

CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND FILMMAKING IN THE PACFICIC

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Introduction

When my feature film *The Land Has Eyes* screened at the Moscow International Film Festival in 2004, my producer/wife and I, the director and writer, were assigned a Russian translator. Since we don't speak Russian, we were grateful for this service. However, during the introduction preceding the film screening, some members of the audience reacted in rather surprising ways to the translator's version of what we had said, making us wonder about the accuracy of the translation. And then the film screened.

No one laughed or made any audible sounds throughout the screening of our film. Everyone was so quiet you could hear yourself breathe. This was strange because we had just returned from screening the film eight times around Rotuma where the film was shot. There, the reaction was one of hilarity, with some audience members shouting mocking comments at the actors on screen, cheering when an old lady riding a scooter chased the villain, or slapping each other on the back as they burst into laughter when someone said or did something that they recognized as so typically Rotuman. Audience members teased the actors who sat among them, ridiculing them when they made an appearance and basically making quite a bit of noise. This was the first feature film

ever made on Rotuma, and seeing themselves on screen appeared to be a source of amusement, if not excitement. At several screenings, the chiefs had to order the audience to shut up so that others could hear the dialogue and follow the film's plot. So how do we explain the silent reaction of the Russians? Are the Russians watching the same film the Rotumans saw? And then I remembered that a man in a nearby booth was providing a simultaneous translation of the film's dialogue in Russian. What on earth was he telling them? And how do we know that he was translating accurately?

About forty people stayed behind for the discussion that followed the film screening. Someone would ask a question in Russian, the translator would relay the question to us in English, we would answer, and then she would translate into Russian what we had said to the audience. I thought we were doing very well until a man put up his hand, and then talked in Russian for what seemed like two minutes. We listened politely until the man had stopped talking. The translator turned to me then asked in her Russian accent: "So how do you protect yourself from getting penetrated?" Thinking I hadn't heard correctly, I asked her to please repeat her question. She did, revealing no embarrassment whatsoever. I looked at my wife, and realized she was pressing her fingernails into the palm of her hand so she wouldn't burst into laughter. Taking my cue from my wife, I pulled myself together, and in as steady a voice as I could muster, asked

the translator to explain in more detail what the questioner wanted to know. Fortunately, the translator was able to provide a full account of what the man had said. It turns out that the man's question should have been translated thus: "Rotuma is such a small island, so how does it protect itself from getting invaded?"

My Russian experience with translation taught me many lessons, the first of which is that one should always be suspicious of translated accounts, particularly if there is no opportunity to question the translator. Imagine if I had returned from Russia without getting to the bottom (no pun intended) of what the translator really meant. I'd still be thinking that Russians are very rude people, preoccupied with protected sex! Now that I know better, I think they're preoccupied with national security instead. Obviously, these are two very different readings of the same incident. It also confirms my belief that there is usually more nuance or cultural specificity in the original account than there is in the translated version.

A second lesson I learnt is that the translated version, albeit unwittingly in my Russian experience, could end up becoming more entertaining and sexier than the reality. Think of titles of early Hollywood films set in the Pacific such as *Bird of Paradise*, *The Blue Lagoon*, *South Pacific*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Jungle Heat* (1957), *Girls! Girls!*

Girls (1962), *Wake of the Red Witch* (1948), *Enchanted Island* (1995), and more recently, *Blue Crush* and *Fifty First Dates*.

In October 2009, the Hawai`i International Film Festival screened the world premiere of a feature film on Hawaii's princess Kaiulani under the title *Barbarian Princess*.

According to the director of this film, he and the producers had chosen this title in order to attract white audiences from the continental United States. From this, we can infer that they were more concerned with making a profit at the box office than responding positively to local and Hawaiian protests against the use of the word "barbarian".

Ironically, film festivals on the continental United States and beyond did not want to screen this film, and so the filmmakers ended up having their world premiere where their real audience resides, which is in Hawai`i. Unfortunately, the word "barbarian", which the producers claim is meant to be ironic, is not in inverted commas, a fact that makes one suspicious of the motives of the filmmakers. Further, the film itself makes numerous references to Princess Kaiulani's beauty and intelligence, with just a fleeting mention that she is from a barbaric race. Wouldn't the title "Hawaiian Princess", "Beloved Princess", even "Hawaiian Soul" be more fitting labels?

