

## Heterolingualism in Paul Verhoeven's *Zwartboek* (2006)

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This paper deals with the treatment of foreign languages in Paul Verhoeven's Second World War/Holocaust film *Zwartboek / Black Book* (2006). By analyzing four clips that show how the heterolingual environment of the movie participates in the narrative and thematic construction of the film, it concludes that Verhoeven has a well-conceived linguistic strategy. The study not only shows that the presence of several languages in *Zwartboek* may be a function of it being a Dutch-German-Belgian-UK co-production, but it also ensures a form of authenticity that reflects the reality of the WWII setting, which is typically a combat zone depicting an armed conflict between opponents of different nationalities. The English subtitling of the film for distribution in the North-American market reduces this linguistic hybridity somewhat, thereby contributing to homogenization, but it homogenizes it less than dubbing would. Because it is a popular action film, subtitling does not prevent an English-speaking audience from engaging with the film. Given the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling, we are nevertheless reminded that not everything can be converted from one language into another, resulting in a reduction in linguistic nuance for the secondary target audience of the North-American market by comparison with the primary target audience, the Dutch viewer.

Key terms: Heterolingualism; multilingualism; subtitling; dubbing; Second World War movies; combat movies; Dutch resistance movies; Holocaust movies.

Paul Verhoeven's 2006 movie *Zwartboek / Black Book* belongs to the well-established genre of the Second World War combat movie (Basinger 2003). More specifically, it is part of a subcategory within this genre that focuses on WWII resistance movements, particularly that of the Dutch resistance. *Black Book* takes its title from a secret list of Dutch collaborators in the Second World War. It is an action movie full of loyalty and betrayal, but never in their pure form; moral confusion and relativism are everywhere. While the movie begins and ends in Israel in 1956, the middle part is an extended flashback set in and

around The Hague, the Netherlands, in 1944-45. As in most movies dealing with armed conflict or resistance networks, *Black Book* features characters with different nationalities that speak different languages. Language, in fact, is a major theme in the film. It not only distinguishes the characters linguistically, frequently establishing their national loyalties, but the ability to speak different languages is often key to a character's survival.

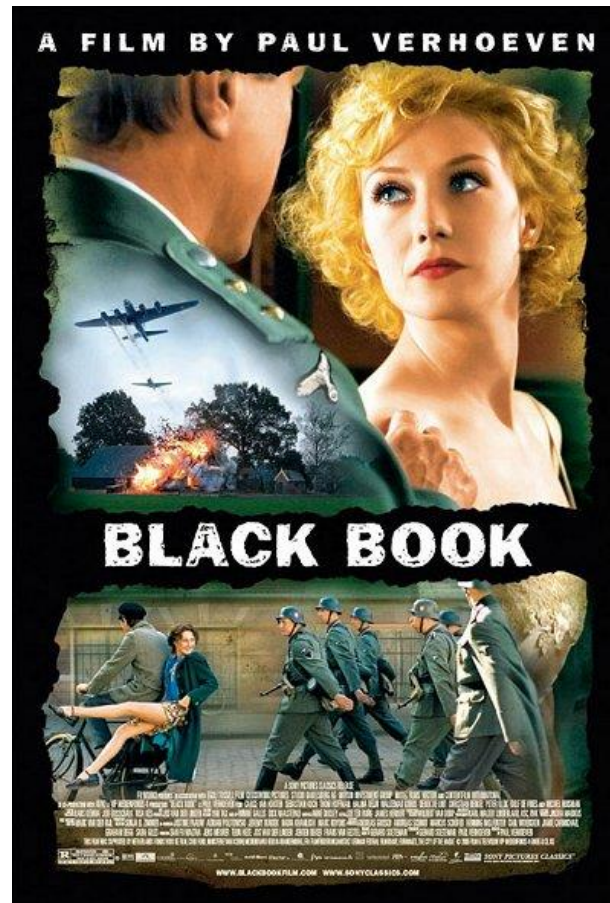


Figure 1. Poster of *Black Book*. Reproduced from <http://www.filmjabber.com/>.

Who is Paul Verhoeven and what kind of films does he make? Born in 1938, Paul Verhoeven is a Dutch film director, producer and screenwriter who has made movies in both the Netherlands and the United States. His life and work may be clearly divided into three phases, consisting of an early phase in the Netherlands between 1969 and 1983, a middle phase in Hollywood from 1983 until 2000, and a third phase following his return to the Netherlands, where he is still living and working today. Verhoeven is not for the faint of heart. He started out as an *en-*

*fant terrible* and remains a rebel to this day. Trademarks of his films are explicit sex and violence, coupled with social satire whose barbs are tempered somewhat by the director's humor and irrepressible wit.

