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THE PERCEPTION OF AMERICAN ADOLESCENT CULTURE THROUGH THE
DUBBING AND FANSUBBING OF A SELECTION OF US TEEN SERIES FROM
1990 TO 2013.

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THESIS CONVENTIONS

- American English is used throughout this dissertation. For consistency purposes, any occurrences of British spelling in quotations have been changed to American spelling.
- Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese into English are my own.
- Episodes of television shows are referred to using the widespread format “NSxNE”, where the first number indicates the season to which the episode belongs and the second number indicates the episode itself. For instance, the pilot episode of a show is listed as 1x01. Episode titles are also listed; subsequent references only list the titles.
- “AV” stands for “audiovisual”, while “AVT” stands for “audiovisual translation.”

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INTRODUCTION

The impact of television on spoken and written language has always been a popular topic in television studies, given the televisual medium's power to draw viewers towards an ideal thematic, cultural, and linguistic center, promoting literacy and favoring the adoption of a unified, standardized language that provided a shared alternative to regional varieties. Audiovisual translation studies have frequently embraced this 'top-down' model, illustrating the strategies employed by translators and adaptors to create localized versions that served the same standardizing function in their specific destination markets. Viewers in different countries were provided with a growing corpus of translated dialogues which often exerted a strong influence on their respective target languages, especially in countries which tended to favor dubbing over subtitling practices (henceforth referred to as 'dubbing countries'). While subtitling allows for the coexistence of the source and target languages, albeit after the implementation of the necessary reduction and compression techniques to the latter, dubbing entails a complete replacement of the original dialogue track with the translated version, leaving no vestiges of the original script. Visual constraints obviously affect the translation process: images and plot references constantly highlight the "cultural otherness" (Pavesi 2005: 27, my translation) of the dubbed text and point at the "overtness" (House 1997) of the translation, signaling that the target text "does not purport to be an original" (Munday 2012: 93). A frequent example are the New York City shots which serve as a backdrop to countless situation comedies, such as *Friends* (Kevin Bright, Martha Kaufmann, and David Crane, NBC, 1994 – 2004) or *Seinfeld* (Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld, NBC, 1989 – 1998). Nonetheless, traditional dubbing has often succeeded in luring viewers into its make-believe, prompting them to sign a fully binding contract that represents a duplicitous 'willing suspension of disbelief.' Not only do recipients of dubbed products subscribe to the rules of the fictional worlds they enter, they also take a further, voluntary leap into the illusory dimension that they deliberately

choose not to recognize as the double mystification it technically constitutes.¹ A consensual participation in this multi-layered con game is the *conditio sine qua non* to enjoy fictional texts in their dubbed versions, yet until the late twentieth century it was also extremely impractical to approach such products in a different manner, since the highly limited availability of original texts in dubbing countries made it almost impossible for local viewers to retrieve information on pre-adaptation dialogues. Over the decades following its inception, Italy's own longstanding tradition of high-quality dubbing performed by talented voice actors contributed to the general perception of dubbed versions as the *actual* audiovisual products, allowing both cinema and television to conceal the filter of translation (and oftentimes of censorship as well) behind the linguistic bridge that enabled a population with limited exposure to foreign languages to appreciate cultural works produced beyond its national borders.

For over sixty years, such a bridge remained non-negotiable, both because many Italian viewers lacked the language skills necessary to approach non-Italophone products (which were also much harder to retrieve in the pre-digital era) and because the audience as a whole was so accustomed to dubbing that it rarely even questioned the effectiveness and the deontology of this form of translation. The role of dubbing as the unchallenged vehicle for foreign AV products does not necessarily imply an intrinsic deceitfulness: in spite of the political agenda behind its introduction and many of its applications², the *doppiaggio* tradition has repeatedly shown its ability to produce remarkable linguistic feats³ which display true dedication and a full mastery of the art of adaptation, in varying degrees of fidelity to the original texts. Nonetheless, the traditional perception of dubbing as a sheer comprehension facilitator constituted a veritable *passe-partout*

¹ A case in point is that of the sit-com *The Nanny* (Fran Drescher and Peter Marc Jacobson, 1993 – 1999), in which the leading character and her relatives were originally a Jewish-American family from Queens, NY, but became immigrant Italian-Americans from Frosinone in the dubbed version (see Frezza 1998; Bucaria and Chiaro 2007: 104; Barra 2013: 107). Unaware of the shift, Italian viewers in the 1990s enjoyed the show and its 'Italian' humor, perhaps even more than they would have enjoyed a version based on the original, culture-specific Jewish jokes (although, admittedly, many scenes like the Passover *seder* sequence in episode 4x21, 'The Passed-Over Story,' make much more sense in their original context, rather than camouflaged as a birthday dinner or as similar, non-Jewish rituals).

² See **paragraph 2.6.1**.

³ An illustrious example, quoted in numerous studies on dubbing (Galassi 1994: 62; Sandrelli 2000: 101-115; Pavesi 2005: 16-17; Chiaro 2006: 202; Ranzato 2010: 25), is Sergio Jacquier's adaptation of Norman McLeod's *Horse Feathers* (*I fratelli Marx al college*, 1932), which featured an ingenious rendition of the original pun on the homophone 'seal' (seal of approval vs. Phocid mammal) as "Focalizziamo!" (Let's focus!) to account for the presence of an actual, living seal ('foca'), on which the gag was based.

which granted translators and adaptors relative freedom in the rendition of texts that were still going to pass as the actual products, regardless of the changes that had been implemented. Until the inception of digital video storage, only a highly limited number of viewers had the opportunity to access original, non-dubbed texts (assuming they wanted or needed to). Incompatibility issues between the encoding standards used in different world regions (PAL, NTSC, and SECAM), difficulties in information retrieval, and expensive postage fees discouraged mail orders of foreign videocassettes, while pioneer attempts to introduce subtitled movies on the Italian market⁴ or in Italian cinemas⁵ were mostly perceived as a niche operation targeting language learners or intellectually-minded viewers. This general scenario enhanced the illusion that dubbing could act as a mere ferry boat, delivering unfiltered, unadulterated versions of original AV products that were received not as translations, but as the texts themselves: as Szarkowska (2005: 7, quoted in Maestri 2010: 43) notes, “a dubbed film ceases to be a foreign film in order to become just a film.”

This collective perception underwent a major change with the digital and IT revolution that started towards the end of the twentieth century, as the increasing availability of AV texts in foreign languages eventually challenged the monopoly of dubbing and the viewers’ own relationships with dubbed products. The advent of the DVD established an entirely different picture for AV translators and for their target audiences, as Jorge Díaz-Cintas (2005: 3) highlights:

The arrival of DVD can be considered the most significant advance in our field. It is having the greatest impact in the way audiovisual programs are sold and marketed, and it has changed subtitling as a translation practice. Since bursting onto the market, its rise has been unstoppable: “DVD became the most successful consumer electronics product of all time in less than three years of its introduction. In 2003, six years after introduction, there were over 250 million DVD playback devices worldwide” (DVD Demystified, 2004). The DVD is a versatile disc on which audio and video material as well as all types of electronic documents can be recorded and reproduced. It is a new generation of optical disc that, although very similar to the CD, is essentially faster and has a greater memory capacity, a potential recognized by the audiovisual industry. Perhaps its most significant advantage is the possibility of incorporating up to 8 versions of the same program dubbed into different languages, and up to 32 subtitle tracks in several other languages.

⁴ For instance, *Speak Up* magazine launched its *English Movie Collection* in the early 1990s, offering its readers the opportunity to purchase VHS tapes containing English and American movies with English subtitles and a printed version of the script that included vocabulary explanations.

⁵ In the early 1990s selected movie theaters like the Tiffany in Bologna (now called Chaplin) showed original-language movies on specific, usually least-crowded days of the week such as Mondays or Tuesdays, offering discounted tickets for students and teachers.

It is still most likely that many DVD purchasers in dubbing countries only watch the version dubbed into their native language. Nonetheless, the sheer fact that DVDs can accommodate different audio and subtitle tracks increases the audience's potential exposure to original foreign texts and to the use of subtitles as a means to enhance their language skills or to taste the original flavor of their favorite movies or shows while still understanding dialogues and plot developments. A parallel trend is currently gaining ground in television broadcasting in Italy, as more and more networks offer their viewers the opportunity to switch to the original audio track or to load original subtitles for their most popular shows.

Yet the main factor behind the paradigm shift through which dubbing is slowly losing its grip on the cartel it had established in Italy and in other countries is probably a consequence of the Internet revolution. Even in the age of slow, expensive dial-up connections, listservs and the early World Wide Web provided an amount of data that grew exponentially and allowed users to retrieve information on the pre-dubbing versions of their chosen AV texts, perhaps in the form of movie/episode scripts or additional, undubbed content such as promotional trailers or cut scenes. The diffusion of broadband Internet and of countless file sharing opportunities through streaming websites or peer-to-peer networks broke the last remaining barrier, allowing for the circulation of full-length AV texts that could be retrieved rapidly at any time, both through official, subscription-based services such as NetFlix and through unauthorized 'cyberlockers'⁶ or file-sharing clients. Aside from the legal implications of copyright infringement, which would need a separate dissertation to be explored in their entirety,⁷ it is crucial to highlight that the increased, almost instantaneous accessibility of foreign AV products triggered monumental changes in viewer practices. The charge-free (albeit illegal) circulation of movies and TV shows had a strong appeal in countries where until not long ago a single-season DVD box set could easily cost as much as sixty

⁶ Online file storage providers like FileServe, RapidShare, and the now defunct MegaVideo and MegaUpload.

⁷As specified in the disclaimer on page I, "this dissertation does not promote, support, or condone copyright infringement, piracy, or any other illegal activities involving copyrighted material. The phenomena of file sharing, streaming, fansubbing, and all other activities referring to the unauthorized consumption and distribution of copyrighted texts are referenced for research purposes only and should not be construed as an encouragement to engage in said activities."

Euros; yet being able to access original material from one's own computer mere hours after the US broadcast has definitely played an equally important, if not a larger role in the development of a new perspective towards undubbed texts and towards subtitling in traditional dubbing countries, especially with regards to television shows.

Social networks, gamification tools (see paragraph **1.9**), and other participatory platforms have created a whole new virtual environment in which moviegoers and TV show fans can discuss their favorite topics with like-minded people, be they friends, acquaintances, or complete strangers. While most movies can be discussed over a larger span, since viewing times may vary considerably in different areas and since films tend to be self-concluded, television-based dialogue tends to rely on a faster viewer response due to its weekly recurrence and to the risk of 'spoilers' (comments which give away important details on plot turns, thus 'spoiling' the viewing experience for unwary users). Rather than being limited to the verbal analysis of AV texts, media discussion is increasingly incorporating forms of user appropriation and 'remediation,' as technology offers more and more freely available tools for visual elaboration, video remixes, and other forms of commentary, appreciation, or satire (see **1.8**). Fan remediation is inscribed in what Lawrence Lessig (2008: 68), rephrasing John Philip Sousa, critic of the US copyright system in the early nineteenth century, defines as a "Read/Write" culture, as opposed to a "Read/Only" culture:

In the language of today's computer geeks, we could call the culture [of amateur creativity] a "Read/Write" ("RW") culture: [...] ordinary citizens 'read' their culture by listening to it or by reading representations of it (e.g., musical scores). This reading, however, is not enough. Instead, they (or at least the "young people of the day") add to the culture they read by creating and re-creating the culture around them.

The analogy is to the permissions that might attach to a particular file on a computer. If the user has "RW" permissions, then he is allowed to both read the file and make changes to it. If he has "Read/Only" permissions, he is allowed only to read the file.

The opportunity to interact with one's favorite texts not just in terms of discussion, but also of an active, creative remediation adds a supplementary level to the viewing experience and requires an even faster appraisal of the original texts. The viral circulation of cleverly assembled Internet 'memes' containing visual puns as an instant response to social and cultural events illustrates the

extent to which a timely participation in this global dialogue is crucial to a full, unspoiled experience of said events.⁸ This urgency has prompted many viewers in traditional dubbing countries to make an active effort to overcome linguistic barriers in order to be able to follow the rapidly expanding transmedia discourse on their favorite TV shows as soon as possible after each episode's premiere in its country of origin (i.e. mainly in the US, since the market for serial fiction is still largely dominated by North American productions, aside from the recent upsurge in shows from the UK and from other countries).⁹ A closer approach to the source culture in which television shows are produced and to the specific language used in each product has thus led to a significantly stronger demand for translational solutions which are simultaneously faster and more accurate in terms of fidelity, prompting an escalation in the phenomenon of 'fansubbing' in many dubbing countries such as Italy, Spain, Brazil, and Argentina (as highlighted, among others, by Barra and Guarnaccia 2008; Müller Galhardi 2009; Innocenti and Maestri 2010; Bold 2012; Orrego Carmona 2012 and forthcoming; Massidda 2013; see chapter 2). Amateur subtitling traces back to the late 1980s and to the analogical circulation of Japanese animes,¹⁰ yet, with the diffusion of digital encoding, broadband Internet, and freeware subtitling software, the entire creation and distribution process of non-professional subtitles has become exponentially faster, easier, and cheaper, if not altogether gratuitous, aside from the time and skill investment on the amateur subtitlers' part (which is not to be underestimated, since it usually entails complying with tight deadlines and working late at night without compensation; see 2.8).

The increasing diffusion of fansubbing is responsible for a major evolution in television viewing in Italy and in several other dubbing countries. A large part of the audience probably still

⁸ For instance, when AMC aired the *Breaking Bad* series finale on September 29, 2013, ItaSA fansubber toppeddu85 claimed he would refrain from accessing Facebook until he managed to watch the episode (Facebook status, 2014); similarly, seriophile Carlo Trimarchi recently posted a status in which he observed that if his Facebook feed was spoiler-free on a Monday morning, the *Game of Thrones* episode that had aired in the US on the previous night must be either bad or devoid of significant deaths, joking on the show's perpetually high body count (Facebook status, 2014).

⁹ Over the past few years, British television has produced a number of hit shows as varied as costume drama (*Downton Abbey*, Julian Fellowes, 2010 - present), detective fiction (*Sherlock*, Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, 2010 - present), and thrillers/mysteries (*Broadchurch*, Chris Chibnall, 2013 - present; *Utopia*, Dennis Kelly, 2013 - present). Successful productions from other countries include thrillers (*The Killing*, Denmark; Søren Sveistrup, 2007 - present), mysteries (*Top of the Lake*, Australia; Jane Campion and Gerard Lee, 2013), and supernatural dramas (*Les Revenants*, France; Fabrice Gobert, 2012 - present).

¹⁰ According to the website Anime Nation, the first fansubbed product was a 1986 episode of *Lupin III* on VHS. <http://www.animenation.net/blog/2001/12/27/ask-john-what-are-fansubs/> (accessed June 7, 2014).

favors casual viewing and prefers to unwind on the couch in front of a product that speaks their own language, willingly accepting the limitations of dubbing in exchange for an easier consumption, or perhaps not even questioning the fidelity of the dubbed version. Nonetheless, a growing number of viewers (see **2.8.1** for estimated figures) acknowledges the unavoidable gap between original and dubbed texts and looks for alternative translations that preserve more of the original content and form and overcome the usually lengthy delay that the adaptation process entails. The recognition of the existence of alternative forms of AVT signals a radical change in the relationship between viewers and source texts: dubbing is no longer seen as a sheer, unobtrusive vehicle, and the spreading awareness of its limitations, especially in terms of excessive domestication and of delivery delay, calls for a reassessment of the entire AVT system in dubbing countries. When time is of the essence and more and more viewers become aware of the potential fallibility of dubbing, AVT providers need to review their translation and distribution processes in order to cater to an audience that is no longer willing to accept dubbing as a monolithic, unquestionable authority. Some Italian networks (most notably, Sky Italia) have started to respond to these new needs, offering their viewers a subtitled versions of recently-aired episodes of US shows and promoting an unprecedented acceleration of the dubbing process; yet many other entertainment providers are still clinging to an outdated model which will eventually prove impracticable as an increasing amount of faster and less domesticating alternatives becomes available, be they offered by amateur or professional translators. However, the present study is not to be read as a criticism of dubbing *per se*, since Italy has always boasted (and continues to boast) an impressive number of trained and dedicated translators, adaptors, and voice actors. What should be adjusted is the outdated system within which these professionals operate, which is modeled on a superseded conception of the Italian audience and regulated by an obsolete collective labor agreement that does not provide acceptable compensation and working conditions. At the time of writing (June 2014), dubbing professionals are on a three-week strike to obtain a new contract that offers adequate salaries and reasonable shifts; the agreement that is still in use expired over three years ago and is causing a de-

qualification of dubbing-related professions and favoring the proliferation of underpaid or unreported employment. A concrete recognition of the value of skilled professionals is thus not only an ethical imperative, but also a necessary step for the dubbing industry to be able to offer a competitive service in an era in which it no longer detains the monopoly of the AVT sector. Delivering high-quality translations in reasonably fast times is only possible through a system that values skilled labor, rejects dumping strategies that favor depreciation and quality loss, and correctly assesses the new developments in television consumption in order to offer products that actually cater to the specific needs of evolving Italian audiences.

This dissertation thus aims at providing an overview of the mutual influence between the evolution of television viewing practices and that of the AVT scenario in Italy, presenting data that have been gathered over four years of television show analysis and audience monitoring (2010-2014), in the hope that more and more Italian AVT providers and networks will acknowledge the deep paradigm shift that has taken place over the past decade and reassess their workflow and strategies accordingly, providing dubbed and subtitled versions that match the higher quality of recent television productions and function as tools for language learners and teachers, given the powerful habit-forming potential of serial television viewing. Over the past few years, AVT studies scholars have produced a number of compelling essays on fansubbing and new forms of AVT (Barra and Guarnaccia 2009; Lee 2010; Innocenti and Maestri 2010; Bold 2011; Vellar 2009 and 2011; Pérez-González 2012; Orrego Carmona 2012 and forthcoming; Massidda 2013), using cogent case studies to expand the theories and analyses illustrated in the existing AVT literature (among others, Luyken and Herbst 1991, Baccolini et al. 1994, Zabalbeascoa 2005 and 2008; Zabalbeascoa et al. 2005; Chaume 2004a and 2004b, Orero 2004, Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2005, Antonini and Chiaro 2005 and 2009, Chiaro 2006, Pavesi 2005, Chiaro et al. 2008 and 2010, Díaz-Cintas 2008 and 2009, Antonini 2008 and 2009, Freddi and Pavesi 2009, Perego and Taylor 2012 on dubbing; Ivarsson 1992, Gambier 1995 and 2003, Ivarsson and Carroll 1998, Gottlieb 1997 and 2005, Karamitroglou 1998 and 2000, Carroll 2004, Díaz-Cintas 2004 and 2005, Pedersen 2005 and 2011,

Perego 2007, Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2007 on subtitling; Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sanchez 2006, O'Hagan 2009 and 2011 on fansubbing).

The goal of the present study is to combine the AVT studies approach with a socio-cultural perspective that draws from television studies, new media studies, and fandom studies, positing the contemporary television audience as a type of “viewership 2.0” (Casarini 2012 and forthcoming), an audience that inhabits and informs our current “convergence culture” (Jenkins 2006a) and performs an active form of television viewing based on the re-composition and appropriation of “expanded texts” (Carini 2009, my translation) that spread over different media (Jenkins 2006a; Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008; Scaglioni 2011; Jenkins et al. 2013), interact with their paratexts (Gray 2010) and prompt a creative remediation. This combined approach originates from the acknowledgement of the higher craftsmanship of contemporary television authors; Chiara Checcaglini (2010: 4; my translation) highlights that

serial television has reached such a high degree of textual and productive complexity that it is just as valuable as the ‘nobler’ cinematic text [and should thus be analyzed] using the tools that have already been to deconstruct and study the elements of the language of film, while recognizing the specificity of television shows on the other hand.

The recent debate on quality television (Jancovich and Lyons 2003; McCabe and Akass 2007) and cult television (Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson 2004; Scaglioni 2006; Abbott 2010; Maio 2013) provides a measure of the depth and complexity of the television shows produced in the past two decades and sheds light on the new ways in which television series are experienced, based on Umberto Eco’s notion of “a completely furnished world” (Eco 1987: 198) which the audience is eager to inhabit and which tends to establish an osmotic relationship with the viewers’ real lives through ancillary products, “transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins 2007) and triggers for creative remediation. Luca Barra (2009: 143; my translation) also remarks that “the recent cult for television shows has led to an unprecedented focus on fidelity that is both philological and fetishistic.” Scholarly attention and downright worshipping constitute two sides of the same coin: while the former is generally worthy of praise and the latter can prove dangerous and biased when it

overlooks the reasons behind domestication strategies, both audience responses signal a growing awareness of the inescapable divergence between each source text and its target versions.

The consequently decreasing applicability of the traditional monopolistic AVT paradigm based on dubbing alone warrants a thorough assessment of past and current situations in order to gather data upon which AVT providers in dubbing countries can base their future strategies. Rather than compiling a prescriptive model, which would hardly be functional in a constantly evolving scenario, the goal of this dissertation is to analyze a selection of case studies spanning over the past 25 years, creating a reference corpus that maps AVT trends against the faster-paced evolution of televisual texts and of viewing practices. The American adolescent drama constitutes an ideal genre to investigate the evolution of the Italian audience's linguistic awareness. With its spotlight on teenage characters and its target adolescent demographic, the teen drama offers a glimpse onto a dimension with both steadfast *tòpoi*, settings, and character types, and vibrant, ever-changing sociolects, thus creating a two-fold challenge for translators and adaptors, who need to deal with the genre's intrinsic self-referential dynamics and with a mercurial language that can rarely have perfect interlinguistic equivalents. The corpus compiled for this dissertation comprises six popular teen dramas, which will be analyzed from a perspective that combines sociological, intercultural, and AVT studies in order to compare the depiction of the American youth culture and its dubbed reflection onto the imagination of the Italian audience. The analysis aims at tracing the diachronic evolution of both constructions as shaped by the development of the genre, the growing emancipation of the teen generation, and the translation strategies determined by specific methodological choices, visual constraints, and sometimes by clear censorship agendas. As Diana Bianchi (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 184) highlights,

in the case of television, because of its popular and populist nature, it may be expected that the adaptation of imported texts is more deeply affected by ideological constraints than would occur in other media. In addition, such manipulations are more likely to take place with respect to 'sensitive' areas of representation that are especially important from a symbolic point of view, as they are the repositories of hopes and anxieties. The representation of youth is certainly one of these 'charged' cultural areas and one that in recent years has found increasing embodiment in the figure of the teenager, particularly in many TV fictional series produced in the USA.

The present study will therefore identify the core elements of televised teen fiction, such as language, settings, character types, relationships, typical issues, and cultural references, and gauge the effectiveness or failure of the Italian renditions, thus producing a cartography of the peculiar, ambivalent construction of American youth culture as it is perceived and altered through an external gaze and with which the (mainly) adolescent Italian public establishes a double relationship of identification and alterity, of fusion and divergence. By incorporating the parallel and often complementary approaches provided by cultural studies and screen translation studies, this dissertation will explore the multiple signification codes intrinsic to AV productions: the combined analysis of verbal, visual, aural, and diegetic elements will allow for an all-round depiction of the Italian transposition of a type of youth culture that is so conspicuously characterized and so often exported as adolescence in the US.

Dissertation structure

The opening chapters introduce theoretical framework on which this study is based; **chapter 1** illustrates the state of the art of media studies and fandom studies, while **chapter 2** provides an overview of audiovisual translation literature with a deeper focus on dubbing and fansubbing practices. **Chapter 3** focuses on methodology, illustrating the process of corpus composition through the selection of specific episodes of six particularly representative TV shows among the extensive array of US teen dramas. **Chapter 4** traces the lineage of televised adolescent fiction in the so-called ‘teenpic,’ a genre that originated in the 1950s and that experienced various resurgences in later decades, including a crucial renaissance in the 1980s, which is responsible for many of the motifs that still recur in high school-based TV shows. The empirical analysis conducted on the six shows is then presented in the following three chapters, each based on a different phase of the evolution of audience practices. **Chapter 5** analyzes the birth of the teen drama in the pre-

Internet era, focusing on the pivotal *Beverly Hills, 90210* (Darren Star and Aaron Spelling, Fox, 1990 – 2000). **Chapter 6** proceeds to study two cardinal shows from the late 1990s and early 2000s, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Joss Whedon, WB/UPN, 1997 – 2003) and *Dawson's Creek* (Kevin Williamson, WB, 1998 – 2003), which heavily relied on intertextual references and prompted a first audience interaction through the then-blooming World Wide Web. **Chapter 7** completes the overview through the analysis of three contemporary shows that are strikingly 'transmedia' (*Glee*; Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan, Fox, 2009 - present) or strongly informed by tech slang and acronyms (*Gossip Girl*; Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage, The CW, 2007 – 2012) or by geek culture (*The Big Bang Theory*; Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady, CBS, 2007 - present). A comparative analysis of these three shows in their original, dubbed, and fansubbed versions will highlight the divergence between the dubbing-only paradigm and the growing practices of active audience appropriation and remediation. The final chapter illustrates the **Conclusions** that can be drawn from the empirical analysis and review possible directions for future research in this area.

Chapter presentation

Chapter 1 focuses on television, new media, and fandom studies, describing the model of convergence culture introduced by Henry Jenkins (2006), which posits an interdependence of all areas of the contemporary "mediascape" (Appadurai 1990) and, as Maher (2008: online) summarizes,

the tendency of modern media creations to attract a much greater degree of audience participation than ever before, to the point that some are actually influenced profoundly by their fanbase, becoming almost a form of interactive storytelling; and the phenomenon of a single franchise being distributed through and impacting a range of media delivery methods.

As previously mentioned, transmedia storytelling implies a double textual "overflow" (Brooker 2001: 456-472; Carini 2009: 30 and 54-61), comprising a 'top-down' text dissemination over

different media operated by cultural gatekeepers ('media overflow') and a grassroots, 'bottom-up' re-composition, remediation, and re-circulation enabled by new technologies ('cultural overflow'). The new dynamics of cultural production and consumption will thus be analyzed through the lens of fandom studies (Lewis 1992; Jenkins 1992, 2006a, 2006b; Brooker 2001, 2002; Hills 2002; Scaglioni 2006, etc.), focusing on the new approach to serial television, which increasingly requires an active effort on the viewers' part through remediation, gamification, and 'second-screen' companion applications that viewers use on their smartphones or tablets while watching their shows on their 'first' screen. The qualitative evolution of TV series will also be analyzed as both a cause and a consequence of the development of specific, interpretive spectatorship skills; as television was gradually relieved of its stigma of shallow entertainment and as the idea of quality television (Jancovich and Lyons 2003; McCabe and Akass 2007) emerged in the small-screen universe, TV shows developed increasingly specific identities and languages and the teen drama evolved into its various subgenres, providing multifarious renditions of the American teenage culture and of its subcultures. The original and the Italian versions of these different fictional universes of adolescence and their highly distinctive sociolects will be analyzed in the empirical part of this dissertation (**chapters 5-7**).

Chapter 2 illustrates the foundations of audiovisual translation studies, highlighting the different challenges imposed by screen translation as opposed to mono-modal translation: the coexistence of different channels of communication in multimedia products entails a higher number of translational constraints than a single-medium text, since visuals, gestures, sound effects, and any other non-verbal components that might be present tend to generate additional restrictions for translators. Audiovisual translation is thus often defined as a type of "constrained translation" (Titford 1982: 113; Mayoral et al. 1988; quoted in Díaz-Cintas 2004: online), since the AV translation process is deeply affected by issues of spatial, temporal, articulatory, and kinetic synchrony, aside from the meaning and style-related difficulties intrinsic to any sort of translation. Additional challenges arise from "culture-bound translation problems" (Leppihalme 1997: 2),

which occur when the target audience is (or rather, is deemed to be) unfamiliar with a part of the source text that is deeply embedded in the source culture and that cannot be explained through footnotes, as one would do with a written text. These instances are likely to generate what Antonini and Chiaro have defined as “lingua-cultural drops in translation voltage” (2005: 39), perceivable alterations of an otherwise regular stream of translational electricity. Such drops are most likely to burst the viewers’ “environmental bubble” (Cohen 1972: 166-167, quoted in Katan and Straniero-Sergio 2003: 133) and cultural references constitute the core issue upon which the debate over dubbing and fansubbing has been pivoting. Chapter 2 therefore explores the different areas in which these problems tend to occur: culture-bound references in general; Verbally Expressed Humor (Chiaro 2004 and 2006); sociolects and idiolects; intratextual and intertextual references. The rest of the chapter analyzes the dubbing and fansubbing scenario in Italy, highlighting the different perspectives from which these two practices tend to tackle culture-bound issues and suggesting a joint-expertise approach that might combine the dubbers’ higher proficiency in providing a smooth rendition and the fansubbers’ generally deeper knowledge of the source culture in which televisual texts are produced and of each specific text.

Chapter 3 describes the *modus operandi* designed for this dissertation, detailing the reasons behind the adoption of an interdisciplinary, systematic approach (Scaglioni in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009; Barra 2012) rooted in Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory (1978a, 1978b, 2005) and envisioning televisual texts as embedded in both their source culture and source language and within the various ranks of the television polysystem (single episodes, single seasons, complete shows, the television medium, and the mediasphere as a whole). The increasingly influential role that audiences are playing within the television system also warranted a partial monitoring of the segment of audience response that can be gauged through social platforms, in order to provide an overview that is not only based on the dissertation author’s experience as a viewer, but also reflects the general attitude of the technology-oriented portion of the fandoms of the three most recent

shows analyzed in this study: *Glee*, *Gossip Girl*, and *The Big Bang Theory*.¹¹ Conversely, fansubs and the current fan discourse will not be analyzed for the three remaining shows (*Beverly Hills, 90210*, *Dawson's Creek*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), given the long hiatus between the production of the dubbed versions of these series and that of the corresponding fansubs. However, relevant information on fan appreciation at the time of the first Italian broadcast of each of these shows will still provide a precious tool to frame the evolution of the response of the Italian audience to teen fiction. The six series were selected for their relevance for the Italian audience and for the specific translational challenges that each of them entailed, in order to construct a representative overview of the teen drama scenario between the early 1990s and the early 2010s; the episode selection process was based on thematic content, language/translational issues, and fandom response. **Chapter 3** thus also describes the process through which textual samples were collected in specifically designed tables, cataloguing transfer strategies through an adapted version of Jan Pedersen's taxonomy of Extra-Cultural References (2005: online).

Chapter 4 traces the roots of adolescent television shows in their cinematic predecessor, analyzing the advent of the teenpic in the post-World War II Affluent Society and its evolution throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Adolescence as a distinct socio-cultural category emerged in the 1950s (Tonolo 1999: 31; Shary 2005: 1) with the growth of America's teen population and its gradual emancipation through a slower transition from childhood to adulthood and through an increasingly higher spending power (Shary 2002: 4). The film industry soon realized the potential of this new, expanding market and began to produce movies focusing on the dilated process of self-definition and on the growing generation gap between the increasingly autonomous adolescents and their concerned parents. To analyze these two themes, **Chapter 4** focuses on the chronotope of the high school as the typical socio-spatial frame of American adolescence, given its status as a semi-free, semi-constrained reality in which teenagers discover how to define their own

¹¹ The comments quoted in this dissertation are not meant to be considered as statistically representative, but rather as randomized samples illustrating that new trends are developing across different fandoms, signaling an evolution which, while not ascribable to each show's audience as a whole, is still significant enough to warrant a revision of AV strategies that are becoming obsolete.

identities by adopting or rejecting the semiotic and linguistic traits to which they are exposed and which the global audience has now learned to recognize. The analysis of the ‘high school teen movie’ subgenre thus explores the process of self-definition through which both characters and viewers learn to shape their personalities by conforming or diverging from the set of stereotypes with which they are presented. John Hughes’s *The Breakfast Club* (1986) constitutes a representative case study to describe the construction of personal identities and interpersonal relationships among fictional adolescents, in that it epitomizes the hierarchic systematization of the manifold representations of the Self as a social construct (Goffman 1959; Rosenberg 1988), but also highlights how each categorization actually transcends its own borders, triggering a continuous re-negotiation of one’s own self-perception. The analysis of this sense-making process is a crucial premise to understand teen television, both in diegetic terms (consider the countless plot twists based on the subversion of the initial pigeonholing of the characters) and on an intertextual level, as a consequence of the growing self-referentiality of the televisual universe. **Chapter 4** ends with an overview of the evolution of teen television, positioning the selected series within a diachronic framework that focuses on self-definition and on the theme of teenage angst, in terms of both the literal depiction of the desire to ‘fit in’ and to ‘be cool’ and the symbolic representations of alienation and otherness through figures such as vampires, witches, and shapeshifters.

The following three chapters (**5 to 7**) are dedicated to the three different phases of the evolution of the Italian audience over the past 25 years. **Chapter 5** focuses on the 1990s, during which the teen television panorama was dominated by *Beverly Hills, 90210* (1990 - 2000). Darren Star and Aaron Spelling’s groundbreaking production guided an entire generation through adolescence and into adulthood, adjusting its focus as the protagonists faced the different challenges of growing up (high school, college, jobs) and setting the standard for all the teen programs that would follow. The series premiered on Italian screens on November 19, 1992, creating a watershed as significant as the one it had represented in the US in 1990 and reinforcing the perception of an ideal Californian youth that drove fast cars through boulevards lined with palm trees, attended

classes on a campus that resembled a tourist resort, and spent their spare time shopping in classy boutiques, partying, and surfing to their heart's content. Nonetheless, Giampiero Francesca (2011) highlights that, as a product of the post-Reaganomics Bush Sr. administration, the early seasons of the show also conveyed a strong belief in the ideal of the self-made man (represented by the Walsh family moving from Minnesota to Beverly Hills and by the insistence on working one's way towards emancipation and self-affirmation) and on the centrality of family values, a feature which was to decline in successive seasons and in later shows, which reflected the more liberal *Zeitgeist* of the Clinton presidency. The strong accent on what could be defined as 'Walsh ethics' was enhanced by the dubbing process, which could afford to tame and downplay linguistic choices to an extent that was only possible in an era in which original videos and scripts were virtually impossible to retrieve. Still, the dubbed version flowed almost as seamlessly as natural speech, and the befitting voice actors cast for the main characters (especially Marco Guadagno for Brandon Walsh and Francesco Prando for Dylan McKay) contributed to the sedimentation of the show as the cornerstone of televised American youth in the collective imagination of Italian viewers, paving the way for a long progeny of teen dramas, part of which is analyzed in the following sections.

Chapter 6 focuses on the late 1990s, which saw the emergence of two other crucial products destined to earn the loyal following of a new generation of American and Italian adolescents: *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1997 - 2003), with its successful blend of sarcasm, action stunts, and horror/supernatural elements and its eponymous, charismatic heroine whose witty banter gave birth to a veritable, recognizable 'Buffyspeak' / 'Buffytalk'; and *Dawson's Creek* (1998 - 2003), an idealist, existential teen drama whose protagonists preferred to wallow in endless philosophical, meta-fictional monologues. If *Beverly Hills, 90210*, had already proved that the era of self-conclusive shows was declining (even though its popular spinoff *Melrose Place* had barely anything to do with the original text), series like *Buffy* and *Dawson's Creek* opened the gates to intertextuality and to meta-television, inaugurating an era in which shows boasted "a structure of self-reflection on their status as objects belonging to the world of communication," as illustrated by

Veronica Innocenti and Guglielmo Pescatore (2008: 28, my translation). Diegetic references to cult movies abound in a cinephile show such as *Dawson's Creek*, whose leading protagonist is constantly attempting to script his and his friends' lives according to specific genre conventions (from the amateur horror movie he shoots in season 1 to the meta-teen drama he writes and directs in season 6), while paying homage to classic teenpics (episode 1x07, 'Detention,' is a 45-minute tribute to *The Breakfast Club*). Yet the increasing intertextual osmosis between shows and other products of popular culture is most evident in dialogues: the most effective lines of this new generation of teen dramas often incorporate specific references that are rarely explained and require viewers to develop an encyclopedic knowledge of potential hypotexts. For instance, Dawson explicitly refers to the forefather of teen dramas in episode 1x02, 'Dance,' as he asks his friends "What have we learned from tonight's *90210* evening?" Buffy, in turn, makes fun of Dawson's penchant for drama and over-analysis in episode 7x22, 'Chosen,' in which she tries to explain to her former vampire boyfriend Angel that her heart belongs elsewhere now: "You're not getting the brush-off. Are you just going to come here and go all Dawson on me every time I have a boyfriend?" Since Dawson basks in meta-quotations and Buffy's idiolect is deeply informed by pop culture references, intertextuality most likely constituted one of the main challenges of the dubbing process for these two shows. In many cases the translators and adaptors resorted to "Target-Language (TL) oriented strategies" (Pedersen 2005: online) such as generalization or omission, which favored comprehension, but tended to downplay the crucial traits of the shows. If this general translation trend was still possible in the late 1990s (even though it was not exempt from criticism, especially in the case of *Buffy*), it proved highly inadequate for audiences 2.0, as is described in the following section.

Chapter 7 illustrates the explosion of intertextuality and transmediality in the post-millennial mediascape, in which TV authors must keep in mind that at least a portion of their audience is conversant with technology and willing to make an active effort in exchange for an enhanced viewing experience. The three shows from the late 2000s included in this dissertation

epitomize three different aspects of the new wave of teen dramas, depicting different traits of the first generation of post-millennial teenagers. *Gossip Girl* (2007 – 2012) built on the heritage of its showrunners Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage's previous series, *The O.C.* (2003 - 2007), portraying emancipated, extremely opulent teenagers that deal with grown-up problems (and grown-ups that dress and act like teenagers). Its unusual Manhattan setting (as opposed to the nondescript fictional towns or the rich Californian neighborhoods of its predecessors) and the need to keep up with 'life in the fast lane' and with the perilous, scandal-triggering revelations orchestrated by the eponymous blogger all led to an acceleration of communication through a frequent use of acronyms, sentence compression strategies derived from text messaging, and a tech-based, fast-paced metropolitan youth slang, in full new media fashion. Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan's *Glee* (2009 – present) moves the setting back to small-town America (a fictionalized version of Lima, Ohio) and significantly reduces the usage of communication technology within the fictional world, but only to have the latter erupt on a number of different media platforms that exploit the show's plethora of musical number with plot-relevant lyrics. *Glee* fans (who have labeled themselves 'gleeks,' proudly boasting their geeky¹² devotion) can thus sing their favorite hits through the countless licensed karaoke applications and videogames (such as *Glee Karaoke Revolution* for Nintendo Wii) or watch the *Glee 3D Concert Movie* based on the cast's *Glee Live! In Concert!* summer 2011 world tour. This complicated (and highly profitable) system of Chinese boxes turns the series into a transmedia franchise that "weaves together different narratives travelling on different channels," (Innocenti and Pescatore 2008: 43, my translation) and creates additional issues for translators, who have to deal with texts that are no longer self-conclusive and with an audience willing to track the proliferation of textual portions on different media and to navigate the network of intertextual references that each text creates with other television or popular culture items. The last series selected for this study, Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady's *The Big Bang Theory* (2009 – present), is so imbued with references to geek culture that the protagonists (four

¹² "Geek" can indicate "a person who has excessive enthusiasm for and some expertise about a specialized subject or activity," especially when used self-referentially. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/geek> (accessed June 10, 2014).

researchers at the California Institute of Technology) inhabit a literal transposition of Eco's (1987: 198) "furnished world," complete with all kinds of science-fiction, fantasy, and superhero paraphernalia (from *Star Wars* light sabers to *Lord of the Rings* costumes). Even though the characters are in their late twenties, the show represents the sublimation of teenage life (settings, hobbies, and interactions are very similar to those depicted school-based teen shows, except for the increased freedom allowed by the characters' age and resources). Moreover, the series played a key role in signaling the evolution of audience reception in Italy: upon adapting the first eight episodes, the dubbing studio Post In Europe managed to turn the show's highly specific, carefully crafted identity into an amorphous twenty-minute filler based on vulgar humor. Yet the show already had a cult following in Italy, mainly thanks to fansubbing, and the fans protested so vigorously that Post In Europe ended up replacing the entire dubbing team for the series (Innocenti and Maestri 2010: online).