In spite of the good intentions of many indigenous filmmakers, including Pacific Islanders, to capture the complexity of our cultures as we know them, the medium of

film, particularly the feature film, is a colonizing medium. By this I mean that the dictates of the market place, and the business aspects of film production and distribution, render it impossible for any film to do justice to lived reality, past or present. The most we can expect from feature films is a partial understanding of the culture or society portrayed on screen.

The indigenous films that open to us windows through which we can see the diverse cultures of our world in ways that are most nuanced and culturally specific are the ones least concerned with reaping a profit at the box office. Quite often, but not always, these films are made primarily for the people whose lives are depicted on screen, with creative control, in most cases, resting in the hands of indigenous people. Such films include the Maori features *Te Rua* (1991) and *Mauri* (1988); the path-breaking Inuit film *Atanarjuat: the fast Runner* (2001), *Pear ta Ma`On Maf: The Land Has Eyes* (2004), and the Aboriginal film *Ten Canoes* (2006). Conversely the ones that are most influenced by globalizing forces and emphasize entertainment and broad appeal are those likely to be most susceptible to the dictates of the market economy. Needless to say, these indigenous films are more successful at the box office. Such films include *Whale Rider* (2001), *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002), *Smoke Signals* (1998), *No.2* (2006), *Sione's Wedding* and *Eagle vs Shark* (2007).

I now look at five features from the Pacific in an effort to demonstrate the ways in which indigenous films are coerced to adhere to mainstream structures of storytelling and to keep cultural references either universal or familiar (as much as possible) to white mainstream audiences. My intention here is not to pass judgment on any of the films referred to in this paper but rather to illuminate the colonizing nature of the medium, particularly in relation to indigenous knowledge and translation for global audiences.

Whale Rider

In my opinion, *Whale Rider* provides us with the best example of a feature film that successfully combines art and commerce. It clearly demonstrates the necessity of catering to the tastes of the masses, more interested in entertainment than education. Exotic color that enhances the storyline makes the product different from the rest. By adhering to a well-known structure of storytelling as well as other familiar elements (beautiful cinematography, music, sound effects etc.) the film remains accessible and non-threatening.

Released in 2001, *Whale Rider* is the story of Paikea, a young girl who defies patriarchy in her Maori culture to become the leader of her tribe. At the core of this film's narrative is a folktale which explains that the original

inhabitants of the people of Whangara in Aotearoa New Zealand where Paikea resides arrived riding on the back of a whale. Claiming genealogical ancestry to the original whale rider, Paikea rekindles a mystical connection to the whales listing in the sea. When the pod of whales end up stranded on the beach, Paikea proves that she can be the new leader of her tribe by riding the lead whale. Koro, Paikea's grandfather and male chauvinist who up until this point had been fiercely opposed to Paikea's aspirations to leadership on the basis that only boys can lead, eventually succumbs to the evidence before him and bestows upon his granddaughter his blessings. The film ends with Paikea and her grandfather seated side by side inside a magnificent Maori waka (canoe) while community members row and chant in unison as they head out to sea, and symbolically, into the future.

[Please refer to the video clip with the opening scene of *Whale Rider* - opening_scene_whale-rider.wmv]

In spite of its overwhelming success worldwide, *Whale Rider* received mixed reactions among Maori people (see Hokowhitu 2008; Barry Barclay quoted in Calder 2003). Negative criticisms focused primarily on the creative choices made by the producers to translate for the screen a folktale rooted in ancient oral history. The main criticism is that in its effort to reach mass audiences worldwide, *Whale Rider* has taken a story imbued with nuance and mana and turned it into a commodity with a shiny gloss that is typical of films aspiring for box office success. According to the Maori

scholar and critic Brendan Hokowhitu, *Whale Rider* has compromised cultural specificity and integrity in its effort to be universal (Hokowhitu 2008).

Is compromise a necessary requirement for box office success? The mere act of choosing to make a feature film is a compromise because the medium has certain constraints and limitations. In Hamid Naficy's book *An Accented Cinema* (2001), he writes that the fictional film, rather than the documentary or short film, embodies generic rules that indigenous filmmakers must adhere to, if they are to find distribution in the global marketplace. If they don't wish to adhere to the rules, then they must "expand, manipulate, or otherwise subvert generic expectations in ways that refresh the genres, or sometimes, destroy them" (Kolker, 2002, 171-172). This is a tall order indeed for any filmmaker – to wander away from the proven path to success – and it is therefore understandable that most filmmakers end up emulating the techniques and storytelling structures favored by mainstream Hollywood movies.