Four feature films dominate the early phase in the Netherlands: *Turks Fruit* ('*Turkish Delight*'; 1974), *Soldaat van Oranje* ('*Soldier of Orange*'; 1975), *Spetters* (1980), and *De Vierde Man* ('*The Fourth Man*'; 1983). *Turkish Delight*, which won the *Gouden Kalf* award for Best Dutch Film of the Century, tells a story set in the 1970s of a passionate love story or *amour fou* of an artist and a liberal girl from a conservative background, in the process breaking all the social taboos of the time in typical counter-culture fashion. Verhoeven's international breakthrough came in 1979 with the release of *Soldier of Orange*, based on a true story about the Dutch resistance in World War II, and earning him a Golden Globe nomination. This was followed by *Spetters*, which focuses on the lives of three young dirt-bike racers who each fall in love with the same girl, and *The Fourth Man*, a horror thriller centered around a man with a sense of impending doom and his relationship with a woman who may well lead him to this doom.

The Hollywood phase in the middle stands out for several blockbuster movies directed by Verhoeven: the three science fiction films *RoboCop* (1987), *Total Recall* (1990), and *Starship Troopers* (1997), and the erotic black widow thriller *Basic Instinct* (1992). Each of these movies has become a cult classic in its own right, not only for its pure entertainment value but also for its relentless preoccupation with the darker corners of the human soul. A fifth movie made in the Hollywood years is *Showgirls* (1995), which became famous not because it was considered good, but because it was deemed to be so bad. It received no less than seven Golden Raspberry Awards, including Worst Film and Worst Director. Verhoeven is the only director to have accepted the awards in person, which is a testament to his sense of humor, as well as his ability not to take himself too seriously. Ironically, the film then went on to become a camp classic and one of MGM's all-time bestsellers, making more than 100 million on the home video market.

This is, then, the context within which we can place *Black Book*, Paul Verhoeven's major feature film following his return to the Netherlands in 2000. This movie has much in common with Verhoeven's earlier work in the Netherlands, not least of which is his collaboration with Gerard Soeteman, his scriptwriter for almost all of the earlier feature films made in the Netherlands. For his subject matter, Verhoeven returns to the Second World War and the Dutch resistance, a subject already featured in *Soldier of Orange*. *Zwartboek* also continues a long tradition in all of Verhoeven's work of focusing on a strong woman. With the Hollywood blockbusters, *Black Book* shares not only the focus on action and the high production values but also the moral relativism of its

characters. Although this movie is subtler in many ways than its Hollywood predecessors, nothing is black and white; victims are at the same time perpetrators.

Front and center in *Zwartboek* is Rachel Stein, alias Ellis de Vries, whose Jewishness, however, does not stand in the way of her getting ahead. She is a good example of the “new Jew” about which Nathan Abrams writes in his book *The New Jew in Film: Exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema* (2011). Abrams argues that around 1990, films about Jews and their representation in cinema multiplied and took on new forms, marking a radical break with the past and its depiction of Jewish stereotypes. Rachel is neither a victim nor a long-suffering Jewish mother or the Rose of the Ghetto, but smart, beautiful, talented, strong, resilient, and likable – a virtual superwoman. Rachel is also multilingual, moving within the heterolingual environment of the Second World War, and in a movie that is an international Dutch-German-Belgian-UK co-production. In addition to Dutch, we hear German, English and Modern Hebrew, and Rachel appears to be equally fluent in all of them. It is a sign of her infinite adaptability. Other characters slip in and out of Dutch, German and English as well, but in their case it is often a matter of their questionable national loyalties.

What I am particularly interested in is the question of how and to what extent the heterolingual reality of *Black Book* as a mainstream film engages the viewer, especially a North-American viewer who has to rely on translation in the form of subtitles. Can the linguistic hybridity that is celebrated by the original heterolingual soundtrack be maintained by the subtitles or do they undermine it? Is there such a thing as universal convertibility, that is, can subtitles capture all the nuances of the original language? Since German is the language of the occupier and Dutch of the occupied, while Modern Hebrew is intimately linked to the Zionist movement and the founding of the modern state of Israel, what happens to these languages and the national brandings they represent when they are converted into English – which is also the language of the liberator – for globalized markets? In these and other questions, I am building on the theories proposed by Carol O’Sullivan in her book *Translating Popular Film* (2011), as well as by other theorists interested in the diversity of translating practices in modern cinema.