Framing the empirical evidence gathered in **chapters 5-7** within the theoretical framework described in **chapters 1 and 2**, the **Conclusions** chapter will underline the fact that the paradigm shift in television production and consumption is irreversible and that the AVT industry needs to reassess its strategies accordingly, lest official distribution channels lose an even larger portion of their audiences. By advocating a re-evaluation of AVT practices, the goal of this dissertation is not to criticize the quality of either official dubbing processes or non-professional subtitling (both of which have advantages and downsides), but rather to point out that most of the AVT industry is still referring to an outdated model that is proving self-detrimental and that needs to be adjusted not just because of the diffusion of fansubbing, but because the overall audience evolution points towards a new model of television consumption. A possible solution might entail a joint-expertise approach, combining professional dubbing and subtitling skills with the deeper knowledge of specific shows that fansubbers tend to exhibit. Dubbing is far from supplanted, at least in Italy, and it is probably bound to be used for a long time still; what has changed is the framework within which it operates, since the traditional, self-referential AV translation process is not well-suited for the new,

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interconnected mediascape. Dubbing studios will thus likely have to adjust their strategies in order to survive on the new market: while fansubbers claim they do not aim at creating competition (a believable statement, considering that they do not receive compensation and that their goal is to offer a free service to like-minded seriophiles with a more limited command of English), their sheer existence invalidates the old perception of dubbing as the only path to access foreign AV texts. The dubbing industry should thus assimilate the greatest lesson offered by fansubbing, which is how to cater to evolving audiences by focusing on the specific traits of each show and learning how to navigate the paths of intertextuality. While it is impossible for single translators or adaptors to be fully conversant in all of the shows on which they work, a revision of the workflow inspired from fansubbing teams and a collaboration with specific consultants or proofreaders for each show might prove fundamental in the development of a new AVT model able to face the challenges imposed by intertextual connections and transmedia storytelling.

CHAPTER 1. TELEVISION, NEW MEDIA, AND FANDOM STUDIES

“If it doesn’t spread, it’s dead.”

- Henry Jenkins and the Convergence Culture Consortium on transmedia content spreadability

Sheldon: Gentlemen, since *Star Wars* Day is rapidly approaching, we should finalize our plans.

Penny: That's a real thing? What is it? *Star Wars* Christmas?

Howard: No, don't be ridiculous. That's Wookiee Life Day.

The Big Bang Theory, episode 7x02, “The Proton Transmogrification”

In the age of transmedia storytelling and immersive viewing experiences, it is no longer possible to analyze television as an independent medium. Television shows maintain many of the features with which they have always been associated, such as a multi-episode and multi-season structure, long story arcs, and a distribution cycle still mainly based on small-screen diffusion. Nonetheless, the growing complexity of televisual productions, the spreading of fictional universes over different media (as widely analyzed by fandom scholar Henry Jenkins, among others), and the evolution of viewing practices call for a wider perspective that is able to place television products within the larger framework of media studies and fandom studies, given the increasingly relevant role of fandom response and remediation of television shows in our “media-saturated environment” (Gray 2010: 20; Scaglioni 2011: 105) and the growing opportunities for viewers to create their own, fully-customized palimpsests through the new media circulation patterns. As Jennes (in Tomanić Trivundža et al. 71-72) highlights,

since digitization, TV is fast becoming a networked digital technology, featuring personalization and interconnectivity. This means a shift from traditional television as a one-way mass media model to a two-way interactive model (Carlson, 2006: 97-98), or to a medium of mass self-communication (Castells, 2009: 70). Traditionally, the television industry has been based on aggregated audiences and programs. In these circumstances, watching television content has only been possible when the TV set was on. Today’s TV audiences are fragmented and have more control over how they consume TV content, with additional access made possible via Digital Video Recordings, online media, downloads, DVDs, etc. Even if the audience is not particularly revolutionary in its viewing practices (Van den Broeck, 2011: 429), these technological developments or opportunities pressure the relationships between the players in the television market, as they are constantly confronted with limitations, challenges and opportunities (Seles, 2010: 5-7).

This chapter is thus dedicated to the depiction of the current “mediascape” (Appadurai 1990) as it is shaped by media convergence, participatory culture, transmedia narratives, and niche-targeted

narrowcasting, in order to highlight “the changing role of users/consumers as actors in the television value chain, as TV makes the transition to a digital, connected era” (Jennes in Tomanić Trivundža et al. 2011: 71). The opening quote from the meta-fandom situation comedy *The Big Bang Theory* (which is analyzed in **chapter 7**) illustrates the extent to which contemporary viewers are willing to allow and foster the osmosis between fictional worlds and their own real lives. This evolution is propagating to many television fandoms and has an enormous impact on the way in which television is consumed, especially in dubbing countries, where the audience is increasingly aware of the inadequacy of the traditional AVT paradigm to satisfy their need to experience their favorite shows to the fullest. This chapter analyzes the evolution of television distribution and consumption practices and the increasingly relevant role of audience participation, outlining the post-millennial mediascape in order to provide the new socio-cultural context to which audiovisual translation needs to adjust (as will be explained in **chapter 2**).

1.1 Television shows in the DVD and Internet era

After 60 years of relative technological continuity in the television distribution workflow (Di Chio in Tessarolo 2007: VII, my translation), digital technology has triggered a genuine revolution in the production and consumption of audiovisual products, as described by Creeber and Martin (2009: 5):

The ‘Digital Revolution’ is a recent term describing the effects of the rapid drop in cost and rapid expansion of power of digital devices such as computers and telecommunications. With the arrival of the digital media, the world was arguably altered and the way that we think of ourselves and the planet (indeed the universe) has conceivably changed forever. In particular, digital culture is associated with the speeding up of societal change, causing a number of technological and social transformations in a surprisingly short amount of time.

This revolution has led to a setting in which individual viewers have access to a growing array of media platforms and to an exponentially increasing amount of data and material on film and television texts, which has produced a significant shift in traditional patterns of consumption. As Liscia (2003: 142, my translation) highlights:

this new scenario replaces the dichotomy between production and distribution with a value chain model in which the key processes are the creation of contents, their aggregation and distribution, and their eventual release and transmission.

Digital technology does not only facilitate data manipulation and circulation to an unprecedented extent, but it also “allows viewers to establish a dialogue with the [television] medium” (Liscia 2013: 144, my translation), fulfilling Rob Owen’s 1997 prophecy: “in the year 2010, the structure of television will likely be a far cry from what viewers see today. Maybe by then individual viewers will play programmers, scheduling what they want to watch when they want to watch it” (1997: 209). Spectators have become *bricoleurs* who “disrupt the traditional organization of television around time-rituals imposed by programmers” (Hartley 2002a in Miller 2002: 33) and assemble their “playlist TV” (Scaglioni 2011: 16), constructing their own, personal palimpsests (Liscia 2003: 149; Colletti and Materia 2012: 9) through specific, conscious choices that entail a much higher level of personal responsibility. The introduction of the remote control had paved the way for viewer emancipation, which had then undergone a significant acceleration with the advent of the VCR. Analogical recording devices “enhanced viewers’ independence” (Menduni 2009: 79, my translation) in that they first allowed the audience to record and watch (or re-watch) television programs at their own convenience. Nonetheless, as Seiter (in Miller 2003: 35) highlights,

the VCR was originally predicted to be used primarily for time-shifting of programs, so that viewers could fast-forward through commercials. Instead, viewing habits remained substantially the same *vis-à-vis* broadcast television, and instead the VCR – whose rapid adoption outpaced even that of the first television sets – has come to be used primarily as a means for viewing movies on video.

The ultimate watershed in television distribution and consumption is represented by the advent of digital technology, which liberates viewers from the traditional consumption paradigm based on “domesticity and isochrony” (Scaglioni 2011: 12, my translation), offering them the opportunity to experience high-quality audiovisual texts whenever it is most convenient for them (‘time-shifted’ viewing) and in whichever location they prefer (‘place-shifted’ viewing / mobility). This new consumption paradigm pivots around the concepts of segmentation and customization and tends to favor non-linear, bottom-up consumption (‘pull’ mode) over linear, top-down distribution entirely

controlled by cultural gatekeepers ('push' mode). (Di Chio in Tessarolo 2007: VIII). Digital technology also offers a crucial advantage over analogical devices: "there is no generational loss in signal reproduction – the material can be copied or transmitted an indefinite number of times without any degradation of quality" (Seiter in Miller 2002: 36). The near-absolute preservation of video and audio quality played a key role in the diffusion of DVDs, which appeared in 1996, together with the first CD/DVD-burners for personal use (Menduni 2009: 81). VCRs had allowed viewers to create their own, private collections of video material, yet the high risk of quality loss decreased the value of analogically recorded texts, much like a distasteful frame or poor preservation can depreciate the best of paintings. Conversely, as Gray illustrates, DVDs constitute a much more prized casing for video collections, in that they allow for both careful preservation and a sense of 'possession' of the audiovisual texts:

DVDs allow personal ownership of the text. Much as an art collector can hang an acquisition in his or her own living room, DVDs better suit this image of austere art in allowing the freedom to see them whenever and wherever their "owner" would like (2010: 101-102)

Kompare observes that DVDs do not just record television, they reconceptualize it. Once television is available on DVD, several changes occur. First, one can now archive television, having it available on command, rather than relying on the vagaries of local scheduling. Admittedly, VHS allowed the same, but issues of relative software size, quality, and ease of use made the recording, storing, and watching of VHS more tricky. DVD availability now encourages viewers to think about which shows they would like to own, rather than simply what they would like to watch this week, or what they must remember to record and watch on the weekend. With this comes an increase in the value of television: that which is *worth recording*, *worth keeping*, and *worth purchasing* takes on more artistic value. (2010: 106; emphasis added)

DVDs prove particularly effective for television show collectors; aside from quality loss risks, archiving full seasons or entire shows on videocassettes required a significant amount of storage space and money investment, not to mention the extremely time-consuming procedure one had to follow if they decided to record the shows themselves, removing commercials and balancing the length of each episode against the poorly measurable physical tape. The possibility to store complete shows on reliable supports also changed the way in which television series are consumed: as Thompson (2007: xix) observes,

unlike the home-video industry, which released small numbers of series episodes, the basic unit of release on DVD is an entire season, sometimes an entire series. Producers now make shows with the knowledge that each episode might be viewed and scrutinized over and over again.

The possibility of deeper scrutiny on the viewers' part warrants a higher care in the development of television texts and a stronger focus on intra-textual consistency, as producers become increasingly "aware of a more sophisticated audience, one that can keep track of the story in greater detail and over longer periods of time" (Murray 1997: 8). Yet producers can also exploit the valuable opportunity to frame television shows within the polished and capacious structure of the DVD, often including paratexts such as promos, deleted scenes, and commentaries, which "repeatedly insist that their shows are better, becoming a key site for the construction of discourses of value" (Gray 2010: 19).

Yet it was the advent of broadband Internet that unleashed the full potential of digital distribution; the entire array of programs available on DVD or through the television networks of the so-called "age of Plenty" (Ellis: 2000) can only compare to the online circulation of digital files to a certain extent, since the ability to retrieve media products through a relatively simple web search and to receive the desired content on one's own computer in a matter of hours (or even minutes) has introduced an irreversible change. Tessarolo (2007: 5, my translation) identifies the key factor behind this shift in the perception and strategies of media retrieval in the boom of the Napster peer-to-peer file-sharing service, which operated between June 1999 and July 2001 and allowed users to exchange media files (typically music in mp3 format):

The Napster phenomenon [...] showed the world the equation that regulates the evolution of the Internet, and above all it highlighted the elements of which it is constituted: band breadth, ease of diffusion and access, compression algorithms, and efficient services for content search and distribution.

Discussing the obvious legal implications of media piracy and copyright infringement is beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, for the purposes of the present study, it is crucial to understand the socio-cultural impact of file-sharing practices, especially through 'broadcatching' (a downloading system based on the automatic aggregation of web feeds to accelerate transmission),

which “magically blends three elements: the power of search engines, the automatism of RSS, and the distributive efficiency of the P2P protocol” (Tessarolo 2007: 69, my translation). Broadcatching is also used for official Internet-based radio and television channels, but its most popular application is the domain of file-sharing platforms like the μ Torrent client, which allow users to search for media files (through a dedicated index like Isohunt or a mere Google search) and download them easily and rapidly through an automated meshwork of interconnected users that function as partial repositories. Torrent clients are a popular tool for the circulation of television shows, and the fact that their users were estimated to be over a quarter of a billion in early 2013 (McCormack 2013: online) is a strong signal that “a growing number of people are starting to get used to looking for contents on different channels from the few traditional TV networks” (Tessarolo 2007: 17, my translation). Aside from the monetary appeal of the “free” (yet unauthorized) retrieval of media material, a key factor behind the escalation of file-sharing is the high speed with which audiovisual products can be accessed through online circulation. By eliminating geographical and physical barriers, the diffusion of the Internet has enabled instantaneous worldwide communication, *de facto* creating a virtual projection of the notion of “global village” popularized by Marshall McLuhan (1962). Aside from utopian (and dystopian) considerations on its consequences, global connectivity had a tangible, significant impact on media consumption, and even more so on television viewing: the development of a worldwide dialogue on televisual products which is mainly based on US programming prompted viewers from the rest of the planet to look for alternative, faster ways to retrieve new episodes when the official importing and broadcasting process proved too lengthy. This phenomenon is particularly relevant for the active part of the global viewership interested in venturing beyond sheer discussion, in appropriating and remediating shows by exploiting the “new production tools and distribution channels [which] have lowered barriers of entry into the marketplace of ideas” (Jenkins 2006a: 293). Aside from enabling artists and authors to produce and distribute cultural texts in an easier and far less expensive way, the Internet constitutes an extremely fertile ground for cultural appropriation, expansion, and

remediation of official AV texts. Gwennllian-Jones (in Jancovich and Lyons 2003: 168) underlines that

digital and Internet technologies facilitate the production and dissemination of high-quality fan-produced texts and ‘steals’ from source texts in ways that were previously unimaginable. Digital production and dissemination profoundly alters the unwritten contract between the culture industry as the producer and distributor of popular culture and fans as merely passive consumers.

The following paragraphs will therefore explore the new modes of television consumption, starting from an assessment of the notions of quality and cult television and moving on to describe the dynamics of narrowcasting, affective economics, and transmedia storytelling, and the evolution from viewers to prosumers and producers.

1.2 - Quality television and the third Golden Age of television production

Media scholars have identified three “Golden Ages” in the history of the small screen, isolating periods in which television production boomed and underwent crucial evolutions. Robert J. Thompson (1997: 11) situates the “First Golden Age” in the early era of the medium, roughly between 1947 and 1960; yet in spite of its revolutionary effect on everyday life, for several decades television was considered as the younger sister of “higher” forms of entertainment such as theatre or cinema and it took even longer for it to outgrow the stigma of the “idiot box” (Thompson in Maio 2009), which still reappears every now and then. Nonetheless, the early 1980s brought about a fundamental watershed that triggered a deep shift in the perception of television, as Horace Newcomb (in Miller 2003: 29) illustrates:

by the early 1980s, however, a new perspective was emerging, led not so much by critics, but by critical recognition that television itself had perhaps achieved a different social status. Admiration for programs such as *Hill Street Blues* appeared in conjunction with widespread positive audience response. *Hill Street Blues*, and, more tellingly, programs such as *St. Elsewhere* were considered “quality” work that marked a “new era” in television content.

It is precisely with the premiere of the gritty *Hill Street Blues* (Steven Bochco and Michael Kozoll, 1981 – 1987) that Thompson (1997) identifies the onset of the “Second Golden Age,” which he associates with the rise of VCR sales and the advent of cable channels. These two technological developments paved the way for the process of viewership segmentation which increased exponentially with the digital revolution and which led to a structurally different way of conceiving the audience. Rather than being perceived as a monolithic block of viewers for which producers had to create ‘mass’ products, audiences began to be seen as “a sum of a considerable number of smaller, theme-specific interests.” (Tessarolo 2007: 16, my translation) This shift entailed a higher focus on demographics, rather than on total numbers of undifferentiated viewers, and a mutual raising of the bar between producers and (niche) audiences, which led to the development of more specific, carefully crafted programs (consider David Lynch’s *Twin Peaks*, 1990 - 1991; or Chris Carter’s *The X-Files*, 1993 - 2002). While the definition of ‘high-quality’ cannot be applied to all of the shows produced after 1981 and not even to all of those created in the past decade, a significant rise in the proportion of “good” shows has led Barbara Maio (2009) to identify a “Third Golden Age” of television production, characterized by better storytelling and deeper character development. Maio dates the onset of this era in 2000 (2009: 203), while Barra and Scaglioni (in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 17) identify its apex in the 2004-2005 season, with the advent of *Lost* (J.J. Abrams, Damon Lindelof , and Jeffrey Lieber, 2004 – 2010), *Desperate Housewives* (Marc Cherry, 2004 – 2012), *Grey’s Anatomy* (Shonda Rhimes, 2005 – present), and *House, M.D.* (David Shore, 2004 – 2012). The growing creation and distribution of “products that averagely boast a higher quality and attract the attention of viewers and critics alike” (Maio 2009: 203, my translation) prompted Thompson to agree with Maio on the definition of “the Third Golden Age of television as something unique that happens when ‘quality as an exception’ becomes ‘quality as a rule’ (Thompson in Maio 2009: 12), echoing Carini’s (2009: 38-39, my translation) claim that quality TV refers to a televisual style that “emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, spread throughout the 1990s, and became the norm in the 2000s.” Jowett and Abbott (2013: 10) observe

how this overall qualitative improvement has had a powerful effect on the perception of television as a form of entertainment: “in this post-digital era, TV is moving beyond its reputation as mainstream, mass entertainment aimed at the lowest possible denominator,” and recent productions such as *Breaking Bad* (Vince Gilligan, 2008 – 2013), *Game of Thrones* (David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, 2011 – present), and *The Walking Dead* (Robert Kirkman and Frank Darabont, 2010 – present) confirm that the Third Golden Age is far from over.

It must be noted that the debate on quality television mainly refers to quality as a sort of genre, rather than using the word as an expression of judgment. Sarah Cardwell (in McCabe and Akass 2007: 26-27) draws a parallel between ‘good’ television (as in television that is experienced positively) and ‘quality television’ as a generic category:

let us consider how one might classify programs as quality television on the basis of their exhibiting certain textual characteristics of content, structure, theme and tone. American quality television programs tend to exhibit high production values, naturalistic performance styles, recognized and esteemed actors, a sense of visual style created through careful, even innovative, camerawork and editing, and a sense of aural style created through the judicious use of appropriate, even original music. This moves beyond a ‘glossiness’ of style. Generally, there is a sense of stylistic integrity, in which themes and style are intertwined in an expressive and impressive way. Further, the programs are likely to explore ‘serious’ themes, rather than representing the superficial events of life; they are likely to suggest that the viewer will be rewarded for seeking out greater symbols or emotional resonance within the details of the program. [...] higher level of engagement is considered to be another feature of high-quality television. It also places the viewer into the active position that one takes up when making a critical judgment. The program encourages us to interpret and evaluate it.

Nonetheless, Cardwell (in McCabe and Akass 2007: 30) eventually argues

that many of those attributes that define quality television are also ones that may relatively reliably contribute to making a program a good one. They do so because such attributes enable the viewer to watch the program repeatedly and to draw and revise various interpretations, and those interpretations reveal the program to be coherent at the level of *stylistic integrity*.

While the usage of ‘quality’ as a generic label does not necessarily imply a value appreciation, many of the shows produced in the Third Golden Age of television do display both the typical features of the genre (as described by Cardwell) and generally higher creative and aesthetic merits, precisely because stylistic integrity is the necessary cornerstone of a functional, consistent fictional

universe, which is crucial for the fully immersive television experience coveted by the cult viewership described in the following paragraph.

1.3 - Cult television and world building

As highlighted so far, television consumption has undergone radical changes in the digital era, and worldwide audiences have developed a far stronger awareness of the ways in which they can engage with their favorite shows, so that “it is impossible to think of modern audiences as a cohort of mannequins that devour television in a completely unconscious way” (Francesca 2011: 7, my translation), or as “a mass of defenseless subjects” (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008: 112, my translation). Casual viewing is still far from superseded, since many viewers still prefer a lighter form of entertainment that allows them to unwind through the consumption of products that are undemanding in terms of plot decryption; yet a growing percentage of global audiences is seeking a different type of viewing experience, which poses harder challenges that spread well beyond the television medium and the single AV text, but are also able to reward proficient viewers with the highly desirable prize of a fully immersive experience. As Scaglioni (2006: 57, my translation) illustrates,

the experience of complete immersion into a collaboratively imagined universe is not just analogous to the utopian *virtual realities* postulated by science-fiction and *cyberpunk* literature, but it is also consistent with the trend of “total entertainment” developed in modernity and late modernity, from the *camera obscura* to 3D cinema and theme parks.

A pivotal concept to understand how the small screen can participate in this quest for ‘total entertainment’ is the debate on cult television, which is closely related to the discussion on quality television (Abbott 2010: 3) described in the previous paragraph. Like ‘quality,’ “cult television [... is] a fluid and evolutionary process” (Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson 2004: xix) that resists univocal definitions, as is evident from the abundant literature on the subject (among others, Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson 2004; Scaglioni 2006; Abbott 2010; Maio 2013). The term ‘cult’ originates in

opposition to ‘mainstream,’ to indicate a product that addresses a specific sub-group of the audience, as described by Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson (2004: ix):

in the media, in common usage, and sometimes even in academia, ‘cult’ is often loosely applied to any television program that is considered offbeat or edgy, that draws a niche audience, that has a nostalgic appeal, that is considered emblematic of a particular subculture, or that is considered hip.

However, the process of audience segmentation and viewer empowerment generated by the digital revolution has blurred the boundaries between mainstream and cult television (Jancovich and Hunt in Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson 2004), especially as a consequence of the adoption of narrowcasting strategies based on Chris Anderson’s Long Tail theory (which will be explored in the next paragraph). Matt Hills (in Abbott 2010) thus argues that

concepts of ‘cult’ and ‘mainstream’ have started to break down and coalesce into new patterns of cultural meaning. Fan activities such as online posting and speculation, fiction-writing based on the originating TV show’s characters, and textual interpretations revolving around specific characters and relationships, have all now begun to revolve around what might otherwise be thought of as ‘mainstream’ TV shows. (2010: 69-70)

Though the two categories may not wholly fuse together or may not cease to carry distinct meanings, the notion of ‘mainstream cult’ TV shows, designed to reach a wide range of audiences and intended to be read fannishly as well as less closely, offers a useful purchase on the post-Buffy, post-X-Files rise in ‘artistic’ and ambivalent/ambiguous telefantasy. As I have argued here, it also proffers a way of thinking about the new-media-driven rise in fan activities surrounding shows that would not conventionally have been thought of as ‘cult’. These developments all suggest that thinking of the ‘mainstreaming of cult’ as a kind of ‘selling-out’ would be an unhelpful, if not outmoded, approach. Instead, a range of popular contemporary TV shows seem to be engaged in deconstructing the cult versus mainstream binary, presenting commercially driven TV drama which self-consciously draws on discourses of authorship, sophistication, and quirkiness which have been more traditionally linked to cult TV in its telefantasy mode. (2010: 69-73)

By emphasizing the growing production of increasingly self-conscious shows designed to elicit ‘fannish’ readings, Hills’s argument isolates the common denominator of cult products that is most productive to analyze the impact of the new modes of television consumption, expanding Jancovich and Hunt’s (in Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson 2004: 27) claim that “cult TV is defined not by any feature shared by the shows themselves, but rather by the ways in which they are appropriated by specific groups,” as well as Pearson’s (in Abbott 2010: 8) belief that the “understanding of cult television should be predicated on audience practices, not textual characteristics.” This dissertation will thus focus on the idea of what its author has elsewhere defined as *viewership 2.0* (Casarini 2012 and forthcoming; see **paragraph 1.7**), an “involved viewership, [not] necessarily large or

small, but involved, [...an audience] that is required to do more work, to pay attention and extract the less-obvious conclusion, if a conclusion is reached at all” (Espenson in Abbott 2010: 45-52). The crucial element of cult fandoms is not their size, but the degree of involvement they display: as the following paragraph will illustrate, in the digital age, a smaller, yet particularly dedicated audience willing to buy all sorts of ancillary products is much more profitable than a wider audience that is not interested in a full commitment. Cult television has become “a consumption canon deliberately pursued by the television industry, since it is capable of creating strong ties between serial products and their *audiences*” (Pescatore in Maio 2013: 8, my translation), especially in contemporary culture, in which, as Maio (2013: 20, my translation) underlines, “products are developed in a multimedia, transversal, and multiplatform way.” Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson (2004: xvii) summarize the idea of cult television as

a metagenre that caters to intense, interpretative audience practices [...which] stem from an imaginative involvement with the cult television narratives that offer fans enormous scope for further interpretation, speculation, and invention.

Given the degree of fan involvement in cult television consumption, a key factor to attract cult fandoms is the conception of storytelling as “world building” (Jenkins 2006: 116; Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 8), as the creation of a consistent fictional universe that viewers will be glad to inhabit and explore in detail. Umberto Eco’s routinely cited pivotal analysis of *Casablanca* as a cult product (1987: 198) still provides the best definition of fans’ involvement with their fictional world of choice:

The [cult product] must be loved, obviously, but this is not enough. It must provide a completely furnished world so that fans can quote characters and episodes as if they were aspects of the fan’s private sectarian world, a world about which one can make up quizzes and play trivia games so that the adepts of the sect recognize through each other a shared expertise. Naturally all these elements (characters and episodes) must have some archetypal appeal... I think that in order to transform a work into a cult object one must be able to break, dislocate, unhinge it so that one can remember only parts of it, irrespective of their original relationship with the whole.

While the size of Eco’s “sect” can vary considerably, as previously illustrated, the idea of a shared expertise and a common reassembling of textual fragments in multifarious forms is still seated at

the core of cult fandom. To use a comparison drawn from the world of gaming, traditional, linear television watching resembles classic platform games such as the early *Super Mario Bros* installments (1985), in which the player proceeded along a pre-determined path, while cult television watching (and generally the new forms of television watching of the age of convergence) are akin to free-roaming videogames such as the *Grand Theft Auto* saga (Rockstar Games, 1997 – present), which allow players to explore different areas in the order they prefer, and sometimes even to customize the entire playing environment with in-game creation tools to design their own experience (as is the case with the *Little Big Planet* series; Media Molecule, 2008 - present). As with videogames, engaging viewers in the world-building process is only possible if the in-world rules are clear and consistent: the stylistic integrity of quality television series plays a key role in developing viewing and world-building skills, allowing viewers to absorb each show's philosophy and training them to fill in the gaps left by the original text and to predict plot outcomes and character developments. Aside from responding “to the infantile need of always hearing the same story, of being consoled by the ‘return of the Identical,’ superficially disguised, [...by] reward[ing] our ability to foresee” (Eco 1994: 84), consistent fictional cosmologies also enable viewers to actively participate in the world-building process through what Hills (2002: 137) defines as hyperdiegesis, “the creation of a vast and detailed narrative space, only a fraction of which is ever directly seen or encountered within the text, but which nonetheless appears to operate according to principles of internal logic and extension.”

Television shows constitute a particularly fecund soil for hyperdiegesis, since their serial format allows for the gradual, regular expansion of the original narrative space through the accumulation of additional details and through both official and unofficial gap-filling practices operated by showrunners and by fans. Aldo Grasso and Massimo Scaglioni (2009: 7, my translation) illustrate the ways in which televisual worlds are constantly amplified:

In television shows the ability to create worlds is ‘amplified,’ so to speak: the development of the plot through a considerable number of episodes forces [authors] to constantly find new ways to re-propose a set of elements (settings, characters, and style traits) which become increasingly detailed and multiply incessantly.

Grasso and Penati (2009: 13, my translation) underline how this process leads fans to develop a closer intimacy with their chosen fictional universes and to relish the sense of homecoming and belonging that originates from their gradual appropriation of the narrative space:

The extension of story arcs in television series amplifies the construction of a progressive intimacy with the fictional universe, which becomes an increasingly appropriated space, a private place that [viewers] can visit infinite times, finding comfort in the cyclical return of the identical.

Paolo Braga (2003: 152, my translation) further explores the sense of belonging generated by effective world-building practices in television production and consumption:

The viewer’s emotional involvement is jointly shaped by the serial format and the televisual medium. Due to these two components, the viewer’s disposition towards identification immediately [denotes] empathy towards the characters and familiarity [in the sense of] the certainty of a prolonged relationship and a sense of belonging.”

World-building at its most successful allows viewers to enter a ‘state of flow’: adjusting Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of “flow experience” to television consumption, Brooker (in Gray et al. 2007: 153) defines “flow” as “the pleasurable sensation of losing oneself in one activity – work, a game, a physical or mental challenge – and becoming immersed, with everything perfectly meshing in a harmonious state where goals are set and satisfyingly met.” Achieving a similar rapture has become easier in the age of transmedia storytelling, in which televisual world-building extends beyond the limits of the televisual medium, allowing a deeper osmosis between fictional universes and real life through the acquisition and experience of all sorts of paratexts and ancillary gadgets, as underlined by Jonathan Gray (2010: 21-22):

this concern with making storyworlds accessible and inhabitable then extends into a discussion of various forms of film- or television show-related games that allow players into a text to explore, sample, and/or create parts of the storyworld interactively, [... a set of paratexts that offer a] vibrant and vital a contribution to meaning-making and the development of storyworlds.

Aside from the fascination exerted by flow theories, transmedia world-building is first and foremost a powerful marketing strategy, the essential component of what John T. Caldwell (2003: 132-136) defines as “second-shift aesthetics”:

a growing and ubiquitous world of digital that employs traditional and modified ‘programming strategies’ in the design of everything from interface and software design to merchandising and branding campaigns, [...shifting] from notions of *network/program* “flows” to *audience/user* “flows” [...and involving] the management of ancillary and digital sites that users migrate to from a primary or initial site.

As the following paragraph will illustrate, the entire Long Tail / second-shift aesthetics approach to media sales mainly relies on the spending power of devoted fan audiences whose needs for immersion and collaborative meaning-making are catered to in a completely satisfying way. As Sara Gwenllian-Jones (in Jancovich and Lyons 2003: 166-167) notes,

this is world-building for profit. The cult television builds fictions that are not confined to a single medium but rather sprawl across a variety of different media and texts that are connected not by any linear master narrative, but rather contribute to a fantastical, populated, and coherent cosmology. [...] Fans’ devotion to official texts, their seemingly insatiable appetite for merchandise, their need to share their fascination and ardor with other fans, their production and consumption of derivative texts, bespeak not opposition, but a deep-seated compulsion to build, enter and uphold a virtual reality. The ‘must see’ status of cult television series stems from this compulsion.

The urgency of a reassessment of the AVT system based on audiences’ increasing desire to experience this ‘virtual reality’ in an immersive way is contextualized in **chapter 4**, which illustrates how teen television can be construed as a cult product, leveraging its audience’s proclivity to inhabit and actively expand their fictional worlds of choice and positing its core viewers as a powerful group that is far more conversant in television consumption than it is usually given credit for. Ross and Stein (2008: 8) maintain that

Teen TV’s association with commercialization and the gendered seriality and emotionality of soap opera always intersects with its engagement of discourses on ‘quality television,’ positioning ‘Teen TV’ somewhere between ‘mainstream’ and ‘elite.’ Indeed, Teen TV lends itself to cult status, with much of it existing on smaller networks and relying on a core audience to ‘spread the word’ about any given program.

Chapters 4 and 6 will introduce the WB Television Network (Warner Bros. Entertainment’s teen-targeted network, in operation between 1995 and 2006) as the foremost example of the construction of teen television as a cult product, building on Wee’s (in Ross and Stein 2008: 43) claim that the

network “evolved into a media site engaged actively in creating, mediating and (re-)shaping teen entertainment culture.” The analysis of the storyworlds that the WB created through and around its leading shows *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson’s Creek* (**chapter 6**) will bear witness to the audience-engaging power (and marketing value) of accurate, compelling world-building in a regime of ‘affective economics’ (see **1.4**).

1.4 - The Long Tail, narrowcasting, and affective economics

As outlined in the previous sections, the traditional ‘one-to-many’ paradigm of television distribution proves obsolete in the digital age of media convergence, in which the “economics of scarcity” (Anderson 2008: 9) has been replaced with an overabundance of opportunities for viewers to develop their own consumption patterns and schedules. Larger mass audiences have not yet ceased to exist, and probably never will, since an easier, restful form of television consumption is bound to maintain a certain appeal in a busy society saturated with visual and verbal stimuli. Nonetheless, wider general audiences are no longer the driving force behind the television industry, since only a minor portion of each program’s revenues comes from the program itself, while the lion’s share originates from advertising, merchandise, and ancillary products. The viewers that are more likely to engage with a show to such an extent that they are willing to invest a considerable amount of money in purchasing DVDs, videogames, gadgets, and other licensed paraphernalia are those described in the paragraph on cult television – those who actively participate in the creation of their favorite storyworlds and who see money spent on merchandise as a necessary investment to enhance their viewing experience. The entertainment industry has thus begun to court these niche audiences (Gwenllian Jones and Pearson 2004), which, like cult fandoms, are not necessarily defined by their size (the mainstreaming of cult has rewritten the idea of ‘niche’), but rather by the level of engagement displayed by their members. Over the past two decades, the entertainment world has thus witnessed a shift from the role of “networks as facilitators of a National public

sphere to a situation in which these organizations are increasingly preoccupied with garnering niche audiences” (Jancovich and Lyons 2003: 3). The economic model best suited to address this “balkanized universe of niches and specific tastes” (Grasso in Scaglioni 2011: VIII, my translation) is Chris Anderson’s “Long Tail” approach, first introduced in a pivotal article on *Wired* magazine (October 2004, issue 12:10). The Long Tail model is based on the idea of selling “less of more” (Anderson 2004): in the current age of abundance, in which all kinds of specific products are easily retrievable, the largest share of profits does not come from selling “hit” products (Anderson 2008: 1), but from the sum of the “millions of fringe sales” (Anderson 2008: 24) that keep occurring over time. The efficiency of this model is determined by the fall of distribution costs generated by the Internet and by on-demand purchase channels. Hit products have not disappeared from markets and continue to sell far more than any single ‘non-hit’; nonetheless, the relative liberation from the constraints of warehouse space brought about by the Internet has allowed companies to offer virtually limitless catalogues, thus creating an all-encompassing supply that can potentially meet any type of demand:

the new niche market is not replacing the traditional market of hits, just sharing the stage with it for the first time. For a century we have winnowed out all but the best-sellers to make the most efficient use of costly shelf space, screens, channels, and attention. Now, in a new era of networked consumers and digital everything, the economics of such distribution are changing radically as the Internet absorbs each industry it touches, becoming store, theater, and broadcaster at a fraction of the traditional cost. (Anderson 2008: 6)

The Long Tail approach is applicable to a wide range of products, but is particularly relevant for the publishing and entertainment industries: among his main examples, Andersons mentions Rhapsody, Netflix, and Amazon, pointing out that “more than a quarter of Amazon’s book sales come from outside its top 100,000 titles” (2008: 23), a portion that has probably grown larger over the past six years. It is thus clear that the key to reaching these niche consumers is no longer the sort of all-pervading visibility procured by traditional advertising, but rather the increased availability of an ever-wider array of specific products, as already illustrated in the paragraph on file-sharing systems supported by powerful search engines (see **1.1**).

In the television industry, the Long Tail approach is mainly based on the ideas of narrowcasting and affective economics. The term ‘narrowcasting’ originates as the opposite of ‘broadcasting’ and entails the creation and dissemination of media products aimed at “small[er], but dedicated and demographically desirable, niche audiences” (Pearson in McCabe and Akass 2007: 249), rather than a general public (and is thus also referred to as niche marketing or target marketing). Henry Jenkins’s theory of affective economics indicates a new marketing approach that “seeks to understand the emotional underpinnings of consumer decision-making as a driving force behind viewing and purchasing decisions” (2006a: 61). Networks and producers are increasingly interested in leveraging fans’ involvement, as Braithwaite (in Ross and Stein 2008: 135) highlights by identifying “television’s economic imperative – to create the compulsive viewing audience so attractive to advertisers.” Emotional involvement toward a product or topic generally leads to a higher investment in terms of time, money, or energy and triggers a collaborative effort aimed at constructing a better-functioning whole. A non-lucrative example of this process is Wikipedia, as described by David Gauntlett (in Creeber and Martin 2009: 41):

Wikipedia greatly benefits from the passion and expertise of enthusiasts in thousands of scientific, technical, hobby, craft and pop culture topics. It is a good example of the ‘long tail’ phenomenon (Anderson 2004, 2006): both Wikipedia and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* will include articles on key topics in art, science, geography and history, but only Wikipedia will have detailed articles on new or not very popular rock bands, individual railway stations, obscure computing issues, movies and television series, Scottish Renaissance poetry, Muppet characters, knitting techniques, and anything else that some people are into but which there wouldn’t be room for in a published encyclopedia. Because communities of enthusiasts collaborate to create encyclopedia-style factual articles about their area of interest, a kind of frenzy of friendly but competitive fascination tends to generate precise and carefully composed articles on every subject.

In a commercial environment, user engagement obviously does not only represent a means to achieve a greater good, but also a powerful market tool. Jenkins (2006: 67) explains the television industry’s growing interest in “what consumers do with media content once it has passed across their eyeballs: each subsequent interaction reinforces their relationship to the series and, potentially, its sponsors.” Charting “attentiveness to programming and advertising, time spent with the program and the degree of viewer loyalty” (2006: 67) thus acquires a paramount importance for television networks and producers. As **Chapter 2** will highlight, understanding affective economics is also

crucial for audiovisual translation providers and should constitute the basis of the reassessment of the AVT system that is proving increasingly pressing as non-Anglophone audiences weigh the limitations imposed by delayed dubbing against their love for a particular television show and their desire to interact with it as soon as possible.

1.5 - Media convergence, Expanded Texts, and transmedia storytelling

The concepts of cult television consumption and affective economics must be framed within the paradigm of media convergence, which Henry Jenkins (2006: 2) defines as “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences.” Jenkins’ conceptualization expands the theory of televisual flow introduced by Raymond Williams (1974: 80):

in all developed broadcasting systems the characteristic organization, and therefore the characteristic experience, is one of sequence or flow. This phenomenon of planned flow, is then perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form.

In convergence culture, traditional medium levees break, and the televisual flow expands to other media; Will Brooker (2001; in Allen and Hill 2004: 569) thus proposes the notion of overflow, which occurs when “the text of the TV show is no longer limited to the television medium.” Gray (2010: 40) highlights how this concept “evok[es] an image of a text that is too full, too large for its own body, necessitating the spillover of textuality into paratexts.” Convergence culture operates in an opposite and complementary direction, enlisting both producers and users for a collaborative quest of textual re-aggregation that is deeply influencing the current mediasphere, as Jenkins (2006a: 175) explains: “it is the interplay – and tension – between the top-down force of corporate convergence and the bottom-up force of grassroots convergence that is driving many of the changes we are observing in the media landscape.” As Gray (2010: 41) summarizes, the ideas of overflow

and convergence outline a scenario in which each text is brought to life by the interaction of centripetal and centrifugal forces:

while Brooker's metaphor of "overflow" might suggest a movement away from "the show itself," Henry Jenkins refers to such multi-platformed media texts as "convergence," suggesting a grand confluence of media texts and platforms under the broad heading of the single text. [...] Rather than choose between metaphors of "overflow" or "convergence," I find the ebb and flow suggested by employing both terms indicative of the multiple ways in which many media texts are now both moving outward yet incorporating other texts inward, being authored across media. Between the outward overflow and inward convergence of paratextuality, we see the beating heart of the text.

Stefania Carini (2009: 28, my translation) explores this ebb and flow motion in her analysis of the "Expanded Text," which she defines as "shaped by an Original Text (or Great Master Text) and its media and cultural overflow." In contemporary media production, original texts are designed to comply with criteria of elasticity and resilience (Grignaffini in Pozzato and Grignaffini 2008: 164) that anticipate and enable their own augmentation, both through an industry-operated, top-down expansion and through a grassroots user remediation:

The starting point is an Original Text designed to be tweaked and used by both the audience and the industry. [...] The overflow thus becomes a flow that extends beyond the limits of the small screen under the influence of this double convergence. [...] The television text travels over different platforms, inhales new vital energy and originates endless other texts. It is a flowing text that generates other flows outside the small screen. Yet this expansion is natural, expected and necessary. Each text anticipates the context for its own expansion (Carini 2009: 31-32, my translation).