The novel *Whale Rider*, on which the film version is based, is written by the well-known Maori writer Witi Ihimaera. The screenplay adaptation and direction, however, is by Niki Caro, a pakeha (white New Zealander) who worked closely with Ihimaera and the Whangara community in the development of the script. Unlike some filmmakers appropriating stories

rooted in indigenous communities, Niki Caro, by all accounts, collaborated with the owners of the oral narrative. In addition, she collaborated closely with an American writer brought in to Aotearoa/New Zealand to help her make the script more commercial.

The result of this collaboration is a screenplay that adheres to the proven three-act structure of most Hollywood films to tell a modern Maori story rooted in ancient oral tradition for broad international appeal. If this film were to be judged according to all the awards it has won, and all the rave reviews it has received around the world, this kind of collaboration is a model to be emulated by all filmmakers mining ancient oral narratives for contemporary cinema. This kind of success is possible not only because of selected indigenous knowledge that has been kept intact and introduced in the film version, but also because of what has been edited out in order to make a culturally specific film universal. In fact, this nod toward universality is part of the reason *Whale Rider* has come under criticism. The charge is that an oral tale that is very specific to the Ngati Porou tribe is being viewed by the rest of the world as representative of Maori culture (Hokowhitu 2008; Houston 2008).

Perhaps to avoid controversy, the film adaptation leaves out certain things in the novel that might be construed as

political. In the novel, the nuclear testing on Mururoa atoll in French Polynesia has disoriented the whales' sonar, causing them to lose their way in the Pacific Ocean. In the film, the whales' distress on the beach appears to be a sympathetic response to Paikea's own heartbreak over her grandfather's refusal to attend a performance at her school concert in which she pays tribute to him in an emotional speech. Moreover, the film version, like its predecessor *Once Were Warriors*, edits out any references to pakeha colonization of Maori culture and land, as though afraid that if it did so, pakeha viewers would stay away (also see Hokowhitu 2008).

As though to preempt any attacks against *Whale Rider* from the Maori community, John Barnett, one of the film's three producers, asserts that *Whale Rider* is not a Maori film (see special features of the dvd). By this he means that the film *Whale Rider* does not belong to the Maori community, but to the world. And by extension, if it belongs to the world, then it follows that the film should be more concerned with universal, as opposed to local (read Maori), aspirations and realities.

In the dvds' special features section, Niki Caro illustrates John Barnett's point when she explains her decision to edit out a specific scene from the film. The viewer is shown a scene of Paikea's grandfather Koro digging with his son

Porourangi to install a septic tank near his home. As we listen to the commentary, we hear Niki Caro refer to this deleted scene as "overilluminating." She adds that "too much is being told", and that the scene is very "revealing of what life is like. . . for leaders of this community" and that contrary to what we might think, these leaders quite often have to be the ones doing the dirty work. Caro's comments imply that a non-Maori audience will find it difficult to comprehend why a man of high rank should be engaged in a task we would normally associate with an underling. Caro's decision allows enjoyment of the narrative by non-Maori to proceed smoothly, unhindered by cultural specificity that is realistic but ultimately, is a stumbling block to universal appeal.

[Please refer to the video clip with the septic tank scene of *Whale Rider* - septic_scene_whale-rider.wmv]

In order for indigenous films to be popular worldwide, they must change to reflect or mirror the tastes of the western world. This is because in the arena of the marketplace, exchanges between the western world and the developing world are unequal. Producers and distributors from white dominant culture are the ones most likely to be calling the shots. They are the ones who will buy or exhibit a film. Unless indigenous filmmakers are willing to "play the game" as dictated to them, their films will fail to find distributors. To follow this view to its logical conclusion,

the indigenous films that are most successful at the box office are the ones that best reflect or mirror successful American movies. And the ones that are least successful at the box office are those that have retained the highest degree of cultural nuance, specificity, and cultural autonomy.

The Land Has Eyes

An important difference between *Whale Rider* and *The Land Has Eyes* (*Land* from now onwards) is that *Land* was not driven primarily by the dictates of the marketplace but rather by a desire to record for posterity the language, lifestyle, customs, and values of the Rotuman people through the medium of a feature film.