What is the cinematic “linguascape” of *Black Book*, to use Adam Jaworski’s term (Jaworski et al. 2003), and how does the film work with and represent foreign languages? To explain this, I would like to use two terms coined by two more specialists in the field of translation. The first is Meir Sternberg’s notion of vehicular matching (Sternberg 1981), which essentially matches the language or languages of the characters in the story world. If the

story features foreign languages, for example, vehicular matching allows foreign characters to speak in their own language. The practice responds to a perceived demand for authenticity or realism. The second term is "heterolingualism," to which I allude in the title of this paper. First coined by Rainer Grutman in 1996, the term may be defined as "the use of foreign languages or social, regional and historical language varieties in literary texts" (quoted in Meylaerts 2006, 4). Although originally envisaged in relation to literature, the concept resonates with potential within the context of translation in cinema, which is "in some ways freer to multiply languages than print literature is" (O'Sullivan 2011, 20). I also use the term heterolingual, rather than multilingual, in the sense that a person or character may speak multiple languages, and is therefore multilingual, but the environment in which multiple languages are spoken is heterolingual.

In this sense, then, the environment in Paul Verhoeven's *Zwartboek* is heterolingual. Although primarily a Dutch language film, we hear more than one language. In the DVD version released for the domestic market or the primary target audience, the Dutch remains unsubtitled, while subtitles in Dutch are supplied for the German, English and Modern Hebrew dialogue. The Dutch viewer therefore encounters the heterolingualism directly and each of the different language groups experiences the moment of the exchange of languages. For example, a Dutch viewer would immediately take note of the switch from Dutch to another language not only orally but also visually, since subtitles make linguistic differences visible on the bottom of the screen. Subtitles are therefore simultaneously a translation of the oral into the visual.

Subtitling in cinema must be distinguished from dubbing. Dubbing has been defined as "a translation mode which replaces the verbal signs present in the acoustic channel by another set of verbal signs in another language, respecting a series of constraints such as lip-synchrony" (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007, quoted by Labate 2012, 12). In other words, the translation of the source language into the target language is carefully matched to the lip movements of the actors in the film. In the case of movies with multiple languages, however, those in charge of dubbing have to decide whether or not they want to leave this multiplicity intact. This can be done, in the words of Bleichenbacher (2008), through presence (leaving foreign utterances intact), evocation (by means of foreign accents, for example), signalisation (referring explicitly to a foreign language), or elimination (getting rid of foreign languages altogether in favour of the target language). Whichever choice is made, the practice of dubbing puts the onus squarely on the viewers and their willingness to suspend disbelief as it compromises the principle of realism.

Instead of being dubbed, foreign movies are subtitled for release into the North American market. In the award categories such as the Oscars, a picture is

listed as foreign when the dominant language is not English. In the North-American market, the Dutch, German and Hebrew that we hear in *Black Book* are marginal languages that are therefore rendered into the dominant language of English. The reasons are primarily commercial; more viewers will get to see the movie. The English subtitles resolve the comprehension issue almost immediately, with a delay of no more than the six or seven seconds that it takes to read the two-line text that usually appears on the bottom of the screen.

Subtitles give us access to another culture, to worlds outside of ourselves. The viewers of a subtitled film receive the subtitles as the original dialogue. However, subtitles normally tend towards greater standardization than their source texts (Touy 1991, 188). There is a kind of discursive levelling, as subtitles elide “gestural language, tag questions, repetitions, and exclamations” (O’Sullivan 2011, 188-189; see also Hatim and Mason 1997, 78-96). Swear words in the foreign language are often softened in the English subtitles so as not to alienate the audience. Since subtitling tends to reduce, paraphrase and homogenize in order to fit the dialogue box or not to offend, viewers sometimes perceive subtitles as unfaithful (see O’Sullivan 2011, 103).