The idea of expanded texts thus presupposes a (re)composition of the textual flow that must be performed by both producers as providers of official material and users as active re-aggregators and remediators (see **paragraph 1.8**). As Sandvoss (in Gray et al. 2007: 31) underlines, we now live "in a state of constant audienceship in which we consume mediated and fragmented texts and reconstitute textual boundaries in the act of reading in an intertextual field." Convergence culture expands the domain of intertextuality to a virtually limitless galaxy of different platforms, since transmedia storytelling liberates narratives from the boundaries of a single medium, as Jenkins (2006a: 97) explains:

a transmedia story unfolds through different media platforms, with each new text making a distinct contribution to the whole. [...] Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained [...] any given product is a point of entry into the franchise as a whole. Reading across the new media sustains a depth of experience that motivates more consumption.

While each text must be somehow self-conclusive, so as to be marketable separately, the interplay between different entries allows for an increasingly enhanced experience that extends far beyond the portion of the storyworld that can be appraised through any of its single components, as Gray (2010: 2-3) observes:

given their extended presence, any filmic or televisual text and its cultural impact, value, and meaning cannot be adequately analyzed without taking into account the film or program's many proliferations, [...which] change the nature of the text's address, each proliferation either amplifying an aspect of the text through its mass circulation or adding something new and different to the text. [...] But rarely if ever can a film or program serve as the only source of information about the text. And rather than simply serve as extensions of a text, many of these items are filters through which we must pass on our way to the film or program, our first and formative encounters with the text. [...] Hype, synergy, promos, narrative extensions, and various forms of related textuality position, define, and create meaning for film and television.

This *cross-fertilization* has become a key feature of the digital age: "convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content" (Jenkins 2006a: 3). The niche audiences and cult fandoms coveted by the television industry are usually happy to train themselves to look for additional hermeneutic clues beyond each single text, engaging in a collective mission of collaborative interpretation which will be described in the next paragraph.

1.6 Interpretive collaboration in transmedia storytelling

The contemporary mediascape informed by convergence and intertextuality gives new resonance to the theories of textual interpretation developed by the key figures in twentieth-century semiotics and narratology. Transmedia storytelling, participatory culture, and user remediation bear witness to the extra-literary applicability of Roland Barthes' notion of the text as a woven fabric of signifiers that can only be experienced through the act of consumption, which, in turn, is also an act of production, since each reader (or viewer, in the case of television series; Maio 2009: 21) affects the actualization of the text in a different way (Barthes 1977: 157-163):

... *the Text is experienced only in an activity of production.* [...] The Text is plural. Which is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The Text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The plural of the Text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric). [...] The text] asks of the reader a practical collaboration.

The need for collaboration in the meaning-making process is the necessary condition for the realization of a text and is inscribed in the text's own existence; "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (Barthes 1977: 148), and each text explicitly summons viewers to "weave the threads of the intrigue" (Casetti 1998: 7), to "concretize textual gaps [drawing] on their own knowledge and experience – on what Jauss (1982) has described as 'horizon of expectation'" (Sandvoss in Gray et al. 2007: 29). Gray highlights that "texts make sense because of our past textual experiences, literacy, and knowledge" (2010: 31), building on Stuart Hall's "Encoding / Decoding" model of communication (1973), according to which each reader will construct their own meaning from the same text, based on their own background, and on Umberto Eco's notion that "a text is incomplete because it has to be realized [...], it is interwoven with blank spaces, with interstices that need to be filled" (Eco 1979: 52, my translation). Each text thus posits what Eco defines as a "Model Reader" (1979: 55), transcending Wolfgang Iser's notion of an "implied reader" (1974) and referring to an ideal recipient that necessarily takes part in the realization of the text:

To organize his textual strategy, an author must refer to a set of competences [...] that give meaning to the expressions he or she uses. He needs to assume that the set of competences to which he refers is the same as the one to which his reader refers. He will thus posit a Model Reader that is able to participate in the textual realization moving along the same way of thinking as himself (the author) and operating interpretatively as he operated generatively. [...] On the one hand, the author posits the competence of his Model Reader, but on the other hand he *establishes* it. (Eco 1979: 55-56, my translation)

A text is a device conceived in order to produce its Model Reader. This Reader is not the one who makes the 'only/ right' conjecture. A text can foresee a Model Reader entitled to try infinite conjectures. [...] Thus every act of reading is a difficult transaction between the competence of the reader (the reader's world knowledge) and the kind of competence that a given texts postulates in order to be read in an economic way. [...] The Model Reader of a story is not the Empirical Reader. The empirical reader is you, me, anyone, when we read a text. Empirical readers can read in many ways, and there is no law which tells them how to read, because they often use the text as a container for their own passions, which may come from outside the text, or which the text may arouse by chance. [...] There are certain rules of the game, and the Model Reader is someone eager to play such a game. (Eco 1996: online)

The Model Reader is a key concept to understand the dynamics of textual interpretation and is all the more applicable to the audiences of the current mediasphere: Model Viewers of contemporary television are posited by audiovisual texts and entitled to an endless array of possible interpretative acts. If meaning-making is virtually infinite *per se*, the appropriation and remediation opportunities offered by new technologies and the new social watching practices create additional dimensions in which the hermeneutical processes can take place. Each cooperative interpretation act then functions as an additional expansion of the text's fabric of signifiers, to a virtually endless extent that Charles Peirce defined as "unlimited semiosis" (quoted in Eco 1979: 28) and that Mikhail Bakhtin illustrated in his last article while describing the impossibility of endings:

There is neither a first word nor a last word. The contents of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and into the most distant future. Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest past will never finally be grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue. (quoted in Gray 2010: 44)

If we consider collaborative interpretation as a perpetual chess match between the Model Author and the Model Reader, transmedia storytelling represents a 3D chess game in which pieces can be moved on multiple boards situated at different levels. The Model User's "inferential walks" (Eco 1979: 118, my translation) then become twofold; the decoding and meaning-making process entails a quest to retrieve the clues scattered over different media that must precede or accompany the actual interpretive process through which the User "escapes the tyranny of the text [...] to go find possible outcomes in the repertoire of the already-said" (Eco 1979: 118, my translation).

Transmedia hermeneutics is a vital part of user-activated world building and is an ongoing process based on what Hills (2002: 98) defines as "endlessly deferred narrative," which creates an infinite space for constant gap-filling and re-interpretation. The expanded text can thus inflate to spawn an entire universe, as underlined by Gray (2010: 7): "the text, as Julia Kristeva notes, is not a finished production, but a continuous 'productivity.' It is a larger unit than any film or show that may be part of it; it is the entire storyworld as we know it." As the text is appropriated and remediated, it brings its own contribution to the ongoing conversation with other past, present, and

future texts, which now include all sorts of media text, extending well beyond the literary domain in which narratological theories were first developed. 360-degree intertextuality could thus be seen as the key principle that governs the contemporary mediascape, as all texts are created in a dimension of constant interaction and mutual framing, as Sandvoss (in Gray et al. 2007: 24) summarizes:

Individual texts at the point of production are part of a wider web of textual occurrences and the meanings derived from them. These textual elements are read in the context of other texts. Intertextuality is thus the essence of all texts.

Gray (2010:117) further explores textual interdependence:

Intertextuality refers to the fundamental and inescapable interdependence of all textual meaning upon the structures of meaning proposed by other texts. In common usage, intertextuality refers to instances wherein a film or program refers to and builds some of its meaning off another film or program, and intertext to the referenced film or program. [...] As Laurent Jenny notes, it “introduces a new way of reading which destroys the linearity of a text,” instead opening the text up to meanings from outside, so that often much of (our understanding of) a text will be constructed outside of the text. And while it is more obvious in examples such as *West Side Story*, *The Colbert Report*, or *The Sopranos*, no text creates its entire meaning for itself by itself, as viewers will always make sense of a new text using structures and orders of meaning offered to them by other texts, genres, and viewing experiences. Intertextuality is always at work, with texts framing each other.

The defining role of intertextuality within the contemporary mediasphere has a particular appeal on cult fandoms, since it generates a sense of omnipotence by placing viewers in a co-creative position within a potentially endless world-building enterprise. However, as previously mentioned, it is crucial to remember that the entire process is still controlled by the media industry, as Jenkins (2006a: 3) emphasizes: “not all participants are created equal. Corporations – and even individuals within corporate media – still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers,” and for an accurate analysis of collaborative transmedia interpretation and world-building “we need to keep in mind [...] that the interests of producers and consumers are not the same” (Jenkins 2006a: 58). Such interests usually coalesce in the exaltation of user engagement, yet users themselves should avoid delusions of grandeur by remembering that most companies indulge their pro-activity to leverage its monetary value. Nonetheless, it is still true that user engagement has an unprecedented relevance and that its profitability for the industry often results in the creation of a wider set of interaction opportunities, which viewers appreciate and exploit in

manifold manners that have rewritten the dynamics of media consumption, thus inviting a deeper analysis of fandom practices and audience participation.

1.7 Fans and viewership 2.0

The previous paragraphs have highlighted the crucial role of fans and fandoms in contemporary media use; to fully understand cult television viewing, the following sections will introduce a series of notions drawn from fandom studies, mainly related to the hybrid model of production and consumption that has emerged in the past decade. The current value of the term ‘fan’ has reached far beyond its etymological connotation of ‘fanatic,’ of a concept that “involves images of social and psychological pathology,” as Jensen (in McQuail 1992: 9) highlights. While many people are still “both drawn towards and repelled by the excessive and passionate qualities of the dedicated fan” (Casey et al. 2002: 67), most of the recent literature on fandoms identifies fannish passion as a pivotal element in contemporary television reception and appropriation and the media industry has begun to court fans directly, precisely because of their profitable devotion (Scaglioni 2011: 98), as described in the section on the Long Tail distribution model (see **1.4**) and underlined by Jenkins et al. (2013: 1-2):

audiences are making their presence felt by actively shaping media flows, and producers, brand managers, customer service professionals, and corporate communicators are waking up to the commercial need to actively listen and respond to them.

Sandvoss (2005: 8) defines fandom as “the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text”; Gray et al. underline that “being a fan has become an ever more common mode of cultural consumption” (2007: 7) and that fandom must be investigated “as part of the fabric of our everyday lives” (2007: 9). Many fandom scholars (Jenkins 1996; Tulloch 2000; Hills 2002) also see a strong similarity between fans and researchers and “recogniz[e] the generalized hybridity of contemporary media academics – academics who are also audiences and consumers of the type they write about” (Hills in Gray et al. 2007: 47). Fannish practices have always existed to a certain

extent, yet the digital age has led them to an exponential growth in size, visibility, and community-building power: as Jenkins (2006a: 27) summarizes,

our ties to older forms of social community are breaking down, our rooting in physical geography is diminished [...]. New forms of community defined through voluntary, temporary, and tactical affiliations and reaffirmed through common intellectual enterprises and emotional investment.

An illustrative example of the impact of the new media (and especially of the Internet) on fandom practices is Will Brooker's study of the *Star Wars* fandom (2002: xiv):

Star Wars fandom was flourishing before the advent of the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s. [...Yet] the internet transformed the nature of *Star Wars* fandom as it did many other communities: communication across the world became instantaneous and cheap; whole fan novels could be sent to another nation in seconds; a global network of fans could argue in real time on a discussion board; and by the late 1990s, amateur filmmakers could launch their productions on a web platform and screen it to a potentially vast audience. Perhaps most important, fans could easily and quickly find other fans and become part of a community.

Global connectivity has provided fandoms with unprecedented tools for communication and for the creation on a shared space based on common interests, rather than on geography. In a way, as Pullen (quoted in Scaglioni 2011: 97) summarizes, “the Web has mainstreamed fandom,” since fandom practices have now become “widely available” (Scaglioni 2006: 43, my translation) and their visibility has increased exponentially, bringing modes of consumption that were traditionally ignored (if not feared or spurned) in the global spotlight: as Jenkins (2006b: 135) observes, “fans have always been early adapters of new technologies; their fascination with fictional universes often inspires new forms of cultural production. None of this is new. What has shifted is the visibility of fan culture.”

Quoting Appadurai (1990), Baym and Burnett (2009: 25) highlight that “these fans are cultural ambassadors, contributing to and reshaping the mediascapes, technoscapes, and financescapes.” As described in the previous paragraphs, the crucial role of fans in the contemporary mediasphere and in global culture is determined by the blurring “of clear boundaries between media production and consumption through the forms of productive consumption enabled by new technologies” (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008: 94, my translation). Dedicated viewers are no

longer seen as sheer recipients of media products, but as responsive and pro-active players that “have the interest in commandeering portions of the world, as well as the ability and freedom to create their own parts of and paths through this world” (Gray 2010: 207). Media scholars commonly refer to “the transformation of the media user into a spect-acteur” (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008: 110, my translation) by using the portmanteau terms “prosumers” (Toffler 1984) or, more accurately, “producers” (Bruns 2007), which highlight the content-creating power of producers/consumers or producers/users.¹³ Indeed, fans’ agency (powered and publicized by new technologies) constitutes a pivotal change in the media consumption scenario, as underlined by McKee (in Miller 2002: 67):

What caught the imagination of many television researchers (particularly in the cultural studies tradition) about the ‘fans’ described by Jenkins was the fact that they produced material culture of their own. They did not simply react to an academic agenda [...] Rather they displayed agency in their everyday media consumption. Quite unprompted, they produced their own short stories, novels, audiotapes of related songs, scripts, magazines, and even re-edited videotapes: almost every form of cultural production possible. There was no way that these viewers could be rendered passive by the application of the term ‘consumers.’ [...] Jenkins showed not simply that fans are ‘active’ (producers), but also that they engaged with the television text in a number of ways. They didn’t all interpret the program in the same way, and they didn’t all agree with what they saw as their program’s stance on various issues.

Jenkins et al. (2013: 2) further stress the role of online community-based user participation in cultural consumption:

This shift from distribution to circulation signals a movement toward a more participatory model of culture, one which sees the public not as simply consumers of preconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined. And they are doing so not as isolated individuals but within larger communities and networks, which allow them to spread content well beyond their immediate geographic proximity.

The growing agency and consciousness displayed by contemporary audiences also have a momentous impact on the audiovisual translation scenario, since traditional modes and times of AVT are ill-fitted to cater to this new kind of responsiveness and pro-activity. Elsewhere the author

¹³ This dissertation employs the term “producer,” which Bruns coined as a contemporary age recontextualization of Toffler’s 1980-based term “prosumer,” explaining that “a closer look at Toffler’s own description of his prosumer model reveals that it remains firmly grounded in the mass media age: the prosumer is clearly not the self-motivated creative originator and developer of new content which can today be observed in projects ranging from open source software through Wikipedia to Second Life, but simply a particularly well-informed, and therefore both particularly critical and particularly active, consumer. [...] In [contemporary] user communities [...], roles as consumers and users have long begun to be inextricably interwoven with those as producer and creator: users are always already also able to be producers of the shared information collection, regardless of whether they are aware of that fact - they have taken on a new, hybrid role which may be best described as that of *producer*” (2009: online). Tralli (2014: 104, my translation) highlights that ‘producer’ “stresses the personal agency of the individual, while consumers [and thus prosumers] are necessarily connected to the object [of their consumption] through a monetary relationship, and thus participate in a commercial transaction, whether wittingly or not.”

of this dissertation referred to this “upgraded” form of television audience as “viewership 2.0” (Casarini 2012 and forthcoming) to highlight the fact that it does not only use paratextual and ancillary resources for a better reception of each show, but it also employs technology to participate in the construction of each storyworld and to create alternative social communities based on shared cultural preferences and on a collaborative appreciation and remediation of television products. Viewers 2.0 display a higher degree of “media literacy”¹⁴ (Scaglioni and Sfarini 2008: 64, my translation) and comfortably navigate the scenario of convergence and transmedia storytelling, gladly engaging in collaborative textual re-aggregation through a variety of devices and enjoying the payoff of an enhanced, immersive viewing experience. Zaccone (2011: 241, my translation) underlines the bidirectionality of the new relationship between users and audiovisual texts, describing a new “multitask[ing] audience [and] the development of new modes of interaction through the multi-devices that characterize the way in which audiovisual products are experienced.” In a scenario in which audiovisual products are both distributed and recomposed through different platforms and in which “media texts [are constantly looking] for new touchpoints and ways to engage their viewers (Barra in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 54, my translation), traditional AVT strategies that easily managed to accommodate a single, unidirectional televisual flow and a passive reception are proving incapable of catering to the needs of new television audiences. Viewers 2.0 may still constitute a limited portion of the total audience in dubbing countries, where linear, less challenging television consumption is still widely appreciated, bearing partial witness to Sartori’s (2000: 30, my translation) prediction that “television will win among the ‘lazy’ or tired viewers, who prefer to sit back and watch, while the Internet will win among the ‘active’ viewers, those who enjoy engaging in dialogue and research. Nonetheless, there is also enough evidence to disprove Sartori’s (2000: 23) fear that the hegemony of the visual will deprive the ‘homo videns’ of his abstraction and conceptualization abilities. The visual dimension is no longer (or not only) a caterer of pre-cooked meals, but also a powerful trigger for active appropriation, creative remediation, and

¹⁴ Knobel and Lankshear (quoted in Tralli 2014: 55) define media literacy as “socially recognized ways of generating, communicating and negotiating meaningful content through the medium of encoded texts within contexts of participation in Discourses or as members of Discourses.”

a deeper understanding of media dynamics, not to mention a much broader reflection on linguistic issues in non-Anglophone countries. The diffusion of a more conscious and active approach to audiovisual texts, of transmedia consumption, and of social watching practices has led to a wider awareness of the derivative status of translated AV texts and to a deliberate rejection of those that prove inadequate for an enhanced viewing experience, be it for the delay in delivery that inhibits participation in the global dialogue based on US schedules or for the usage of translation strategies that are perceived as excessively domesticating and thus as deep alterations of the original texts. The following paragraphs explore fandom practices of appropriation, remediation, and social watching to reiterate the pressing need for a revision of the AVT apparatus to reflect viewers 2.0's multifarious skills and higher linguistic awareness that come into play in contemporary television consumption.

1.8 Community building and user remediation

As Jenkins (2006a) highlights, “the age of media convergence enables communal, rather than individualistic, modes of reception” (2006a: 26), and textual re-aggregation in the contemporary mediascape is a process of “collective meaning-making” (2006a: 4). Shirky (2009: 48) adds that “we now have communication tools – and increasingly, social patterns that make use of these tools – that are a better fit for our native desires and talents for group effort.” The idea of community is a fundamental component of fandom, as media scholars frequently observe: “fans participate in communal activities—they are not ‘socially atomized’ or isolated viewers/readers” (Hills 2002: ix) and cult watching is “intimately relational” (Scaglioni 2006: 16, my translation). Rather than exploring issues of fandom as resistance,¹⁵ this dissertation will thus focus on the process of

¹⁵ See Jenkins 1992, Hills 2002, and Booth 2010, among others. In particular, Jenkins's 1992 volume introduces the idea of fan consumption as *textual poaching*, drawing from Michel de Certeau's 1984 essay *The Practice of Everyday Life*: “Michel de Certeau (1984) has characterized such active reading as “poaching,” an impertinent raid on the literary preserve that takes away only those things that are useful or pleasurable to the reader: “Far from being writers... readers are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves” (174). De Certeau's “poaching” analogy characterizes the relationship between readers and writers as an ongoing struggle for possession of the text and for control over its meanings.” (1992: 24-25). Thus for Jenkins (1992: 24)

community building, since the desire to recreate a shared experience is probably the main driving force behind the practices of television consumption that have the deepest impact on the audiovisual translation scenario. In *Living with Star Trek*, Lincoln Geraghty (2007: 103) highlights the sense of security and belonging that originates from being part of a group of kindred souls:

community, according to Zygmunt Bauman, “is a ‘warm’ place, a cozy and comfortable place.” Within a community, we are safe from the dangers of the outside world and are able to find comfort with the people that share in it.

By eliminating the need for geographical proximity, the Internet has thus generated an explosion of community building sites; Jenkins (2006a: 256) underlines that “a man with one machine (a TV) is doomed to isolation, but a man with two machines (TV and a computer) can belong to a community.” Communication is a key factor in the development of a collective identity and a community-specific language heightens a group’s strength, providing a shared framework that has a function akin to that of a film genre, as Tralli (2014: 183-185, my translation) explains:

as Nancy Baym observes in *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, groups generated by some sort of “digital mediation” can be defined through the concept of linguistic community: ‘online communities share ways of speaking that capture the meanings that are important to them and the logics that underlie their common sensibilities. Groups share insider lingo including acronyms, vocabulary words, genres, styles, and forms of play.’ Moreover, if we consider the popular theories of movie genres suggested by Rick Altman in *Film/Genre*, we will find evident similarities with the idea of genres as sites in which different demands coexist. Genres must be intended from a discourse perspective, as a language that does not only describe a particular phenomenon, but is also used by a speaker to communicate with another speaker, usually for a specific and identifiable purpose.

The process through which identity and community are created discursively is one of the features that clash most evidently against the traditional AVT apparatus, since excessive domestication deprives non-Anglophone viewers of a relevant part of fandom-specific communication frameworks, as **chapter 2** will illustrate.

Online group-building also operates in a regime of “wikinomics” (Tapscott and Williams 2006), a paradigm of mass collaboration in which free individuals cooperate to improve a situation, solve a problem, or generally augment their collective knowledge by pooling in ideas and sharing

fans “cease to be simply an audience for popular texts; instead, they become active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meaning,” and they “actively struggle with and against the meanings imposed upon them by their borrowed materials.”

their different forms of expertise. Once again, the foremost embodiment of this way of thinking is Wikipedia, a “pool of shared information with constant maintenance” (Casati 2012: presentation, my translation) based on the ‘wisdom of crowds,’ but also on the collection of highly specific notions that no single individual would be able to possess. In a way, television fan groups operate like show-specific wikis, as Jenkins observes:

the fan community pools its knowledge because no single fan can know everything necessary to fully appreciate the series. [...] Collective intelligence expands a community’s productive capacity because it frees individual members from the limitations of their memory and enables the group to act upon a broader range of expertise. (2006b: 139)

Consumption has become a collective process, [as indicated by] collective intelligence, a term coined by French cybertheorist Pierre Levy. None of us can know everything; each of us knows something; and we can put the pieces together if we pool our resources and combine our skills. (2006a: 4)

The ideas of community and collective intelligence generally entail a non-hierarchical organization that Tapscott and Williams (2006: 23-25) define as peering, “a horizontal [structure which...] succeeds because it leverages self-organization” and because it pivots around “a sense of mutual obligation and shared expectations about what constitutes good citizenship within a knowledge community” (Jenkins 2006a: 266). The sense of belonging, security, and validation (Tushnet in Gray et al. 2007: 63) experienced by the members of a fandom group originates from the idea of a community of peers, in which individual knowledge is not used to stand out of the crowd, but as a donation to those who do not possess those particular skills or pieces of information, who will contribute their own expertise in return, in order to increase the group’s collective knowledge in a regime in which all members are helped to reach the same level of proficiency in the group’s specific field. Tralli (2014: 175) refers to the “mentorship economy” through which expert users teach forms of remediation (in the case of her analysis, vidding techniques¹⁶) to ‘newbies’ (neophytes) interested in learning the trade, so to speak. Thus online communities somehow reenact craftsman apprenticeships, as users are taught by their peers to employ their skills for creative

¹⁶ Francesca Coppa (2008: online) explains that “vidding is a form of grassroots filmmaking in which clips from television shows and movies are set to music. The result is called a *vid* or a *songvid*. Unlike professional MTV-style music videos, in which footage is created to promote and popularize a piece of music, fannish vidders use music in order to comment on or analyze a set of preexisting visuals, to stage a reading, or occasionally to use the footage to tell new stories. In vidding, the fans are fans of the visual source, and music is used as an interpretive lens to help the viewer to see the source text differently. A vid is a visual essay that stages an argument, and thus it is more akin to arts criticism than to traditional music video.”

remediation, both to make each text ‘their own’ and to add their contribution to the way in which that text is perceived collectively. Remediation entails a wide variety of ways for viewers to appropriate a text, treating it “like ‘silly putty,’ stretching its boundaries to incorporate their concerns, remolding its characters to better suit their desires” (Jenkins 1992: 159). Whether they choose to rework the original material through text-based forms of remediation (like fan fiction, the creation of unofficial stories based on the characters and settings from a popular narrative) or through visual-based techniques like fan art or vidding, fans perceive shows as “lovemarks that stimulate the production of user-generated contents that extend beyond superimposed dynamics and products” (Zaccone 2010: online, my translation) and are glad to invest their time and energy in a process that is bound to enhance their own viewing experience and that of the other members of their community.

As highlighted in the paragraph on expanded texts, a key feature to create successful products in the contemporary mediascape is to make them flexible and resilient in order to enable their augmentation *a priori*. Jenkins et al. (2013: 3) introduce the concept of ‘spreadability,’ referring “to the potential — both technical and cultural — for audiences to share content for their own purposes, sometimes with the permission of rights holders, sometimes against their wishes.” Spreadability is an imperative attribute for media texts to prosper in the new produsage scenario (as epitomized by the slogan coined by the Convergence Culture Consortium which opened this chapter: “if it doesn’t spread, it’s dead”). Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that it is first and foremost a feature controlled by producers, which determine the limits of the users’ sandbox, as Gray (2010: 162-165) underlines:

While audiences and fans can and regularly do create their own paratexts that privilege their own readings of texts and their own interpretive strategies, we must avoid the trap of seeing these as necessarily of equal presence and power as those created by film and television producers and their marketing teams. [...] We should also acknowledge the increasing incidence of media firms creating policed playgrounds for fans, setting up fan sites that invite various forms of fan paratextual creativity and user-generated content, yet often imposing a set of rules and limitations and/or claiming legal rights over the material.

Barra (in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 54, my translation) also highlights how producers frequently capitalize on bottom-up contributions:

Media institutions also appropriate (and re-appropriate) those forms of play, navigation, and expansion of the possible world which were originally left to the fans' creativity.

Thus the fans' "labor of love [which] operate[s] in a gift economy" (Jenkins 2006a: 180) may be re-appropriated by the media industry to generate profit, becoming free labor in "that moment where this knowledgeable consumption of culture is translated into productive activities that are pleasurable embraced and at the same time often shamelessly exploited" (Terranova 2003: online). One of the areas in which the media industry most clearly exercises its re-appropriation power is that of social viewing and second-screen applications, which will be explored in the next paragraph. Keeping in mind the issues of 'playbor' (the overlapping of play and labor) that arise from industry-controlled fandom practices is essential to understand the mechanisms of affective economics; nonetheless, it is also important to remember that the other side of the coin is an enlarged playground for identity and community formation, which is shifting from a "walled garden" to an "open sea" context (Pucci 2010: 117) and which exerts a huge appeal on audiences worldwide and can thus not be ignored upon the reassessment of AVT strategies to allow local publics to participate in the discourse and in the activities surrounding specific shows.

1.9 Social watching, second screens, and gamification

The transmedia expansion of televisual texts and the tools for time-shifted and place-shifted consumption initially generated a dispersal of the television audience, superseding the traditional viewing paradigm which entailed the physical gathering of a number of people in front of a single screen and the synchronic appraisal by audience members throughout a country, as Brooker (in Gray et al. 2007: 159) observes:

when fans watch their DVDs or videos now, they have the convenience of deciding how long their ‘journey’ is and when it starts and finishes, but have lost the sense that they are undertaking it at the same time as a nationwide community, undergoing the same or similar experiences during the same time scale.

Conversely, the very same phenomena triggered an impressive online re-aggregation and re-socialization of the viewing experience in a culture that has moved “from *appointment TV* to *engagement TV*” (Jenkins 2006a: 121), to “a TV based on human relationships” (Johnson quoted in Colletti and Materia 2012: 13); as emerges from the previous paragraphs, “television still generates shared rituals, synchronizes discourses, catalyzes attention. Perhaps even more than in the past, television remains a ground for sharing” (Grasso in Scaglioni 2009: VIII, my translation). Contemporary television-based dialogues no longer require physical or geographic proximity, as the Internet provides all sorts of spaces for the virtual discussion and appropriation of televisual programs through the practices of social viewing, which Colletti and Materia (2012: 7, my translation) define as “the actions and interactions generated on social networks on the topic of television programming.” As previously underlined, viewers 2.0 usually display a high degree of media literacy: Jenkins et al. (2013: 11) concur that

the participating public is more collectively and individually literate about social networking online; because people are more frequently and more broadly in contact with their networks of friends, family, and acquaintances; and because people increasingly interact through sharing meaningful bits of media content.

Social media have thus become “privileged sites for identity definition” (Silverstone quoted in Scaglioni and Sfarini 2008: 137), as television viewers are increasingly performing their fannish devotion through a process of networked self-representation and through personal branding strategies applied to online platforms. Tessarolo (2007: xvii, my translation) underlines how “the new generations conceive the Web as a natural extension of their social experience,” while Boccia Artieri (2013: 2) highlights that “today, in our society, digital natives are producing their generational identity in a networked space between online and offline reality.” Social media provide an instantaneous, costless, and potentially far-reaching way to actively construct one’s identity through fandom, which, as Hills (2002: xi) observes, is “always performative, [...] an identity

which is (dis-)claimed, and which performs cultural work.” The sheer act of viewing is not sufficient to be an actual part of an audience 2.0: personal and group identity must be actively shaped through “self-representational storytelling” (De Ridder in Tomanić Trivundža et al. 2013: 256) and “negotiation strategies through which media products are used in daily life as resources for social relationships and for self-presentation purposes” (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008: 97, my translation). Participation in the textual aggregation and world-building process related to a television show goes hand in hand with the construction of one’s own fandom-mediated self, which hinges on the public display of one’s televisual skills: as Scaglioni and Sfardini (2008: 91, my translation) underline,

the affective dimension of subcultures is the voluntary reason that triggers the need for individuals to show their cultural choices, to be seen as they make them, both as a characteristic and identifying trait of their group and as a form of continuous self-definition.

Claiming one’s place in Eco’s “furnished world” (1987: 198) and within a specific fandom is most easily attained by sharing spectatorial achievements in real time on online social platforms through a second screen (usually a smartphone or a tablet). The integration of mobile social media into all aspects of daily life makes such tools ideal for the construction of “new forms of programming that demand and reward immediate attention [,] building up viewer loyalty by intensifying the affective appeal of [specific] programs” (Jenkins 2006a: 96). In the age of *MultiTV* (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008), multitasking, and multi-devices, defining one’s television related identity involves a variety of media platforms that transform television viewing into a sort of *augmented reality* in which the boundary between real life and fictional worlds is increasingly blurred through instant communication.

Some of the typical social watching channels are so deeply integrated in our daily lives that they are barely perceived as devices for an active definition of personal and shared identities, as is the case with non-scripted tools such as ‘live tweeting’ (which is most popular for trending ‘swarm events’ like the Oscars or soccer tournaments) or status updates on facebook or other social

networks. The marketers behind these platforms clearly welcome the opportunity for a deeper, revenue-generating engagement that users consider as an integral part of their regular habits.¹⁷ As Jenkins et al. (2013) observe,

while an advertisement might feel like an intrusion or interruption, people often welcome spreadable media content from friends (at least discerning ones) because it reflects shared interests. (2013: 13)

recommendations from “the average person” have become a renewed priority, and word of mouth, the original form of marketing, is treated as a new phenomenon due to one major distinction: online communication creates a textual trail of the conversations audiences have about a brand or media property which may be archived indefinitely for all to see. (2013: 75)

Social watching (and user-powered advertising) also operate through specifically designed platforms like Miso (<http://gomiso.com>) and TvTag (formerly GetGlue, now available at <http://tvtag.com>) (Zaccone 2011: 247-254; Garbin 2012: online;) which leverage cult viewers’ intrinsic collector instinct by offering virtual rewards for check-ins, comments, or other interactions with a specific show. ‘Checking in’ literally means posting a real-time announcement to alert contacts (or whoever else might be interested) that one is watching a particular show. Regular check-ins will earn viewers virtual rewards like badges or stickers, which can then be advertised through Facebook or Twitter to boast one’s commitment (while simultaneously providing free publicity for the shows themselves, as previously mentioned). For instance, TvTag users who check in to *The Big Bang Theory* fifty times on fifty different weekdays will unlock the 5-Nights-A-Week sticker dedicated to fan-favorite Sheldon Cooper, one of the show’s geek protagonists, which comes with an appropriate meta-cult description:

Congratulations! With your obsessive check-ins, you've just unlocked the Sheldon sticker. Don't get overconfident though. You're still no match in Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock!¹⁸ Keep watching *The Big Bang Theory* 5 Nights a Week! Share this one proudly. It's from our friends at Warner Bros. Television.

The copywriters’ explicit attempt to favor the coalescence of the storyworld and the fans’ real lives and their direct reference to Warner Bros. are clear indicators of the marketing strategies behind

¹⁷ For instance, during the 2014 World Cup facebook ran ads such as “When the whistle blows, it’s more fun to be with your fellow fans. Enjoy Japan vs. Greece together.”

¹⁸ See **chapter 7**.

social watching aimed at “mapping cross-device engagement and modulating intent” (Picarelli 2012: 2), as Zaccone (2011: 264, my translation) illustrates:

real-time engagement, game-like dynamics, rewards, acknowledgements and reputation within communities, together with sharing practices through Social Networks, constitute the heart of Social TV, which promises to be the system that will prove most valid over the next few years, both from a technological point of view and for marketing purposes. [... There will thus be] a sort of middle [ground], a “playground” in which marketing strategies and user activities meet, contributing to the evolution not only of marketing plans for audiovisual products, but also of the concept of text - [...] a middle ground governed by the renegotiation of textual production practices and of the promotion of audiovisual products.

The effectiveness of such strategies relies on the principles of gamification, which Werbach (2012: online course) defines as “the use of game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts to achieve goals that are beyond success in the game.” Gamification appeals to fans’ intrinsic desire for completion and adds extra motivation factors by creating friendly competition through a rewarding system that incentivizes active participation aimed at unlocking extra contents and measuring one’s engagement against that of his or her peers. A gamified experience involves a Points, Badges, and Leaderboards (PBL) system that rewards each action performed within the gamified microcosm with a certain amount of points (which is usually higher if the action is publicized through social networks, once again providing free grassroots publicity for producers). By increasing their scores, users can unlock visual tokens of their engagement (badges that are displayed in a virtual trophy case on their profile page) and climb the show’s leaderboard, thus competing against other users from all over the world (both friends and strangers) and obtaining a virtual validation of their expertise and engagement. The PBL system contributes to the user’s process of self-branding and self-representation that is now performed by sharing activities that were once considered as trivial (if not as a complete waste of time) and that have now been rehabilitated as tangible proof of one’s spectatorial skills, which entail a desire to be always up-to-date, but also the ability to choose what is worth seeing and to engage with it. A gamified viewing experience thus allows the satisfaction of the three needs postulated by Deci and Ryan’s (2002) Self-Determination Theory, which proves extremely useful to understand the new degree of user agency: users’ independent choices create a sense of autonomy, their competence receives tangible

validation through points and badges, and leaderboards and interactions with other users satisfy the need for psychological relatedness.

In television consumption, users are obviously driven by an intrinsic motivation, since they probably would have watched the show of their own accord. Yet gamification also provides an extrinsic motivation which adds rewards to actions that were already pleasurable, thus enhancing the viewing experience, but also favoring a profitable habit formation process bound to lead to higher revenues for show producers. Gamification strategies prove best-suited for serial television consumption, since serialized products are intrinsically designed to lure viewers into a regular relationship that requires dedication, consistency and a voluntary effort to participate in the creation of each fictional universe. Aside from check-in platforms like Miso and TvTag, marketing strategies based on social watching also operate through network-designed second-screen applications, which emerged when companies realized that audiences were splitting their attention between the actual shows and related or unrelated content on their smartphones and started to capitalize on viewers' multitasking habits by filling their second screens with official, show-related material. The so-called 'companion applications' thus prolong the audience's engagement, offering an enhanced viewing experience. At the beginning of a new episode, a logo or 'call to action' button appears on the TV screen to prompt users to activate their second screens and interact with the show. To be most effective, second-screen applications should be created in line with the format of the show that they accompany. An example of successful lock-in between a program and its companion app (Pavolini in Colletti and Materia 2012: 64) is the Story Sync companion application which AMC launched for the last season of its leading show *Breaking Bad*: at the beginning of each new episode, an on-screen button that read "Start Story Sync Now" prompted viewers to activate the app on their iOS or Android mobile platforms. The app flowed along with the episode, "help[ing] viewers to catch up live with the series' narrative, providing pop-up information on past episodes, instant replays, sharing functions and a "reload" option that allowed to re-watching scenes during commercials" (Picarelli 2012: 5).

A scenario based on transmedia storyworlds with multiple entry points (Iacobacci in Colletti and Materia 2012: 22) accessible through mobile platforms favors the development of Sandvoss's (in Gray et al. 2007: 31) "state of constant audienceship" and a global desire to keep up with the Joneses: in the viewership 2.0 paradigm, spectatorial skills do not just entail the ability to choose high-quality shows that are worth the time investment required by enhanced watching, but also an active effort to follow them with the shortest possible delay after their original broadcast. It thus becomes even more evident that the traditional AVT system is poorly fitted to cater to non-Anglophone viewers' need "to re-anchor themselves to *another palimpsest* (for instance, US scheduling for TV show fans who adopt illegal consumption practices such as *downloading* and *streaming*) and to another discourse community" (Scaglioni 2011: 6, my translation, emphasis by the author). The desire to participate in a global social watching experience prompts viewers outside the US to find ways to overcome language barriers and the consumption delay caused by the traditionally prolonged dubbing process. To accommodate these new needs, official AVT providers should thus adopt strategies that can produce high-quality translations in a relatively short time, both recognizing the value of skilled professionals (insufficient compensation and exacting working conditions eventually prove counter-productive in most cases) and envisioning AVT as a transmedia task that might warrant the employment of Subject-Matter Experts (SMEs) as consultants or specialized translators, since the localization of transmedia storyworlds requires a specific knowledge of each narrative (the kind of expertise displayed by fans and fansubbers) and a full-rounded translation proficiency that might extend beyond traditional forms of AVT. Fox International Channels Italy, which is proving particularly responsive to the evolution of television consumption in non-Anglophone countries, is setting the standard for a revision of AVT strategies based on social watching: aside from accelerating the dubbing process for its leading shows, it also launched its own iOS second-screen app, *Fox Fan*, which provides synchronized, fully localized additional content for a "bidirectional social TV experience" that guarantees "added value and transmedia content," as stated by Francesco Barbarani, Head of Fox Networks & Digital (quoted in

Genna 2013). **Chapter 2** will provide an analysis of the Italian AVT scenario to illustrate why strategies like the ones adopted by Fox Italy are a necessary implementation to construct an AVT system that can be competitive in the viewership 2.0 paradigm.

CHAPTER 2. AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION STUDIES

Buffy: You also might want to avoid words like ‘amenable’ and ‘indecorous,’ you know? Speak English, not whatever they speak in, uh...

Giles: England?

Buffy: Yeah.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, episode 2x02, “Some Assembly Required”¹⁹

The analysis of the evolving historical and sociological context in which recent television series have been produced (and specifically, the teen series in this corpus) constituted a crucial starting point to identify the cultural environment in which creators, adaptors, and audiences operate and to define the current practices of television consumption and their impact on international distribution. The present chapter will complete the theoretical framework based on media studies and fandom studies with the equally fundamental perspective of audiovisual translation studies, which provided the tools and theories necessary to perform the empirical analysis and to postulate viable paths for a future reassessment of audiovisual translation practices in light of the evolving relationship between viewers, texts, and linguistic barriers. As Munday (2008: 179) summarizes, “the emergence of new technologies has transformed translation practice and is now exerting an impact on research and, as a consequence, on the theorization of translation.” **Chapter 1** explored the changes brought about by the digital revolution, by global connectivity, and by participatory fandom practices to provide an outline of the context in which AVT must now operate; the present chapter will then focus on AVT itself, providing an overview of its traditional paradigm in dubbing countries to highlight the teleological divergence between obsolete strategies and current media consumption practices and suggesting a possible revision to accommodate the needs of the changing television viewership. As specified in the introduction, the present study does not intend to criticize dubbing *per se*, both because it still caters to a wide portion of the Italian audience and because of the dedication and skills displayed by many of the professionals that operate in the *doppiaggio* tradition, a legacy that

¹⁹ See chapter 6.

should be preserved and fostered precisely through the adequate recognition of the skills of the trade and through the adjustment of its workflow to the contemporary scenario. The present chapter will thus focus on the challenges of AVT and on the higher conspicuousness of the hiatus between original televisual texts and their dubbed versions in an era in which the former can be easily retrieved in digital format and the latter no longer hold the monopoly of language transferring, suggesting a possible solution based on the acknowledgement that fidelity²⁰ is now actually part of the concerns of viewers 2.0.