As the writer, director, and co-producer, I had creative control over the film. Not having any investors, studio producer, or funding body telling us how to make *Land* proved to be a blessing in disguise. We were left to our own devices, to follow our own naive and idealistic notions of how to tell our story. We even filmed it completely on an isolated island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with no infrastructure for filmmaking. Even so, and in spite of all our best intentions, there were self-imposed pressures on us during pre-production, production and post-production to think about non-Rotuman audiences and how we could reach

them even as we tried our best to maintain integrity and control over the story we wanted to tell.

Land is about a young girl's struggles to redeem her father's name. Shot in 2001, and before *Whale Rider* came out, *Land* has been compared by some reviewers to *Whale Rider*, in so far as the story has a young girl at its center as well as a folktale that inspires the protagonist in her fight for justice with the western court on Rotuma. But this is where the similarities end. *Whale Rider* was made for \$4 million U.S. dollars (Houston 2008), *Land* for a little over half a million. *Whale Rider* is in English, *Land* is in Rotuman (mostly) with English subtitles. *Whale Rider* had the financial backing of New Zealand's Film Commission and, apart from its protagonist, employed well-known actors in lead roles; *Land* used Rotumans who had never acted before for 98% of its cast. The only experienced actor was Rena Owen, best known for her role as Beth in the Maori feature *Once Were Warriors*, and to a much lesser degree, James Davenport, a theater student at the University of Hawai'i at the time of production. Moreover, *Whale Rider* is based on a novel whereas *Land* is semi-autobiographical and based largely on my experiences as a young boy growing up on Rotuma. Finally, unlike *Whale Rider*, *Land* had no oversight from investors or a funding organization and we were therefore less concerned with broad appeal or success at the box office. Nonetheless, the mere act of translation, not

just from a minority culture to a mainstream audience, but from the Rotuman language to English, meant that we had to make compromises in order to conform to mainstream requirements of filmmaking.

[Please refer to the video clip with the opening scene of *The Land Has Eyes* - opening_land_has_eyes.wmv]

The climactic scene in *The Land Has Eyes* harkens back to an earlier scene close to the beginning of the film when the white judge in court fines the protagonist's father for a crime he did not commit because of a deliberate mistranslation by the court interpreter. The mistranslation brings about shame for the protagonist's family, as well as a concerted effort by the family to raise the necessary funds to pay back the fine. The climactic scene juxtaposes two opposing worldviews, one by the Caucasian, the other by the chiefs. Both worlds remain separate and distinct from each other, untranslatable, until the white judge asks the protagonist "Can you tell me what happened there? The chiefs understand, but I don't." When the indigenous world is translated to the white judge, he understands what was unknown and unknowable to him before, and this sets the stage for an informed decision that absolves the protagonist and her family. By not compromising her culture's point of view, the protagonist wins her case. In real life, as opposed to the fictional world of storytelling, compromise

appears inevitable, even when the film is in the native language of its characters.

In the case of *The Land Has Eyes*, this compromise is evident in the subtitling, and translation from Rotuman to English. Long sentences in Rotuman had to be reduced to one or two lines in order to fit the bottom of the screen and to be read quickly. Metaphorical allusions that reference cultural traits or features could not be translated literally because they would either be nonsensical to non-Rotumans or they would conjure up connotative associations that would only lead to confusion. For example, when the protagonist's father advises his daughter Viki to continue doing her homework he says to her in Rotuman "Hia' `ou ra heta ma hia' la fa'". Here, he is using an ancient proverb that had been passed down orally through many generations. A literal translation would be "If you're trying to break the branch of a tree, be certain that you break it." For Rotumans, this utterance by the father resonates with them at a deep level because of its cultural and historical associations.

**[Please refer to the video clip of the Rotuman proverb
- Rotuman_proverb.wmv]**

As a young man contemplating leaving college, I was brought to my senses when one of my older brothers, my guardian at that time, invoked this ancient proverb to fortify me. It worked because I remembered that when I was a little boy my

father had used the same proverb to instill determination in me whenever I wanted to give up a difficult task; I decided to return to university and complete my degree. Non-Rotumans, on the other hand, would be confused by a literal translation and would wonder what trees and branches had to do with the scene they were watching. After much reflection, I decided to subtitle the father's advice in this way: "You must complete what you set out to do." Inevitably, my translation meant that all nuance in meaning in the Rotuman language is lost in the English translation.

