Multidimensional Translation: Conference Proceedings*. Eds. Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast and Sandra Nauert, 2005. 16-32.
- Diaz Cintas, Jorge and Pablo Munoz Sanchez. "Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment." *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 6 (2006): 37-52.
- Diaz-Cintas, Jorge, Aline Ramael. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling (Translation Practices Explained)*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 2007.
- Ferrer Simo, Maria Rosario.. "Fansubs y Scanlations: La Inluencia del Aficionado en los Criterios Profesionales." *Puentes* 6 (2005): 27-43.
- Gerrig, Richard J. and William G. Wenzel. "The Role of Inferences in Narrative Experiences." *Inferences During Reading*. Ed. Edward J. O'Brien, Anne E. Cook, Robert F. Lorch, Jr. Cambridge University Press, 2015. 362-385.
- Goldman, Susan R., Kathryn S. McCarthy, and Candice Burkett. "Interpretive Inferences in Literature." *Inferences During Reading*. Ed. Edward J. O'Brien, Anne E. Cook, Robert F. Lorch, Jr. Cambridge University Press, 2015. 386-410.
- Goris, Olivier. "The Question of French Dubbing: Towards a Frame for Systematic Investigation." *Target* 5.2 (1993): 169-190.
- Gottlieb, Henrik. *Subtitles, Translation and Idioms*. University of Copenhagen: Center for Translation Studies and Lexicography, 1997.
- Gottlieb, Henrik. "Texts, Translation and Subtitling - In Theory, and in Denmark". *Translators and Translations*. Eds. Henrik Holmboe and Signe Isager. Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2001. 149-192.
- Gottlieb, Henrik. "Language-Political Implications of Subtitling." *Topics in Audiovisual Translation*. Ed. Pilar Orero. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2004. 83-100

## Works Cited

- Gottlieb, Henrik. "Multidimensional Translation: Semantics turned Semiotics." *Challenges of Multidimensional Translation: Conference Proceedings* (2005): 33-61.
- Ivarsson, Jan and Mary Carroll. *Code of Good Subtitling Practice*. 1998 [Data file].  
retrieved from  
[http://www.esist.org/ESIST%20Subtitling%20code\\_files/Code%20of%20Good%20Subtitling%20Practice\\_en.pdf](http://www.esist.org/ESIST%20Subtitling%20code_files/Code%20of%20Good%20Subtitling%20Practice_en.pdf)
- "Japan Plans Campaign to Curb Manga, Anime Copyright Violations Abroad." *Japan Times*, July 28, 2014. Accessed August 24, 2015.  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/07/28/national/crime-legal/japan-plans-campaign-curb-manga-anime-copyright-violations-abroad/#.Vdrgn3noupp>
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York UP, 2006.
- Jenkins, Henry. "Transmedia Storytelling 101." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan: The Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*, March 22, 2007. Accessed August 24, 2015.  
[http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia\\_storytelling\\_101.html](http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html)
- Kabara, Thomas. "What is Gained in Subtitling: How Film Subtitles Can Expand the Source Text." *Transcultural* 7.1 (2015): 166-179.
- Kaindl, Klaus. "Multimodality and Translation." *Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*. Eds. Carmen Millán and Francesca Bartrina. New York: Routledge, 2013. 257-270.
- Kalinowski, Isabelle. "La vocation au travail de traduction" *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 144 (2002): 47-54, quoted in Isabelle Bilodeau, "Literary Translators as Peritextual Authors: Conventions, Agency, and Image Building in the Writing of Japanese Translator Commentary," PhD thesis, Nagoya University, 2015.

## Works Cited

- Kamiya, Setsuko. "Lost in Translation on Japanese Screens." *Japan Times*, May 9, 2004. Accessed August 24, 2015.  
<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2004/05/09/to-be-sorted/lost-in-translation-on-japanese-screens/#.U5PUqGeKCpo>
- Kumar, Naveen. "TV without Borders." *Vox*, August 21, 2019. Accessed October 31, 2019.  
<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/8/13/20803186/subtitled-tv-netflix-los-e-spookys-made-in-heaven-sacred-games>
- Kunzli, Alexander and Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow. "Innovative Subtitling: A reception Study." *Methods and Strategies of Process Research: Integrative Approaches to Translation Studies*. Eds. Cecilia Alvstad, Adelina Hild, and Elisabet Tiselius. Amsterdam: Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2011. 187-200.
- Lee, Hye Kung. "Cultural Consumers and Copyright: A Case Study of Anime Fansubbing." *Creative Industries Journal* 3.3 (2010): 235-250.
- Lee, Hye Kung. "Participatory Media Fandom: A Case Study of Anime Fansubbing." *Media, Culture & Society* 33.8 (2011): 1131-1147.
- Lee, Tony. "Getting the Words Right." *Daily Yomiuri* (English version), August 3, 2002, 11.
- McCarthy, Kathryn S. and Susan R. Goldman. "Comprehension of Short Stories: Effects of Task Instructions on Literary Interpretation." *Discourse Processes* 52.7 (2015): 585-608.
- Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan, Inc. 2002. *2002-nen (Heisei 14-nen) kōshū 10-oku-en ijō bangumi* [Data file]. Retrieved from [http://www.eiren.org/toukei/img/eiren\\_kosyu/data\\_2002.pdf](http://www.eiren.org/toukei/img/eiren_kosyu/data_2002.pdf)
- Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. London: Routledge, 2001.