2.1 Overview of AVT

The concept of audiovisual translation is both intuitive and multi-faceted, as terminology has evolved quickly over the past decades, especially since the Golden Age of the discipline in the 1990s. Elisa Perego's (2005: 7, my translation) straightforward definition proves most effective to pinpoint the area in which the present analysis operates: AVT "refers to all the modes of language transfer aimed at translating the original dialogues of audiovisual products, i.e. of products that simultaneously communicate through the acoustic and the visual channels." As screen products, the television shows explored in this dissertation "are completely audiovisual in nature. This means that they function simultaneously on two different levels" (Chiaro in Munday 2009: 142). However, while the term 'screen translation' self-evidently refers to products consumed through a screen, 'AVT' encompasses a wider variety of texts: as Zabalbeascoa (in Díaz Cintas 2008: 29) highlights, "an AV text is a mode of communication that is distinct from the written and the oral modes, although it may not be easy to draw a clear borderline between the audiovisual and other modes." AVT thus comprises other forms of multi-modal translation, such as videogame and web localization or accessibility practices like audiodescription, but also areas like the translation of theater plays, opera librettos, or comic books (in which "the dialogues contained in the speech

²⁰ For the purposes of this dissertation, "fidelity" is used to indicate the extent to which a translation accurately renders the meaning of the source text without distortion.

balloons connected to each speaker attempt to emulate spoken language”; Chiaro in Munday 2009: 142). In her introduction to the 2004 edition of *Topics in Audiovisual Translation*, Pilar Orero summarizes the “terminological instability” (Díaz Cintas 2009: 7) that characterizes the discipline to which we refer as audiovisual translation studies, observing that

the unsettled terminology of audiovisual translation is patent from the very denomination of the field, from Traducción subordinada or Constrained Translation (Tifford 1982: 113, Mayoral 1984: 97 & 1993, Rabadán 1991: 172, Díaz Cintas 1998, Lorenzo & Pereira 2000 & 2001) to Film Translation (Snell-Hornby 1988), Film and TV Translation (Delabastita 1989), Screen Translation (Mason 1989), Media Translation (Eguíluz 1994), Film Communication (Lecuona 1994), Traducción Fílmica (Díaz Cintas 1997), Audiovisual Translation (Luyken 1991, Dries 1995, Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997, Baker 1998), or (Multi)Media Translation (Gambier & Gottlieb 2001). [...] Screen Translation would leave out for example translations made for theatre or radio, and the term multimedia is widely perceived as related to the field of IT. Audiovisual Translation will encompass all translations — or multisemiotic transfer — for production or postproduction in any media or format, and also the new areas of media accessibility: subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing and audiodescription for the blind and the visually impaired.

Underlining the increasing usage of “audiovisual translation” (among others, see Gambier 1996, 2000, and 2006; Karamitroglou 2000; Chaume 2002; Caimi 2006; Pérez-González 2009), Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 11–12) observe that “[the term] audiovisual translation (AVT) has been gaining ground in recent years and is fast becoming the standard referent.” Subsequent literature highlights a persistence of ‘AVT’ as the most frequent denomination, although “screen translation” (ESIST – European Society for Studies in Screen Translation, est. 1995; Chiaro et al. 2008; Petillo 2008) is also widely used to refer to screen products. For consistency purposes, ‘AVT’ was adopted as the standard term to refer to the discipline and practices investigated in this dissertation, yet ‘screen translation,’ ‘multimedia,’ and ‘multimodal’ translation to underline the constraints imposed by the co-existence of different semiotic channels.

As described in **chapter 1**, transmedia productions increasingly require importing networks to translate material that extends beyond television scripts, ranging from the localization of companion applications (such as the Fox Fan app mentioned in **1.9**) to the translation of graphic novels (e.g. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, published by Dark Horse Comics; *The Walking Dead*, Image Comics; and *Game of Thrones*, Dynamite Entertainment) and to the transcreation of promotional material that may or may not entail the use of a screen (promos and trailers vs. printed ads,

billboards, packaging copy). Each of the text types involved may require different specific skills and different analysis methods, bearing witness to Orero's (2004: VII) definition of AVT as "a new dynamic umbrella, [in response to] Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb's (*Multi Media Translation* (BTS 2001: 45) [question ...] 'Is (multi) media translation a new field of study or an umbrella framework for scholars from various disciplines?'" AVT is thus to be considered as a separate discipline, but its analysis benefits from a comprehensive view (Delabastita 1989: 194) and an interdisciplinary perspective, as summarized by Pablo Romero Fresco (quoted in Díaz Cintas 2009: 5): "it seems that the most fruitful studies on AVT include or assume to some extent two basic notions: the independence of AVT as an autonomous discipline and its dependence on other related disciplines."

On the one hand, the AVT process entails specific strategies of language transfer that are best appraised through a translation studies approach, yet on the other hand the AV translator's work is deeply affected by the limitations imposed by multi-modality (see **paragraph 3.2**) and by socio-cultural constraints, calling for an integration of the linguistic approach with a sociological perspective. An effective AVT analysis approach should thus consider the socio-cultural factors that govern not only the text creation process, but also the choices (or obligations) of AV translators, according to Gideon Toury's (1995: 54-55)²¹ definition of "norms":

In its socio-cultural dimension, translation can be described as subject to constraints of several types and varying degree. These extend far beyond the source text, the systemic differences between the languages and textual traditions involved in the act, or even the possibilities and limitations of the cognitive apparatus of the translator as a necessary mediator. In fact, cognition itself is influenced, probably even modified by socio-cultural factors. At any rate, translators performing under different conditions (e.g., translating texts of different kinds, and/or for different audiences) often adopt different strategies, and ultimately come up with markedly different products.

In terms of their potency, socio-cultural constraints have been described along a scale anchored between two extremes: general, relatively absolute rules on the one hand, and pure idiosyncrasies on the other. Between these two poles lies a vast middle-ground occupied by intersubjective factors commonly designated norms. The norms themselves form a graded continuum along the scale: some are stronger, and hence more rule-like, others are weaker, and hence almost idiosyncratic. [...] Sociologists and social psychologists have long regarded norms as the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community - as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate - into performance instructions.

²¹ Quotations refer to the revised volume *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, which Toury published in 1995; the concept of translation as a norm-governed activity was first introduced in *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (1980).

Many AV scholars concur on the validity of a DTS approach to audiovisual translation: Lambert (1997: 142) notes that “the success of more functionally oriented approaches such as Skopos theory [...] and the polysystems approach has presented the phenomenon of translation as a communicational and a cultural one in which language plays a key role.” Delabastita (1989: 206) agrees on the effectiveness of a descriptive model based on the identification of “a complex interactive group of norms” that govern translation choices. Karamitroglou, in his 2000 study of dubbing and subtitling preferences in Greece, highlights the need to consider the human agents involved in the AVT process, as well as the expectations of the recipients and the influence of markets and institutions; and Díaz Cintas (in Orero 2004: 26) suggests that

the changing and evolving nature of norms frees the scholar from the prescriptive principles that have characterized the postulates of previous theoretical constructs such as linguistics structuralism. The equivalence between source and target products is not absolute and depends on socio-historical variables.

The global media scenario defined in **chapter 1** provides an overview of “the decision-making, production and distribution processes which make translation a feasible, living and significant entity” (Gambier in Chiaro et al. 2008: 16). Socio-cultural factors have a particularly strong impact on the production and translation of audiovisual texts in the current mediascape, which has undergone an unprecedented evolution over the past decades, especially with regards to the consumption of Anglophone television products in traditional dubbing countries. If the creators of a televisual text need to construct a Model Viewer within their own culture, audiovisual translators are then faced with the harder challenge to postulate a Model Viewer whose perception is informed by a different culture, but also by a deeper knowledge of the source culture than in the pre-Internet age. As Osimo (2001: 47, my translation) underlines,

translators have the great responsibility to [...] establish who is the Model Reader they address. This is one of the elements that influence their translation strategy. The different impact of the prototext [the source text] on the target culture is determined by the translators’ more or less accurate understanding of the strategy (of the Model Reader) of the prototext and by their ability to devise a textual strategy (the Model Reader of the metatext [the target text]) that is suited to the target culture.

While translators of written texts generally operate in a less constrained regime, audiovisual translators need to balance the intrinsically challenging task of constructing a Model Viewer (potentially a Model Viewer 2.0) with the limitations imposed by multimodality; the following paragraphs will thus focus on the issues generated by the need to maintain the synchrony between the visual and the verbal channels, which has a strong impact on the decisions of the AV translator.

2.2 The challenges of multimodality

All types of translation are subject to constraints of some form, be they imposed by cultural differences, publishing conventions, or other factors that limit the translator's choices. Multimodal texts, however, usually present additional challenges that originate from the coexistence of different semiotic channels, only one of which can be modified in the translation process: as Chiaro (in Munday 2009: 155) underlines, "what makes audiovisuals especially complex in translational terms is the fact that the acoustic and visual codes are so tightly combined as to create an inseparable whole." In rare instances (usually related to censorship or to the mitigation of explicit references in children's products) importing companies might decide to tweak the visuals, but since this process tends to be expensive and time-consuming, in most cases translators will only be able to operate on the verbal channel, adjusting it to maintain consistency with the visual non-verbal elements, which usually sit on the throne of AV signification, as Díaz Cintas (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 3) highlights:

It could be argued that this state of affairs is normal as we are dealing with an art form which started with the movement of images and is by and large based primarily on the power of the image. The obvious downside for us, translators and scholars of the (translated) word, is that if images are the most important variable in the equation, words – and consequently our role – tend to take more often than not a secondary, marginal position.

Many scholars thus refer to AVT as "constrained translation" (Titford 1982; Mayoral et al. 1988; Pavesi 1994, 2005; Chaume 1997), as explained by Zabalbeascoa (in Díaz Cintas 2008: 23):

The reasoning behind this proposal is that in translating the words of a film, one is up against the same situation as translating any other written form of communication plus the additional constraint of having to

synchronize the words of the translation with the picture (and, presumably, the original sound effects), i.e. having to place the string of words alongside the parallel movement of the picture.

Pavesi (2005: 12, my translation) emphasizes the dependence of the language transfer process in film (and television) translation “on pre-determined verbal codes and on the world that is represented on screen.” While this dependence is present in all forms of translation of film and television products, from subtitling to voice-over, it is most evident in dubbing, which must comply with stricter constraints that do not only refer to the duration of the original dialogue lines, but also to the facial and physical movements of the characters on screen. The need to maintain isochrony and synchrony proves hardest to satisfy in the case of culture-specific references, which translators need to weigh against their projection of the target audience, knowing that, in the absence of an official equivalent, they will not have the opportunity to use footnotes²² and will thus have to resort to a certain degree of omission or adaptation strategies. Moreover, the focus on intertextuality of the current mediascape (highlighted in **chapter 1**) constitutes an additional challenge, since AV texts can no longer be considered as independent units, and their translation necessarily participates in an intertextual dialogue with which the target audience might have a different level of familiarity from that of the source audience. This section will thus explore the different types of synchrony that affect the AVT process and focus on the further challenges posed by cultural and intertextual references, in order to delineate the complexity of the dimension in which dubbing operates.

2.3 Types of synchrony

Audiovisual products are consumed at a specific, medium-determined pace, unlike written texts, which can be read at different speeds, depending on the reader’s literacy level, on the genre and on the complexity of the writing, or even just on an impromptu decision to linger on a certain page or

²² An exception to this rule is amateur ‘abusive subtitling,’ which involves the insertion of pop-up glosses and explanations, particularly to translate Japanese animes (see Nornes 1999; O’Hagan 2006; Caffrey 2009; Pérez-Gonzalez 2012; Perego and Taylor 2012). Bucaria and Chiaro (2007: 115) suggest that “just as much literature contains annotations to aid the reader, surely verbal and audio glosses should be equally feasible.” Fansubs and other forms of AVT (such as audiodescription for the blind) are indeed moving toward the integration of annotations into AV texts; given the speed at which AVT has been changing over the past decade, it is reasonable to assume that in a near future it will be possible to gauge the audience’s readiness to accept the introduction of similar tools in official AVT forms.

jump to the following section. Synchrony is thus a key requirement for translated film and television products, since the visual flow cannot be separated from the verbal one without compromising the comprehension and the enjoyment of the whole text. AVT relies most heavily on isochrony, as Chaume (in Orero 2004: 41) explains:

the timing of the screen characters' utterances must be respected; [...] the translated dialogue (in the case of dubbing) must fit exactly in the time between the instant the screen actor opens his/her mouth to deliver the lines from the source text and the instant in which he/she closes his/her mouth. This kind of synchrony is known as isochrony.

Whether the translated text is provided through subtitles, voice-over, dubbing, or any other form of AVT, it is imperative that its segmentation coincides with that of the source text to enable viewers to maintain a correct connection between the verbal and visual channels. However, isochrony is even more crucial in dubbing, since an asymmetry between the aural and visual channels is much more perceptible than an out-of-sync subtitle or voice-over line (which can be partially compensated by the presence of the original audio track). Moreover, dubbing must also comply with other types of synchrony which bear little or no relevance in other forms of AVT, namely phonetic / articulatory synchrony and kinetic / paralinguistic synchrony (Pavesi 2005: 13, my translation). Articulatory synchrony is usually referred to as 'lip synch,' which Chaume (in Orero 2004: 41) defines as respecting "the lip movements in close-up shots and extreme close-ups [...by] matching the translation with the screen actor's articulatory movements." However, Pavesi (2005: 13) notes that the term "lip synch" excludes the role of the other organs involved in phonation, such as the jaw and the teeth, and suggests the more accurate definition "articulatory synchrony." Adopting Herbst's 1994 classification, Pavesi (2005: 13-14) distinguishes between quantitative articulatory synchrony (which corresponds to isochrony) and qualitative articulatory synchrony, which entails the usage of dubbed sounds that are compatible with those of the original text in the scenes in which the actors' phonatory movements are particularly visible, which occurs most often with vowels, bilabial consonants such as [m], [b], and [p], and the labiodental fricatives [f] and [v] (Pavesi 2005: 14; Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2005: 67). Finally, kinetic / paralinguistic synchrony

refers to the correspondence between the translated texts and “the head, arm, or body movements of the characters on screen (assent, negation, surprise, etc.)” (Chaume in Orero 2004: 41). Even though “there is no absolute rule regarding synchrony” (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2005: 67, my translation), the complex interaction between these types of correspondence creates a “tunnel” (Cary 1960: 11, quoted in Pavesi 2005: 26) in which the AV translator is forced to proceed along a narrow path of synchrony-influenced choices, each of which tends to restrict the range of possible solutions for subsequent issues. The next paragraph will illustrate how “culture bumps” (Leppihalme 1997) create additional obstacles that AV translators need to tackle, lest their target audiences experience a rough, turbulent ride through the text.

2.4 Culture bumps, Lingua-cultural Drops in Translation Voltage (DTVs), and Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs)

The various types of synchrony provide enough constraints to turn the AVT process into a race on a track full of chicanes and sharp curves; yet aside from trying not to swerve off the road at every turn, AV translators also need to tackle the “culture bumps” that might compromise the audience’s ride. Leppihalme (1997: 4) defines “culture bump” as the phenomenon which “occurs when an individual finds himself or herself in different, strange, or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture.” While this may happen in any form of communication, AV texts typically emphasize the uncomfortable feeling generated by the lack of comprehension of the source culture, since viewers do not have the opportunity to ask for clarifications (as they would do in a conversation) and replaying the obscure part is not always possible and might not be sufficient anyway. Dubbing must thus find a way around culture bumps, as Paolinelli and Di Fortunato (2005: 2, my translation) highlight:

dubbing is a tool to overcome cultural differences, not just linguistic differences, a tool that reconstructs the particular world described in a movie as an equivalent world that can be understood in a theoretical cultural

framework of which the dialogue adaptor must become the first spectator, a Model Viewer, by using his or her sensitivity and knowledge of the target culture, as well as of the source culture.

From this perspective, dubbing can thus be considered as a service (Antonini and Chiaro 2005; Bucaria in Chiaro et al. 2008) that importing networks need to provide to their viewers to allow them to consume and enjoy a program. Bucaria (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 151) observes that “as providers of this service, AVT professionals and scholars have a chance to cultivate an interest in how the end-users, i.e. the viewers, perceive what they are exposed to on a daily basis.” Antonini and Chiaro (2005: 39) adopt the compelling metaphor of a supply of electricity: just like a power shortage or blackout prevents television consumption, irregularities in the translation stream have a negative impact on the viewer’s experience. Antonini and Chiaro define these glitches as “lingua-cultural Drops in Translational Voltage” (DTV), referring to “any instance when the intended message does not fully get across” (Antonini in Chiaro et al. 2008: 140) and “to the inevitable perceived uneasiness and turbulence in the verbal code with respect to the visuals” (Chiaro in Munday 2009: 157). Antonini and Chiaro (2005: 39; quoted in Chiaro, in Chiaro et al. 2008: 251) identify four main types of obstacles that can generate DTVs:

1. Culture-specific references (e.g. place names, references to sports and festivities, famous people, monetary systems, institutions, etc.);
2. Lingua-specific turbulence (translating terms of address, taboo language, written language, etc.);
3. Areas of overlap between language and culture (songs, rhymes, jokes, etc.);
4. Visuals (culture specific examples void of language)

Since teen shows tend to feature a wide range of cultural references, diastatic variations, sociolects and idiolects, jokes, topics that might be taboo in other cultures, and other culture-specific, lingua-specific, and lingua-cultural elements, the empirical analysis in **chapters 5 to 7** will refer to the first three categories and focus on Culture-Specific References (CSR; Chiaro in Munday 2009: 156) / Extra-linguistic Cultural References (ECR; Pedersen 2005: online). CSRs constitute a privileged site to analyze the re-construction of the teen identity into Italian, especially in shows that are deeply permeated by popular culture, such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Dawson’s Creek*, or *The*

Big Bang Theory. Antonini and Chiaro (2005: 39; quoted in Chiaro in Munday 2009: 156) list ten typical CSR areas:

1. **Institutions** (including judiciary, police, military)
 - a. Legal formulae: e.g. ‘This court is now in session’, ‘All rise’, ‘Objection, your Honor’, ‘Objection overruled/sustained’, ‘You may be seated’;
 - b. Courtroom forms of address: e.g. ‘Your Honor’, ‘My Lord’, ‘Members of the jury’;
 - c. Legal topography: Supreme Court, Grand Jury, Court, etc.;
 - d. Agents: lawyers, solicitors, attorneys, barristers, etc.; hospital hierarchies such as consultants, interns, paramedics; military hierarchies, etc.
2. **Educational** references to ‘high school’ culture, tests, grading systems, sororities, cheerleaders, etc.
3. **Place names**: The District of Columbia, The Country Club, 42nd Street, etc.
4. **Units of measurement**: Two ounces of meat, 150 pounds, twenty yards, etc.
5. **Monetary systems**: Dollars, soles, pounds, etc.
6. **National sports and pastimes**: American football, baseball, basketball teams: The Nicks, Boston, Brooklyn Dodgers, etc.
7. **Food and drink**: Mississippi Mud Pie, pancakes, BLT, etc.
8. **Holidays and festivities**: Halloween, St Patrick’s, July 4th, Thanksgiving, Bar Mitzvah, Chinese New Year, The Festival of Light, etc.
9. **Books, films and TV programs**: ‘Did you watch *The Brady Bunch*?’; ‘Welcome to the road, Dorothy.’
10. **Celebrities and personalities**: Ringo Starr; Topsy; The Cookie Monster, etc.

Perhaps with the exception of institutions, all of the other categories appear more or less frequently in US teen shows; educational references are obviously omnipresent, but food and drink are mentioned just as often, given their relevance in American consumer culture and the role of shared meals as a moment of bonding and conviviality – a television trope that is frequently used to bring the characters together in a single place. While categories 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 appear occasionally, references to books, films and TV programs and to celebrities and personalities abound, especially in markedly intertextual shows such as *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson’s Creek*. It should also be noted that in this corpus CSRs are frequently used as a source of Verbally Expressed Humor (VEH), in which case rendering them into a different language and culture becomes an even harder task, as Chiaro (2006: online) observes:

while many translational problems which regard VEH on screen are similar to those also found in written texts, namely conveying extreme lingua-cultural specificity interlingually, often they turn out to be multiplied several times over owing to the very restrictions which the visual code imposes upon the translation.

CSRs / ECRs can be addressed in different ways; the consistent adoption of a specific set of strategies determines the degree of domestication or foreignization (Venuti 1995) of the target text,

which tends to be noticeably different in dubbed and fansubbed versions. Quoting Katan (1999/2004: 147), Chiaro (in Munday 2009: 157) suggests three strategies to render CSRs:

in order to handle such references, as in written translation, translators opt for either: a) ‘chunking up’ and making CSR in the target language more general than those in the source language through the adoption of hyperonymy; b) ‘chunking down’ by replacing them with more specific references in the target language; or c) ‘chunking sideways’ and replacing CSR with same level equivalents (Katan 1999/2004: 147).

All three types of chunking are often used when dubbing teen shows into Italian; hyperonymy is a frequent solution, since it favors immediate comprehension, even though it might deprive the text of some of its original flavor, if used excessively (an issue that is regularly criticized by fansubbers and viewers 2.0). Chunking down yields alternate results, in that increasing specificity is more likely to give away the translator’s intervention if the hyponym is not chosen scrupulously; chunking sideways is perhaps the best compromise, even though it still introduces shifts in meaning that need to be balanced with particular care. The range of strategies adopted to render CSRs / ECRs in the teen shows in this corpus was mapped through an adapted version of the categories illustrated by Jan Pedersen (2005: online) in his article “How is culture rendered in subtitles?”, in which the author discusses and expands previous classifications (among others: Gottlieb 1992; Ivarsson 1992; Díaz Cintas 2003). Pedersen’s taxonomy refers to subtitling (the leading form of AVT in Denmark and Sweden, on which his analysis focuses), but it can easily be applied to dubbing (Pedersen 2005: online; Ranzato 2010: 46), provided one remembers that the choices made by dubbing translators are not only influenced by isochrony, dialogue segmentation, and shot changes, as happens in subtitling, but also by the other types of synchrony described in **2.3**. Pedersen provides a definition of Extralinguistic Culture-bound References (ECRs) that is in line with that of CSRs:

an Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR) is defined as reference that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience. (Pedersen 2005: online).

It should be pointed out that even though ECRs refer to extralinguistic entities, i.e. entities ‘outside language’ they are still verbal, i.e. they are expressed by means of language. When an ECR appears in the ST, the

subtitled needs to make a decision on how to bridge this cultural gap between the presupposed encyclopedic knowledge of the ST audience and the TT audience. (Pedersen in Chiaro 2008: 102)

As Ranzato (2010: 46) highlights, a key element in Pedersen's approach is the focus on *transculturality*, which refers to the different ways in which cultures interact with one another:

the notion of Transculturality deals with the point that not all ECRs cause Translation Crisis Points. Some ECRs, which I call Transcultural ECRs, are more or less equally known to the TT audience as to the ST audience. Then there are what I call Microcultural ECRs, which the producers of the ST cannot expect the majority of their audience to know. These two categories of ECRs do not normally cause any Translation Crisis Points. There is a scale between these two points and in the middle of this scale are Monocultural ECRs, which are known to the ST audience, but inaccessible to the TT audience, and these often call for an Interventional strategy. (Pedersen in Chiaro 2008: 104)

Ranzato (2010: 84) also refers to "threshold references," which are halfway between Transcultural and Monocultural ECRs, and underlines the relevance of sociolects and idiolects,²³ which are frequently used in teen shows to identify speech communities ('teen talk,' 'tech slang,' 'geek speak') or to construct a cult character's identity ('Buffyspeak'; Sheldon Cooper's highly scientific and overly formal language in *The Big Bang Theory*).

These classifications stress the fact that the AV translator's key responsibility is to gauge the degree of familiarity with the source culture that the target audience is estimated to possess, as well as its "comfort factor," which Katan and Straniero-Sergio (2003, quoted in Ranzato 2010: 67) define as the extent to which viewers are entertained. Assessing the audience's knowledge of the source culture clearly entails a lot of guesswork, especially in the contemporary mediascape, in which intertextuality informs all types of cultural products and complicates the dynamics of cultural interaction, as Eco already pointed out in 1994 (90):

such phenomena of "intertextual dialogue" were once typical of experimental art and presupposed a very sophisticated Model Reader. The fact that similar devices have now become more common in the media world leads us to see that the media are carrying on and presupposing the possession of pieces of information already conveyed by other media. The text of *E.T.* "knows" that the public has learned from newspapers or television everything about Rambaldi, Lucas, and Spielberg. The media seem, in this play of extratextual quotation, to make reference to the world, but in effect they are referring to the contents of other messages sent by other media. The game is played, so to speak, on a "broadened" intertextuality. Any difference between knowledge of the world (understood naively as a knowledge derived from an extratextual experience) and intertextual knowledge has practically vanished.

²³ Ranzato also analyzes dialects, which were excluded from this study since they are rarely used in the shows in this corpus.

The present analysis thus aims at identifying the different approaches adopted by dubbing adaptors and by fansubbers to create texts that they estimate to match the viewers' expectations, tackling obstacles in different ways and navigating the increasingly complex network of intertextual and culture-specific references. **Chapter 3** describes the methodology at the basis of this study and illustrates the **episode analysis tables** based on Pedersen's taxonomy of the different strategies used to render ECRs / CSRs. A selection of examples from each show is analyzed in **chapters 5 to 7**.

2.5 AVT for television

Technological progress has extended the range of translation forms that can be used for television texts: next to traditional dubbing and subtitling, the current scenario includes a variety of specialized translation types and tools that cater to specific audiences, such as portable devices that display subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing or play audiodescriptions for the blind (smartphones, tablets, or even electronic glasses that function with dedicated apps like the Italian project MovieReading, available at www.moviereading.com), live subtitling applications, and respeaking software for voice recognition. Participatory culture and the digital revolution (see **chapter 1**) have also generated a democratization of AVT tools, prompting a diffusion of amateur subtitling and of fandubbing,²⁴ as Díaz Cintas (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 7) highlights:

With Internet having fully come of age, subtitling and dubbing software programs have become much more affordable and accessible, with many of them available free on the net. These programs have facilitated the rise and consolidation of translation practices like fansubs and fandubs, whose underlying philosophy is the free distribution over the Internet of audiovisual programs which have been subtitled and dubbed by fans for fans. These new forms of subtitling and dubbing lie at the margins of market imperatives and are far less dogmatic and much more creative and individualistic than what has traditionally been done (Ferrer Simó 2005, Díaz Cintas and Muñoz-Sánchez 2006). They pick and mix among the conventions and parameters traditionally applied in the various modes of audiovisual transfer and come up with hybrid forms that could well be the seeds of future conventions and norms.

This dissertation will focus on dubbing and fansubbing, illustrating how the two forms often seem to be taking opposite sides in what Gottlieb defines as the perpetual “tug-of-war between fidelity

²⁴ Fan-made dubbing obtained by recording a translation of the original audio track.

and audience concerns” (in Díaz Cintas 2009: 25) and highlighting the differences between two modes of consumption that are currently based on opposite constructions of their respective Model Viewers, the blending of which might lead to successful results in updating AVT to the emerging viewership 2.0 while still catering to the less involved part of the audience (see **paragraph 2.9**). Professional subtitling will not be explored in detail, since its usage is still limited in television consumption in Italy; however, a brief overview will be provided to introduce fansubbing.

2.6 Dubbing

The most evident difference between dubbing and subtitling is the way in which these two forms of AVT are delivered: as Chiaro (in Munday 2009: 141-142) summarizes, “dubbing is a process which uses the acoustic channel for translational purposes, while subtitling is visual and involves a written translation that is superimposed on to the screen.” Dubbing refers to the replacement of the original dialogue track with a translated and adapted version of the script that is recorded by professional voice actors. Dubbing can be performed in different ways: for instance, in many countries documentaries are dubbed in voice-over, “a technique in which a disembodied voice can be heard over the original soundtrack, which remains audible but indecipherable to audiences” (Chiaro in Munday 2009: 152); in Poland, imported television productions are delivered through a method known as ‘juxtareading,’ in which the dubbed lines are not recorded by different actors, but read by a single reader (usually with a neutral, low-pitch voice) over the original dialogue track. However, this dissertation will only refer to the form of dubbing that is most widespread in traditional European dubbing countries (Italy, France, Germany, Austria, and Spain), which entails the elimination of the original dialogue track and the use of multiple voice actors and actresses. Dubbing typically involves a four-step sequence, which Chiaro (in Munday 2009: 144-145) describes as follows:

the first step includes the translation of the script, which is usually translated word for word. The second step is the adaptation of the translated script. The script is adapted so that it would sound natural in the target language. Moreover, the dialogue spoken in the target language has to be adjusted to the lip movements and facial expressions of the actors on screen. The third step indicates the recording of the translated and adapted script by actors. The final step deals with mixing the new script with the original recording.

The translation of the script is carried out by a specialized audiovisual translator who delivers a text that is as close as possible to the original and, unlike other forms of translated texts, is usually “not definitive [...but] will serve as the starting for a lengthy and complex process during which the text will pass through many hands and operations, which may be more or less respectful of the original translation” (Martínez in Orero 2004: 3). A dubbing translator / dialogue adaptor²⁵ (who may or may not be conversant in the source language) then modifies the translated text to adjust the length and features of each line to match the duration and segmentation of the original dialogues and “the actors’ mouth movements and the other images as closely as possible” (Chaume in Orero 2004: 42), not only trying to respect the types of synchrony described in 2.3, but also attempting to reproduce a dialogue that is similar to spoken language. As Pavesi (in Chiaro 2008: 80) summarizes, “at least two main requirements, therefore, interact in shaping film dialogues: representation of orality on the one hand and time-constrained narration on the other.” Alfieri and Bonomi (2012: 9, my translation) highlight that “the language of television belongs to the category of the “transmitted” (*trasmesso*), which is located mid-way on the diamesic axis between written and oral productions.” However, dubbed dialogues can only mimic natural spoken language to a certain extent, as underlined by numerous scholars: Nencioni (1976) defines the language of dubbing as “parlato recitato” (recited spoken language); Gregory and Carroll (1978: 42) describe it as “written to be spoken as if not written”; Rossi (1999) adopts the term “parlato simulato” (simulated spoken language); and Chaume (2007: 77) refers to “a prefabricated, artificial, non-spontaneous oral register; in other words, one which does not exactly imitate the spontaneous oral register, but echoes many of its characteristics” – a “false spontaneous” (Marzà and Chaume: 2009: 33). Alfieri and Bonomi (2012: 102, my translation) define the type of Italian used in fictional shows as “parlato oralizzato”

²⁵ In some cases a single professional takes care of the translation and adaptation phases.

(oralized speech), a “recited speech adapted to the dynamic televisual recitation and thus subject to a sort of mimetic rotation: a type of speech modeled on spontaneous speech, but ‘cleaned’ of redundancies when it is written in form of a script and subsequently re-spoken during the voice-acting session.” Analyzing dubbing thus includes identifying the norms which adaptors tend to use to recreate this somewhat pasteurized, “prefabricated orality” (Chaume 2001: 78), as Pavesi (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 82) highlights:

the researcher’s task includes identifying which target language features are systematically made to convey orality in the target text and what functions they serve (Pavesi 2005). In this framework the search for regularities of linguistic behavior in translated film texts may correspond to the search for translational norms. These may yield repeated and systematic patterns of selected features shared by translated products belonging to the same genre, for specific language pairs, in given periods of time. Some norms may also transcend genre, language or time restrictions and work across a wider translational range.

Due to historical attempts to use audiovisual products to create a unified language to promote national identity (see 2.6.1), in Italy the language of dubbing has always aimed at reproducing a normative, standard variety devoid of diatopic, diastratic, and diaphasic variations, an “impossible Italian” (Fink 1983, quoted in Maestri 2010: 27, my translation) that “respected grammar rules and was flattened on an average and phonetically neutral level (derived from theater recitation, and thus from the Tuscan variety, until the forced adoption of the Roman-Tuscan pronunciation in 1939)” (Raffaelli 2001: 896; quoted in Ranzato 2010: 16, my translation). The attempt to recreate a normative language articulated with clean, uninflected enunciation in non-overlapping speech turns led to the emergence of a perceptibly artificial filmic and televisual language defined as ‘dubbese,’ as Antonini (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 136) highlights:

the term dubbese (in Italian *doppiaggese*) was coined by Italian screen translators and operators to negatively connote the linguistic hybrid that over the years has emerged as the “standard” variety of Italian spoken by characters in dubbed filmic products both for TV and cinema (Cipolloni 1996, Rossi 1999b).

Register uniformity (Perego 2005: 26) and “interference from the SL, for example in the form of lexical and syntactic calques, shifts between formal and informal register, and translational clichés in general” (Bucaria in Chiaro et al. 2008: 150) have been frequently identified in most types of dubbed movies and television programs. Alfieri and Bonomi (2012: 102-103) list several examples

of dubbese equivalencies: among others, “Qual è il tuo nome?” (literally “What is your name?”) as opposed to “Come ti chiami?”; “Qual è il problema?” (“What is the problem?”) as opposed to the much more common “Cosa c’è che non va?” (“What is wrong?”); the presence of unnecessary personal pronouns; and the use of “Posso chiamarla [nome proprio]?” (“Can I call you [first name]?”) as a calque used instead of the pragmatic equivalent “Posso darle del tu?”, which signals a switch from the polite form “Lei” (third person singular) to a more direct “tu” (second person singular). Cappuccio (2007: 97) also lists the frequent calques “Dannazione!” (“Damn!”) and “Sei pazzo o cosa?” (“Are you crazy or what?”). Furthermore, prefabricated orality tends to be more perceptible in audiovisual text that focus on specific speech communities, and many dubbed adolescent shows exhibit a form of ‘teen dubbese’ that is often used to compensate for untranslatable idiolectic forms. On the one hand, the usage of artificial stock phrases as markers of teen talk (a common example is “cioè” / “tipo” to render the American interjection “like”) gives away the artificiality of the reconstructed language, especially when it is employed for years or even decades and thus fails to mirror the rapid evolution of adolescent idiolects. On the other hand, several studies show that audiences in dubbing countries are partly trained to accept dubbese (and teen dubbese) as a clause of their ‘viewing contract,’ as Pavesi (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 81) summarizes:

The need for linguistic realism is also to be assessed in relation to the degree of acceptance of the inherent features of film language by target audiences. Descriptive and empirical investigations, in particular by Chiaro and her co-workers, have shown viewers’ relative readiness to accept unrealistic features, including so called dubbese (Herbst 1994, Pavesi 1994, Antonini and Chiaro forthcoming, Chaume 2004d).

Once the adaptation phase is completed, the script is handed over to the dubbing studio, where voice actors record the adapted lines, “matching the translation with the screen actors’ body movements and articulatory movements” (Chaume in Orero 2004: 42). A dubbing director supervises the whole process, suggesting changes to the script whenever necessary; the recorded dialogues are then mixed with the original soundtrack containing “the sound effects and music of the original, which can now be isolated from dialogue” (Gambier in Chiaro et al. 2008: 26) thanks

to digital technology. With so many people working on the rendition of an audiovisual text into a different language and the general policy of the importing network hovering above all of the professionals involved, the complexity of dubbing is all the more evident; besides synchrony-related constraints, analyzing dubbed texts should thus also consider the problems that tend to arise when many people work on the same project following their different working routines and simultaneously trying to comply with general, network-imposed guidelines. As previously stated, the purpose of this dissertation is not to criticize the dubbing process in its entirety, since the current Italian scene boasts many skilled professionals specializing in each of the different phases. What should be thoroughly reassessed is the idea of the target audience on which current dubbing practices are based: as Barra (2009b: 514) highlights,

some adaptation changes are not made (or not only) to improve voice synchronism, language complexity or precise cultural references, but according to a simplified idea of the audience – often considered by media workers as lazy, lethargic, unwilling to discover anything new.

As described in **chapter 1**, the traditional idea of viewers as “couch potatoes” (Scaglioni and Sfardini 2008: 70) no longer represents the whole Italian audience, as a growing portion thereof is starting to explore different, more active forms of television consumption. Since the entire dubbing industry relies on the existence of an audience that uses its adaptations, the diffusion of alternative forms of AVT such as fansubbing highlights the urgency of a revision of dubbing practices, which are still designed to cater to an increasingly anachronistic Model Viewer.

2.6.1. Dubbing in Italy

In the early decades of cinema, countries “like France, Germany and Italy - which boasted important film schools willing to fight the Hollywood “invasion” – favored dubbing because of protectionism policies” (Audissino 2012: 22). In Italy dubbing was introduced by the fascist regime in 1931 and played a crucial role for both censorship and propaganda (Maestri 2010: 26): by replacing the original dialogue track, the autarchic government had the double opportunity to

contain the threat of the newly available talkies (which had first been imported in 1929) and to foster the creation of a homogeneous language aimed at an artificial unification of the manifold linguistic and cultural communities within the Italian borders (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2005: 12). Even though it showed little fidelity to the original foreign texts and to the diatopic varieties of Italian spoken in the different areas of the country, the language of the movies constituted an effective coalescing agent for the fragmented Italian population: as Ranzato (2010: 77, my translation) underlines, “since no common linguistic models were available, the language used to translate American movies started to become a paradigm for spoken Italian.” The artificial, uninflected language rooted in the theatrical and literary traditions described in 2.6 was subsequently adopted for the small screen: when the national television service began, on January 3, 1954 (Menduni 1998: 53), dubbing practices were transferred to the new medium with minimal modifications, as Barra (2009b: 512) highlights:

These production – better, mediation – routines are deeply rooted in the cinema dubbing system, born in Italy soon after the introduction of cinematographic audio. In almost 80 years, the processes have been constantly optimized, thanks to technological and cultural innovations, and became interiorized by both media professionals and the audience. With the birth of television and the arrival of a large number of foreign “ready-made” products, they were applied, with few changes, to television industry.

National television focused on the promotion of a language aimed at fostering literacy and cultural unity (Maestri 2010: 63): “televisual Italian was born as the language of [popular] education and of identity formation created by state TV, which drew on the pedagogic intentions of European television, and particularly of the BBC” (Alfieri and Bonomi 2012: 13, my translation), and therefore “television had a strong impact on the development of spoken Italian” (De Mauro 1968, my translation).

According to Cappuccio (2007: 95, my translation), in 2007 “the Italian dubbing industry [had] a yearly turnover of about 60 million Euros, 60% of which [came] from television, mainly from television series and animes,” and it is reasonable to assume that such figures are now significantly higher, given the subsequent proliferation of networks on both Digital Terrestrial

Television (Rai4's palimpsest is mainly devoted to television shows, while Real Time mainly broadcasts reality shows and cookery programs) and cable platforms (for instance, in April 2014 Sky Italia launched the thematic channel "Sky Atlantic," which broadcasts television shows and TV movies twelve hours a day and boasts exclusive premieres like Netflix's *House of Cards*). While Italian networks acknowledge the need to create and import contents that appeal to specialized audiences, AVT providers are still only taking limited steps to provide an equivalent service from a translational point of view. Hit drama shows appear to be adapted with greater attention to language specificity: for instance, dubber and dubbing director Giuppy Izzo (in Cappuccio 2007: 97) recalls that for *Grey's Anatomy* the dubbing studio PUMASdue hired a medical doctor (plastic surgeon Yuri Macrino) as a consultant to double-check the translated scripts. However, for many other television series the dubbing process still clings to an outdated approach aimed at homogenizing same-genre products with translational solutions that tend to present pre-determined stimuli over and over, triggering Pavlovian reactions in the viewers by employing well-tested mechanisms that might still work, but also turn television watching into a mechanical activity that pivots around genre stereotypes and pays little attention to the specificity of each show. This process is particularly evident in the dubbing of teen shows and situation comedies, frequently considered as interchangeable fillers to cover afternoon programming and the pre-primetime slot. As described so far, a growing percentage of the Italian audience is actively bypassing this homogenization by turning to other sources of AVT (mainly to fansubbing); once the audience has raised the bar, dubbing providers should thus adjust their strategies to match the evolving viewing skills and still prove competitive, now that alternatives to their service are gaining significant ground.

