MICHAEL CRONIN, *Translation goes to the movies*. London: Routledge, 2009. Pp.
145. Pb. $36.95.

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There has always been an abundance of literature on the technical difficulties linked
to movie translation (dubbing and subtitling), or more particularly extra-diegetic
processes of translation, that is, acts of translation that take place outside the
fiction. However, the aim of Cronin's book is original: to study representations
of translators as characters in movies, or intra-diegetic instances of translation.
The first chapter of the book presents historical and theoretical background.
Large in its breadth, it spans from the silent movies era to the contemporary recep-
tion of American movies. After this introductory chapter, the book is divided into
film genres (westerns, comedies, dramas, and science-fiction films) and fifteen films
are analyzed: *Stage coach* (1939), *The Alamo* (1960), *Dances with wolves* (1990), *A
night at the opera* (1935), *The great dictator* (1940), *Borat* (2006), *Lost in trans-
lation* (2003), *Babel* (2006), *The interpreter* (2005), and *Star wars* (the original
trilogy 1977–1983 and the three prequels 1999–2005).

In the second chapter of the book (i.e. the first part of analysis), Cronin directs
his attention to three seminal westerns: *Stagecoach*, *The Alamo*, and *Dances with
wolves*. The study of translators and interpreters in these fictions permits him to
"explor[e] the complex and highly charged politics of language and translation in
screen treatments of the great move westwards" (xv). The third chapter is about
comedies and how, in these films, the locus of humor is often in the accent and
the nonnative syntax of characters. Dealing with "pseudo-language" (like the
pseudo-German that Hynkel/Chaplin speaks in *The great dictator*) and
"pseudo-translations" (in *Borat*, since Sacha Baron Cohen is obviously only pre-
tending to be a foreign speaker of English), he argues that "denying the utter-
ances of others the status of language-that-can-be-translated is to reduce them
to the condition of animals" (66). The fourth chapter shows how translation
tries to bridge the local to the global. For example, Cronin argues that *Lost in
translation* reminds the spectator of the "local realities of translation on a multi-
lingual planet" (85) and that "the real loss in translation is a loss of communica-
tive innocence. That is, the notion that speakers of a global lingua franca can
somehow expect to be readily and instantly understood across the planet" (88).
The last chapter, on science-fiction films, is a slight disappointment. Dealing
with alien languages and how language variety can impede democracy, it does
not bring together the stimulating threads of reflection that Cronin weaved in
the previous chapters.

Despite its flaws, the book is an important addition to the field. It reminds the reader that "translating the world into English makes it a safe and recognizable place with nothing to disrupt the monoglot fiction apart from the occasional untranslated residue of language shift" (69). The book is very readable and should appeal to students in translation departments as well as students of linguistics who are interested in representations of language and culture in the media.

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ANATOLY LIBERMAN, *Word origins and how we know them: Etymology for everyone*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Pp. vii, 325. Pb. $14.95.

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Etymology is not to be confused with entomology. The latter deals with insects, although so too may the former, but in a completely different way. "For example, the origin of the word *bug* has bothered (one might even say bugged) researchers for decades" (6). However, both *etymology* and *entomology* take us back to ancient Greece.

Such is the untiringly jovial and hilarious tone of this fascinating book. Presented in eighteen chapters of varying lengths, typically running from ten to twenty pages each, it is written with a verve rarely come across in introductory books. Liberman's aim is to captivate the uninitiated and keep them spellbound by the piquant delights of this otherwise arid landscape. He does this by, among other things, playing with words all the time and, in so doing, proving how the study of words and the way they work and evolve over time can be a source of great fun in and of itself. Following the opening chapter, where Liberman offers the reader an idea of what etymology is all about, Ch. 2 explains the fundamental distinction between words and things—the principle that underlies all theories of representation. This is followed by seven chapters dealing with different principles of word formation: "Sound imitative words," "Sound symbolism," "Folk etymology," "Words based on reduplication," "Infixation," "Disguised compounds," and "Suffixes, prefixes, misdivision and blends."

Chs. 10 and 11 both deal with names of celebrities, but in different ways. Whereas the former deals with famous persons who, so to speak, lent their names to products named after them (such as *macintosh*—or, as Liberman reminds us, *mackintosh*, as it is often "misspelled"—meaning a raincoat, before it began to refer, thanks to a different person with the same name, to a