While subtitled films in general raise the visibility of multilingualism and might even “trigger a certain kind of multilingual imagination” (O’Sullivan 2011, 141), they render all languages into the language of the subtitles, which in our case is English. For example, while a Dutch viewer of *Black Book* would have no difficulty registering the switch from Dutch to German in the film, English-speaking viewers watching a subtitled version might not necessarily perceive this language shift, unless they have some knowledge of the languages involved. Of course, this lack of awareness of the language shift is not limited to English speakers only, but to any speaker not familiar with these languages. This brings up an interesting paradox: while, on the one hand, subtitling or translating dialogue makes visible linguistic differences on screen, it reduces it, on the other hand, by homogenizing it into the target language.

A related paradox may be observed in relation to the distribution of foreign-language films. Historically film distributors in North America have been reluctant to distribute these films, as there is a perception that the North American viewer resists reading subtitles (O’Sullivan 2011, 177-178): presumably it places a cognitive burden on them or is perceived as work. Audiences of art house cinema are generally speaking more accepting in this regard. The paradox is that language differences limit the market for imported films, but the preservation of those differences remains essential to the market (see O’Sullivan 2011, 200).

Since movies set in the Second World War or in combat zones in general inherently involve armed conflict that pits friends against foes in an international

environment, they lend themselves very well to an analysis of heterolingualism and the translation strategies used to deal with this (see Basinger 2003). Simon Labate (2012) analyzes this in relation to two Hollywood movies set in World War II that were dubbed into French: *The Longest Day* (1962) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Using quantitative analysis, he comes to the conclusion that the earlier movie tends to eliminate or homogenize heterolingualism, whereas the latter leaves foreign languages as such, pointing to a recent trend in audiovisual translation to maintain linguistic differences (Labate 2012, 1). Presumably, this trend is in response to a demand for a higher degree of realism. By contrast with dubbing, however, subtitles always maintain the linguistic landscape of the source languages. The difference lies in the viewer's ability to perceive these language shifts.

I have selected four short clips to illustrate the heterolingual landscape of *Black Book* and the translation strategies used to deal with multiple languages. The criteria I used for selecting the clips are twofold: 1) the presence of two or more languages in a particular clip, and 2) clips that clearly show a thematic relationship between the use of multiple languages as part of the overall narrative structure of the film. While the first clip introduces the viewer to the heterolingual environment of *Black Book*, the second and third clips demonstrate the use of language as a way of constructing and deconstructing the enemy. In the last clip, finally, the linguistic setup is such that the characters speak their own respective languages (Dutch and English), while understanding each other perfectly.

### **Clip 1: Opening sequence (0:41-4:03)**

The first clip is the opening scene set in Israel in 1956. The landscape is foreign, dry and dusty. An old tour bus, clearly marked "Holy Land Tours" approaches, and then drops off a group of foreign tourists at a kibbutz led by an English-speaking tour guide who admonishes the tourists not to linger more than 15 minutes, so that they will be on schedule for the next stop on their Jesus Trail Tour. A woman walks towards a school with open windows through which she hears children singing. The camera then takes us inside the school where we see a female teacher dressed in a pale blue dress and wearing a head scarf, leading the children in a Hebrew song while keeping time with her hands. As the teacher sees the flash of a camera, she tells the woman outside in Hebrew that taking pictures is not allowed. The woman outside recognizes the teacher as her friend Ellis de Vries from the war, and Ellis, in turn, recognizes the woman outside as her old friend Ronnie.

In this brief opening scene, the language shifts from Hebrew to English to Dutch, all rendered in one language through the subtitles as English. A certain

levelling of language may be observed by the English translation of Ronnie's pointed question "*Hoe ben jij hier in gods naam gekomen?*" as the rather flat translation in the subtitle "How did you end up here?" A much more colourful and literal translation of Ronnie's question would be "How in God's name" or "How on earth did you end up here?" Ellis' answer "I live here. This is my country" surprises Ronnie, because she did not even realize that Ellis was Jewish. It turns out that Ronnie is now married to the Canadian she met during the liberation of the Netherlands in 1945, and Ellis de Vries is now Rachel Rosenthal, married, with two children. The kibbutz where they live is called Kibbutz Stein, which is Rachel's maiden name. The whole movie will therefore focus on the mystery of who and what Rachel is, which begins in Holland in September 1944 and ends in May 1945, before we reconnect with the final scene of the movie which transports us back to Israel in 1956. At the end of the clip we see Rachel walking towards the water, where the camera focuses on her face as she is going into a pensive mode, reflecting about her past, which will form the extended flashback in the main part of the movie.