2.7 Subtitling

Henrik Gottlieb (in Orero 2004: 86) defines subtitling as "the rendering in a different language of verbal messages in filmic media, in the shape of one or more lines of written text, presented on the

screen in synch with the original message.” Subtitling thus involves a diamesic variation, since the translation of the original spoken text is delivered in written form and projected or loaded onto the images and synchronized with the original soundtrack. Subtitling constitutes a cheaper form of AVT, since it does not involve the entire re-recording process and can be performed by a limited number of professionals, who translate the text using reduction strategies (such as the elimination of redundant elements like repetitions or interjections) and create subtitles based on a set of guidelines (a famous example is the “Code of Good Subtitling Practices” proposed by Carroll and Ivarsson at the *Languages and the Media* conference in Berlin in 1998, but different countries and different companies may apply different conventions). Guidelines are aimed at obtaining the maximum possible accessibility (Gambier 2001; 2003), which Bartrina (in Díaz Cintas and Anderman 2009: 232) defines as a combination of

acceptability (grammar, style, terminology), legibility (position, subtitle rates), readability (reading speed rates, shot changes), synchronicity (what is read is what is shown), relevance (what information is to be deleted or added) and translation strategies when dealing with cultural items.

For instance, subtitles should be positioned in the bottom part of the screen (originally centered for movies and left-aligned for television, even though the distinction is not always respected) and should occupy a maximum of two lines (each of which should contain no more than 35-40 characters); segmentation should follow syntactic rules and meaning blocks and the first line should be shorter than the second, so as to facilitate the natural movement of the eye and to cover a smaller portion of the image. Subtitles should then be synchronized through a process called ‘spotting’ or ‘cueing,’ which involves setting time codes for the appearance (in-time) and disappearance (out-time) of each subtitle based on the length of each utterance, but also on shot changes and on general reading speed notions, such as leaving each subtitle on screen for a time comprised between 1,5 and 6 seconds. Intralingual subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing also need to include additional information that hearing-impaired viewers are unable to retrieve from the visuals, such as explanations of background noises and sounds (e.g. “door opens”) or indications on the emotions

conveyed orally (e.g. “screaming,” “angry,” etc.). Intralingual subtitles and most subtitles for small-screen consumption tend to be closed (soft subs), delivered on a separate file that users can select from a teletext provider, a DVD menu, a pay-TV channel, or a video-player; conversely, open subtitles (or hard subs) are printed on the movie itself and are more frequently used in movie theaters (Gottlieb in Baker 1998: 247; Chiaro in Munday 2009: 150). As explained in the following paragraph, fansubs can be either delivered as soft subs or superimposed on video files, yet fansubbing communities usually adopt the first option to avoid involvement in the circulation of copyrighted videos.

Until recently, subtitling has enjoyed a limited popularity in Central and Southern European countries, where its usage was perceived more as a display of intellectual affectation than as a viable alternative to dubbing. However, over the past decade many viewers in dubbing countries have begun to acknowledge the advantages of subtitling (Chaume 2013, quoted in Orrego Carmona forthcoming; Massidda forthcoming) and this form of AVT is gaining ground both for moviegoers and especially for fans of television shows. Chiaro (in Munday 2009: 151) highlights that “the fact that subtitles are added to the original version, rather than substituting part of it (i.e. the verbal code), renders subtitling an uncharacteristic and possibly unique type of translation.” The coexistence of the original audio and the written translation (transparent / overt translation) is extremely useful both for language acquisition purposes and to enable viewers to understand what is being said while still listening to the actors’ original performance. La Polla (in Baccolini et al. 1994: 56, quoted in Maestri 2010: 41, my translation) notes that

however distracting, subtitling allows a comparison that dubbing does not permit. With the former, we can access the images, the original language, and the written translation; with the latter, we can only access the images and the translation. We thus miss an element that is certainly not irrelevant.

The presence of a *tertium comparationis* makes subtitling intrinsically “other,” as Cronin (2009: 115-116) highlights:

subtitles signal otherness in a direct and immediate way, not to be masked by the familiar intimacy of dubbing. This is not to say that subtitles cannot be domesticating, wholly adapted to the language system and values of the target audience, but rather to point the ability of subtitles to leave the auditory distinctness of other speech forms intact.

The ability of subtitles to point toward otherness is a key issue in fansubbing, which is generally rooted in a foreignizing translational approach that moves the viewer closer to the source text, rather than the other way around. The next paragraph will explore this phenomenon, which plays a crucial role in the evolution of television consumption.²⁶

2.8 Fansubbing

Fansubbing refers to the unofficial creation and distribution of subtitles made by fans for fan consumption. While this phenomenon has only risen to worldwide popularity in recent times, thanks to digitization and global connectivity, its inception dates back to the late 1980s, when American fans of Japanese animes started to resort to home-made subtitling to allow fellow fans to access animated series that did not circulate in the US (O'Hagan 2009: 99), particularly after the 1982 ban on animes that were deemed to have an (allegedly) inappropriate content (Massidda forthcoming). Anime fan communities thus began to produce their own fan subtitles (*fansubs*), which they printed on imported videocassette tapes; the earliest known anime fansub is believed to be a 1986 episode of *Lupin III* (Bold 2010; Massidda forthcoming), while the first fansubbed products to reach a significant distribution in the US were the first two episodes of *Ranma ½*, produced by the Ranma Project in 1989 (AnimeNation 2001).²⁷ Since then, fansubbing has deeply evolved, especially after the onset of digital file circulation and subtitling software and the advent of the Third Golden Age of television (see 1.2), which prompted the rise of television show amateur subtitling; however, the key features of fansubbing have remained close to its initial goals to provide easier, faster access to audiovisual material, to serve a community of dedicated fans for

²⁶ Official subtitling is still only used by a limited portion of the Italian audience, and a deeper analysis of its features is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Readers who are interested in a wider treatment of the subject will find an abundance of theories, practical guidelines, and case studies in the extant literature. Among others, see Gambier 1995 and 2003, Ivarsson 1992, Gottlieb 1997 and 2005, Ivarsson and Carroll 1998, Karamitroglou 1998 and 2000, Carroll 2004, Díaz-Cintas 2004 and 2005, Pedersen 2005 and 2011, Perego 2005, and Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2007.

²⁷ See <http://www.animation.net/blog/2001/12/27/ask-john-what-are-fansubs/> (accessed June 10, 2014)

non-lucrative purposes, and to provide more ‘authentic’ translations than those available commercially (Cubbison 2005, quoted in O’Hagan 2009: 100 and in Caffrey 2009: 3). Fansubbers follow the principles of wikinomics (see **1.8**) and envision language knowledge as an asset to be shared with those who do not possess it, in order to allow fellow fans to access unfiltered foreign television with minimum delay. Timely delivery and fidelity to the source texts played key roles in the rise of fansubbing in Italy and in other dubbing countries like Spain, Brazil, and Argentina. As Cronin (2009: 14) observes,

the ‘talkies’ have not rendered audiences speechless. Film spectators before and after movies are coopted into a network of anticipation and commentary, which has translation into local language as a core element of the filmic experience. The socially mediated activity of language is crucial to the reception of the most all-pervasive of blockbusters.

Orrego Carmona (forthcoming) highlights the need for local television audiences to access new episodes soon after the US broadcast to be able to participate in the global process of discussion and remediation:

time was one of the main triggers of creation and expansion of non-professional subtitling in the first place: viewers wanted to access audiovisual content as soon as possible, but the lengthy delays required for international distribution posed a problem for most of them.

The higher degree of foreignization displayed in fansubbing addressed another pressing issue in dubbing countries, where the accessibility of original audiovisual texts prompted viewers to realize that dubbed products lost a relevant percentage of their initial flavor: as Massidda (forthcoming) highlights, “target-oriented translation norms are blamed for altering relevant aspects of signification, idioms and register.”

To address these two main issues, fansubbers created highly-organized teams that translate, synchronize and distribute amateur subtitles through a functional division of labor (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2007: online; Barra and Guarnaccia 2009: 244-245; Maestri 2010: 101; Bold 2011: 11; Massidda forthcoming). ‘Raw providers’ acquire the source material, initially on VHS, now most commonly through TV-rips distributed through torrent networks (Bold 2011: 11), including

the correspondent closed captions exported on the so-called ‘.ts raw’ (MPEG transport stream; Massidda forthcoming), which serves as a base for the translation process. Closed captions are usually supplied by Chinese sources, which are generally faster, or French providers, which tend to be more accurate (Barra and Guarnaccia 2009: 244); when .ts raws cannot be obtained, the same sources provide approximate transcriptions obtained through OCR (Optical Character Recognition software used on un-exportable captions) or through voice-recognition programs. The following step is either ‘synching’ (synchronization) or translation, depending on the organization of the fansubbing team; some communities have separate ‘synchers’ and translators, while other groups prefer to assign both tasks to a single subber. Once the files are ready, the editor/proofreader uploads them to a private area of the group’s server, divides the episode into equal parts and assigns each portion to a specific translator; usually three or four people work on a single episode to allow for an optimal workflow and a faster delivery. The editor then merges the translations, proofreading them to fix mistakes and to guarantee consistency and adjusting the synchronization. If necessary, a typesetter adjusts fonts for songs or off-screen dialogues, though this process is less relevant for television than it is for animes. Completed fansubs are then uploaded as .srt or .sub text files that can be downloaded for free and opened with video players such as VLC; as previously mentioned, fansubbing communities only store soft subs to avoid copyright infringement.²⁸ The entire process is completed in a matter of days, or even hours for the most popular shows, which entails intense late-night to sub episodes aired in the US primetime slot (which usually starts at 9 p.m. EST, 3 a.m. in the GMT+1 time zone to which Italy belongs): as Carini (2009: 58, my translation) underlines, fansubbing thus clearly entails “respect for the text, an act of love and faith,” and since subbers

²⁸ As happens with many forms of user remediation practices, the boundary between legal and illegal distribution and use of fansubs is blurry. O’Hagan (2009: 94) refers to fansubs’ “dubious legal status” and Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2007: online) note that “fansubs are technically illegal,” since translation rights are property of the copyright owner (not to mention the fact that fansubs are frequently used with video files retrieved through unauthorized channels); however, fansubs also play a key role in the promotion of audiovisual products, especially of those with limited or non-existent circulation outside the country in which they were produced, and there seems to be a relatively high degree of tolerance toward the circulation of *soft subs*. While no official confirmation has been issued, the deontology of fansubbing (see “A New Ethical Code for Digital Fansubbing,” available at <http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/feature/2003-06-08/2>; quoted in Maestri 2010: 107) is thus frequently perceived as ascribable to the *Fair Use / Fair Dealing doctrine*, which is applicable in the US and in many other countries including Italy (see Tralli 2014) and which allows limited use of copyrighted material for nonprofit commentary, criticism, parody, research, and educational purposes. Massidda (forthcoming) pinpoints the non-lucrative perspective of fansubbers and the positive effect that their translations have had on the promotion of televisual products: “fansubbing communities release a translation conceived as a personal interpretation of a TV program in order to share it with fellow fans. As a result, the way fans retrieve the copyrighted video associated with the fansubs is therefore irrelevant to them. The impact of fansubbing on the promotion of the vast majority of American TV shows in Italy is no secret. What was said in the past concerning other underground practices can easily be applied to this new phenomenon.”

receive no compensation, their work corresponds to what Jenkins defines as “labor of love,” (see 1.8) operating in a gift economy aimed at sharing one’s passion with fellow fans.

2.8.1. Fansubbing in Italy

Italian viewers eager to watch the original version of their favorite shows but not fully proficient in English can resort to the subtitles provided by the two main Italian fansubbing communities, ItaSA (Italian Subs Addicted, www.italiansubs.net) and Subsfactory (www.subsfactory.it). ItaSA was born in 2006 as a result of the cult following of *Lost* and currently boasts over 400,000 active members (statistics are only available for users who post in the forum boards) and offers subtitles for 730 shows, with leading series like *Game of Thrones* getting over 25,000 hits per episode. Subsfactory originated from an anime fan community established in 2003 and has about 40.000 forum posters, but still provides subtitles for 296 shows (the most popular of which get between 3,000 and 5,000 hits per episode). Besides their difference in size, the two communities also tend to adopt opposite approaches to fansubbing: ItaSA aims at providing subtitles as fast as possible²⁹ and allows more room for adaptation and creativity, while Subsfactory favors accuracy over speed and aims at extreme fidelity (Barra and Guarnaccia 2009: 251; Massidda forthcoming). The rivalry between the two groups is no secret; however, Massidda (forthcoming) also highlights the positive “competition between the two communities, [which] push[es] them towards high levels of performance.” While the phenomenon is still limited to a part of the national audience, its growing figures (ItaSA’s active members doubled over the past two years) represent a significant indicator of the diffusion of new forms of television consumption, which should lead official AVT providers to reassess their own workflow and practices accordingly. Several professional translators have already admitted that they frequent online fandom and fansubbing communities whenever possible to gather useful information for their translations (Maestri 2010: 104) and the most far-sighted

²⁹ Maestri (2010: 112) quotes an interview in which MetalMarco, one of ItaSA’s administrators and leading subbers, boasted the fact that fansubs for *Lost*’s episode 5x06 were already available at 7:36 a.m., less than four hours after the US airing.

Italian networks have already started to adjust their services: after the success of MTV Italia's pioneer attempts to broadcast American dating/reality shows (*Room Raiders*, 2004 – present; *Next*, 2005 – 2008; *The Hills*, 2006 – 2010) with subtitles to convey their original flavor, other networks (mainly part of the Sky Group) started to offer faster AVT solutions for viewers 2.0. As Carini (2009: 59, my translation) underlines,

the risk to acquire texts that the viewer already knows, which are thus less appealing [...] prompted the [Italian] networks, especially those operating on satellite TV, to attempt to decrease the distance between the US airing and the Italian broadcast.

Scaglioni (2011: 115, my translation) notes that this solution is adopted both “to contrast piracy (and peer-to-peer-based viewings) and to offer a premium service,” thus prompting viewers to subscribe to pay-TV channel bouquets to enjoy a faster delivery of professionally translated products. So far, this strategy has led to extremely positive results, starting from the now legendary simultaneous airing of the *Lost* series finale on NBC America, on Sky1 in the UK, and on Fox Italia on May 24, 2010; in spite of the inconvenient scheduling for European time zones (6 a.m. in Italy), a massive number of viewers tuned in to watch the original, untranslated version, which was then re-broadcast with professional subtitles 24 hours later (155,000 viewers; Sky Magazine 2010) and fully dubbed a week later (Massidda forthcoming). Fox Italia subsequently adopted the AVT timetable used for this successful experiment to other shows such as *FlashForward* (Brannon Braga and David S. Goyer, 2009 – 2010), *Last Resort* (Shawn Ryan and Karl Gajdusek, 2012 – 2013), and *Glee* (see **chapter 7**). However, the adoption of subtitling as an alternative to dubbing is not limited to recent *quality TV* productions: a significant example is that of Soapclassics.com, which sells the box sets of the classic soap operas *Guiding Light* (Irna Phillips, 1937 – 2009) and *As the World Turns* (Irna Phillips, 1956 – 2010) and plans to webcast the former with Italian subtitles, to allow Italian viewers to purchase the download of the last two seasons, which were never aired on the Italian network Retequattro (Giannotto 2012: online, my translation).

The increased general openness toward subtitling is also visible from fan comments on social networks, which display a much deeper, cross-fandom acknowledgment of the hiatus

between original and dubbed texts. For instance, a facebook user recently posted the following comment on the CW teen-horror show *The Vampire Diaries* (Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec, 2009 – present) on the “Noi... Telefilm Addicted” group page

I happened to see an episode of The Vampire Diaries in Italian. PLEASE KILL ME, I WANT TO FORGET KLAUS'S DUBBED VOICE! It's impossible to listen to him without his wonderful, sexy accent. “Sistaaaah, rippah..” No, no, no.

(available at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NoiTelefilmAddicted/> , my translation; last accessed June 25, 2014):

Fans are also increasingly aware of the role of fansubbers in facilitating their access to original texts. Consider the following series of comments posted on the facebook *Game of Thrones* page before the US première of the third season, which was broadcast at 9 p.m. on HBO America and rumored to be available in live streaming (and thus unsubtitled) at the same time (in Italy, 3 a.m. on a Monday morning):

- Are any of you crazy enough to watch the streamed episode tonight [at 3 am]?
- No, it's too much of an effort without subs.
- My English is very poor, but I'll watch it *anyway*.
- I *won't understand a thing*, but I'm leaving tomorrow and I can't miss Jamie's appearance. *I can't*.
- I'll watch it even if I know I'll only understand *a few words* of the entire episode.
- Will there be anyone *kind-hearted enough to subtitle the episode?* [...] *Karma* will certainly reward them.

(available at <https://www.facebook.com/GameOfThrones.IITronoDiSpade> , my translation; last accessed June 25, 2014):

The increasing frequency of similar comments and the rising number of fansub downloads signal an evolution process that is prompting viewers to value immediacy over ease of consumption and to dare watch new episodes of popular television shows even without subtitles, which would have been inconceivable only a few years ago. Official AVT providers should therefore acknowledge that “[fansubbing] is here to stay. Understanding how it works and learning from it seem to be one of the keys to better cater to the well-connected, eager viewership of this century” (Bold (2011:16).

2.9 A joint-expertise proposal

The overview of the dubbing and fansubbing processes presented in this chapter highlights the different perspectives at the core of these two types of audiovisual translation. The most evident gap between the two forms lies in the distance between the source texts and the dubbed or fansubbed target texts: for reasons due to its tradition and to the typical conception of its Model Viewers, dubbing tends to favor domesticating translation strategies, producing target texts that often move away from the correspondent source texts and closer to what the audience is supposed to be able to appreciate, “diminishing the number of steps the audience should follow to decode the [original line]” (Ranzato 2010: 92, my translation); conversely, the ideology behind fansubbing is mainly based on foreignization, since it aims at preserving as many of the features and references of the source text as possible. Neither trend is applied universally within its typical domain, yet both can be considered as frequently employed rules of thumb that offer a general guideline for translation, based on the estimated pro-activity of the audience (or lack thereof) and on the specific channel through which they operate. Due to articulatory synching constraints and to the morpho-syntactic differences between English and Italian, which usually result in the latter requiring extra space to express the same concept for which English possesses a 10-20%-shorter version, the aural delivery of dialogue translation generally leaves no room for additions or even requires the use of text compression techniques. Conversely, fansubbers are frequently able to maintain cultural references or even insert partial explanations, especially because they enjoy a higher formal freedom than that of professional subtitlers for cinemas or DVDs and because they posit an audience that is more willing to make a linguistic endeavor to begin with, since acquiring subtitles implies a voluntary effort and since reading a written translation that flows along with dialogues spoken in a different language generally requires more energy than listening to a spoken translation that replaces the original dialogue track all together. While fansubbing communities aim at providing a free service

and not at competing with dubbing,³⁰ the sheer existence of an alternative (and faster) form of AVT and the growth of its audience is enough to create a form of competition that challenges the monopoly of dubbing, which persisted until only a few years ago and was at the root of the lack of quality control in translation and adaptation, as Chiaro (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 246-247) underlined in 2008:

at the heart of the entire quality issue lies a somewhat perverse mechanism of non-competitiveness. Unlike any other goods or service, we are dealing with a service which offers no choice. Viewers are exposed to one translation alone as a filmic product is likely to be translated only once and furthermore, by a single company. Commissioners do not ask various companies to translate a product after which they choose the best. Of course the product may be re-dubbed or re-subtitled at a future date, as happens especially with great movie classics, but more than one dubbed or subtitled version of a product at the time of its release is quite unusual. Indeed consumers can sometimes choose the translational mode in which to watch the product (the choice between dubbing and subtitles is available in Switzerland and Sky packages across the EU), but beyond that they are generally forced to accept what they are given in a 'take it or leave it' situation. Thus, we are faced with a sort of monopolistic market in which many products are tendered for translation in a way which is less than transparent. In such a no-choice situation, there appears to be little that consumers can do.

Fansubbing alone is probably not enough to overturn a mode of consumption that has been rooted in the very practice of film and television watching in Italy, and Orrego Carmona (forthcoming) also points out that “a full shift from dubbing to generalized acceptance of subtitling is not likely, nor is there general acceptance of subtitling as a valid option.” Nonetheless, Perego and Taylor (2012: 128) observe that empirical studies on the reception of dubbing and subtitling conducted so far (Perego, Del Missier 2010) suggest that “it is possible to educate viewers to appreciate forms of translation to which they are not used, so that they can use either form without feeling tired when they use the one that is less common in their country.” Moreover, the fact remains that fansubbing (and official subtitling, whenever available) do constitute an accessible alternative and a growing part of the audience in dubbing countries is switching to these forms of consumption. Massidda (forthcoming) underlines the changes already set in motion by the diffusion of fansubbing:

according to the [2012] European report on the status of the translation profession, the changes brought about by fansubbing practices seem to have had a major impact both on translation theory and practices, not to mention on the audience's perception of subtitling (Pym et al. 2012). The study also reports that, even though crowdsourcing is still a niche activity and affects the sector only to a limited extent, its influence is bound to grow and there are useful lessons to be learnt concerning good practices for professional translators as well (ibid.: 37).

³⁰ And generally with networks and producers, since without an official market, television series would not even exist (Maestri 2010: 107-108).

To prove competitive on a market that is no longer monopolistic, dubbing should thus consider the type of audience that uses fansubbing and adjust its practices accordingly: just as “old institutions are repurposing, perhaps evolving a more interactive model of the viewer as a service-demanding client for whom ‘content’ must be tailored” (Hartley 2002b in Miller 2002: 63), AVT providers should review their construction of the recipients of their services and consider the growing portion of viewers that is willing to make an extra effort to satisfy what Jenkins (2006: 96-100) defines as “epistemophilia”: “to truly understand what we are watching, we have to do our homework.” A viable solution might entail combining the most effective features of dubbing and fansubbing, maintaining the technical expertise and the search for a smoother, natural-sounding rendition that is typical of the former and introducing the concept of a dedicated, specialized audience that is usually assumed by the latter. A revision of the Italian AVT system would thus benefit from the combination of the best features of traditional dubbing (fluent dialogues, accurate synchronization, and effective voice-acting) with the traits of fansubbing that are most suited to address the challenges generated by intertextuality and transmedia storytelling and to cater to the evolving needs of the audience, reducing the usage of domestication strategies and “decreasing the distance between translators and consumers” (Müller Galhardi 2009: online, my translation), possibly by hiring Subject-Matter Experts as consultants or proofreaders for shows with a specific identity and jargon.³¹ **Chapter 3** will thus introduce the methodology adopted to use teen shows as a lens to highlight the differences between the traditional dubbing paradigm aimed at a general audience and the fansubbing approach based on viewership 2.0.

³¹ For instance, in 2010 the subtitling company Sub-Ti launched its “Fans & Subs” contest to select two particularly proficient fansubbers, who were subsequently hired as freelancers (Di Giovanni and Spoletti 2011: presentation).

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As emerges from **chapters 1 and 2**, “television remains a complex and elusive object of study” (Casetti and Di Chio 2001: 1, my translation), and a research project on the interlinguistic and intercultural reception of recent and contemporary television shows requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines different social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives in order to deliver a complete, full-rounded analysis of the impact of the evolving television consumption practices on audiovisual translation. The present study is thus based on a two-fold research framework which combines two mutually informed discourses, employing socio-cultural theories to appraise translation and using “translation as an approach, a paradigm and an interpretative key for transcultural and transnational interdisciplinary research” (Rundle 2014: 2). The first part of the present chapter thus defines a framework that integrates the sociological perspective provided by television studies, new media studies, and fandom analysis (explored in **chapter 1**) with a DTS-based approach to audiovisual translation (described in **chapter 2**). The second part describes the methodology employed for the selection and the analysis of the six television shows in this corpus and illustrated the tools and procedures used to map salient themes and significant translational solutions.³²

3.1 Towards an interdisciplinary approach

As cultural products, television shows position themselves within an increasingly complex network of interrelations that Itamar Even-Zohar (1978a, 1978b, 1990) defined as a “polysystem”, based on “the idea that socio-semiotic phenomena, i.e., sign-governed human patterns of communication (such as culture, language, literature), could more adequately be understood and studied if regarded as systems rather than conglomerates of disparate elements.” (1990: 9) While

³² This chapter focuses on the process of series selection and on the relevance of each show within the framework described in **chapters 1 and 2**. For a chronological overview of the evolution of teen television, see **chapter 4.4**.

polysystem theory originated in the literary translation tradition, “the concept is sufficiently flexible to allow us to also talk of a film polysystem in Spain or in any other country” (Díaz Cintas in Orero 2004: 23) and of local television polysystems as well. Like books, movies, and other cultural products, television shows are best apprehended when considered in relation to the historical and cultural context in which they were created (Checcaglini 2010: 4) and within the galaxy of coeval, previous, and even subsequent products of the same culture. Each television series can also be considered as a subsystem in its own right, since its nature usually implies the existence of a number of interrelated episodes, as opposed to self-concluded narratives such as movies or novels (with the obvious exception of cinematic and literary sagas). The reception of serial products by non-native speakers of the source language adds yet another layer of complexity to the analysis of television series, especially in an era in which traditional television translation paradigms prove ill-fitted for the evolving needs of the audience. It is thus evident that any single, monolithic approach would fail to produce an accurate, comprehensive analysis of the density of relations within and between different episodes, shows, languages, and cultures. The present analysis is thus based on a framework that draws from both media studies and translation studies (as well as from other sociological and psychological theories, when necessary).

In his analysis of American situation comedies conducted for the volume *Risate in scatola. Storia, mediazioni e percorsi distributivi della situation comedy americana in Italia*, Luca Barra (2012: 260, my translation) underlines the need for “an approach to the topic of importing and modifying American [shows] in Italy that is as systematic as possible, thus accounting for the complexity of the variables involved and for the ways in which they connect and influence one another.” Drawing from Ortoleva (1995) and Scaglioni (2011: 5), Barra identifies the historical-ethnographic method as the best tool for a holistic analysis, which confirms the validity of the diachronic division of the present study, based on the different phases of the simultaneous (and often interwoven) paths of the evolution of audiovisual translation and of its target audience. Barra also quotes Edgar Morin’s re-evaluation and legitimization of the analysis of mass culture: as long

as observers are able to maintain an adequate perspective (“the right distance”, as director Carlo Mazzacurati would have said), it is crucial that they also “participate in the object of their observation. [...] One has to know the world without feeling extraneous to it, and to wander the great boulevards of mass culture” (Morin 1962: 17). Aside from the analysis of the selected shows, this dissertation also includes a partial *netnography* – “a specialized form of ethnography adapted to the unique computer-mediated contingencies of today’s social worlds” (Kozinets 2010: 1). Monitoring user interactions on the official pages of different shows on social watching platforms, fansubbing websites, and social networks is a key process to study “fandom as experience” (Scaglioni 2006: 93) and to gauge the evolving ways in which American television is consumed in Italy. Viewers’ comments included in this study are not intended to have statistical value, since the spectatorship sample taken into consideration was restricted to unsolicited comments on television consumption and AVT practices, many of which appeared to be posted by viewers with a high familiarity with technology and with the retrieval of audiovisual files through the Internet; a pre-existing passion for television shows; the habit to watch new episodes as soon as they came out, either online or on satellite channels; and a proclivity to use online platforms to interact with audiovisual texts.³³ Nonetheless, the very existence of a particularly involved audience segment (which appears to represent a rising percentage of the Italian public, based on the increasing number of subscribers to fansubbing websites and posters on public platforms; see **2.8**) suggests a growing interest of at least a portion of the Italian audience in participating in the global practices of discussion, appropriation, and remediation of television shows and is itself a barometer of the need for a reassessment of audiovisual translation strategies.

³³ When present, the authors’ full names were concealed for privacy purposes; forum screen names were maintained, both because they do not give away details on their owners’ personal data and because active participants in Internet activities (such as fansubbers, fanvidders, or forum subscribers) tend to prefer to be quoted with their nicknames, which constitute a crucial part of their online identities.

3.2 Corpus composition

The selection of US teen dramas as the focus of the present analysis originated from the author's long-term interest in the genre, due to both the predominance of Anglo-American productions in youth-targeted serial products and the challenges intrinsic to the translation of teen talk. The corpus assembled for this dissertation is thus meant to provide an overview of the evolution of the teen shows produced in the United States between the early 1990s and the early 2010s and of their import and reception in Italy, in terms of both linguistic adaptation and audience reaction. Given the plethora of Anglophone television shows about adolescents that have appeared on American and international screens over the past three decades, it is beyond the scope of this monograph to provide a complete listing and an in-depth analysis of each single program. The present corpus comprises six of the US series that have proven most popular in Italy (based on their success, on their recurrence in television-based discourse, and on the author's own experience as a teenage viewer in the 1990s and as a scholar of teen-targeted literary, cinematic, and televisual productions) and that are particularly representative of each of the three main stages of the evolution of the Italian audience (pre-Internet audience, early-Internet audience, viewership 2.0). It goes without saying that this selection is far from comprehensive, and many other relevant teen series from each era would have been worthy of academic attention; the decision to focus on the adolescent culture of the United States has also implied the exclusion of high-quality teen products from other Anglophone countries, such as the original, British version of *Skins* (Brian Elsley and Jamie Brittain, E4, 2007 – 2013) or the Canadian franchise *Degrassi* (Linda Schuyler, CBC, 1979 – present). Shows beyond the present corpus will be referenced whenever possible and will provide material for future research.

3.2.1 Top-down vs. bottom-up television consumption

The high-speed, structural evolution of serial television consumption over the past three decades justified a chronological organization of the present corpus, rather than a thematic division. The six shows are thus presented in the order in which they were originally broadcast in the United States, which roughly corresponds to the one in which they were first aired in Italy. However, rather than adopting a segmentation based on decades or on broadcast history, the period between 1990 and 2014 was segmented based on the different stages of the evolution of the global audience and of the Italian audience in particular. The main watershed in this categorization originates from the shift from top-down to bottom-up television consumption (which echoes Lawrence Lessig's notion of the difference between Read/Only and Read/Write cultures, as described in the introduction to this dissertation). Since this switch has emerged gradually and is still far from completion (assuming completion is attainable, the collected data were analyzed according to the three different paradigms of audience reception that can be identified over the past three decades. In the early Nineties, prior to the boom of the Internet, television consumption was still largely top-down, with limited opportunities for audience interaction and virtually no access to original texts in dubbing countries.

Chapter 5 - Top-Down Television Consumption (Early 1990s) analyzes the structure and the dubbing of *Beverly Hills, 90210*, the forefather of teen dramas and a pivotal show for the initial development of audience practices through pre-Internet fanzines and ancillary products. **Chapter 6 - The Emergence of Audience Participation (Late 1990s- Early 2000s)** focuses on the following phase, exploring the early age of Internet-based audience interaction through the analysis of two markedly intertextual shows, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson's Creek*, both of which aimed at offering an enhanced viewing experience to those who were willing to engage with their respective texts. **Chapter 7 – Viewership 2.0** concludes the overview focusing on the boom of audience participation in the past decade (late 2000s – early 2010s), which has had a crucial impact on the reception of foreign television shows in dubbing countries. While extremely different from one another in themes, structure, and language, the last three series in my corpus all provide fertile

environments for a bottom-up consumption paradigm through which viewers become active inhabitants of each show's "furnished world" (Eco 1987: 198), be it through the decryption of a fast-paced, metropolitan tech slang (*Gossip Girl*), through a transmedia sing-along experience (*Glee*), or through a full immersion in a detailed representation of *geek culture* (*The Big Bang Theory*).

3.2.2 Series selection

The data collection process aimed at obtaining a balanced corpus of empirical data that were as representative as possible of the three stages of the evolution of teen television consumption. The top-down consumption age was dominated by *Beverly Hills, 90210*, one of the most influential shows for young American and Italian viewers in the early 1990s, and probably in the entire history of teen-targeted television. By introducing the idea of primetime television shows specifically targeted at adolescents, *Beverly Hills, 90210* paved the way for the emancipation of teen television from the family and escapade genres (see **paragraph 4.4**) and prompted the creation of a weekly viewing ritual that did not constitute a less popular alternative to spending time with their friends, but rather a crucial part of social life, whether in terms of actual collective viewing experiences or of the episode discussions that took place in the following days, as illustrated in E. Graham McKinley's *Beverly Hills, 90210. Television, Gender, and Identity* (1997). Even though spectators had limited resources to respond to shows in the pre-Internet era, ritual viewings and the acquisition and public use of ancillary merchandise such as stickers, T-shirts, school planners, or similar accoutrements contained the embryo of the dynamics of audience participation that would emerge in the following years and boom in the post-millennial mediascape.

The second phase of audience interaction provided a first confirmation of Marshall McLuhan's farsighted 1964 assessment that "we live today in the Age of Information and of Communication

because electric media instantly and constantly create a total field of interacting events in which all men [sic!] participate” (1994: 273). Among its countless advantages, the diffusion of personal computers and home-based Internet connections also provided a means to access a shared virtual environment inhabited by people with similar interests. Since “cool media [like television] are high in participation or completion by the audience” (McLuhan 1994: 31), television shows constitute a fertile ground for online audience interaction and even the early Internet-based aggregation platforms (such as text-based forums or mailing lists) managed to create “clusters of affiliation” (Kozinets 2010: 21) where fans of a specific show were certain to find a pre-screened group of like-minded people. The series selected to represent this second phase of teen television consumption were designed to appeal to this emerging participatory audience, as their showrunners and producers took special care in building their fictional worlds and in weaving a thick fabric of intertextual references. Aside from its numerous aesthetic merits (which are still widely discussed in both fan communities and academia), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is also an early and successful example of transmedia storytelling, since the world created through its 144 episodes (and through the 110 episodes of its spinoff *Angel*; Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt, The WB, 1999 – 2004) was expanded in the so-called *Buffyverse*, in which series creator Joss Whedon was deeply involved. The *Buffyverse* canon (as approved by Whedon) includes three additional seasons entirely developed through graphic novels (published by Dark Horse, the third-largest comics publisher in the US after Marvel and DC), as well as other related graphic novels (some of which authored by Whedon himself); yet the galaxy that gravitates around *Buffy* extends much farther, through an array of novels, pilots, promos, video games, and action figures and through the countless remediations produced by viewers who have not yet ceased to engage with the show, even over a decade after its end. Whedon and his team of highly skilled screenwriters (among others, Marti Noxon, Jane Espenson, and David Fury) managed to combine the showrunner’s key choice to subvert traditional ‘slasher movie’ *tòpoi* (portraying a blonde teenage girl as the ultimate fighter,

instead of the designated victim) with powerful storytelling and memorable dialogues, which fans still enjoy quoting and remediating.³⁴

Kevin Williamson's *Dawson's Creek* was designed to invite a similar "participatory, interactive engagement which constructs the show as an extended, immersive experience" (Brooker 2001: 456). Even though the show did not give birth to an official 'Dawsonverse,' its producers relied on the immersive opportunities offered by the blossoming World Wide Web, making the series "'overflow' from the primary text across multiple platforms - particularly onto dedicated internet sites" (Brooker 2001: 456; see **chapter 1**). The show had a 'regular' website at dawsonscreek.com, yet what proved most effective in enhancing the viewers' experience was the WB's investment in creating an online world that was truly "furnished" (Eco 1987: 198), allowing the audience to live the 'authentic' *Creek* experience. Among fictional websites for the imaginary town and colleges that constituted the main settings of the show (the fictional Capeside, Massachusetts, and a series of invented colleges in the Boston area), the crown jewel of the WB's campaign was the then-innovative and still frequently cited website *Dawson's Desktop* (Brooker 2001; Caldwell 2003; Bandy 2007; Gillan 2011), through which the audience could explore the 'personal' computers of the main characters, complete with e-mails, instant messages, photo galleries, and anything one would have expected to find on a desktop in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Elizabeth Bandy (2007: 13) provides an accurate description of the synergy between the show and its online companion:

The official Web site serves as a launch pad for the online world of Dawson's Creek. Visitors to dawsonscreek.com can follow links to the homepage for the fictional town of Capeside, Massachusetts, the setting for Dawson's Creek. In the show's fifth season, the teen characters move on to college, and their fictional schools also have Web sites. What stands out about this site is not only the amount and variety of content but also the many elements that create a sense that the Dawson's Creek world exists in reality. Modeled after real life town Web sites, the address for Capeside's homepage ends in ".net" and includes links to the Web sites of local businesses, such as the bed and breakfast owned by main character Joey Potter's family. The fictional college Web sites, like www.worthington.edu, feature options similar to those found on

³⁴ A cogent example is Jonathan McIntosh's popular 2009 fanvid "Buffy vs. Edward," in which Buffy's piercing irony is used to parody the sexist dynamics of the *Twilight* saga. The author describes his fanvid as "an example of transformative storytelling serving as a pro-feminist visual critique of Edward's character and generally creepy behavior. Seen through Buffy's eyes, some of the more sexist gender roles and patriarchal Hollywood themes embedded in the *Twilight* saga are exposed in hilarious ways. Ultimately this remix is about more than a decisive showdown between the slayer and the sparkly vampire. It also doubles as a metaphor for the ongoing battle between two opposing visions of gender roles in the 21st century" (McIntosh, quoted in Tralli 2014: 134).

real college Web sites, including ones where users can purchase merchandise with the school logo. In terms of show investment, though, the ultimate link takes users to the "Dawson's Desktop" site, dawsonsdesktop.com, where they are invited to explore the computer desktops of the main characters and to read their e-mails and journals. The site rotates weekly to feature a different main character's computer desktop. Again, the realism of these desktops is striking. Each character's desktop features a screen filled with a personalized background and the icons one would expect to find on a computer desktop—including a trash can icon. Users read the character's e-mail by clicking on an icon that opens an in box, just as they would do to read their own e-mail. Unlike the "IM Rory" feature on gilmoregirls.com, however, the "Dawson's Desktop" producers continually refresh the content, and there are always new e-mails to read sent from one character to another. Through the character e-mails and journals, users can follow the lives of these characters off-air with content that does not appear in the show at all. This extra-textual content fills in gaps between episodes and allows users to follow the characters' actions over the summer hiatus when no new episodes air.

For both *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson's Creek*, viewer interaction required at least an average command of English, since ancillary texts were rarely translated. Even though retrieving original texts was still complicated and access to non-televisual components of the transmedia puzzle was limited, viewers in dubbing countries gradually began to realize that they were missing out on an increasingly larger part of the viewing experience. **Chapter 6** thus analyzes the growing discrepancies between an excessively domesticating AVT model (often verging on censorship, especially when it came to sexual references) and the audience's mounting awareness of their restricted access to the full experience of television viewing.

Such awareness significantly increased with the diffusion of broadband Internet, which allowed for a much faster circulation of large files and provided the missing link between viewers in dubbing countries and original texts, thus increasingly highlighting the inadequacy of the lengthy adaptation and dubbing process and of the excessively domesticating translation strategies that frequently altered the nature of AV texts. Not all viewers subscribed to this new perspective, and the majority preferred (and still prefers) the easier, less demanding consumption enabled by dubbing; yet the mere development of a however limited viewership 2.0 constitutes an epochal change in the history of television consumption in dubbing countries, since it challenges a paradigm that had remained relatively unaffected for over half a century and it signals an unprecedented openness toward subtitling and language acquisition (see **2.9**). Moreover, the number of Italian viewers willing to make a linguistic effort has been on the rise for several years and the diffusion of

fansubbing has had a visible impact on television consumption and on the strategies adopted by the most perceptive AVT providers to counterbalance the consumption of audiovisual products through unofficial channels. **Chapter 7** thus explores the evolution of teen dramas in the age of audience participation, focusing on Italian viewers' growing awareness of the limitations of dubbing as a port of entry for an immersive viewing experience and for active remediation. The various aspects of post-millennial televisual consumption that are most affected by inadequate AVT practices will be explored through the analysis of three shows that posit different kinds of cult audiences. *Gossip Girl* pivots around communication and the new media: its entire plot is gradually unveiled by the eponymous blogger, who uses her informer network to gather and publish scandalous information on the flamboyant lives of the emancipated, aristocratic Upper East Side youth. The characters are constantly checking their phones for updates from Gossip Girl or using them to take incriminating pictures and pass on juicy details; given that timing is crucial to keep (or divulge) secrets that could dismantle even the most glamorous of the façades, fast communication becomes the ultimate priority, and compression techniques used in texting and instant messaging end up permeating the characters' spoken conversations as well. Since acronyms, tech slang, and metropolitan sociolects rarely have interlinguistic equivalents that fit the synchrony-related constraints imposed by AVT, the dubbing process strongly affected the show's specificity, also due to the importing broadcaster Mediaset's³⁵ conception of teen dramas as interchangeable replicas of one another. The fans' disappointment and their numerous online comments that favored fansubbing over dubbing highlight the impossibility to reduce a contemporary show to yet another element in a series of undifferentiated high-school based teen dramas when its specific identity is deliberately constructed through its language, as well as through its plot and setting.