A second example is the following. In a scene where the protagonist's mother refers to the antagonist as being very close to the court translator, she says in Rotuman "Ia ma Poto fakikia se inoso". A literal translation would be "He and Poto (the court translator who is male) are like a married couple." It is possible that this translation would have suggested a homosexual relationship between the two men in some people's minds, which isn't the intended meaning. The correct translation, and the one used in the film, is this: "He is Poto's best friend." This translation, however, fails to capture the level of emotional intimacy implied in the Rotuman version but appears to be the best compromise, given the constraints of the medium.

Translating cultural norms for the screen, particularly those from isolated and relatively unknown communities such

as Rotuma, is a daunting task. If the culture portrayed appears too different or alien from the knowledge and experiences of the viewer, the film is unlikely to succeed at the box office. This is because audiences like to be able to sympathize, even empathize, with the characters and the interactions on screen. Thus studio producers are always searching for what is universal in a story from a minority culture (see John Barnett, quoted in Welch 2003, 21).

Other Recent Pacific features

Since 2000, several feature films have been made with Pacific Islanders playing key roles in front and behind the camera that appear to be driven primarily by mainstream aspirations and box office success. By mainstream I mean that the film's language of choice is English, it uses well-known or professional actors, enjoys a budget of more than a million, demonstrates high production values, and its producers and distributors operate within well-established Euro-American structures. Some of these films may even have white characters in the lead but they also make forays into the world of indigenous people in its storyline. Taiki Waititi's feature *Eagle vs Shark* is an interesting case in point. Since Taika Waititi is the most interesting and talented Oceanic filmmaker today, some elaboration is necessary.

In 2004, the Academy for Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences nominated Taika Waititi's short film *Two Cars One Night* for an Oscar. This nomination propelled Waititi into the limelight. He made a second short film *Tama Tu*, another impressive work that screened at many international film festivals and won several awards. He followed this with a feature film in 2007 titled *Eagle vs Shark*, a story of two white misfits who find heterosexual love in the most unlikely places.

Unlike Waititi's two short films that are close to the indigenous end of the continuum, this feature film starring two love-birds at its center is positioned closer to the non-indigenous end of the continuum. Although Waititi's feature makes brief forays into the indigenous world of Maori and Samoan identities, it keeps them at a distance, as though aware that too much Maoriness or Samoanness would be detrimental to broad appeal. Thus he makes the decision that the Polynesian mother of the male protagonist should be dead (reminiscent of the dead Polynesian mother of Emille DeBecke's children in the Hollywood film *South Pacific*). As though to ensure that indigeneity has no chance of dominating his film, he decides that the brother of the male protagonist should be dead too. Interestingly, the director plays the dead brother, his presence in the film confined to a family photograph.

In some respects, such deployment of indigenous culture is reminiscent of the ways in which Hollywood films such as *Blue Hawai`i*, *Lilo & Stitch*, *Blue Crush*, and *Fifty First Dates*, and most recently, *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, incorporate aspects of Hawaiian culture into their storylines. The deployment of indigenous culture here is not intended to engage the viewer in any meaningful way; instead, it is used as exotic appeal to add interesting flavors to an otherwise predictable storyline. According to Naficy, such incorporation allows the dominant culture to renew itself and maintain its dominance (6). When Naficy wrote his book, he probably didn't envisage an indigenous filmmaker lending the dominant culture in his country his exceptional talents to reinforce its superiority.

Two other features, *No.2* and *Sione's Wedding* are two recent examples of indigenous films that have also encountered translation challenges. *No.2* (retitled *Naming No.2* in the United States to avoid any references to a bathroom activity) is about a Fijian matriarch living in urban Auckland who wakes up one morning and decides it is time to hold a big Fijian feast at which she will name her successor. In this translation of Fijian experience in urban Auckland for a global audience, the producers chose to have an African American (Ruby Dee) play the Fijian matriarch, with Polynesians (mainly Maori and Samoan actors) as her children and grandchildren.

[Please refer to the video clip with the opening scene
of No. 2 - No2.wmv]

Sione's Wedding, a film about four Samoan losers who wreak havoc at weddings became *Samoan Wedding* when its producers released it in the United States. Sione's personal wedding thus took on the mantle of representing all Samoan weddings, a responsibility too weighty for a light-hearted comedy intended to reap a profit at the box office. Was this change in title intended to entice filmgoers who had enjoyed previously successful features from other cultures such as *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and *Monsoon Wedding*? Incidentally, the idea for this film originated from a pakeha producer (John Barnet of *Whale Rider*) who later hired a well-known Samoan comedian (Oscar Knightley) to co-write the script with Chris Graham, a pakeha. The film made more money at the box office in its first weekend than any other indigenous film in New Zealand. Success at the box office, however, deflects attention from any misrepresentations or distortions of contemporary Samoan culture, whether in the homelands or in urban Auckland.