As this is the opening or establishing scene, the polyglot characters of Ellis and Ronnie immediately pique the viewer's curiosity and draw us deeper into the movie's narrative. They are both survivors of the war, which may well have something to do with their fluency in more than one language. It soon becomes clear, however, that Ronnie is a kind of sidekick of Ellis, a close companion who is subordinate to the one she accompanies. As the lead character, Ellis, as we discover later, is motivated by the honourable goal of serving in the Dutch resistance, whereas Ronnie is an opportunist. While Ronnie is merely visiting the state of Israel with her new Canadian husband in this opening clip, Ellis appears fully committed to the goals of Zionism as a nationalist and political movement dedicated to the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland. Ronnie's questions as to how she got there are also the viewer's questions. The use of multiple languages sets the stage for what is to come, which is the extended flashback of a nation at war.

Heterolingualism is commonly used in war films as a way of building up binary oppositions between friend and foe or good and evil. This is the case in the following clip.

### **Clip 2: Interrogation between Franken and Kuipers jr. (57:31-58:35)**

In this scene, Kuipers junior, a communist, has been rounded up by the Germans along with others in the Dutch resistance after they were caught bringing in a shipment of weapons hidden amongst crates of fruits and vegetables. The Germans will later execute Kuipers for this. Officer Franken speaks German, of course, and so does Kuipers jr. at first. However, after Franken tells Kuipers in



German that he is nothing but a “pile of shit on the road to German victory” (English subtitle), Kuipers responds in Dutch by saying “*Over een paar weken trappen de Russen jou de zee in, met al je beulen erbij*” (translated in the subtitle as ‘Soon the Russians will drive you into the sea. You and all your henchmen’). After being slapped in the face twice by Franken, the archetypal “bad German”, Kuipers calls him “*Vuile schoft*” (‘Filthy Bastard’). Franken then tells the German guards to “rinse out” Kuipers’ mouth for using such foul language, presumably for being called a “*Vuile schoft*”, but also for speaking to him in Dutch rather than German.

Clearly, German is the language of the enemy here, and Dutch the language of the victim. A Dutch viewer would immediately pick up the language shift, but a viewer who relies on subtitles alone might not so readily, as they are not tuned in to the acoustic differences between the two languages. Here, the use of German clearly underlines the antagonistic nature of the Germans in general, and officer Franken in particular. Franken is a particularly vile and ruthless character in the movie. He becomes the face of the Germans who otherwise remain nameless and soulless parts of a war machine that is driven by the evil ideology of National Socialism. The kind of Dutch defiance in the face of Nazi brutality on display in Kuipers’ language and behavior, by contrast, identifies him as a positive character. Dutch defiance against the Germans expressed through language is also a trope or a type of national branding commonly found in Dutch films dealing with the Second World War. The use of Dutch and German triggers suspense and maximizes audience identification; it builds an antagonistic opposition between Us, the good guys, and Them, the Other.

To equate the German language exclusively with the language of the Other is not Verhoeven’s style. Similarly, there are a sufficient number of traitors and collaborators among the Dutch characters to defy the notion that Dutch is the exclusive domain of the good. In Verhoeven’s filmic world, the lines are often blurred. The following clip shows how the viewer’s expectations are thwarted while hearing German.

### **Clip 3: Ellis meets Ludwig Müntze (31:38-33:31)**

This clip is a good example of a “meet-cute”, a plot device enabling the first meeting of the film’s romantic lead characters. It could also be called “Jew meets Nazi”. Rachel is now Ellis de Vries, with dyed blond hair and working for the Dutch resistance. A great beauty and a quick wit, she manages to finagle her way into the first class train compartment of SS Officer Ludwig Müntze and ingratiate herself with him. A singer before the war, Ellis explains that she is travelling with a phonograph and her own recordings. Rescuing her from having her identification papers checked, Müntze is chivalrous and charming. He became

interested in far-away places and studying geography, as he says, from passionately collecting stamps since the age of six. As an SS officer he is now able to collect stamps from all the countries that he has been stationed in since the war began: Poland, France, and now the Netherlands. Noting that he has not yet collected all the stamps in the Queen Wilhelmina series, we know that Ellis will do her utmost to provide him with these.



Figure 2. Screenshot from Zwartboek / Black Book. Reproduced from <http://www.filmjabber.com/>.