Glee functions in an opposite yet parallel way: while not be particularly original in terms of storylines and sociolects, its very structure epitomizes the ability of the teen drama to explore

³⁵ The media conglomerate established by Silvio Berlusconi in the 1970s and still controlled by his family holding company Fininvest. Mediaset is the largest broadcaster in Italy and owns a number of both pay-TV and free-to-air networks (including the three main commercial channels before the advent of DTT: Retequattro, Canale 5, and Italia 1, the latter of which is still the main destination for teen shows).

different narrative formats and develop highly specific subgenres. The story focuses on a high-school choir that gathers a motley crew of adolescent outcast types; while the generally moralistic plot soon loses its appeal, what makes the show stand out and continue to engage its audience after five years is its peculiar musical structure. Each season stages the group's path to a larger choir championship, constructing a sort of 'macro-musical' based on 22 episodes, each of which represents a 45-minute micro-show. The typical Broadway paradigm that portrays the incubation of a star-crossed, yet eventually successful musical performance thus informs both each single episode and each season as a whole. Musical numbers are carefully chosen both to address specific themes and to function as a diegetic device, since the various storylines are developed through song lyrics as much as through non-musical dialogues. While the show achieved noteworthy results in terms of overall television ratings (its first two seasons had an average of around 10 million viewers and a 78 and 76/100 score on Metacritic³⁶), its relevance and its gripping power lie in its conception as a transmedia storytelling franchise that factors in an active response from its musically-minded audience. The series did appeal to a general viewership as well, at least during its first seasons; yet most of its success and revenues are propelled by its devoted 'gleeks,' which may be fewer in number, but create a much more profitable market with their eagerness to purchase ancillary products and to live the whole choir experience, singing along with the characters, recording copycat videos, or attending live concerts. This marketing model based on Chris Anderson's Long Tail distribution strategy (2004 and 2006; see **paragraph 1.4**) caters to a particularly dedicated audience that is willing to invest its energies in the viewing and appropriating process in exchange for a fuller entertainment experience. A double effort is thus required of non-Anglophone viewers, who need to be able to appraise the lyrics both in their translated version (since the songs are almost always crucial for plot developments) and in their original form, if they wish to sing along while watching or to play one of the numerous *Glee*-based karaoke videogames (such as Smule's *Glee*

³⁶ Metacritic is a portal that aggregates reviews of movies, television shows, albums, and videogames, averaging the scores derived from each review to obtain a single number that is usually considered as a fairly reliable assessment of the reception of a cultural product. Data for *Glee* are available <http://www.metacritic.com/tv/glee> (last accessed June 10, 2014).

Karaoke app for iOS³⁷ or *Glee Karaoke Revolution* for Nintendo Wii). ItaSA's fansubbers soon devised a way to accommodate both needs, providing two subtitle files for each episode – a regular version with translated lyrics and a karaoke version in which the script was translated, but the lyrics were left in English to allow viewers to sing along with show. Yet *Glee* also constitutes a significant case study for the evolution of official AVT practices, since Fox Italia soon realized the importance of allowing non-Anglophone gleeks to participate in the global discussion and remediation of the show. Starting from the second half of season 2, the network began to broadcast a professionally subtitled version of each new episode 48 hours after the US airing and the dubbed version of the same episode a mere week later, creating a much-appreciated Thursday night double feature (the subtitled version of the latest episode preceded by the dubbed version of the previous one). A closer analysis of the show and of its translation thus proved fundamental to explore the first (successful) signs of the adoption of AVT strategies that are better suited to accommodate the new needs of television audiences.

While *Glee* represents a clear attempt to cater to the evolving viewership, *The Big Bang Theory* illustrates how strong the impact of a dedicated audience can be when AVT providers employ outdated, adulterating strategies that devalue both the show and its viewers' estimated competence. The series boasts a much more specific identity than the average situation comedy, since all aspects of scientific research and of the *geek* lifestyle are depicted in full detail, from the protagonists' dream trip to the Large Hadron Collider to the *Star Trek* action figures on their shelves (complete with intact packaging, as true collectors dictate). The highly careful reproduction of geek culture and geek talk orchestrated by showrunners Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady would have been sufficient to warrant the inclusion of the show in the present corpus, especially due to the meta-fandom experience enabled by the characters' own devotion to their favorite fictional worlds. Yet the series also bears witness to the need for an AVT reassessment, since the original adapting team assembled by the dubbing studio Post In Europe produced an Italian version that was light

³⁷ Available at <http://appcrawlr.com/ios/glee-karaoke> (accessed June 10, 2014).

years away from the original product. Probably aiming at creating yet another interchangeable sitcom to use as a filler in the pre-primetime slot, the team obliterated most of the references to geek culture, replacing them with gross humor, or sometimes even inserting nonsensical dialogues. Yet the part of the Italian audience that was already familiar with the show (mainly thanks to ItaSA's fansubs) was so outraged by the aberrant dubbing of the first eight episodes and protested so vehemently that Post In Europe changed the entire adapting team from episode 1x09 onwards (Innocenti and Maestri 2010: online; Maestri 2011). The case of *The Big Bang Theory* thus highlights the urgency of a redefinition of AVT practices in the light of audience evolution, since the explicit disavowal of a form of AVT due to its divergence from the original text is a symptom of a much more developed proficiency in conscious, active television consumption.

3.2.3 Episode selection

Given the extension of the total amount of footage of the six shows selected for this corpus (over 670 hours, not counting the episodes of *Glee* and *The Big Bang Theory* which have yet to be aired, as of June 2014), a crucial preliminary step involved the selection of a restricted number of representative episodes for each show, which was based on three main principles. The primary discriminating criterion entailed focusing on the seasons that portrayed the main characters' high school and early college years, unless specific reasons warranted a glimpse onto a later era of the protagonists' lives.³⁸ In most American teen television shows, each season covers a school year, in order to accompany viewers as they navigate through each pair of semesters on their own way to high school or college graduation. Even though several of the six shows in this corpus follow their protagonists into early adulthood (for instance, *Beverly Hills, 90210* covers a 10-year span), this analysis will focus on episodes from the first three to five seasons of each series, which usually cover the four years of high school and the beginning of college. Aside from particularly significant

³⁸ Among these, the musical episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 6x07, "Once More with Feeling"; and *Glee*'s tribute to the premature death of lead actor Cory Monteith, a moving episode that portrays the protagonists' homage to the memory of Monteith's character, Finn Hudson (5x03, "The Quarterback").

episodes from later seasons of the first five shows, a major yet justifiable exception to this criterion is *The Big Bang Theory*. The show's protagonists are in their mid- and late twenties, but their lifestyles resemble a sort of 'enhanced adolescence' that can be assimilated to the high school / college paradigm, since they all work in a relatively informal environment, they eat lunch at the cafeteria and order take-out food for dinner, and they devote most of their spare time to science-fiction shows and movies, to comics and cosplaying,³⁹ and to role-playing games and videogame marathons.

Thematic criteria were subsequently used to isolate specific episodes that portrayed key adolescent issues or pivotal moments in the characters' paths toward adulthood, such as the generation gap and the conflict between parents and children, relationships and sexuality, substance abuse, and issues of body image, but also the beginning of the school year, the prom, the SATs, and graduation. The specific identity of each show determined the predominance of one or more of these topics: for instance, *Glee*'s choir of 'losers' needs to fight for funding against the more popular school groups (the football players and the cheerleaders), and the show is thus full of references to fitting in and to relationships, while *Gossip Girl*'s focus on the life in the fast lane of the young Manhattan aristocracy gives more resonance to topics such as the admission to a prestigious college and over-the-top parties in which high-end alcohol and drug abuse are omnipresent, also due to the much more conspicuous financial resources of the protagonists.

For the series included in the viewership 2.0 phase and for those who are still frequently discussed online, a third criterion was based on the method described by Giovanna Cosenza (2008: 280, my translation). Cosenza's approach entails

working on what Greimasian semiotics defines as the *discursive semantics* of texts, which is an abstract, general level of analysis, in which one studies, among other things, the *themes* of a textual *corpus* and the way in which these are invested with *values* (Greimas and Courtés 1979; Pozzato 2001: 70-71). After having made a first set of hypotheses on the themes and values of a number of episodes, it suffices to study the most representative among them with analytic perseverance. An

³⁹ Costumed role play performed to represent characters and scenes from mangas, animes, television shows, etc.

important aid in identifying the representativeness of a television show *corpus* comes from observing online fan communities. For instance, if an episode triggers more comments and controversy than others because it stages the *coming out* of a homosexual protagonist (as does the fifteenth episode of the second season of *Dawson's Creek*), it is clearly more representative of this theme than other episodes and will have to be included among the ones that must be studied to explore the ways in which the show portrays and narrates male homosexuality. In other words, the discussions conducted by fans on online forums and blogs are a good test bench for the hypotheses formulated after viewing the episodes.

This method is particularly fruitful to analyze series that are still on the air, such as *Gossip Girl* (which was still on for the first two years devoted to this project) and *The Big Bang Theory*, and even more so for cases like *Glee*, which boasts a large transformational fandom “that reworks the primary text” (Pearson 2012: 163) and generates countless replies that are not only written texts (comments and reviews), but also audio and video remediations, such as covers, copycat videos, and fanvids. *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* then represents a case on its own, given the abundance of academic literature on the series (‘Buffy studies’), which allowed for the isolation of the episodes that were most significant from a diegetic or narratological point of view. For *Beverly Hills, 90210* and *Dawson's Creek*, online scripts and episode guides⁴⁰ provided useful tools to identify crucial plot points or topics that might prove particularly relevant for the construction of teen talk.

3.3 Episode analysis

The first phase of the analysis consisted in the viewing of the dubbed version of each episode with English subtitles that were either included in the DVDs or retrieved from <http://www.tvsubtitles.net/>, a comprehensive archive that provides a total of over 250,000 subtitle files for 50,000 episodes of 1451 TV shows.⁴¹ While both DVDs and TVSubtitles.net appeared to offer English subtitles that matched the scripts almost *verbatim*, the portions of dialogues included in the sample selection were verified against the original scripts or audio tracks whenever possible.

⁴⁰ Such as tv.com's *Beverly Hills 90210* episode guide (available at http://www.tv.com/beverly-hills-90210/show/293/episode.html?season=Top%20Episodes&tag=list_header;paginator;Top%20Episodes; last accessed June 10, 2014), in which episodes can be displayed in chronological order or based on the ratings assigned by the users of the portal.

⁴¹ As of June 10, 2014; data available on <http://www.tvsubtitles.net/>

During the viewing phase, the lines and dialogue parts that proved significant to explore the construction of televised American adolescence were transcribed in their original, dubbed, and fansubbed versions, using the tables illustrated in the following section (which include time codes, context details, and any other relevant details inferred from the storylines or the visual elements). Whenever possible, viewer comments on dubbing, fansubbing, and the new paradigm of television consumption were also included, especially for the shows for which audience response could be partially monitored in real time through their respective official facebook pages and social watching platforms. As Gillan (in Ross and Stein 2008: 186) highlights, “online fan forums [...] are fascinating places for learning about the way television shows are transforming broadcast programming into lifestyle experiences,” and social platforms have proved most helpful to gauge the extent to which contemporary audiences are willing to engage with their favorite shows.

The analysis took each show’s specificity into account: for instance, the excessive generalization of a movie reference has a stronger impact on a cinephile, intertextual series like *Dawson’s Creek* than on another show such as *Beverly Hills, 90210*, in which cinema does not play a prominent role. The present study also pays particular attention to the translation strategies that are clearly used for censorship purposes: such choices are often camouflaged as neutral dubbing solutions that create a nearly-natural speech (especially in the first three shows, in which dialogues tend to flow smoothly, without perceptible bumps), yet they become clearly visible upon comparison with the original text. A case in point is *Dawson’s Creek*, in which the piercing, sex-related irony typically used by Joey, Dawson’s smart tomboy best friend and on-and-off girlfriend, was constantlyedulcorated in the dubbed version, so much that an entire generation of Italian viewers recalls the character as an irksome, squeamish girl, while her original *persona* was actually much more roguish and streetwise.

3.3.1 Episode analysis tables

The analysis of the selected episodes explores the cultural and linguistic aspects of the original texts and of the corresponding Italian versions, investigating contents, intratextual and intertextual references, pop culture connections, slang terms, sociolects, and any other features that contribute to the construction of the televised adolescent identity. As stated in **chapter 2**, the present study will mainly focus on the rendition of Culture-Specific References (CSR; Chiaro in Munday 2009: 156) / Extra-linguistic Cultural References (ECR; Pedersen 2005: online), since these frequently originate “cultural bumps” (Leppihalme 1997) or “Lingua-cultural Drops in Translation Voltage” (DTV; Antonini and Chiaro 2005: 39) and constitute a privileged site to investigate the different approaches adopted by dubbing and fansubbing (see paragraph **2.4**). The extension of this corpus and the variety of the texts it comprises inhibit a full-fledged linguistic analysis, which would also be undermined by the differences between the practices and times of television dubbing and those of the approach to film dubbing within which numerous linguistic studies successfully operate (e.g. Pavesi 2005; Bruti 2009). Nonetheless, this study will also reference other “phrases and expressions that sound unnatural or unlikely in the target language (Italian), because their translation underwent some sort of interference from the English source version” (Bucaria in Chiaro et al. 2008: 153), censorship strategies, formulaic language, and other phenomena that play a particularly significant role in the rendition of the source texts or in the construction of a sort of teen dubbese.

Table 1 illustrates the framework devised to organize relevant information:

Show - Episode – US Broadcast –Italian Broadcast					
Timecode	Context	English	Dubbed version	Back translation	Translation strategy

Table 1: Sample episode analysis table – Pre-Internet and early Internet consumption

For the shows for which a comparative analysis of dubbing and fansubbing proved illuminating, table 1 was expanded to include the solutions provided by subtitlers from ItaSA, one of the two main Italian fansubbing sites, as illustrated in table 2:

Show - Episode – US Broadcast –Italian Broadcast							
Timecode	Context	English	Dubbed version	Back translation	Translation strategy	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation

Table 2: Sample episode analysis table – Viewership 2.0

For each episode both the original title and its Italian translation were listed. The latter has a limited relevance for shows from the first two eras, since episode titles only appeared on screen during or after the opening theme and were seldom printed in TV listings, which tended to focus on actors and synopses. New forms of television consumption such DVD box sets and online distribution have prompted viewers to pay a closer attention to each episode’s identification records, both due to the need to retrieve specific episodes (especially through illegal platforms) and as a symptom of an active, conscious consumption that replaces the traditional casual viewing with the pursuit of completion through the viewing of all episodes in the right order. For *Gossip Girl*, specific comments on the quality of translated titles were also included,⁴² bearing witness to the viewers’ higher awareness of paratextual elements and to their desire for a viewing experience that is as complete and as closer to the original as possible. Whenever possible, the date of each episode’s original broadcast in the US and that of the first broadcast of the dubbed Italian version were also included, in order to provide an approximate assessment of the time allotted to the dubbing process, which ranges from a couple of years for the first series to increasingly limited time slots for more

⁴² Such as <http://forum.teamworld.it/forum1657/122340-gossip-girl-2.html> (posted January 2009)

recent products, mainly as a consequence of the need to contrast illegal downloading. *Glee* represents the most evident example of this new trend: as explained in **paragraph 3.2.2**.

3.3.3 Transfer strategies for ECR (Extralinguistic Culture-bound References)

Culture-bound references constitute one of the main problems in audiovisual translation and their rendition through domesticating or foreignizing strategies is the most evident difference between dubbing and fansubbing. The present study employs an adapted version of Jan Pedersen’s taxonomy (2005: online) to analyze the numerous instances of “Extralinguistic Culture-bound References” (ECRs) present in the shows included in this corpus.

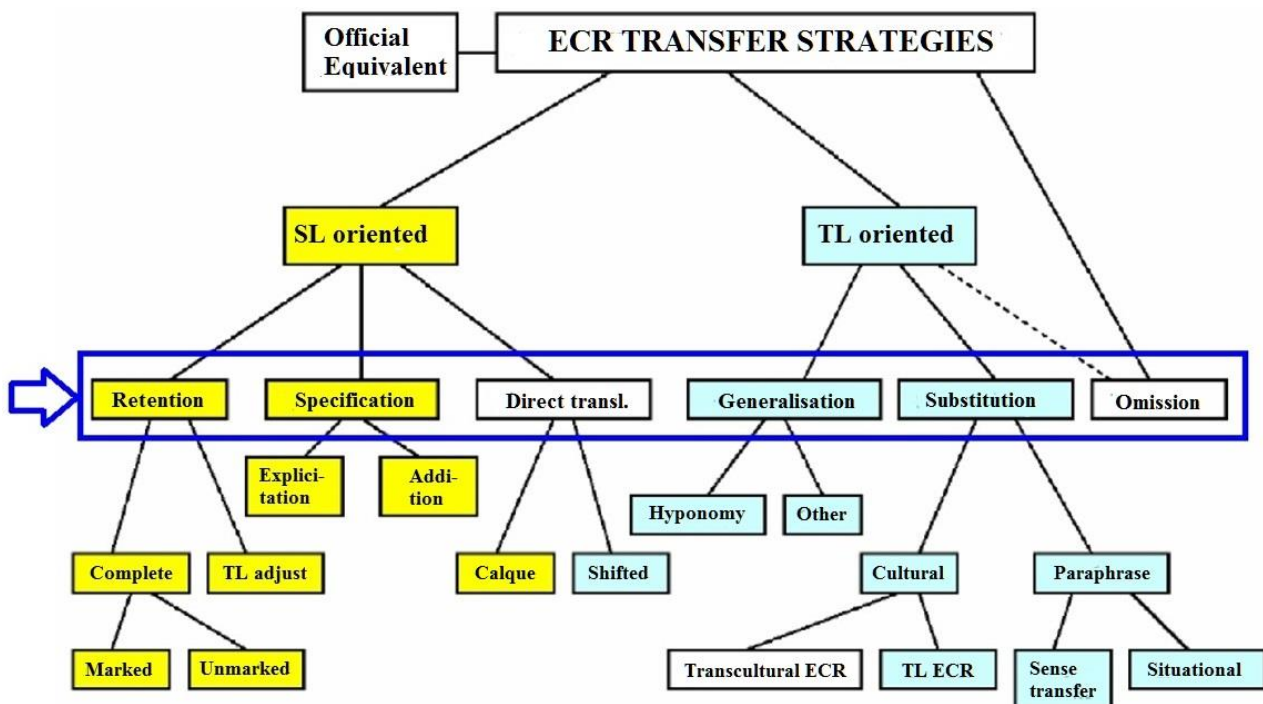


Figure 1. – Jan Pedersen’s taxonomy of ECR transfer strategies (2005: online)⁴³; the dark blue arrow and rectangle indicate the main categories used in the present analysis.

Pedersen distinguishes between two main types of transfer strategies that translators can use to render ECRs in the absence of an official equivalent (an example of which could be the Italian name “Topolino” for “Mickey Mouse”). Source-Language (SL) oriented strategies will produce a foreignizing effect, while Target-Language (TL) oriented strategies will lead to a higher degree of

⁴³ “hyponomy” is probably a typo for “hyponymy.”

domestication. Pedersen arranges the strategies “on what might be called a Venutian scale, ranging from the most foreignizing to the most domesticating strategies (cf. Venuti 1995).” However, he prefers not to use Venuti’s terms, “as they are somewhat counterproductive when translating from English into smaller languages such as the Scandinavian ones. Instead, the more neutral labels ‘Source Language (SL) oriented’ and ‘Target Language (TL) oriented’ will be used.” Pedersen’s objection partly applies to the Italian reception of US television as well, since American teen dramas tend to have a strong connotation that somewhat resists domestication; nonetheless, Venuti’s terminology will be maintained in this study, since it provides an effective summary of the fighting ground between the supporters of dubbing and those of fansubbing in Italy and in several other dubbing countries (a controversy that is probably far more limited in traditional subtitling countries such as the Scandinavian area analyzed by Pedersen). Fansubbers often criticize the fact that dubbing tends to employ a higher number of TL-oriented strategies, domesticating AV texts to such an extent that their identity is irreversibly compromised. Conversely, their foreignizing approach based on SL-oriented strategies aims at maintaining the cultural specificity of the source text as much as possible; while their audience is still necessarily smaller than the general public posited by dubbing, their approach highlights the shift in television consumption practices that has started in the past decade and that is still underway, as described in chapter 1. **Chapters 5 to 7** thus analyze the data collected for each of the six shows in my corpus, providing a number of examples catalogued using Pedersen’s main taxonomy. This dissertation adopts a classification restricted to Pedersen’s second-level categorization (as indicated by the dark blue arrow and box in **Figure 1**), thus using the SL-oriented categories of retention, specification, and direct translation and the TL-oriented categories of generalization, substitution, and omission, without delving into sub-categorizations unless it proves necessary to highlight a specific aspect.

Pedersen (2005: online) describes retention as “the most SL-oriented strategy, as it allows an element from the SL to enter the TT”; this category may entail minor adjustments or the use of formatting devices such as inverted commas or italics to set apart the retained term(s) from the rest

of the text. Specification is similar to retention, but complements the untranslated ECR with an explicitation or with the addition of details that favor comprehension. Direct translation “straddles the fence between the SL and the TL-oriented strategies, between the exotic and the domestic” (2005: online), in that it consists in a literal rendition of the source term(s) that may sound more or less obtrusive to the target audience (calque vs. shifted). Among the TL-oriented transfer strategies, generalization “(which typically, albeit not necessarily, involves translation) means replacing an ECR referring to something specific by something more general” (2005: online), and generally involves hyperonymy; substitution entails the replacement of the ST ECR with another ECR that is easier to understand for the TL audience (cultural substitution) or with a paraphrase (which may or may not retain references to the original ECR, while omission involves the elimination of the ST ECR. For a detailed analysis of the different subcategories of each strategy, see Pedersen’s article “How is culture rendered in subtitles?” (2005); this study will mainly use the categories explained in this paragraph, including any additional comments that might prove helpful in mapping the different transfer strategies used by dubbing and fansubbing. When even omission is insufficient to address a specific ECR transfer (which happens frequently in older series, where entire sentences were often replaced with something completely different), the analysis will include a description of the nature and the effect of the interlinguistic alteration implemented by translators.

Full episode analysis tables are available in **Appendices A to F**.

CHAPTER 4. THE HERITAGE OF HIGH-SCHOOL TEEN MOVIES

JENNY: I tried to be an outsider, but I didn't really fit in. Now Libby calls me a freak and I'm okay with that.

Sabrina The Teenage Witch, episode 1x05, "A Halloween Story"

Teen television is deeply rooted in the well-developed genre of the *teenpic*, which originated as the cinematic response to the post-WWII development of the socio-cultural category of adolescence. As Ross and Stein (2008: 7) highlight,

as a culturally constituted category, adolescence purposefully contains and attempts to fix the experience of crossing from one identity (childhood) into the next (adulthood). The transitional nature of adolescence encompasses not only issues of individual identity but also of community, including an adolescent's place within broader communities and within a community of adolescents (where teen culture might form).

'Teen cinema' indicates a genre that is both about and for younger people, offering a portrayal of youth and aiming at an audience who is either in their own teenage years or wishes to develop a better understanding of the increasingly dilated age of transition from childhood to adulthood. Upon its emergence in the early 1990s, full-fledged teen television drama found an extremely fertile soil in the solid, multifarious movie corpus which had been created in the previous decades and which had set the main topics, character profiles, and diegetic and aesthetic conventions of the genre, shaping the audience's expectations regarding adolescence on screen. Both in its cinematic and televised versions, teen drama tends to be formulaic by definition, exploiting stereotypes and tropes as means to categorize and process reality in an age of uncertainty and perpetual self-definition. Teen television has inherited an entire catalogue of iconic locations, character types, plot developments, and stylistic choices which have risen to quintessential features, rather than representing symptoms of thematic saturation. While conventional and distinctive traits such as setting, mood, or other semantic elements (Rick Altman, quoted in Speed 1998: 24-32) are intrinsic to the idea of genre itself, teen drama traditionally and admittedly goes a step further by constantly

staging stock characters and standardized interactions. The omnipresent clichés define both the content structure and the target audience: the average teenpic is not only about teenagers, it is also designed to appeal to the filmmakers' projection of the 'typical' adolescent. Yet the abundance of standardization and typecasting, which has earned the genre a reputation for trivial, unoriginal cinematography and televisual production, can actually prove fundamental in analyzing the crucial topics of identity construction and social relationships.

With their clear-cut roles, their plethora of classifications and their specific age group target, teen movies are usually identified as a commercial product of the post-World-War-II Affluent Society, a logical and lucrative response to the emerging perception of teenagers as a distinct social and cultural category (Tonolo 1999: 31) which could afford a longer transition between childhood and adulthood and had more time and money to spend on entertainment. As William Osgerby highlights (in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 72),

the American teen population rocketed from ten to fifteen million during the 1950s, eventually hitting a peak of twenty million by 1970. At the same time, a major expansion of education provision saw the proportion of US teenagers attending high school rise from around 60 per cent in the 1930s to virtually 100 per cent during the 1960s – a shift that helped accentuate the identifiability of young people as a distinct generational cohort [with a growing] economic muscle.

The entertainment industry immediately began to leverage this emerging demographic. Nonetheless, besides its undeniable market-driven rationale, teen drama also addresses people's perpetual quest for self-definition, for the understanding of individual and group identity. While this ultimate objective could well apply to many other genres, perhaps even to cultural production as a whole, teen films and shows magnify this aspect through the lens of the age of conflict *par excellence*. As Timothy Shary (2002: 2) emphasizes, conflict is the key ingredient in all drama, and the challenge of growing up and finding one's own place in the world is a natural conflict that is familiar to anyone who has stepped over the threshold of adolescence, whether recently or not.

This chapter will thus analyze the process of identity definition promoted by a set of movies that have proven most influential for teen television. The reasons behind the perpetually resurging

appeal of the adolescent genre are closely connected with the universal need to employ a set of admittedly simplistic abstractions to decode the intricate reality around (and within) each of us in ages of transition, whether cultural or biological, personal or collective. Aldo Grasso (quoted in Silva 2010: 77) suggests that teen drama can be seen as “a *Bildungsroman* which performs the passage from childhood to adulthood, in search of one’s own identity,” as a cognitive mission to decipher reality and learn to relate to it. As adolescents struggle to define themselves, grown-up onlookers embark on the equally complex pursuit of understanding a volatile generation that deflects their usual apperception strategies. Stereotyping then comes to play a crucial role in the systematization of this mercurial reality, both from the inside and from an external standpoint. My goal is to illustrate how the practice of cognitive condensation intrinsic to typecasting is not only instrumental to the understanding of the labyrinthine dimension of adolescence, but actually triggers a process of identity expansion through the explicit admission of its own limitations. Precisely because each stereotype is a conscious oversimplification, both adolescents and adults are constantly prompted to renegotiate the very same perceptions and information they have managed to classify through typecasting. This analysis will thus start from an overview of the genesis and evolution of the teenpic, which is meant to trace the dynamics of this bidirectional process, rather than to compile an exhaustive catalogue. The second part of this chapter will then focus on the subgenre that best highlights the sense-making function of stereotypes and literally stages the inherently human quest of finding one’s place in the world – the high-school movies that exploded in the 1980s and experienced significant comebacks in the late 1990s and in the first decade of the new millennium. Special attention will be dedicated to John Hughes’ *The Breakfast Club* (1985), which can be considered the quintessential high-school movie and whose heritage is evident in countless instances in the series included in my corpus (including an episode-long homage in *Dawson’s Creek*; see **chapter 6**).

4.1 Screening youth and the generation gap

The movie industry has always been aware of the existence of a younger share of the American (and global) population, in terms of both fictional characters and target audience. Nevertheless, as Shary (2005: 1) notes,

American cinema depicted young characters on screen in wildly inconsistent ways (and rather infrequently at that) until the 1930s, and nothing could prepare the film industry, nor the country, for the emergence of that powerful demographic force that bloomed during and after the Second World War: teenagers.

Until then, Hollywood's unsystematic renditions of youth mainly oscillated between an ideal of all-American innocence and righteous pragmatism and a terrifying epitome of rebellion and delinquency. The first category revolved around an idea of youth that was essentially pre-teen, portrayed by actors and actresses that were either children themselves (Shirley Temple being the foremost example thereof) or young adults posing as pre-pubescent characters (such as Judy Garland, who had to squeeze her seventeen-year-old physique into 11-year-old Dorothy's gingham dress for her award-winning performance in Victor Fleming's *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939). These representations mainly focused on uplifting themes and family values, rarely referring to the issues commonly associated with youth, such as interpersonal relationships, the yearning for independence, and the process of identity formation. The *Andy Hardy* movies⁴⁴ are perhaps the most prominent exception to this trend, both in that leading actor Mickey Rooney managed to nurture his child-star fame into a full-fledged acting career and in that the series constituted "the most significant depiction of adolescent life in America until the 1950s" (Shary 2005: 11). Nevertheless, its wholesome treatment of teenage issues and the fact that it earned MGM an Academy Award for "its achievement in representing the American Way of Life" (Shary 2005: 11)

⁴⁴ *A Family Affair* (George B. Seitz, 1937); *You're Only Young Once* (George B. Seitz, 1937); *Judge Hardy's Children* (George B. Seitz, 1938); *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (George B. Seitz, 1938); *Out West with the Hardys* (George B. Seitz, 1938); *The Hardys Ride High* (George B. Seitz, 1939); *Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever* (W.S. Van Dyke, 1939); *Judge Hardy and Son* (George B. Seitz, 1939); *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante* (George B. Seitz, 1940); *Andy Hardy's Private Secretary* (George B. Seitz, 1941); *Life Begins for Andy Hardy* (George B. Seitz, 1941); *The Courtship of Andy Hardy* (George B. Seitz, 1942); *Andy Hardy's Double Life* (George B. Seitz, 1942); *Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble* (George B. Seitz, 1944); *Love Laughs at Andy Hardy* (Willis Goldbeck, 1946); *Andy Hardy Comes Home* (Howard W. Koch, 1958).

underline its concern with national ideals, rather than with the actual teen-related issues that would emerge in the post-war United States.

The second category partially addressed those concerns, yet it only focused on the adult perspective by staging the periodic waves of fear for the mounting unrestrainability of youth. The excesses of the Roaring Twenties (and especially those of the flappers) and the social issues of the Depression era resulted in numerous cinematic depictions of a dangerous youth that needed to be constrained, rather than understood. Both the “innocence” films and the criminal movies tended to portray an undifferentiated mass of young characters seen through adult eyes, focusing either on the positive or on the negative consequences of youthful energy and leaving little room for specific connotations. Aside from the good vs. bad dichotomy, the stereotyping strategies at the core of future teen movies were mainly limited to the major category of the juvenile delinquent, which would nonetheless prove fundamental in influencing the subsequent waves of ephiphobia – and especially the one that inundated the country in the Fifties.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the nation suddenly found itself face-to-face with an unfamiliar entity that proved just as threatening as the nuclear menace – a new, distinct generation that had outgrown the limitations of childhood without inheriting the full duties and responsibilities of adulthood. Adolescence acquired its own generational status as a consequence of the increased circumstantial and financial resources that expanded its duration, allowing young people to dwell much longer on their transition towards maturity. The fact that they had more time to do so, however, did not imply that they knew how to proceed. Given the privilege to explore their personalities in a deeper, longer way, they found themselves struggling to figure out who they were *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world, which, in turn, was striving to make sense of them, to understand this dynamic social entity with a growing power and a protean nature.

The systematic organization of an ever-changing reality that escapes previous cognitive categories is a rational and predictable response to the fear of the unknown, both for those who find themselves in a new, unscripted position and even more so for those who helplessly watch that

kaleidoscopic dimension from the outside. It is therefore natural that the first wave of *bona fide* teen movies would revive and enhance previous concerns for juvenile delinquency, teenage sexuality, and rebellious behaviors, and advocate conformity, family values, and well-defined roles to harness the subversive potential of the new generation. Nor is it surprising that the genre as such would originate in a time and place where “keeping teenagers under control became a national priority” (Tropiano 2005: 22). In the Cold War era the widespread paranoia that the enemy could be hiding anywhere and that no one should be trusted merged with the fear of the increasing independence of teenagers and the widening generation gap, which Lesley Speed aptly summarizes in terms of youth mobility and experimentation versus adult constraint (Speed 1998: 28).

As a result of the post-war affluence, young people stayed in school far longer and generally enjoyed an easier access to resources that favored their emancipation without increasing their responsibilities. As William Osgerby reports, “peacetime saw a decline in full-time youth employment, but the growth in young people’s spending power was sustained by a combination of part-time work and parental allowances, some estimates suggesting that young Americans’ average weekly income had risen from just over two dollars in 1944 to around ten dollars by 1958” (Osgerby in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 72). Together with the wider range of opportunities for self-development, career options and entertainment choices, prosperity and the booming automobile sales among younger generations contributed to the perpetuation of the image of a potentially unrestrainable youth. The preoccupation of older generations, in turn, caused anxiety and distrust in younger people, who unanimously felt that parents and authority figures were unable to understand them (a perspective that later rose to the conventional premise of the entire high-school movie subgenre, if not of the teen movie altogether). Hollywood rushed to exploit “the ephibiphobia [...] that was seeping into popular culture and politics” (Shary 2002: 4), yet it also began to address the teenagers’ own sense of alienation and frustration in a less patronizing way. Among the countless formulaic teen crime movies that appeared in this period, banking on America’s revitalized obsession with juvenile delinquency, the momentous *Rebel Without A Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955)

stood out not only for its artistic merit, but also because it displayed a genuine interest in the adolescent perspective. Parallel to the denunciation of the moral decline of American youth, screenwriters Stewart Stern and Irving Shulman and director Nicholas Ray delved deep into protagonist Jim Stark's feeling of displacement and loneliness, explaining the lack of 'a cause' as a symptom not only of decay, but also of an excruciating loss of direction in life, as the following quotations illustrate:

JIM: Why do we do this?

BUZZ: You've gotta do something. Don't you?

JIM: If I had one day when I didn't have to be all confused and I didn't have to feel that I was ashamed of everything. If I felt that I belonged someplace. You know?

(Nicholas Ray, *Rebel Without A Cause*, 1955)

James Dean's legendary last performance (and the fusion of the actor's cinematic persona with his own identity after his fatal accident) canonized Jim Stark as the archetypal tormented rebel. However, the movie industry's attempt to tap into the disquiet and uncertainty of adolescents is also evident in the profusion of sensationalistic science-fiction and horror movies of the era, such as the whole *I was a teenage...* series,⁴⁵ which inaugurated the teen horror subgenre. If adolescents incubated terrifying, monstrous powers within their minds and bodies, adults responded with an equally alienating barrier of mistrust and suspicion: as one of the protagonists of *Invasion of the Saucer-Men* (1957) complains, "our parents [and] the police [...] think we are drunk or crazy just because we're young" (Tropiano 2005: 43). The widening generation gap also caused a bifurcation in the teensploitation production: next to the delinquency and horror movies highlighting the decadence and uncontrollability of teenagers, an antipodal cinematic trend emerged that "avoided or toned down the dilemmas of youth for the sake of celebrating its carefree aspects" (Shary 2002: 5),

⁴⁵ *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (Gene Fowler Jr., 1957); *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (Herbert L. Strock, 1957); *How To Make a Monster* (Herbert L. Strock, 1958).

as is evident in the escapist *Beach Party* film series (1963-1966)⁴⁶ starring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello.

The teen movie thus began to develop into different subgenres, each of which addressed adolescent issues from a different perspective. Nevertheless, to this day the veritable essence of the genre as a whole still revolves around the persistence and the cyclical exacerbation of the generation gap. With teenagers and grown-ups equally at loss for means to bridge the hiatus between their two worlds, any attempt to decode and classify the unsettling mechanisms of adolescence serves the two purposes of offering adults a rational, albeit partial and clichéd, sense of understanding and of portraying group dynamics and personal challenges with which younger people can easily identify. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed chronology of the genre, it is also important to underline the close relationship between the periodical revival of teen movies and the cultural paradigm shifts that alter the world of adolescence and heighten the generation gap. Socio-cultural and technological innovations such as the advent of shopping malls and multiplex cinemas in the early 1980s or the evolution of the new media in the late 1990s had a much stronger impact on younger generations, the so-called “avant-garde of consumption” (Drotner, quoted in Fornas and Bolin 1995: 48) who rapidly managed to incorporate social changes into their own development process. The film industry systematically attempted to cater both to the new, “updated” teen audience and to the older generations that tried to keep up with its perpetual transfiguration.

Over the decades, however, the metamorphic nature of adolescence acquired a second value that somehow counterbalanced its perilousness: fluidity and instability, even when frightening, also implied a wide array of possible paths that teenagers could explore, making the most of the young age that the United States had always hailed and pursuing the equally powerful American ideal of the self-made man by starting from scratch and shaping their own destinies. Adolescence thus also

⁴⁶ *Beach Party* (William Asher, 1963); *Muscle Beach Party* (William Asher, 1964); *Bikini Beach* (William Asher, 1964); *Pajama Party* (Don Weis, 1964); *Beach Blanket Bingo* (William Asher, 1965); *Ski Party* (Alan Rafkin, 1965); *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* (William Asher, 1965); *Sergeant Deadhead* (Norman Taurog, 1965); *Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine* (Norman Taurog, 1965); *The Ghost in the Invisible Bikini* (Don Weis, 1966); *Fireball 500* (William Asher, 1966); *Thunder Alley* (Richard Rush, 1967).

came to be perceived as a “psychosocial moratorium,” a “delay of adult commitments” for the purposes of allowing identity formation (Erikson, quoted in Speed 1998: 27) – a baffling yet promising age of opportunities during which people had the chance to explore countless hypothetical identities and develop their own individuality by committing to, combining, or rejecting specific traits. Perhaps more than any other form of culture, teen movies (and teen television shows later on) subsequently attempted to provide their audience with a set of simplified abstractions of possible lifestyles, creating a repertoire of stock characters that both fictional protagonists and real-life moviegoers could use to shape their own personalities.

This dimension emerged most clearly in the 1980s, after the relatively quiet phase of the previous decade, in which the teenpic had suffered an overall decline in production and interest. The notable exceptions that appeared towards the end of the Seventies (Brian De Palma’s *Carrie* in 1976, Randal Keiser’s *Grease* and John Landis’ *Animal House* in 1978, to name but a few) harbingered the renewed attention towards teenagers as a crucial market share that would emerge in the first half of the following decade, originating from a number of concurrent causes. The simplistic conservatism of the ‘Reaganite’ approach to social issues, best summarized in the “Just Say No” campaign,⁴⁷ was certainly ill-fitted to accommodate the increasingly complicated adolescent experience and was partly responsible for the “anti-authoritarian strain” (Kaveney 2006: 5) that characterizes the modern teen genre. Hollywood, however, managed to address the higher complexity and the differentiation of teen issues in a much more effective way, which led to both high profits for the industry and a deeper sense of representation for adolescents. Shary (2002: 7) pinpoints the birth of shopping malls with multiplex cinemas as the key factor behind the renewed success of youth-targeted productions, identifying the simultaneous offer of an extensive choice of different teenage depictions as the most adequate reply to the diversification of the teen experience:

Teens were then exposed to a wider range of characters and situations that directly addressed their current social conditions. [...] Unlike the ’50s when screen teens were steered down relatively rigid, righteous paths, the ’80s teens encountered a complexity of moral choices and personal options on which the multiplex movies

⁴⁷ An advertising campaign promoted in the 1980s and early 1990s to discourage young people from using illegal recreational drugs. The slogan was coined by Nancy Reagan, the leading champion of the campaign.

thrives. This gave teenage movie audiences at the end of the twentieth century a greater sense of presence in popular media, a deeper potential to be influenced by the films they saw, and a wider range of options from which they could construct and compare their sense of self.

A major role in the teenpic boom of the early 1980s was played by John Hughes and by the so-called *Brat Pack*, a series of typecast performers that literally acted out the character index envisioned by the iconic screenwriter-director. Movies like *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *Pretty in Pink* (1986), and above all the pivotal *The Breakfast Club*, which shall be analyzed in the following section, established many of the fundamental *tòpoi* of the teen genre. The most prominent of these features include the high school setting, the “anthropology shot” (Kaveney 2006: 3) of the various types and subgroups of the school population, and the stereotype of the adult as the archenemy – a figure that is not only unable to understand teenagers, but actually damages them with either high expectations or sheer neglect. Even though Hughes is easy to criticize, precisely because of his reliance on stereotyping and one-dimensional plots, his opus initiated a sort of teen canon up to which almost every subsequent teen movie and show has had to measure. His heritage is evident in the persistence of his categorizations and trademark storylines (either by imitation or by explicit disavowal) and his genuine interest in seeing the world through the eyes of teenagers still informs the most appealing movies of the genre.