A rebuttal often used to counter charges of inaccuracy leveled at feature films is that a feature is a fictional representation, not a documentary, and the filmmakers are free to take license with reality. Thus it is of no import that a Fijian looks different from an African American or

Maori, or that a "Princess" from rural Samoa would usually (unless she has an extraordinary back story) behave and act more modestly than a Samoan born and bred in the city. Audiences, mainstream audiences at least, don't really care and may not even know the difference. Besides, entertainment and profits at the box office are what matter most, not cultural authenticity or accurate representation.

**[Please refer to the video clip with the scene from
Samoan Wedding - *Samoan_wedding.wmv*]**

Conclusion.

Does it really matter whether or not translations of indigenous knowledge and cultures are accurate? In the Russian story of mistranslation that started this paper, the Russian translator's inaccurate version was unintentional and caused little harm. In *The Land Has Eyes*, a deliberate mistranslation causes considerable hardship and eventual tragedy for a poor family, changing their lives forever. The positive side is that the mistranslation forces the young protagonist Viki to fight against all odds to correct the mistranslation, and in doing so, frees her family from shame and restores their dignity.

Similarly, our responsibility as cultural critics and translators is to correct mistranslations, to advocate for cultural specificity and nuance, to insist that filmmakers are accountable for the images and representations that they

produce, not just in film but in literature, theater, art, and other kinds of media. Another responsibility we have is to explicate the colonizing nature of the film industry as well as the influence of globalization and the market economy on minority artists and cultures. Such knowledge will help our students to better understand the market forces that coerce filmmakers from minority cultures to produce works that mirror Euro-American tastes and sensibilities.

The Land Has Eyes, Whale Rider, No.2, and Sione's Wedding are recent examples of Pacific Islanders' efforts to translate Oceanic cultures for a global audience.

Inevitably, all translations of this nature result in some loss of nuance and cultural specificity. Based on my survey of recent Pacific features in this paper, I believe we will be seeing more and more films made by Pacific Islanders and set in Oceania that cater to Euro-American tastes, values, and sensibilities. We need not see this as a negative development but a compromise that is necessary if these works are going to reach global audiences. An understanding of the business of filmmaking allows us to be critical as well as better informed viewers of recent Pacific feature films.

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There were no strong winds to explain this unusual action and I lost interest in the story I had paid money to watch. In fact, I believe the filmmakers of *Cast Away* did not make this film for people like myself, but for a global audience that knows little about the Pacific, its peoples, and its environment. 4 After all, the story of *Cast Away* is about a man being stranded on a remote island, and accurate representation of the details of the island's flora and fauna must not have been a priority. 5 Another example is my experience as a story and cultural consultant for Disney's animated feature film *Moana* (2016). This article considers the features connected with film title translation. Methods of translation are analyzed with the aid of particular examples. Assessment of adequacy is explained. Examples of translations that are considered unsuccessful are given. A conclusion is made on the necessity of the translator achieving suitable localization for film titles and having a deep knowledge of language and a multicultural mindset. Keywords: film title; cinematography; translation; localization. *The Making of Authority*. Purchase. *Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation*. Purchase. *Moving Boundaries in Translation Studies*. Translation and Identity in the Americas. *New Directions in Translation Theory*. Purchase. Translation/Film Studies. *Accessible Filmmaking*. Integrating translation and accessibility into the filmmaking process. *The Pacific Theatre of World War II, as seen through the eyes of several young Marines*. The Pacific Theatre of World War II, as seen through the eyes of several young Marines. less. *The Pacific Theatre of World War II, as seen through the eyes of several young Marines*. cast. *Cast* These translations completely neglect the intricacies of cultural norms. Unfortunately, because the title informs an audience's decision to watch your film, you can lose whole markets this way. Even better-intentioned localization can miss the mark and cost you dearly. The title gains still another layer when you apply it to the filmmaking process itself: a film about a painting about a muse, all beautiful nuisances. Can movie title translations capture such an essence? How do you localize the title in a way that carries those layers? Movie title translations between European languages, however, are a walk in the park compared to matching them to Asian languages. Wacky Chinese movie title translations are a favorite target of internet ridicule.