

Mario Di Paolinelli, Eleonora Fortunato, (2005) *Tradurre per il Doppiaggio*, Milano: Hoepli, pp.162, €19 ISBN: 88-203-3385-6

Designed and written by two well-known practitioners of the dubbing sector, this book stands out amongst the Italian publications devoted to audiovisual translation for its coming straight from 'inside the trade'. Moreover, its being developed by people who have approached theory as a way to complement their own, practical activity in dubbing, gives the book a very special flavour, which is reflected throughout its chapters, paragraphs, sentences, direct as well as indirect statements.

The practice of dubbing, defined in the subheading as "an imperfect art", is nonetheless illustrated with care throughout the book and given all the importance which is generally denied to it by media and scholars alike, in Italy and beyond.

In one of the introductory statements, dubbing is defined as "essential in determining the exchange value of audiovisual products", thus putting forward a strong –and obviously concerned– claim for a more appropriate recognition of the no-so-imperfect art. In order to support such a claim, a large section of the first chapter is devoted to the history of dubbing, laying emphasis on the great role it has played in shaping film perception in Italy, as well as on its exploitation for political reasons until the advent of television. Tracing the diachronic evolution of dubbing, the authors also refer to the various techniques and strategies which have been implemented throughout the decades, as a reflection of socio-cultural conditions as well as the changing political and ideological requirements of each age. Subsequently, the book describes the reciprocal influence of the language of Italian cinema and of the so-called 'dubbese', claiming not without a hint of pride that the latter has also had a great impact on the development of spoken Italian over the past decades, and quoting facts and opinions from and about dialogue adaptors, dubbing directors and actors themselves. The last part of the first chapter, which is certainly the most important and well-articulated, provides interesting data concerning the production and consumption of films in Europe. By way of comment to the figures provided, the authors emphasize the overwhelming role played by American majors and international distributors in shaping marketing and distribution policies throughout Europe and the world. Not without reason, they also lament the lack of support for the development of national cinemas, especially in Italy, reflecting the concerns of artists and professionals in the field.

The second chapter is devoted to exemplifying the practice of film dialogue adaptation, with the aim to provide useful guidelines to translators wishing to approach this field, whereas the third chapter focuses on the laws and contracts which are currently available in Italy, making reference to a long-standing diatribe for the acknowledgement of rights for dialogue adaptors and other practitioners and, therefore, appealing more strongly to people already involved in this practice and only indirectly to students and researchers. The final chapter offers a

broader view, both in terms of its scope and of the readers who are likely to be interested in the issues covered. The current trends in dubbing are illustrated, with reference to the most important European dubbing countries (Spain, France, Italy), their national policies and the supranational attitudes and regulations.

In short, the book has the advantage of offering insights into different issues connected with the current status and practice of dubbing, covering aspects which may be of interest, at varying degrees, for students and professionals alike. On the whole, the latter tend to be more directly called into play, perhaps reflecting the wish of the authors to acknowledge their efforts and illustrate their rights.

The book, though well-crafted, systematic and informative, is occasionally pervaded by wishful thinking, suggesting for instance the possibility for dubbing to play a role in reducing the flow of audiovisual products from the United States. Notwithstanding its high degree of complexity and the good quality it can reach with certain products, in Italy and beyond, dubbing remains an "art", or rather a craft which absorbs and processes audiovisual products, but it seems unlikely that it could bear a direct reflection on decision-making, marketing and financial policies.

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