

Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour (eds) (2004). *Subtitles: on the foreignness of film*. Cambridge, USA: MIT Press, pp. 544. ISBN 0-262-05078-1. £22.95/\$35.00

The film director Atom Egoyan and the Canadian academic Ian Balfour have together edited a remarkable 500-page book, printed in 1.66:1 Cinemascope ratio, which aims at exploring the history, creation, and translation of subtitles from a perspective away from academia and closer to a coffee table or art book.

The format is beautiful, the subject matter – subtitles – is also looked at from an aesthetic and metaphorical perspective in order to discuss a very wide range of topics, in many different formats: from a poem on subtitles to a Jorge Luís Borges' essay on *Citizen Kane* ("it suffers from gigantism, pedantry and tedium") to White House tapes of Osama Bin Laden admitting his part in the destruction of the World Trade Center, or the portray of otherness and the much trodden dilemma of subtitling versus dubbing.

One of the few contributions which actually deals with subtitles, its translation and their creation is by the French subtitler Henri Behar, who discusses the challenge posed for the translator by the reduction which has to be made in order to fit in the number of characters in the two lines at the bottom of the screen.

One of the book's many virtues is its eclectic approach to formats, discourses, and its commitment to dissensus. The contributors do not stick to the same line about subtitling. Some argue that, rather than preserving and honouring the otherness of films, as has been a classic remark from Translation Studies, or the societies on which they shine a light, subtitles actually obscure cultural differences.

Pilar Orero, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Pilar.Orero@uab.es