Besides Hughes’ impact, the crucial evolution of the teen movie of the 1980s also entailed the codification of the various subgenres that still constitute the core inventory of youth-oriented cinematography and television, such as the sex comedy, the slasher horror, and the technology/science film. Perhaps even more importantly, as the genre achieved maturity it also developed a self-conscious and self-parodic undercurrent that emerged in the 1988 dark comedy *Heathers* (Michael Lehmann) and that would reach full bloom in the following decade, after the quiescent phase of the late 1980s and early 1990s, in which the booming home video market lured teenagers away from movie theaters. The reemergence of the genre in the second half of the 1990s attempted to answer the need to cater to the Generation-X youth, who had become increasingly diversified and even more aware of the difficulties of shaping one’s identity. Following the lead of

the first full-fledged teen shows such as *Beverly Hills 90210*, which had already begun to tap into this new, more complex audience, teenpics then tried to provide a more comprehensive treatment of youth topics, addressing issues that had often been deemed too controversial to find their way on screen (such as sexual orientation or female urges). At the same time, both cinematic and television productions responded to their audience's enhanced self-awareness with the adoption of a reflexive outlook in the form of metafictional, intertextual, and popular culture references (*Scream*, Wes Craven, 1996; *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; *Dawson's Creek*); open parody (*Scary Movie*, Keenen Ivory Wayans, 2000; *Not Another Teen Movie*, Joel Gallen, 2001); or the introduction of an outsider character that analyzes the fictional world from afar (*Never Been Kissed*, Raja Gosnell, 1999; *Mean Girls*, Mark Waters, 2004). The outsider figure also plays a fundamental role in the quest for self-definition, in that it posits the dimension of otherness that is necessary to trigger the transcendence of any insider categorization. While each subgenre shows instances of this process, the establishment and the renegotiation of meaning towards the definition of selfhood is most evident in high-school movies and television shows, by virtue of their inherent focus on the inside/outside opposition. The next section will therefore concentrate on the evolution of the process of meaning mediation and identity construction in this subgenre, which also informs the television shows that constitute my corpus – recent television examples include Brooklynites Dan and Jenny Humphrey fighting their way into the in-crowd of the Upper East Siders in *Gossip Girl* or jocks Finn Hudson and Noah Puckerman joining the school chorus in *Glee*.

4.2 Sense-making in High-School Movies

With its array of different teenage subcultures grouped together and forced to interact, the chronotope of the high school (and specifically of the American high school) represents the ideal environment to capture the phase of exploration and definition inherent to adolescence and to

analyze the development of individual and social identity. Boys and girls growing up in the United States also enjoy a relatively higher degree of independence than their Italian counterparts. They get their driving licenses two years earlier; they can benefit from a better system of after-school jobs and internships, earning both hands-on experience and personal spending money; and above all they live in a peculiar half-controlled, half-liberating environment that promotes social interaction and self-definition. By creating their individual schedules from a variety of classes, extra-curricular activities, and campus events, not to mention sharing breaks and lunch hours with their peers on a daily basis, American teenagers are exposed to a higher level of social interaction than in countries where students take all their classes with the same group of about twenty people and generally leave the school building at lunchtime to spend the rest of the day elsewhere.

Sharing experiences with a larger number of people and groups offers teenagers a much wider repertoire of possible personal and social identities, the salience of which varies according to each different social context. The interaction between idiosyncratic traits and positional characteristics creates a complex network of relationships between the I, the Us, and the Them dimensions. The definition of identity then becomes a matter of hierarchical organization of the multiple, ever-changing representations of the Self as a social product (Casetti and Di Chio 1998: 269), a “configuration of self-designated descriptors, especially significant group memberships and their meanings to that person, their interconnections, and their salience in one or another setting” (Cornbleth 2003: 1-2). It is worth remembering that in teenpics this magmatic array of socially constructed representations of oneself and of others has little to do with the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity of the population of the United States. American high school movies usually adopt a default WASP middle-class viewpoint, portraying an almost all-white suburban world that is ethically and ideologically informed by a Christian framework. This perspective obviously lends itself to easy criticism, as satirized by the 2001 comedy *Not Another Teen Movie*⁴⁸, which

⁴⁸ It is significant to note that the Italian and the Spanish dubbed versions of this movie bear the titles *Non è un'altra stupida commedia americana* and *No es otra estúpida película americana*, which translate as “It’s not another stupid American comedy/movie,” underlining the quintessential “Americanness” of teen movies in spite of their defective portrayal of American society.

underlines the usual absence of African-American characters except for a so-called “token black guy” that has no diegetic role whatsoever and is only used to convey a hint of diversity by means of a supposedly typical ‘black slang’:

MALIK: Sure, why not? I am the token black guy. I'm just supposed to smile and stay out of the conversation and say things like: “Damn,” “Shit,” and “That is whack.”

MALIK (later): Damn, that shit is whack.

(Joel Gallen, *Not Another Teen Movie*, 2001)

Nonetheless, as is often the case in mainstream cinema, the choice of a limited perspective was mostly driven by financial strategies. Osgerby (in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 77) remarks that

the teenage market that emerged in America after World War II was pre-eminently white and middle-class. [...] Teenage spending power was concentrated in the affluent suburbs, where the post-war prosperity of the American middle-class afforded their children a life of significant material comfort with negligible financial commitment.

Referring to the definition suggested by sociologist Jessie Bernard, Osgerby goes on to identify the driving factor behind teenpic construction in “the wallets of this ‘leisure class’ (Osgerby in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 77) In order to reach out to the maximum possible percentage of those wallets, however, teen movies also introduced a paradoxically egalitarian dimension that tried to tap into every teenager’s angst, identifying its roots in the challenging biological and social phase with which all children, regardless of their specific realities, need to come to terms *en route* to adulthood and maturity. By choosing not to portray issues generated by the juxtaposition of different ethnicities or religions, by actual financial need, by serious physical conditions or by any other extant source of heterogenization, inequality or exclusion, teen movies actually aim at representing a pristine conflict that predates the inception of ‘real life’ and that is somehow inherent to the idea of adolescence as a phase of self-definition that is intrinsically convoluted even before the introduction of additional complications. The setting of choice for these films reflects this intention, discarding specific geographic and metropolitan connotations in favor of a nondescript suburban or small-town environment, a “Norman Rockwell-like suburban dreamscape” (Bernstein

1997: 32) that allows viewers to focus on the teen-sized mishaps of the protagonists without the interference of larger-scale implications.

Such perspective is obviously unfit to mirror the additional specific issues that arise from socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious differences, but the goal of high-school teen movies is rather closer to an introductory course in identity formation providing a basic lexicon that caters to teenagers *tout court*.⁴⁹ By removing spatial and cultural specificity, teenpics actually aim at distilling a quintessential “Everyteen” (Bernstein 1997: 34) that is necessarily abstract because he or she needs to appeal to virtually every adolescent viewer going through the process of self-definition, which is already complicated *per se*. Abstraction is the essence of categorization, and in a way the Everyteen idea constitutes the first and foremost stereotype for the decryption of adolescence, positing teens as an ingroup that defines itself by opposition to both the puerile and the grown-up outgroups. Aside from biological distinctions and from the actual emergence of teenagers as a separate category, it is the social construct of adolescence that matters most in terms of identity formation, in that the sense of belonging to a specific (albeit universal) group is the first conscious step towards self-acceptance and personality development. Teen movies enhance this sense of inclusion by constantly highlighting the differences between the teen ingroup and the adult outgroup, insisting on stereotypical parent/authority figures that are invariably absent (either “away for the weekend,” which is the premise for countless teenpics, or just barely ever visible on screen, as for instance in Cameron Crowe’s *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, 1982), antagonistic to the point of being pernicious (a point most famously sublimated by John Hughes’s oeuvre, as previously mentioned), or just utterly incapable of relating to teenagers. For instance, Michael Lehmann’s *Heathers* presents a whole array of adults that are completely out of touch with ‘planet youth,’⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Movies that actually focus on African-American teenagers, usually denouncing inequality and portraying disadvantaged urban realities, have been excluded from the present study in that their premise and structure identify a genre of their own, raising a different kind of identity issues from those presented in the high school movies at the core of this analysis. When present, the school dimension in these movies (at least in those from the 1980s and 1990s) serves more as a backdrop for social denunciation than as the ultimate environment for self-definition through the renegotiation of stereotyped identity traits. Furthermore, as Amy L. Best highlights, “even while representations of ‘American youth culture’ are increasingly attentive to differences rooted in relations of race, class, gender, and sexuality, they continue to eclipse differences of citizenship, immigrant status, and nationality despite the growth and visibility of transnational communities” (2007: 4).

⁵⁰ David Considine summarizes the distance between the adolescent and the adult “planets” in his foreword to Timothy Shary’s *Generation Multiplex* (2002: IX): “Taffel, a child and family therapist, says the most common comment he hears from kids when they discuss their parents is the phrase

culminating in the character of the post-hippie teacher Pauline Fleming, who thinks that “unadulterated emotion outpouring” and enlightened figures such as herself are the key to solving any teen issue:

MS. FLEMING: Whether to commit suicide is the most important decision a teenager has to make. With supervision from people like myself, we can help young people make the right decision.

Michael Lehmann, *Heathers*, 1988

If the separation of the adolescent world from the adult universe is the fundamental ground for identity formation, the equally crucial subsequent step entails breaking down the larger teenage macro-category into a series of interconnected yet discrete microcosms, gradually itemizing possible identity traits for incorporation or rejection in the process of self-definition and sense-making. Stereotyping then provides useful cognitive generalizations, allowing individuals to reorganize their perception of themselves and of others by means of systematic, fathomable models. Clichés are first of all “aids to explanation [...] and energy-saving devices” (McGarty et al. 2002: 2) that attempt to decrypt the complexity of the world through reduction and categorization: “in an environment that contains too much information the most adaptive response by the perceiver is to attempt to reduce this information overload by filtering out or ignoring much of it” (McGarty et al. 2002: 3). As social constructs, stereotypes will hardly ever offer genuine portrayals, given the biased component that makes them self-fulfilling prophecies at best (McGarty et al. 2002: 10); yet their significance lies in their ability to provide a means of structuring information in the process of social cognition. While a certain degree of verisimilitude is fundamental for them to be plausible, stereotypes do not attempt to provide an authoritative representation of reality, but rather point beyond themselves to trigger a process of exploration and definition.

The clichés in school movies thus balance a partially mimetic component with the consciousness that reality ultimately resists pigeonholing and that any process of categorization involves abstraction and reduction. Both younger and older viewers will expect a minimum degree

‘they don’t have a clue’. On ‘planet youth’, as Taffel calls it, parents have little ‘gravitational pull’ and the dominant ideology is ‘live and let live.’ It is a world of moral relativism and rubbery rules, where the primary impetus is comfort, and the primary teacher is pop culture.”

of realism in order to be able to relate to what they see on screen: an overall accurate and up-to-date depiction of “planet youth” will accommodate both those who are proud to be living in the fast lane of adolescence and those who are alarmed by the idea of “fast times” getting faster and faster and want the issue to gain wider attention. Nonetheless, the audience as a whole will also be aware that the taxonomy offered by movies is a consciously limited systematization, based on necessarily generic abstractions that do not portray the world as it is, but rather as “we expect it to be,” as Walter Lippman explains (1922: 65): the stereotype “stamps itself upon the evidence on the very act of securing the evidence” (Lippman 1922: 61). Such consciousness has become increasingly evident with the emergence of overt self-parodies like the aforementioned *Not Another Teen Movie*, which explicitly mocks traditional teenpic stereotypes and their limitations:

RICKY: Yes, but I'm the best friend, and I have been in front of her face the whole time, and she just... hasn't really realized it yet, but she will.

JAKE: Well, I'm the reformed cool guy, who's learned the error of his ways. She's gonna forgive me for my mistakes, and realize that I really love her.

RICKY: [pause] Dammit, that's true.

(*Not Another Teen Movie*, 2001)

The “reformed cool guy” is one of the most recurrent character types in teen movies; he is usually rich (*Pretty in Pink*), popular, handsome and athletic (like the “jocks” in *Say Anything*, Cameron Crowe 1989; *American Pie*, Paul Weitz, 1999; *Varsity Blues*, Brian Robbins, 1999; and *She's All That*, Robert Iscove, 1999) and tends to follow the same development line: through a bet, a deal or another kind of external prompt he will get to know an ‘uncool’ girl who will teach him the true meaning of feelings and respect. She will then find out about the deal and reject him, only to take him back when she realizes that he is indeed reformed. Similarly, most of the other character types undergo some sort of rehabilitating transformation: the shallow cheerleader / popular girl will prove that she can have feelings too (*Can't Buy Me Love*, Steve Rash, 1989; *Clueless*, Amy Heckerling, 1994; *10 Things I Hate About You*, Gil Junger, 1999) and the shy geek will have his or her chance

to join and eventually stand up to the in-crowd (*Can't Hardly Wait*, Deborah Kaplan and Harry Elfont, 1998; *Mean Girls*). The climax of their transformation will often take place at or after a high school milestone event (usually the prom, the graduation ceremony or another major dance or celebration), functioning both as an opportunity for role reversal and a coming-of-age ritual (Best 2000: 2) and generally leading to a predictable epilogue. Yet while the renewal process is just as stereotyped as the characters involved, the idea of reformation is one of the most fundamental concepts in the economy of teen movies. Aside from any moralistic connotation, the concept of redemption is the key to transcending the rigidity of each categorization. Whether reformed characters actually become 'better people' (which tends to occur, as most teen movies involve happy endings) is ultimately irrelevant; what matters is that they take the chance to step out of their own roles and engage in exploration.

The Breakfast Club, which is often considered the quintessential teen movie, provides an entire catalogue of character types that eventually prove much less adamant than they did at first sight. The movie provocatively opens with a denunciation of the clichés that adults impose on teenagers:

BRIAN (off screen): You see us as you want to see us... in the simplest terms and the most convenient definitions. You see us as a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess and a criminal. Correct? That's the way we saw each other at seven o'clock this morning. We were brainwashed...

(John Hughes, *The Breakfast Club*, 1985)

As they enter the school library for a day-long detention, the five characters are indeed introduced with all the typical markers "indicating their social position in the high school caste system." (Tropiano 2005: 167). Andrew, the Jock, sports his letterman jacket and will later strip to a Nike wrestling singlet showcasing his biceps; Princess Claire dons a trendy outfit complete with diamond jewelry and Molly Ringwald's snobbish smirk; Brian, whose own name is an anagram of 'Brain,' wears proper clothes and mentions that he belongs to the Maths, Physics and Latin clubs; Bender, the Criminal, is defined by his unruly long hair, his leather boots, his frequent outbursts of rage, and

his biting, resentful sarcasm; and Allison, the Basket Case, wears shapeless black clothes and does not utter a single word for the first half of the movie.

As the story develops, however, the quintet engages in a sort of group therapy session, gradually moving from reciprocal dislike and open insults to a mutual understanding based on the (not surprising) discovery that they all have their own issues, which, even less surprisingly, are always caused by parents who either ignore or abuse them. The rest of the story leads to a predictable 1980s happy ending: the Princess steps down from her throne to mingle with the Criminal, who is actually much more intrigued by her than he had been willing to admit; a simple makeover proves to be just what it takes to reveal the beauty of the Basket Case to the eyes of the Jock, who has also broken down when analyzing the impact of his father's expectations; and the Brain, having finally confessed his own inability to deal with failure (in the form of a low grade), is left to complete the essay that they had been assigned for detention, to whose convenient title inquiry "Who are you?" he replies: "What we found out is that each one of us is a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess, and a criminal." The movie's most significant features are neither the anticipated reformation nor the feel-good epilogue, but rather the renewed emphasis on the irreconcilable generation gap and the recognition of fluidity, of mutual influences, of a virtually endless spectrum of complex identities. For both of these reasons the stereotypes of the rebel and of the outsider prove to be the most effective, in that they both betoken strong dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, the inability to conform and the desire for a global cognitive reorganization where they might eventually find their own place.

The rebel/criminal tradition traces back to *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Blackboard Jungle* (Richard Brooks, 1955) and usually involves an open challenge to adult-imposed rules, simultaneously conveying a feeling of empowerment for younger, turbulent viewers and the open denunciation that older, more worried audiences advocate. While most rebel movies follow a similar pattern involving lack of communication and blatantly defiant gestures as both instances of insubordination and undeclared cries for help, the grounds of rebellion vary from gun violence

(*Elephant*, Gus Van Sant, 2003) to drug addiction (Sean Penn's perpetually stoned "surfer dude" in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*) and to sexuality and self-harm (*Thirteen*, Catherine Hardwicke, 2003). Similarly, the freak/outsider type is an umbrella category comprising highly different representations of extraneousness, ranging from awkward oddballs (*Rushmore*, Wes Anderson, 1998; *Donnie Darko*, Richard Kelly, 2001; *Napoleon Dynamite*, Jared Hess, 2004) to brave girls willing to endure pregnancy *and* high school at the same time (*Juno*, Jason Reitman, 2007) and to literal, supernatural metaphors of otherness (the vampires in *The Lost Boys*, Joel Schumacher, 1987, and in the *Twilight* saga,⁵¹ 2008-2012; the witches in *The Craft*, Andrew Fleming, 1996; the werewolves in *Ginger Snaps*, John Fawcett, 2000).

Yet perhaps the most significant type of outsider is the character that literally looks in from an external viewpoint: an undercover journalist going back to high school for an assignment (*Never Been Kissed*), an adult trapped in the body of a teenager (*Freaky Friday*, Mark Waters, 2003; *17 Again*, Burr Steers, 2009) or simply "the new kid in town" coming from a completely different background and thus equipped with often hilarious means to decode the new environment. *Mean Girls* offers an example thereof as Cady Heron, daughter of two research zoologists and raised in Africa, compares teen dynamics with animal behaviors in a voice-over comment to a montage of juxtaposed jungle scenes and high-school shots:

CADY: Being at Old Orchard Mall kind of reminded me of being home in Africa. By the watering hole. When the animals are in heat."

(Mark Waters, *Mean Girls*, 2004)

The manifold manifestations of the rebel and the outsider types ensure variety and preserve the entertainment potential of the subgenre; yet the most significant feature of these character categories, common to both stereotypes, is that they always entail a switch in perspective. Their sheer presence initiates the exploration process that is so crucial to identity construction: whether they are represented by a vampire, a shy, unpopular kid or a 16-year-old mother-to-be, they serve

⁵¹ *Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008); *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (Chris Weitz, 2009); *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* (David Slade, 2010); *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1* (Bill Condon, 2011); *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2* (Bill Condon, 2012).

the fundamental purpose of challenging the very same *Weltanschauung* construed through the other stereotypes. Lippmann (1922: 63) suggests that “when a system of stereotypes is well fixed, our attention is called to those facts which support it, and diverted from those which contradict.” The function of rebels and outsiders is thus to denounce the arbitrariness of the selection of facts deemed to be relevant and to call attention to those in disaccord with the stereotype system, whose reliability is thus undermined from within. By pointing towards an entire world of possibilities beyond the genre’s own set of basic categories, they succeed in the process through which teen movies can transcend their own limitations: “detecting the false absolutism of stereotypes” (Lippman 1922: 40) and engaging both characters and viewers in a continuous social renegotiation of the meanings of reality. As we shall see in the next chapter, this process has found an even wider resonance in teen series, in which the characters’ development benefits from the much deeper exploration allowed for by the multi-season format comprising thousands of minutes of footage, as opposed to the average 90-100 minutes allotted for a single movie. Not only does the basic categorization instated by teenpics still inform most high-school-based shows, as is evident in five out of the six series included in the present corpus; the evolution of television culture, of filming and editing techniques, and of user engagement has also allowed for the upgrade of teen drama from single-session viewing experiences to veritable growing-up companions, which accompanies adolescents (and post-adolescents) through their challenging years of transition and identity formation.

4.3 Teen television

As highlighted in the previous sections, the category of adolescence emerged in the post-WWII United States, at a “specific historical moment [...] where adulthood became increasingly deferred and new youth consumer markets seemed eminently exploitable. [...] In this period of both

economic and baby boom, ‘the teenager’ developed as a recognized cultural identity in close synchronization with the rise of television as a widely consumed domestic medium” (Davis and Dickinson 2004: 2). Both wide and small screens soon became an integral part of the daily lives of adolescents, “not as a substitute for their real surroundings, but as a *part* of their actual surroundings” (Karen Lury, quoted in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 2). To this day, “teens often watch TV in order to socialize, to have common frames of reference through which to talk to others” (Davis and Dickinson 2004: 2), thus gaining access to the first level of identity formation – that of social interaction, through which the introduction of alterity triggers a reassessment of the sentient I. If pursuing conformity and a sense of belonging somehow becomes a key to differentiation for the individual viewer, the development of a shared and relatable category with an augmented spending power and a significantly larger share of responsibility-free spare time was immediately appreciated and promoted by the entertainment and advertising industry, as William Osgerby underlines (in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 77). Both Hollywood and the growing television medium started to tap into the “teenage goldmine” (Osgerby in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 73), and the ABC network even embraced youth-targeted programming (which had its apex in the long-lived music-performance show *American Bandstand*, 1952-1989, “an outgrowth of radio disc jockey shows”; Martin in Ross and Stein 2008: 39) as a way to challenge the duopoly of its better-fitted, more widespread competitors NBC and CBS.

Countless television productions aimed at adolescents (and at their disposable income) found their way on local and national networks over the following decades, yet televised teenagers were portrayed either as carefree protagonists enjoying the freedom of youth or as part of a larger family picture. Shows boasting teenage protagonists mainly focused on unproblematic friendships and happy-go-lucky themes such as harmless shenanigans or fun-filled escapades, best represented in the *Gidget* novels, sitcom, and telemovies of the 1960s, which were closely related to the coeval ‘Beach Party’ teenpics. On the other hand, shows with wider ensemble casts frequently featured adolescents, providing more relatable characters for younger viewers of genres as varied as soap

operas (*All My Children*, Agnes Nixon, 1970 – 2011; *The Young and the Restless*, William J. Bell and Lee Philip Bell, 1973 – present), drama productions (*Little House on the Prairie*, Blanche Hanalis, 1974 – 1983), or sit-coms (*Leave it to Beaver*, Joe Connelly and Bob Mosher, 1957-1963; *The Cosby Show*, Ed. Weinberger, Michael Leeson and Bill Cosby, 1984 - 1992), to list but a few examples. Nonetheless, most of these shows still depicted youth as a sort of Blakean age of carefree innocence and charming naiveté, as opposed to the age of experience, knowledgeability, and troubles of adulthood, as is evident in self-explanatory titles such as *Father Knows Best* (Ed James, 1954 – 1962). *Happy Days* (Garry Marshall, 1974 – 1984), the one show that originated as the representation of the lives of young adults, was still filtered through the lens of nostalgia, to which most Hollywood and television creators resorted in the dark times of the 1970s, when America was haunted by the shadows of the Vietnam War, the Cold War, and the Watergate scandal. *Happy Days* did focus on the lives of young protagonists Richie Cunningham and Arthur “Fonzie” Fonzarelli, yet, as Braga (2003: 202, my translation) underlines, it “still featured a constant intergenerational dialectic between parents and children which is often absent from modern examples,” and above all it followed the trend initiated by movies such as *Grease* and *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973) (Cosenza 2008: 281), glossing over contemporary political, social, and ethical issues altogether through the adoption of an edulcorated, sanitized 1950s setting. As creator Garry Marshall explains in an interview (Smiley 2012), “the censorship was that you didn’t want to show drugs and this or the war in Vietnam and this and that, so we had to set it back in nostalgia terms.” In a way, *Happy Days* did contribute to the diffusion of a shared set of categories and a relatable value system that proves helpful in “negotiating one’s place among one’s peers” (Davis and Dickinson 2004: 3). The sense of alienation and inadequacy and the desire to fit in that are typical of adolescence were frequently addressed in the show (Cosenza 2008: 282), but the Fifties patina ended up softening many of the issues faced by the characters and creating a distance between their world and the viewers’ own reality.

It was only in the 1990s that television began to address those issues in a deeper, more authentic fashion, in order to target the growing market of the so-called ‘echo-boom’ and “Generation Y” teenage audience (Wee in Ross and Stein 2008: 46). With censorship slowly loosening its grip and the growing-up process becoming longer, less linear, and more multifaceted, coming-of-age fiction began to exploit the full potential of serial formats. Teen-targeted expanded texts then started to include a strong “serial component, intrinsically iterative and able to defer dramatic closure” (Braga 2003: 16, my translation), which could walk hand-in-hand with their audiences as they transitioned into adulthood (a trend that has also been dominating the book and movie market for the past fifteen years, as best illustrated by J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* and Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight*). As Palin (in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 85, my translation) highlights,

in the landscape of American serial television, the teen drama is one of the most interesting genres to represent the ability of TV shows to create a world, a furnished universe that, in spite of variations and transformations, remains essentially identical to itself, and thus easier for the viewers to inhabit. The purpose of teen drama is not so much to stupefy, as to reassure its viewers, constantly offering them a ‘safe home.’

Specifically aiming at the creation of a comfortable “home” for viewers under 35, in 1990 producer Aaron Spelling and screenwriter Darren Star created the revolutionary *Beverly Hills, 90210* (see **chapter 5**), giving birth to the first veritable teen drama, a primetime show that blended soap opera elements with a genuine treatment of serious adolescent issues. With as many as ten seasons, the show is the longest teen drama in television history and is often recognized as the alpha production of a whole new conception of televised adolescence, both in its native US and in many foreign countries. Its arrival in Italy in November 1992 marked the beginning of a new era in national programming, introducing teenagers as a complex topic to explore on screen, as opposed to a factor of comic relief or an idealized category. *Beverly Hills, 90210* played a crucial role in shaping the future decades of youth-oriented programming in Italy, in that it laid the foundations for many of the diegetic, aesthetic, and linguistic tropes with which the American teenage life has been permanently engraved onto the collective imagination of the Italian audience.

After the advent of *Beverly Hills, 90210*, the teen drama started to evolve into a full-fledged (albeit often hybrid) genre, with distinct characteristics and a scrupulously crafted style which earned many of its declinations a well-deserved place in quality TV and which transcended the sheer requirement of an adolescent audience or an ensemble of protagonists in their teenage years. Teen series acquired complexity and intertextuality, expanding their target audience to include older viewers through the adoption of “a televisual style which openly solicits adult viewers through certain trademarks of ‘quality’ and ‘sophistication,’ one which significantly diminishes any of the ‘guilty pleasures’ non-teen fans might have previously experienced when watching these programs” (Davis and Dickinson 2004: 11). *Dawson’s Creek* is one of the best examples of these ‘upgraded’ teen dramas: multi-layered storylines, stylistic subtleties, and a synergic usage of visual, verbal, and musical elements for a cult appreciation of the show: as Matt Hills underlines, “teen audiences (displaying more-or-less intense fandoms) often form a key part of cult TV and film audiences, and so too do ‘crossover’ transgenerational audiences of the type attracted by *Dawson’s Creek*” (Hills in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 62). The show’s global relevance, its peculiar, quasi-philosophical dialogues brimming with meta-analyses and intertextual references made it a perfect candidate for my corpus, in that its scripts were not only influential *per se*, but also posited a whole range of challenges for Italian adaptors. *Dawson’s Creek* also boasted both an appealing opening theme (Paula Cole’s “I Don’t Wanna Wait”) and a carefully constructed pop / indie-rock soundtrack, which helped construct the show’s viewers as partly mainstream music consumers with an avant-garde edge and proved in line with the frequent pairing of popular music and compelling storylines, another key feature of the teen genre. As Miranda J. Banks (Banks in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 18) maintains, “the use of popular music on these programs, in their title sequences as well as throughout each episode, gives the stories a lush background that enhances the emotion of the drama unfolding on screen, while defining these dramas as distinctly young and trendy.” Ben Aslinger (in Ross and Stein 2008: 79) also stresses the hermeneutic role of songs in WB shows, claiming that they add “sonic layers complicating textual readings of gender and sexuality [...and]

function to communicate character interiority.” Music played a key role in the rise of many other teen shows, such as *Roswell* (Jason Katims, 1999 – 2002; which opened with Dido’s “Here With Me”), *Smallville* (Alfred Gough, Miles Millar, 2001 – 2011; Remy Zero’s “Save Me”), *One Tree Hill* (Mark Schwahn, 2003 – 2012; Gavin DeGraw’s “I Don’t Want to Be”), *The O.C.* (Josh Schwarz, 2003 – 2007; Phantom Planet’s “California”), and *Veronica Mars* (Rob Thomas, 2004 – 2007; The Dandy Warhols’ “We Used to Be Friends”). Last but not least, together with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Dawson’s Creek* also proved crucial for the definition of the archetypal teen drama setting, the American small town in which life revolves around the high-school and a few other teen-friendly locales, such as cheap food joints, movie theaters, sports centers, and the local mall. While the upper-class *Beverly Hills* backdrop hatched its own lineage of urbanite, luxury environments (such as the eponymous, affluent Orange County in *The O.C.* or Manhattan’s Upper East Side in *Gossip Girl*), many other teen shows maintained the small-town setting that *Dawson’s Creek* had inherited from the John Hughes movies of the 1980s. The original, unremarkable Illinois suburbs (*The Breakfast Club*’s Shermer, for instance) thus spawned an entire clan of charming yet nondescript small towns that resembled one another even when they were located in entirely different areas of the United States. Thus *Buffy*’s fictional Sunnydale, California, and *Dawson’s Creek*’s equally imaginary Capeside, Massachusetts, share many traits with other teen show settings such as *Gilmore Girls*’ Stars Hollow, Connecticut, *Veronica Mars*’ Neptune, California, and *One Tree Hill*’s eponymous location in North Carolina.

Aside from integrating quality and cult TV features, counterpointing the ups and downs of teenage life with an appropriate soundtrack, and defining adolescent chronotopes, the teen show also began to blend in structures, motifs, and stylistic choices from other genres, thus developing its own set of subgenres. With the notable exception of *That ‘70s Show* (Bonnie Turner, Terry Turner, and Mark Brazill, 1998 – 2006), with its focus on the social issues on the Seventies, teen sit-coms tended to have a less complex style and structure, partly because they drew their format from the family-based shows of the 1980s and partly because they provided a lighter treatment of teenage

issues. A few examples are still worth mentioning because of their influence on the visual depiction of the high school chronotope, with different rooms marking the flow of daily life at school. Aside from the aforementioned dramas, the contemporary mental image of the classroom, the locker room, the science lab, the cafeteria, and the gym are still informed by the colorful locations filmed in shows such as *Saved by the Bell* (Peter Engel, 1989 – 1993), *Boy Meets World* (Michael Jacobs and April Kelly, 1993 – 2000), and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (Jonathan Schmock, 1996-2003).

One of the subgenres that proved most successful is the horror/paranormal/science-fiction show, which pivots on the visual depiction of teenage angst and the perception of alterity and alienation as a whole array of monster/supernatural types, from vampires to werewolves and other shapeshifters, and from witches to misunderstood underdogs with superpowers that inhibit full integration. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* stands out as the most representative example of the horror subgenre, both because of an entire legion of symbols of otherness is deployed to portray the various forms of teenage alienation, self-discovery, and self-empowerment, and because of its own manifold merits as a teen drama and as a television show in general. The fertile academic production that is still prospering a decade after the airing of the series finale bears witness to the complexity and the value of the show, created by acclaimed showrunner Joss Whedon and instilled with the strength and effectiveness of a great cast and an imaginative, detail-oriented screenwriting crew. Aside from the visual concretization of monster-related metaphors and a plethora of other relevant content features, *Buffy* also provides an endless array of witty, well-crafted dialogues brimming with sarcastic remarks and pop-culture and intertextual references that have led to the creation of the terms ‘Slayer slang,’ ‘Buffyspeak,’ and ‘Buffytalk.’ The heavily censored dubbed dialogues of the show also constitute a manifest example of the Italian resistance to the rise in the quality and the complexity of teen shows, which still tend to be pigeonholed in the very slot they have managed to transcend from *Beverly Hills* onwards.

Both *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson's Creek* played a key role in constructing the identity of their home network, the WB, as the main destination for teen television. As underlined by Ross and Stein (2008: 19),

the WB's specific teen branding incorporated elements of so-called "quality" TV, as these programs combined cinematic technique with self-reflexive popular cultural references to create a sense of teen identity both specific and poised toward mainstream (and adult) cultural engagement.

After two years of limited success, the WB boomed from 1997 to 2003, with *Buffy* and *Dawson's Creek* marshaling a whole range of acclaimed teen shows such as *Felicity* (J.J. Abrams and Matt Reeves, 1998 – 2002), *Roswell*, *Gilmore Girls* (Amy Sherman-Palladino, 2000 – 2007), *Smallville*, and *One Tree Hill*. Wee (in Ross and Stein 2008: 48) highlights that most of "these shows share a range of distinct characteristics: they feature a young and highly attractive ensemble cast and they all trace the experiences of youth and growing up with an appealing blend of intelligence, sensitivity, and knowing sarcasm." Many of these series earned the network both high ratings and a distinct reputation for high-quality teen television; nonetheless, after 2003 the WB struggled to expand beyond its traditional 12-24 demographics, and as ratings declined, its owners decided to shut down the network to devote their energies and capitals to a new project. In 2006 CBS Corporation and Warner Bros created the CW, which inherited many of the series that had previously aired on the WB and is now the leading network for teenage programming, even though its current shows enjoy a less favorable reputation than those of the golden age of the WB. Among the leading CW series aimed at teenagers, which include *The Vampire Diaries* (Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec, 2009 – present), *Hart of Dixie* (Leila Gerstein, 2011 – present), and *The Carrie Diaries* (Amy B. Harris, 2012-2014; based on the Candace Bushnell book bearing the same name and narrating the adolescence of *Sex & the City's* Carrie Bradshaw), the fast-paced drama *Gossip Girl* was selected for this study due to its acceleration of dialogues and plot developments to adjust them to the frantic, flamboyant Upper East Side lifestyle. The show's faster rhythm and its reliance on instant communication provides a variety of examples of tech talk, digital native slang,

acronyms, and other features of text-messaging used in regular dialogues, all of which tend to undergo deep changes through the sift of dubbing.

Like *Gossip Girl*, the remaining two shows in this corpus are also examples of audiovisual texts with a specific diegetic and linguistic identity. *Glee*, which has been airing on Fox since 2009, is a musical dramedy based on the lives and misfortunes of a high school glee club from Lima, Ohio, which comprises the whole nine yards of teen stereotypes. Jocks, cheerleaders, divas, and geeks learn to develop their identities and to respect one another through music, as they participate in increasingly competitive choir championships. Each episode is constructed as a musical show, complete with plot-relevant, carefully-selected pop, rock, and R&B hits and frequent tributes to chart-topping singers or music icons, which place *Glee* in an ideal position for a transmedia experience.

The case of *The Big Bang Theory* (which debuted in 2007 on CBS) proves even more significant to assess the evolution of the Italian-speaking audience. The fully-furnished geek microcosm inhabited by the main characters imbibes each episode with countless of accurate references to geek culture, which have allowed the show to develop and maintain the unique, consistent identity at the basis of its success. However, as previously mentioned, the first Italian adaptation of the show replaced most references with vulgar jokes or illogical line, which resulted in an open protest by the Italian viewers and in the replacement of the entire adapting and dubbing team. Comparing the fansubs and the dubbing scripts for *The Big Bang Theory* is thus fundamental to fathom the gap between what the dubbing agency identified as the Model Viewer and the actual, much more conversant spectatorship and paving the way for a reassessment of audiovisual translation practices in the light of the audience evolution.

CHAPTER 5. TOP-DOWN TELEVISION CONSUMPTION

The 1990s constituted a turning point in American media production, as they marked the end of the cultural consensus that had united the American audience through sixty years of radio broadcasts first (since 1929) and TV programming since the 1950s. The oligopoly of the three major networks ABC, CBS, and NBC, which had “preclusively shared the national commercial broadcast television audience among themselves for decades” (McKinley 1997: 15), was undermined by the emergence of a growing number of networks and cable channels which triggered a fragmentation of the general public and the development of niche audiences with specialized interests (explored in **chapter 1**). While each of the three main networks still attracted more viewers than any of the new channels, the process of viewership segmentation that led to the current Long Tail scenario (see **1.4**) had been set in motion and television networks gradually began to target specific demographics to secure a profitable audience share. Fox Broadcasting Company pioneered the new trend in the late 1980s: “an entire network, Fox, was created with the idea of targeting its programming (*Melrose Place*, *Beverly Hills, 90210*) to those under the age of 35” (Cary 1992: 30, quoted in McKinley 1997: 15). Launched in 1986 “as the fourth network, at the dawn of the age of deregulation”⁵² (Carini 2009: 11, my translation) and backed by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, Fox had its first hits with the sitcom *Married... with Children* (Michael G. Moyer and Ron Leavitt, 1987 – 1997), the procedural crime drama *21 Jump Street* (Patrick Hasburgh and Stephen Cannell, 1987 – 1991), and Matt Groening’s irreverent cartoon *The Simpsons* (the longest-running animated series in the history of US television), all of which paved the way for the network’s later success. Yet it was in 1990 that Fox officially started to marshal the teen market, when creator Darren Star and producer Aaron Spelling inaugurated a streak of shows aimed at a younger audience (which would become the network’s trademark throughout the rest of the decade) by launching *Beverly Hills, 90210*, a

⁵² The removal of state controls in the broadcast industry, which eventually led to the concentration of media ownership and the emergence of *media conglomerates* such as Viacom, CBS Corporation, News Corp, Time Warner, and 21st Century Fox.

“melodramatic teen serial” (Ross and Stein 2008: 15) often identified as “the father of all teen dramas” (Palin in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 85, my translation). After a relatively slow start, with season one scoring an average rating of 6.4% in the US, the show managed to secured a loyal following, and seasons two to five maintained an average rating over 11%.

Beverly Hills was the first primetime show which specifically targeted teenagers instead of trying “to appeal to a wide audience by including characters of several age groups” (Owen 1997: 74). As McKinley (1997: 5) highlights, “*90210* has been touted in the popular press as raising topical issues, such as drug addiction, teen pregnancy, and date rape, which producers have said they hope would teach viewers important lessons.” Indeed, part of the show’s success was due to its attempt to take teenagers more seriously than any previous televisual product, exploring the “prolonged liminality” (Stein in Ross and Stein 2008: 238) of adolescence with genuine interest, rather than dismissing it as a transitional phase; yet one of its greatest merits was the ability to operate the other way around as well, using televised adolescence as a lens to capture the atmosphere of deep social change that characterized the last decade of the past millennium. As Francesca (2011: 24, my translation) underlines,

given the particular phase of life that adolescence constitutes, the [teen] public is ideal to represent societal changes. Even though they are permeated with the socio-cultural rules of the era in which they live, young people are endemic bearers of change, harbingers of new trends, tendencies, and customs. This is the reason for which many teen dramas have managed to describe the evolution of society between the lines of simple high school stories.

The 1990s were a complex age of rapid social and cultural evolution which began with the legacy of Ronald Reagan’s “America is back” motto (Francesca 2011: 27), progressed through the ups and downs of the Bush Sr. administration (the brief recession, the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Gulf War) and the economic boom of the Clinton era and witnessed a revolution in communication with the diffusion of personal computers and the rise of the Internet. The US population increased by 33 million people over the course of the decade, also as a consequence of a large immigration wave from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia, which resulted in a marked

rise in multiculturalism. At the same time, the high divorce rates of the 1970s and the 1980s had led to an increase in the percentage of single-parent families, which represented 24% of all households in 1990; many young people thus faced adolescence with limited support from their broken homes and learned to envision their group of friends as a surrogate family, as is reflected in many television shows created in this decade (Owen 1997: 11). Transitioning from childhood to adulthood in the 1990s also entailed “coming to terms with sex in an era of AIDS” (Owen 1997: 80): as the HIV and AIDS epidemic reached its peak in the US in the early 1990s, addressing sexual issues and promoting sexual safety became a weighty yet crucial social responsibility.⁵³

Fox sensed the potential of niche programming aimed at young people; its president, Jamie Kellner (1987; quoted in Owen 1997: 56), explicitly chose to target a narrower audience than that of the three main networks:

They try to appeal to everybody, and we believe that has resulted in derivative, homogenized programming [...]. We are going after the young-adult audience. A large percentage of the network audience is over 50, and, in order to win the household ratings game and be no. 1, they must appeal to the older viewers. Fox is not in that household ratings game. We believe that the future of television is going to be directed toward pinpointed demographic audiences.