Although couching the invasion of neighbouring countries in terms of stamp collecting, thereby rendering harmless Nazi Germany's imperialist reach, Müntze is not a "bad German". German is spoken throughout this scene; there is no language shift. Although it is the language of the enemy, there are no negative associations with hearing German, and Ellis' own fluency in German, although tinged with a Dutch inflection, is a testament to her versatility, her gift for languages, and, perhaps, to the Dutch school system. These nuances are not easily picked up by the English subtitles, although the tension in this scene is palpable, as the audience knows so much more than the characters do.

Viewers of a Second World War movie, and particularly of a resistance movie, have been conditioned to associate the use of German with the enemy. As such it is the "acoustic equivalent" (Labate 2012, 20) of a Nazi or SS uniform that often identifies the enemy visually. Both contribute to the way the enemy is constructed. In this segment, however, our expectations are foiled, thereby deconstructing the enemy. The suspense that is initially triggered by the use of German, by Müntze's uniform, and by the fact that this is a meeting between

victim and perpetrator is lifted somewhat by being presented as a “meet-cute” of the love interest in the movie. This affects our perception of Müntze as the enemy or the “Other”, and goes a long way in aligning the viewer’s sympathies with him in spite of his uniform and the language they speak.

In the last clip we have reached a point in the film at which the chief dramatic conflict is worked out.

#### **Clip 4: Dramatic resolution (2:08:41-2:11:22)**

Gerben Kuipers, father of the younger Kuipers whom we saw being interrogated in the second clip, believes that Ellis de Vries is responsible for the death of his son and others in the resistance, as she was framed by the Germans to receive the blame. Her innocence is now proven with the help of the black book of the title that contains all the names of the Dutch collaborators in the movie and the Jewish people they betrayed. The dialogue is in Dutch and English. It is an example of vehicular matching that allows foreign languages to be used directly and realistically; while the Dutch characters speak Dutch, the British officer speaks English. However, the difference is that they all understand each other, which makes it a variation of vehicular matching in the sense in which Meir Sternberg uses it. Although the British Intelligence Officer, played by the British actor Nolan Hemmings, is not expected to speak or understand Dutch, the two Dutch characters speak and understand English perfectly, and have no difficulty switching from one to the other. Moreover, there is no resistance on the part of the Dutch characters to speak the other language, as there was in the earlier scene in which the young Kuipers refused to speak German with his tormentor. English is the language of the victor, of course, which goes a long way in explaining the amicability and linguistic harmony between the characters, and obviates any need to question the authenticity of the scene.

It is often said that true audiovisual translation or translation of any kind is impossible, but it is necessary at the same time. But in Verhoeven’s film it actually works quite well. It works, in part, because *Black Book* is a popular action film and not particularly wordy. The many years he spent in Hollywood may have helped him in this regard. Moreover, the presence of several languages within the same film as it was first released in the domestic market ensures a form of authenticity, reflecting the reality of the WWII setting, and requires a well-conceived linguistic strategy. Verhoeven has this. For example, he uses only native speakers for the foreign language parts; among them a number of major stars in the German film industry, such as Sebastian Koch and Christian Berkel, or British actors such as Nolan Hemmings mentioned above. The fact that *Black Book* is a Dutch-German-Belgian-UK co-production may have factored into this decision as well, in the sense that the contractual obligations surrounding

the international co-production may have required the use of actors from the participating nations. Foreign languages also participate in the narrative and thematic construction of the film. The multilingualism of the heroine, for instance, allows her to adapt and survive, giving her agency; Ellis is not a Jewish victim, and language becomes an instrument of (her) power. However, the heterolingual environment also reflects the moral relativism that characterizes so much of Verhoeven's work. Not all speakers of Dutch are good characters, for example, and not all speakers of German are bad. Even the use of Hebrew is compromised in light of the Arab-Israeli War of 1956 to which the movie's conclusion alludes, and which suggests that the heroine's life will continue to be a difficult one. In the final analysis, when several languages are involved within one film, the director has to rely on certain conventions to ensure spectatorial comfort. One of these conventions is subtitling and the other is suspension of disbelief. It is part of a pact with the audience and language is one part of this pact. The audience will buy into it as long as it is made clear how the film works with foreign languages and how it represents them.