## Works Cited

- Natsuko, Toda. *Jimaku no naka no jinsei*. Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1994.
- Nord, Christiane. *Translating as Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997.
- Nord, Christiane. "Making the Source Text Grow: A Plea Against the Idea of Loss in Translation." *The Translator as Author: Perspective on Literary Translation*. Eds. Claudia Buffagni, Beatrice Garzelli, and Serenella Zanotti. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2011. 21-30.
- Nornes, Abé Mark. "For an Abusive Subtitling." *The Translation Studies Reader*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. New York: Routledge, 2004. 447-469.
- Nornes, Abé Mark. *Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Ota, Naoko. 2007. *Jimakuya wa ginmaku no katasumi de nihongo ga hen da to sakebu*. Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2007.
- Pedersen, Jan. "How is Culture Rendered in Subtitles." *MuTra: Challenges of Multidimensional Translation-Saarbrücken 2-6 May 2005*. Eds. Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast and Sandra Nauert. Saarbrücken: Advanced Translation Research Center, Saarland University, 2005. 113-130.
- Perego, Elisa, et al. "The Cognitive Effectiveness of Subtitle Processing." *Media Psychology* 13 (2010): 243-272.
- Perez-Gonzalez, Luis. "Fansubbing Anime: Insights into the 'Butterfly Effect' of Globalisation on Audiovisual Translation." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 14.4 (2006): 260-277.
- Perez-Gonzalez, Luis. "Intervention in New Amateur Subtitling Cultures: A Multimodal Account." *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series – Themes in Translation Studies* 6 (2007): 67-80.
- Perez-Gonzalez, Luis. "Co-Creational Subtitling in the Digital Media: Transformative

## Works Cited

- and Authorial Practices.” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 16.1 (2012): 3-21.
- Pym, Anthony. “The Translator as Non-Author, and I am Sorry about That.” *The Translator as Author: Perspective on Literary Translation*. Eds. Claudia Buffagni, Beatrice Garzelli, and Serenella Zanotti. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2011. 31-44. Print.
- Richie, Donald. *Viewed Sideways: Writings on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan*. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge, 2011.
- Sato-Rossberg, Nana and Judy Wakabayashi. *Translation and Translation Studies in the Japanese Context*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- Shimizu, Shunji. *Eiga jimaku no tsukurikata oshiemasu*. Tokyo: Bunshun Bunko, 1988.
- Shimizu, Shunji. *Eiga jimaku wa honyaku de wa nai*. Eds. Natsuko Toda and Ueno Tamako. Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobo, 1992.
- Smith, Tim and J. Henderson. “Attentional Synchrony in Static and Dynamic Scenes.” *Journal of Vision* 8.6 (2008): 773.
- Smith, Tim. "Watching You Watch There Will Be Blood." Weblog post. *Observations on Film Art*. Ed. David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson. N.p., 14 Feb. 2011. Web. 12 Feb. 2014.
- Takeda, Kayoko. “The Emergence of Translation Studies as a Discipline in Japan.” *Translation and Translation Studies in the Japanese Context*. Eds. Nana Sato-Rossberg and Judy Wakabayashi. London: Continuum Books, 2012. 11-32.
- Tamura, Yoshihiko. *Kinema Junpo* Feb. 1, 1931
- Van den Broek, Paul, Katinka Beker, and Marja Oudega. “Inference Generation in Text Comprehension: Automatic and Strategic Processes in the Construction of a Mental Representation.” *Inferences During Reading*. Ed. Edward J. O’Brien, Anne E. Cook, Robert F. Lorch, Jr. Cambridge University Press, 2015. 94-121.

## Works Cited

- Verstraten, Peter. *Film Narratology*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Vinay, Jean-Paul and Jean Darbelnet. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. Trans. of Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) by Juan C. Sager and Marie-Josée Hamel. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1995.
- “Visibility.” Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires. Accessed August 24, 2015. <http://www.ceatl.eu/current-situation/visibility>
- Wakabayashi, Judy. “Situating Translation Studies in Japan Within a Broader Context.” *Translation and Translation Studies in the Japanese Context*. Ed. Nana Sato-Rossberg and Judy Wakabayashi. London: Bloomsbury, 2012. 33–53.
- Wakabayashi, Judy. “Japanese Conceptualizations of ‘Translation.’” *World Atlas of Translation*. Ed. Yves Gambier and Ubaldo Stecconi. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2019. 55-80.
- Yanabu, Akira. *Honyakugo Seiritsu Jijō*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982.

## Audiovisual Media

- Apocalypse Now*. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. United Artists, 1979.
- Bridge of Spies*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Disney Studios, 2015.
- Human Stain, The*. Dir. Robert Benton. Miramax Films, 2003.
- Post, The*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. 20th Century Fox, 2017.
- There Will Be Blood*. Dir. Paul Thomas Anderson. Paramount, 2007.