In answering the questions raised in the introduction of this paper, I conclude that the English subtitling of Verhoeven's *Black Book* for distribution in the North-American market reduces its linguistic hybridity somewhat, thereby contributing to homogenization. However, it homogenizes it less than dubbing would. Moreover, because it is a popular action film, subtitling does not prevent an English speaker from engaging with the film. Given the spatial and temporal constraints of subtitling, we are nevertheless reminded that not everything can be converted from one language into another, thereby leading to a reduction in linguistic nuance for the secondary target audience of the North American market by comparison with the primary target audience, the Dutch viewer. Similarly, although North American viewers of the film are quite capable of differentiating between friend and foe, hero and villain, and Dutch and German from a narratological (i.e., having different positions and interests) or a visual point of view (i.e., their uniforms), they might not be able to readily distinguish between them from a linguistic point of view. Finally, the use of English as the language of the victor and the *lingua franca* between characters who do not share the same native language – as witnessed in both the first and the last clip – seems to point toward the emergence of a transnational community, advancing the brand nationalism of English in a globalized context. The English subtitles in this international co-production certainly contribute to this.

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John O. Buffinga was born in Groningen, the Netherlands. He received his Bachelor of Arts in French and German and his Master of Arts in German from Western University in London, Ontario, and his PhD in German from the University of British Columbia. He is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of German and Russian at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. His main areas of teaching, research, and publication are German literature of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – especially Rilke, Expressionism, and literature of the Weimar period – and the history of German cinema, with a focus on New German Cinema and post-unification German cinema. His interest in film also includes the cinema of the Netherlands, specifically the work of the Dutch filmmaker Paul Verhoeven.

### **L'Hétérolinguisme dans *Black book* (2006) de Paul Verhoeven**

Cet article discute le traitement des langues étrangères dans le film de Paul Verhoeven, *Black book* (2006), sur la deuxième guerre mondiale et l'Holocauste. En analysant quatre extraits qui montrent comment le milieu hétérolingue du film participe à la construction narrative et thématique du film, nous concluons que Verhoeven a une stratégie linguistique bien conçue. Notre étude montre non seulement que la présence de plusieurs langues peut être le résultat de sa nature de co-production néerlandaise-allemande-belge-anglaise, mais aussi qu'elle assure une forme d'authenticité qui reflète la réalité de la guerre de 40 dans un zone de combat entre des ennemis de nationalités diverses. Le sous-titrage anglais ajouté pour la distribution sur le marché nord-américain en réduit quelque peu l'hybridité linguistique, ce qui résulte en une certaine homogénéisation, mais moins que ne le ferait le doublage. Pour ce film populaire d'action, le sous-titrage n'empêche pas un public anglophone de s'engager avec le récit, mais étant donné ses contraintes spatiales et temporelles, il nous rappelle quand même qu'on ne peut pas tout traduire d'une langue en une autre et donc qu'il y a perte de nuances linguistiques pour le public cible secondaire (nord-américain) par comparaison avec le public cible primaire (néerlandais).

### **Anderstaligheid in Paul Verhoeven's *Zwartboek* (2006)**

Het onderwerp van dit artikel is de behandeling van vreemde talen in Paul Verhoeven's WWII / Holocaust-film *Zwartboek* (2006). Op basis van een analyse van vier fragmenten waarin de heterolinguale omgeving van de film een integraal deel uitmaakt van de narratieve en thematische opbouw van de film laat ik zien dat Verhoeven een zorgvuldig uitgedachte linguïstische strategie toepast. De aanwezigheid van meerdere talen in *Zwartboek* heeft wellicht ook wel iets te maken met het feit dat het hier om een Nederlands-Duits-Belgisch-Britse coproductie gaat, maar zorgt tegelijkertijd voor een vorm van authenticiteit die recht doet aan de werkelijkheid van de WWII setting, een oorlogsgebied waarin een gewapend conflict plaatsvindt tussen tegenstanders van verschillende nationaliteiten. De Engelse ondertiteling ten behoeve van de distributie van de film op de Noord-Amerikaanse markt reduceert deze linguïstische hybriditeit enigszins, wat resulteert in een zekere homogenisatie, maar minder dan het geval zou zijn als voor dubben was gekozen. Omdat het hier om een populaire actiefilm gaat staat de ondertiteling het engagement van het Engels-sprekende publiek met de film niet in de weg. Gegeven de ruimtelijke en temporele beperkingen inherent aan het ondertitelen worden we er desalniettemin aan herinnerd dat niet alles kan

worden omgezet van de ene taal naar de andere, en dat de ondertiteling noodgedwongen leidt tot een reductie in talige nuance voor het secundaire Noord-Amerikaanse publiek in vergelijking met het primaire publiek, de Nederlandse kijker.