This pivotal intuition also had positive advertising reverberations: by targeting a specific, younger audience, Fox created advertising space that was more valuable than that offered by the generalist networks. McKinley (1997: 17) observes that “as with print magazines, advertisers could avoid ‘waste circulation’ by supporting programs aimed at particular demographic subgroups” that were more likely to experiment with brands and had grown up in an age of consumerism and would thus spend a significant amount of money in disposable consumer products used for self-definition purposes (Owen 1997: 59-60), as later epitomized by Tom Hanks’s famous line from *You’ve Got Mail* (Nora Ephron, 1998):

⁵³ In episode 2x21, “Everybody’s Talkin’ About It,” social activist Andrea directly addresses the issue: “Every year, 3 million teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases. [...] More Americans have died from the AIDS virus than were killed in the Vietnam and Korean wars combined. More are gonna die in the next two years than in the ten years since the virus was discovered. How can people ignore this problem?” Later in the episode, after a heated Parents’ Association meeting to discuss the proposal to provide free condoms for students, Brenda comments: “I mean, ever since Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV-positive, it seems like all you hear about is condoms and safer sex.”

The whole purpose of places like Starbucks is for people with no decision-making ability whatsoever to make six decisions just to buy one cup of coffee. Short, tall, light, dark, caf, decaf, low-fat, non-fat, etc. So people who don't know what the hell they're doing or who on earth they are, can, for only \$2.95, get not just a cup of coffee but an absolutely defining sense of self: Tall! Decaf! Cappuccino!

As highlighted in **chapter 4**, *teenpics*, even when based on clichés, were already playing a key role in helping teenagers negotiate their sense of self; by providing a relatively realistic exploration of adolescence, *Beverly Hills, 90210* paved the way not just for the development of teen television as a genre, but also for the creation of a full-fledged representation of youth that accompanied its viewers for many years through serialized narratives (as opposed to the self-concluded episodes of most preceding shows) and through the construction of adolescent life through both programs and targeted advertising.

Beverly Hills, 90210 premiered on October 4, 1990, starting off with the depiction of the ultimate social nightmare: beginning sophomore year in a new school in one of the richest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, where the in-crowd drives convertibles and enjoys the school's valet parking service, wears designer clothes, and has been growing up together since kindergarten. The Walsh family moves in from Minneapolis and twins Brandon and Brenda face their first day at prestigious West Beverly High; yet in spite of their Midwestern *Weltanschauung* and unsightly car, they manage to befriend some of their Californian schoolmates, who will constitute the core of their future group of friends (and start the tradition of the youth ensemble drama): Kelly Taylor, a blonde, snobbish fashionista; Donna Martin, Kelly's selfless alter ego; Steve Sanders, a well-off jock and harlequin and Kelly's former boyfriend; Andrea Zuckerman, the nerdy editor of the school newspaper who hides her humbler origins to be able to attend West Beverly High and aim at a good college; Dylan McKay, the surfing, motorbike-riding loner who re-embodies the James Dean type; and David Silver, freshman and school DJ, who is always trying to befriend the rest and to pursue Kelly. Even though the character were clearly stereotyped in season 1,⁵⁴ they “retain[ed] a certain fluidity” (McKinley 1997: 19), and the screenwriters managed to shape their personalities as the

⁵⁴ Howard Rosenberg of the L.A. Times defined 90210 as “a zip code for stereotypes and stock characters” (quoted in Owen 1997: 72).

show progressed, gradually revealing past issues and present insecurities, thus allowing viewers to feel as if they were actually becoming friends with the teenagers on screen. Another winning feature of the show was its ability to capture the evolving *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s with remarkable sensitivity: Francesca highlights the atmosphere change from the first seasons (still produced during the Bush administration) to the mid-1990s seasons, which absorbed some of the traits of the Clinton presidency. In seasons 1 and 2, Brandon and Brenda's parents play a pivotal role as the keepers of family values and of a self-made man ethics based on hard work and perseverance (Francesca 2011: 29-31); Jim and Cindy Walsh are omnipresent and represent both the ideal of the communicative parents and the bulwark of healthy moral principles in the realm of appearance and shallowness. As Francesca (2011: 35, my translation) underlines,

it is thus not by chance that the narrative device that sets the *Beverly Hills, 90210* story in motion is Jim Walsh's job promotion. Jim is perfectly representative of this American middle class: an accountant in a large firm, born in Minnesota, which symbolizes the deep heart of America, and getting to touch the American Dream with his own hands. A dream that has always been embodied in the Los Angeles boulevards, in the palm trees of Sunset Boulevard, in the Rodeo Drive boutiques and in the rich neighborhoods of Bel Air, Malibu, and obviously Beverly Hills.

In the first seasons, most storylines are informed by what could be defined as the 'Walsh ethics': Brandon and Brenda obviously make mistakes, as anyone their age would do, especially in the tantalizing Beverly Hills microcosm, yet the moral values with which they have been raised ultimately prevail, whether through their own choices or in the form of advice or reprimands from their parents. Jim and Cindy are the lifeboat that keeps the twins afloat through hard times, and it is not infrequent for episodes to end with a hug scene that reestablishes the *status quo ante*; however, the Walsh household also represents a safe harbor where the other kids can always find refuge: significantly, the Walshes are the only functional family portrayed on the show, and in the first seasons Jim and Cindy partly act as ersatz parents for Kelly, who lives with her alcoholic mother, and Steve, whose (adoptive) mother is inaccessible in real life, even though she plays the perfect mother on TV. Until season 4, Jim also acts as a trustee and financial advisor for Dylan, who lives

alone in a hotel, away from his rich father with a criminal past and his free-spirited mother who lives in Hawaii.

Yet the change in spirit of the mid-1990s, as a consequence of the economic boom and the more liberal politics and lifestyles, caused a perceptible decline in the role of family values, which eventually led the writers of the show to devise another job promotion that “conveniently moved” (Banks in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 21) Jim and Cindy to Hong Kong and off the show, as Francesca (2011: 49, my translation) summarizes:

from its role as a steady point in the protagonist’s life, the family slowly begins to vanish from teen dramas, even becoming the origin of problems and tragedies. Even in *Beverly Hills, 90210*, Jim and Cindy Walsh’s role changes radically. The warm hug that had characterized the first three seasons gradually loses its grip, relegating the two characters to increasingly marginal roles, until they leave the show during the fifth season.

When Jim and Cindy *exeunt* for good, the show assumes one of the features that will characterize most of the following teen dramas: the group of friends that had already been posited as fundamental in the first seasons now becomes the ultimate surrogate family, united by a shared path toward full adulthood. As Braga (2003: 185, my translation) highlights, the *Beverly Hills* gang and most of its televisual heirs grow closer by virtue of a common,

sometimes painful sense of lack of certainties, occasionally enlightened by flashes of love or shared empathy regarding difficulties and obstacles that all the members of the group must face sooner or later as they grow up (breakups, scholastic disappointments, parental shortcomings).

The replacement of the traditional, nuclear family with a group of peers comes full circle when Steve and other friends move in with Brandon, once that Jim and Cindy have left for Hong Kong and Brenda has moved to London to pursue her acting career.⁵⁵ The characters go through all sorts of experiences together during the following five seasons, building relationships, finding jobs and attempting to carve themselves a place in the world; yet the sense of security originally exuded by Jim and Cindy is never rekindled and the parental figures throughout the rest of the show tend to have a negative connotation. The only exception is Nat Bussichio, the friendly owner of the Peach

⁵⁵ Her character was written off due to increasing problems with actress Shannen Doherty.

Pit diner, a favorite meeting spot of the gang and Brandon's first workplace; Nat is always supportive of the group and offers precious advice all along, eventually also walking Donna down the aisle in the series finale after her own father dies; however, his role is only possible because his fatherly aspect is balanced by a brotherly, peer-like relationship with many of the members of the group, especially after Dylan buys out Nat's cousin's share of the diner and opens the Peach Pit After Dark after-hours club, which he and Nat co-run with other members. Similar forms of mitigated adulthood will be represented by Rupert Giles, the librarian / Watcher in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and Will Schuster, the youthful, charming Spanish teacher who leads the New Directions choir in *Glee*.

Beverly Hills, 90210's success owes much to the creators' ability to stage a visible rupture with past televisual conventions: even when Jim and Cindy guarded the Walsh house and championed their imported Minnesota ethics, the show attempted to maintain "a realistic look at teenagers from the perspective of teenagers" (Owen 1997: 73). Granted, many episodes had a moralistic streak that culminated with one or more characters internalizing a precious life lesson and a predictable restoration of the upright way to be, yet the show did not refrain from exploring themes that no other youth-targeted production had dared portray on screen, from sexual issues to psychological instability and suicide. The audience soon realized that the show represented the beginning of a new televisual era: as Owen (1997: 79) reports, executive producer Charles Rosin declared that

once Brenda Walsh lost her virginity and didn't have remorse, people realized that they were seeing something on TV they hadn't seen before. It caught everybody by surprise. But it wasn't by trying to second-guess what kids were doing. It was trying to anticipate what was all around.

Whether or not viewers identified with the lifestyles portrayed on screen (and many probably did not, given the exclusive setting), the show dealt with an array of topics for which teenagers had few (if any) other socio-cultural references and provided a relatively accessible entry point via the Walsh-mediated perspective; the novelty of the approach, the serialized storylines borrowed from

soap operas, and the careful character development soon earned the series a loyal following. While the Internet was not yet capillary and powerful enough to foster the construction of a furnished world which viewers could inhabit,⁵⁶ *Beverly Hills* did give birth to widespread viewing rituals and fandom practices, as E. Graham McKinley highlights in *Beverly Hills, 90210. Television, Gender, and Identity* (1997). Using a social constructivist approach (Scaglioni 2006: 114) based on “discursive identity construction” (McKinley 1997: 7), McKinley analyzes the ways in which *Beverly Hills* fans appropriated the show to define their own sense of Self. Most of the fans she interviewed were young women between eleven and twenty-five who tuned in religiously each week, specifically making room in their lives to be able to follow the show (1997: 10-12):

All viewers said that watching television did not “really” affect them: at the same time, some viewers, typically the younger ones, unproblematically acknowledged they learned behaviors and attitudes from television shows, including *90210*, and all viewers acknowledged they changed their work, school, and personal schedules to accommodate their viewing of *90210*. [...] They negotiated with brothers and sisters for shower time. They unplugged the phone. Some avoided Wednesday night college classes, no matter what the content; others simply left night class early. All the girls and young women I interviewed during the spring 1994 season of *Beverly Hills, 90210* reported making an effort, sometimes a considerable one, to protect their viewing time.

Whenever possible, viewers gathered in small groups (e.g. in college dorm halls) to watch the show and then discussed plots and characters comparing them with their own lives; those who could not join their friends in person often resorted to the pre-digital age precursor of *social watching*, practices: “in a solution common among younger viewers, whose mobility was limited on a school night, some developed the habit of watching *90210* and *Melrose Place* (Darren Star, 1992 – 1999) with a friend via the telephone – ‘We’d sit on the phone from 8 to 10 watching them together’” (McKinley 1997: 12). Analyzing the show involved both comparing the storylines to one’s personal life and discussing connections or references; although far from the intertextuality and cross-referencing that would inform later shows (see **chapter 6**), *Beverly Hills* did enjoy scattering references for viewers who paid particular attention to dialogues, as Owen (1997: 81) reports:

⁵⁶ Apparently, *Beverly Hills* only missed having an Internet-driven hype by a few years, since its spinoff *Melrose Place* already spawned drinking games and similar activities that circulated via early newsgroups like alt.tv.melrose-place

there's always been a fun streak to *90210* that yields more laughs for viewers who pay attention. What appears as a throw-away line of dialogue to some becomes a great joke for others. "I have an English final tomorrow, and I still don't know who killed the damn mockingbird," complained Donna in one fifth-season episode.

Most of these jokes were lost in the interlinguistic adaptation process, as were many other references that were deemed too hard to understand outside the American borders; nonetheless, the show did spark an unprecedented interest in many other countries, including Italy, which soon introduced a wide array of colorful, summery merchandise that "extend[ed] the viewing experience" (McKinley 1997: 20), from daily planners to stationery, from T-Shirts to cheap jewelry, from sticker collections to magazine specials. The following paragraph explores the Italian version of the show.

5.1 *Beverly Hills 90210* – Episode analysis

Beverly Hills, 90210 had its Italian première on November 19, 1992, two years after the original US broadcast (October 4, 1990). The ten seasons of the show aired regularly on Thursday nights between 1992 and 2001, usually following the autumn-to-spring US schedule with a two-year delay. Over the past decade, the series has enjoyed multiple reruns on Italian television, both on subscription-based channels (Comedy Life; Italia Teen Television, 2003-2004; Sky Show, 2007-2008; Sky Vivo, 2008) and on free DTT networks (Italia 1, multiple reruns from 2003 to 2011; Rai 4, 2008-2009; La 5, 2011; Vero Capri, 2012), bearing witness to the significant and unforgotten impact of the show on the Italian perception of American youth. The dubbing process benefited from a time allowance significantly longer than the one contemporary shows can afford and from a relatively consistent coordination: the entire show was dubbed by the Rome-based agency MAR International, founded by renowned dubber and dubbing director Marco Guadagno, under the supervision of the two editors Raffaele Cirioni (seasons 1 to 3) and Alberto Porto (seasons 4 to 10). Nonetheless, the writing and dubbing staff included 28 different dialogue adaptors and 10 dubbing

directors over the ten seasons of the show, as summarized in the following table provided by the main Italian website dedicated to dubbing, AntonioGenna.net:

- **Italian edition:** Raffaele Cirioni (seasons 1-3); Alberto Porto (seasons 4-10) for Italia 1
- **Italian dubbing:** Mar International
- **Italian dialogues:** Simonetta Allodi, Emanuela Baroni, Roberto Bedini, Lorena Bertini, Chiara Bertoli, Luigi Calabrò, Anna Carinci, Antonella Damigelli, Paolo D'aversa, Maria Teresa Del Torso, Cristina Fenuccio, Maurizio Giri, Georgia Lepore, Daniela Mazzarotta, Paola Montagnoli, Carmen Onorati, Lino Pannofino, Mario Paolinelli, Anna Rita Pasanisi, Guglielmo Paternostro, Simona Patitucci, Raffaella Pepitoni, Susanna Piferi, Elisabetta Polci, Francesca Romana Raffi, Silvia Savigni Tommasi, Bianca Toso, Paolo Vidali
- **Dubbing directors:** Marco Guadagno, Massimo Rossi, Roberta Paladini, Georgia Lepore, Francesco Prando, Fabrizia Castagnoli, Roberto Del Giudice, Paolo Buglioni, Carmen Onorati, Mauro Gravina⁵⁷

Conversely, the voice actors assigned to the main characters never changed over the course of the ten seasons (thus avoiding downfalls such as the ill-welcomed temporary replacement of Sheldon Cooper's Italian voice in *The Big Bang Theory*; see **chapter 7**). The following table lists the dubbers that voiced the main characters in the Italian version of *Beverly Hills, 90210*:

Main characters	Played by	Dubbed by
Brandon Walsh	Jason Priestley	Marco Guadagno
Brenda Walsh	Shannen Doherty	Georgia Lepore
Kelly Taylor	Jennie Garth	Lorena Bertini
Steve Sanders	Ian Ziering	Oreste Baldini
Andrea Zuckerman	Gabrielle Carteris	Francesca Guadagno
David Silver	Brian Austin Green	Giorgio Borghetti
Donna Martin	Tori Spelling	Alessandra Korompay
Dylan McKay	Luke Perry	Francesco Prando
Jim Walsh	James Eckhouse	Massimo Corvo
Cindy Walsh	Carol Potter	Renata Biserni

The long processing time and the number of highly-skilled professionals involved in the interlinguistic adaptation of the show resulted in a dubbed version that is generally well-crafted in terms of acoustic quality. Dialogues flow with a smoothness that closely mirrors natural speech and the performance of the aptly-cast voice actors contributed to the admission of many of the

⁵⁷ See <http://www.antonioGenna.net/doppiaggio/telefilm/beverlyhills90210.htm> ; last accessed January 22, 2014.

protagonists to the Olympus of immediately-recognizable characters (which is all the more true for Jason Priestley’s role as Brandon Walsh, voiced by Marco Guadagno himself, but also for Luke Perry’s Dylan McKay, voiced by Francesco Prando, who would later lend his voice to *Glee*’s Will Schuester). Nevertheless, the dubbed version contains numerous mistranslations and inconsistencies, probably due to the limited resources available to translators and adaptors in the pre-Internet era, which inhibited the verification of information regarding quintessentially American features that did not have an Italian equivalent. Upon analyzing the dubbed version, it is thus necessary to consider the scarce retrievability of specific details at the time, which also gave viewers far more limited opportunities to spot mistakes or inconsistencies that are now evident to contemporary audiences. Therefore the appraisal of mistranslations or dubbing mistakes does not constitute criticism *per se*: conceptual misapprehensions originating from sheer translation errors will be identified as such, yet the rest of my examples will serve the purpose of illustrating the rendition of American youth culture in the early 1990s and setting a benchmark to assess the evolution of AVT practices in Italy over the past three decades.

The episodes selected for this analysis are drawn from the first three seasons of the show and are listed in the following table; a selection of examples will be analyzed in this chapter, while full episode tables can be found in **Appendix A**.

Episode number	Title	Reason	Original broadcast (Fox)	Italian broadcast (Italia 1)
1x01	Class of Beverly Hills (Benvenuti a Beverly Hills)	Pilot	October 4, 1990	November 19, 1992
1x02	The Green Room (La camera verde)	Slang, material culture	October 11, 1990	November 26, 1992
1x04	The First Time (La prima volta)	Sex issues	October 25, 1990	
1x07	Perfect Mom (Serata di Beneficienza)	Generation gap, parent-children issues	November 22, 1990	December 31, 1992
1x21	Spring Dance (Il ballo di primavera)	Prom	May 2, 1991	May 9, 1993
2x08	Wild Fire (Fuoco greco)	First day of	September 12,	1993

		school, new entry	1991	
2x13	Halloween (La notte di Halloween)	American festivities/ sex issues	October 31, 1991	1993
2x21	Everybody's Talkin' 'Bout it (Cinture di sicurezza)	Sex / pregnancy issues	February 6, 1992	1994
3x24	Perfectly Perfect (Amore a prima vista)	Eating disorders	March 24, 1993	1995

Table 3. *Beverly Hills 90210* – Selected episodes

The pilot “Class of Beverly Hills” contains a series of translational solutions that signal the shift in perspective from the actual American context to an Italian reconstruction that half feared, half idolized the liberal Californian setting. The episode opens with Brandon and Brenda getting ready for their first day at West Beverly High; Brenda fantasizes about creating a new identity for herself:

English	Dubbed version	Back translation
Brenda: I could be anyone. I could be someone. Brandon: Like what, homecoming queen?	Brenda: Potrei essere chiunque. Potrei essere qualcuno. Brandon: Chi, la principessa sul pisello?	Brenda: I could be anyone. I could be someone. Brandon: Like who, the princess on the pea?

Example 1, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

Brandon’s mockery is rendered with a reference to a popular fairy tale about a princess who could not sleep because of a pea placed underneath her dozens of mattresses, which fails to convey his ironic comment on trying to conform to the high-profile Beverly Hills lifestyle (which could have been easily maintained by using a phrase like “la reginetta del ballo,” the queen of the dance). Conversely, Brenda’s allusion to music videos to comment on the extravagant Californian fashion was correctly replaced with a more understandable phrase, since music video culture had not taken over Italy yet:

Brenda: Everybody here looks like they just stepped out of a music video.	Brenda: Ma che avete, mi sembrate tutti marziani stamattina, o sono io che ho sbagliato pianeta?	Brenda: What's with everyone, you all look like aliens to me, or am I on the wrong planet?
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Example 2, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

A similar approach was adopted in the following episode with the substitution of the Megadeth video reference with a generalized, non-culture-specific comment:

<p>Brenda: So, how great? Brandon: Greater than that fashion victim out there. Brenda: Kelly? How does she look? Brandon: Like a reject from a Megadeth video.</p>	<p>Brenda: Allora, sto bene? Brandon: Sei certo meglio di quel manichino là fuori. Brenda: Kelly? È elegante, vero? Brandon: Sì, sembra che sia appena scappata dalla vetrina.</p>	<p>Brenda: So, do I look great? Brandon: Certainly much better than that mannequin out there. Brenda: Kelly? She's elegant, right? Brandon: Yes, he looks as if she had just escaped from a shop window.</p>
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Example 3, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x02, “The Green Room”

The beginning of the pilot episode also provides key “establishing shots” (Penati in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 48) that set up the general atmosphere of Californian high schools: the West Beverly High campus looks like a summer resort, people drive to school in expensive cars and seem to get there early to skate around, dance randomly, and spend time with their friends. A series of zoom-ins on different people is meant to highlight the diversity of the student population, featuring Arabic and Asian students, skaters, preppy girls, and members of other different cultures and subcultures. The campus radio is immediately introduced through frequent zoom-ins on the hall speakers as the DJ welcomes students (and viewers) to the new school year. Considering that Italian high schools do not have campuses and that the students of each school are divided in fixed groups which stay the same for five years, the adaptors probably faced difficult choices in their attempt to render the much higher degree of liberty and space allowed in American schools. The pilot episode appears particularly weak in terms of rendition and even lapses into easily avoidable mistranslations, as happens in the following example, in which Steve comments on former girlfriend Kelly’s nose job:

<p>Steve: You got a nose job. Kelly: Yeah, I did. Steve: It looks good. Kelly: Big improvement, huh? Steve: They took about a foot off.</p>	<p>Steve: Ehi, ma ti sei rifatta il naso! Kelly: Sì, infatti. Steve: Stai benissimo! Kelly: Sì, piace anche a me. Steve: Bene! E un'accorciatina alle mani no?</p>	<p>Steve: Hey, you got a nose job! Kelly: Yes, I did. Steve: It looks so good! Kelly: Yes, I like it too? Steve: What about a hand trimming now?</p>
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Example 4, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

Steve’s acrimony reemerges later on, as David ogles Kelly at a party and a drunken Steve comments:

Steve: She is the biggest bitch at West Beverly High.	Steve: È la più grande puttana del West Beverly High.	Steve: She is the biggest whore at West Beverly High.
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Example 5, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

In early teen shows the term “bitch” (meaning “jerk”) was frequently translated as the much stronger “puttana” (whore); in more recent examples it is usually rendered as ‘stronza,’ which more or less corresponds to the degree of offensiveness conveyed by the original term. Due to both mistranslations and deliberate adaptations, the Italian version often depicts Kelly as more unpleasant than she actually is, as is evident in the following example from episode 1x21, “Spring Dance,” in which David wants her to wish him luck for a dancing competition through which he wants to win a dance with the Spring Princess (i.e. Kelly herself):

David: Wish me luck , Kel. Kelly: Break a leg .	David: Dimmi in bocca al lupo . Kelly: Rompiti una gamba.	David: Wish me "Break a leg". [metaphorically] Kelly: Break one of your legs . [literally]
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Example 6, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x21, “Spring Dance”

The Italian version fails to convey Kelly’s genuine wish, making her sound as if she really wanted David to stay away from her, when “break a leg” is the pragmatic equivalent to “in bocca al lupo,” a typical good-luck wish that had been translated correctly in David’s line. Admittedly, Kelly is frequently depicted as snooty and self-centered, especially in season 1, but the Italian translation often exacerbates her snobbery and her lack of sensitivity:

Saleswoman: Hi. Paper or plastic? Kelly: Plastic. Toujours plastic.	Saleswoman: Contanti o con la carta? Kelly: Con la carta, mi sembra ovvio.	Saleswoman: Hi. Cash or card? Kelly: Card, obviously.
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Example 7, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x02, “The Green Room”

Kelly’s usage of the French term “toujours” (always) signals an attempt to show off a stylish language, while “obviously” just sounds snobbish. However, shopping with her can actually be a nightmare for middle-class Brenda, who cannot understand why Kelly discards so many nice options when looking for something to wear at the seaside:

Kelly: We're going to the beach, not the Valley .	Kelly: Per la campagna , non per la spiaggia.	Kelly: For the countryside , not the beach.
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Example 8, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x02, “The Green Room”

“Countryside” is a time-effective solution to convey Kelly’s boastfulness, yet it obliterates the reference to the San Fernando Valley, which had been described as “darkness at the edge of town” earlier in the episode (convincingly translated as “il quartiere ai confini della realtà,” the Twilight Zone neighborhood). Aside from the stereotype of the phony, airheaded Valley Girl (which would ironically suit Kelly herself), the San Fernando Valley was also known for its large number of adult entertainment producers.

Brenda eventually gives up shopping with Kelly because of the high prices of the items she suggests; nonetheless, when she goes home, she tries to adjust her clothes so that they will look more appropriate for the Beverly Hills standards:

Brenda: Yeah, well, that doesn't mean I like watching Kelly give her credit cards a workout .	Brenda: Ma questo non mi fa gioire quando guardo Kelly che fa acquisti .	Brenda: Yeah, well, that doesn't mean I like watching Kelly shop .
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Example 9, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x02, “The Green Room”

Brenda’s comment on Kelly’s behavior is downplayed through the generalization “shopping,” but still conveys her frustration. However, Kelly has her own issues, as viewers find out in episode 1x07, “Perfect Mom,” which juxtaposes Cindy and Kelly’s mother Jackie, a fashion addict and alcoholic. After a disastrous mother-daughter fashion show for charity, Kelly undresses her drunken

mother to get her into bed, but Jackie seems to care more about her clothes than about hurting her daughter:

Jackie: Hang up everything nice , okay?	Jackie: Non parlare di cose belle , va bene?	Jackie: Don't talk about anything nice , okay?
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Example 10, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x07, “Perfect Mom”

Probably due to a mistranslation (“hang up” interpreted as ‘stop talking’), the Italian version misses the reference to Jackie’s shallowness. Later, Brenda apologizes to Kelly for not understanding that something was wrong with her mom, whom she had found cooler than her own. Kelly replies with a characteristic ‘Valleyspeak’ feature, the usage of “like” as an interjection which has then become a typical ‘teen talk’ marker (which is omitted in the Italian version):

Kelly: But you, like , can't tell. She does a great job of hiding it.	Kelly: Ma non potevi capirlo. Lei sa fingere benissimo.	Kelly: But you can't tell. She does a great job of hiding it.
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Example 11, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x07, “Perfect Mom”

Eventually it turns out that Kelly is just as envious of Brenda’s mom and longs for a touch of domesticity; Brenda jokes on Cindy’s super-motherly traits:

Kelly: So do you think your mom would care if I stayed for dinner? Brenda: She'll make you clean your plate .	Kelly: A tua madre darà fastidio se resto per cena? Brenda: Ti farà lavare il tuo piatto .	Kelly: Would it bother your mom if I stayed for dinner? Brenda: She'll make you wash your plate .
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Example 12, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x07, “Perfect Mom”

However, the Italian version mistranslates “clean your plate” (as in ‘finish your meal’) as “wash your plate,” which makes Cindy appear stricter than she is. Even though she is undeniably motherly and moralistic, she frequently attempts to approach youth culture, albeit often with comical effects, as in the scene in which Jim calls from Chicago and asks how the kids are:

Cindy: In fact, they're totally bad , or I don't know, maybe it's rad .	Cindy: Sono tremendi... tremendamente in gamba , volevo dire.	Cindy: They are tremendous... I mean, tremendously apt .
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Example 13, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x02, "The Green Room"

The short, almost homophonous words "bad" and "rad" represented a hard translational challenge; a half-pun on the word "tremendous" was probably the safest solution, even though it did not convey Cindy's attempt at using teen slang. Similarly, her enthusiastic account of the time she spends with Brandon's girlfriend Sheryl while waiting for Brandon to come home is toned down in Italian:

Cindy: We've been gabbing forever just having the best time .	Cindy: Siamo andate un po' in giro per cercare di far passare il tempo .	Cindy: We've been hanging around to kill time .
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Example 14, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x04, "The First Time"

Culture-Specific References / Extralinguistic Culture-bound References are usually rendered with target-language oriented strategies. For instance, references to American food culture frequently undergo substitutions or generalizations:

Cindy: Take a muffin !	Cindy: Prendi una brioche !	Cindy: Take a croissant !
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Example 15, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x07, "Perfect Mom"

Even though the bakery product offered by Cindy is clearly not crescent-shaped, the adaptors decided to use the term "brioche" (croissant), an Italian breakfast staple, correctly assessing that Italian viewers probably were not familiar with muffins (which only achieved popularity several years later). Similarly, in episode 3x24, David's "jelly donut" becomes a "krapfen," which still manages to point to Kelly's eating disorder by using an easily recognizable term indicating a very similar, high-calorie baked product.

David: Would you like half of my jelly donut ?	David: Vuoi metà del mio krapfen ?	David: Would you like half of my krapfen ?
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Example 16, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 3x24, ""

The Spanish term “quesadilla,” a Mexican dish based on flour tortilla and melted cheese, was also rendered with the generalization “fritter,” given the limited penetration of Mexican cuisine in Italy in the early 1990s:

Cowboy Guy: No, have these quesadillas . They're much better.	Cowboy Guy: Assaggia queste frittelle , sono molto meglio.	Cowboy Guy: Try these fritters . They're much better.
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Example 17, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 2x13, “Halloween”

McDonald’s was also deemed too specific for the Italian audience:

David: I'm probably gonna have to work in McDonald's for the rest of my life.	David: Per ripagarti lavorerò come cameriere per tutta la vita.	David: I'll work as a waiter for the rest of my life to pay you back.
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Example 18, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

The notorious fast food chain had already expanded to Italy, yet its boom only occurred around the mid-1990s, when the number of McDonald’s restaurants in the country escalated from 8 (in 1990) to 100 (in 1997) and to 200 (in 1998).⁵⁸ Similarly, Andrea’s reference to Ivy League colleges was probably too specific for the early 1990s audience (whereas it would be transparent to a much wider portion of the contemporary viewership, as proven by *Gossip Girl* – see **chapter 7**) and the adaptors chose to use the generalized term “università” (university):

Andrea: I already spend 10 hours of community service a week. That the Ivies love.	Andrea: [...] Questo mi farà entrare all'università .	Andrea: [...] This will get me into college .
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Example 19, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

References to American literature, cinema, and television were usually either generalized or substituted with cultural equivalents that proved less specific. For instance, the adaptors wisely chose to generalize a reference to the *Late Night Show with David Letterman*, which had not yet been broadcast in Italy:

⁵⁸ Data available at http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s#McDonald.27s_in_Italia (accessed June 10, 2014).

Cowboy Guy: I can't believe you're into David Letterman .	Cowboy Guy: Davvero ti piace quella trasmissione?	Cowboy Guy: Do you really like that show?
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Example 20, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 2x13, “Halloween”

Similarly, when Brenda tries to warn her ex boyfriend Dylan about his latest conquest, Dylan’s reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* as a metaphor for the exposure of promiscuity is replaced with a general reference to disclosing information by hanging posters:

Brenda: Did you know that she was going out with Brandon tonight? Dylan: Bren, why don't you just knit her a scarlet letter?	Brenda: Lo sai che stasera esce con Brandon? Dylan: Se vuoi diffondere una notizia, devi attaccare dei manifesti.	Brenda: Did you know that she was going out with Brandon tonight? Dylan: If you want to spread some news, you should hang posters.
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Example 21, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 2x08, “Wild Fire”

In a later episode, Steve’s reference to Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* is replaced with Shakespeare’s *Othello*, based on the reasonable assumption that Italian viewers would be more familiar with the poet’s oeuvre; since the class to which Steve refers is English literature, the substitution is consistent with the plot:

Steve: Great. Now I actually have to read Brave New World .	Steve: Magnifico, ora devo pure leggermi tutto l' Otello .	Steve: Great. Now I have to read the whole Othello .
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Example 22, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 2x21, “Everybody's Talkin' 'Bout it”

A similar cultural substitution strategy was applied to replace a reference to the *I Love Lucy* show with a less opaque reference to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers:

Kelly: The worst part is, two months ago, we rented Lucy and Ethel costumes. Now we're gonna look like fools.	Ma la cosa peggiore è che avevamo affittato i costumi di Fred Astaire e Ginger Rogers , adesso sembrerò una pazza!	Kelly: The worst part is, two months ago, we rented Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers costumes . Now I'm gonna look crazy!
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Example 23, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 2x13, “Halloween”

In other instances the adaptors used substitutions aimed at maintaining an idealized “Americanness”; for instance, when Brenda, Kelly, and Donna need to prepare a song for the

school's talent show, opaque references to *The Wizard of Oz* are replaced with comments on country music:

Brenda: Why don't we do a show tune? Something like “ Somewhere Over the Freeway. ” Kelly: Right, we'll dress up like Munchkins.	Brenda: Facciamo una canzone country tipo “ Laggiù nella grande vallata. ” Kelly: Sì, con pistole e cinturoni.	Brenda: Why don't we do a country tune? Something like “ Down there in the big valley. ” Kelly: Right, with guns and cowboy belts.
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Example 24, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 2x08, “Wild Fire”

In some cases this pursuit of a US flavor even involved altering toponyms to make them sound “more American,” as is visible in the following examples:

Steve: I live at Doheny Road , 4203.	Steve: Abito al 4203 di Doheny Drive.	Steve: I live at Doheny Drive , 4203.
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Example 25, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

Brandon: So, is this what you call the Sunset Strip , man? Dylan: No, that's what the tourists call it.	Brandon: Questo sarebbe il famoso Sunset Boulevard? Dylan: Già, è la gioia di tutti i turisti.	Brandon: So, is this the famous Sunset Boulevard? Dylan: Yes, the joy of all tourists.
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Example 26, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x02, “The Green Room”

Presumably for the same reason, the after-hours club that Dylan and some of the members of the gang open in season 5 is renamed “Peach Pit By Night” instead of “Peach Pit After Dark,” since “by night” is a more easily recognizable Anglophone form. These choices thus highlight a general attempt to convey a sense of Americanness that is closer to the ideal representation of the country than to the actual US culture.

Conversely, the more liberal aspects of American youth culture are often tamed through dubbing. For instance, in episode 1x01 Brenda pretends to be older to flirt with a lawyer she meets at a club; when he asks her if she wants anything to drink, she attempts to sound refined by ordering a “banana daiquiri,” yet the Italian version eliminates the alcohol from the beverage, turning it into a banana milkshake:

Brenda: I'll have a... a... banana daiquiri.	Brenda: Un frappè alla banana.	Brenda: A banana milkshake.
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Example 27, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

In the same episode, Brandon courts the school’s most popular girl, who marvels at the fact that he does not expect her to yield to him; his teasing comment is toned down and ‘Walshified’ in Italian, shifting the emphasis on moral values:

Brandon: Didn't your mother teach you about playing hard to get?	Brandon: Tua madre non ti ha detto che ci sono dei valori da rispettare?	Brandon: Didn't your mother tell you there are values to uphold?
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Example 28, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x01, “Class of Beverly Hills”

Finally, explicit sexual references are usually omitted in translation, as is evident in the next dialogue, in which David wants to shoot an interview in Kelly's dressing room before the mother-daughter fashion show:

Scott: What do you think she'll do when you get in there? David: I think she'll get off on it.	Scott: Cosa credi che farà quando entrerai? David: Credo che le piacerà molto.	Scott: What do you think she'll do when you get in? David: I think she'll like it a lot.
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Example 29, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, episode 1x07, “Perfect Mom”

All of these examples signal a general attempt to mediate the subversive power of the new television trend: as Sigismondi (in Tessarolo 2007: 183, my translation) underlines, “in the 1990s American televisual fiction operate[d] a deep rupture from the past,” and Italian adaptors and dubbers probably deemed its revolutionary potential too wild for Italian television. Their strategies generally functioned quite well, since few viewers had the opportunity to gauge the extent of the changes in the dubbed script; the following chapters will illustrate the growing need for content and mood fidelity that emerged with the diffusion of the Internet and the increase in audience participation.

CHAPTER 6. EMERGENCE OF AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (LATE 1990S – EARLY 2000S)

Buffy: I can just tell something's wrong. My spider sense is tingling.
Giles: Your... spider sense?
Buffy: Pop culture reference. Sorry.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, episode 1x08 “I, Robot, You, Jane”

Pacey: Confused, perplexed, bewildered, mystified - a thesaurus of emotions.

Dawson's Creek, episode 1x01, “Emotions in Motion”

Television shows produced in the late 1990s and early 2000s often managed to capture the evolved “relationship with social reality, its problems, its fears, and its hopes: when read through television fiction, American society appears shaken by a deep sense of anxiety and unrest for the new millennium that [was] approaching” (Sigismondi in Tessarolo 2007: 183, my translation) – a national disquiet which continued well after the onset of the year 2000 and skyrocketed in 2001. The Clinton era surfed the wave of the technological boom: the economy prospered, communication tools improved to unprecedented levels, and dot-com enthusiasm swiped the nation; however, the very same technologies that had fuelled the ‘roaring Nineties’ created as much unrest as they had generated job opportunities and increased revenues. The new media enveloped the population in a sort of giant sounding board in which news reverberated in a much faster and sharper way; just as television had given an unparalleled resonance to the Vietnam war, turning it into “the first living room war” (in the words of writer Michael Arlen), the Internet inflated America’s perception of major news, providing instant (and easily retractable) updates on crucial events like the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal in 1998 and the Columbine shootings in 1999. IT culture also showed its scarier side with the rise of the Millennium Bug scare and especially with the collapse of the dot-com speculative bubble in 2001, which revealed that the power of the new medium was not as easy

to harness as it had appeared initially. Journeying toward adulthood in the late 1990s and early 2000s combined the transitional status of adolescence with an era of ambiguity that blended hopes and fears in equal amounts. Owen (1997: 206) highlights that “as a result of technology, teens of the 1990s not only [had] Gen[eration] X culture at their disposal, but a culture all their own that [was] in its infancy.” Shaping one’s identity in a time of deep cultural changes and growing media connectivity provided countless opportunities, but also generated a proportional anxiety, since the rules of *The Game of Life*, to use a board game metaphor, had suddenly become inapplicable to the evolving society. Personal goals might have stayed the same as those depicted in the popular game, whose origins trace back to 1860: getting an education, finding a job, getting married, raising children, and eventually enjoying retirement; yet now there was no pre-determined track to reach each goal, as new technologies increasingly enabled people to make their own rules, which also meant that they would be responsible for their own straying. Many talented young people marched through the open doors of Internet-based entrepreneurship, but many more eventually locked themselves out of it and of their previous lives by relying on outdated dynamics, when the new scenario did not operate according to traditional procedures and did not guarantee a return on any investment. As the rules changed, the gap between older and newer generations grew larger and young people often found themselves facing adolescence without role models, given the increased sense of mistrust in the generation of their parents. The teen series created in this era capture the widespread attempt to replace the role of the family with a group of friends, a trend which had already started in the later seasons of *Beverly Hills, 90210*, when Jim and Cindy Walsh had been written off the show: as Braga (2003: 153, my translation) highlights, “the explicit representation of the family declines and leaves room for the community of characters that constitutes a surrogate for affection, obviously without fully succeeding in this replacement.” Both of the 1990s series in this corpus depict precarious family arrangements and a much higher faith in friends’ support, as will be described in the following sections; the generation gap is also enhanced by a marked difference between the ‘traditional’ language spoken by the (few) adults and the intertextual, reflexive

sociolects developed by the teenagers. As they try to make sense of life, both Buffy and Dawson use language as a shield from adversities, either in the form of sarcasm and self-irony, as the former does, or as a verbose, philosophical over-analysis with which the latter attempts to control reality as if it were a movie script. Their process of teenage empowerment through the creation of a specific linguistic and cultural identity was mirrored and enhanced by the shows' home network, the WB, which was constructed as an channel-wide teenage product through dedicated programming and advertising. In their introduction to *Teen Television – Essays on Programming and Fandom*, Ross and Stein (2008: 15-16) describe the WB's maneuver to occupy the market vacuum left by Fox, which was trying to expand its target audience:

Both the WB and UPN emerged in 1995 as changes in financial-syndication rules made it necessary for both Warner Brothers and Paramount to ensure there would be distribution venues for their programming. Like “smaller” networks before them (ABC, MTV, FOX), financial concerns drove the trend towards niche marketing. [...] The WB could go after teens because FOX had demonstrated, with the success of shows like *Beverly Hills, 90210* (1990-2000) and *Party of Five* (1994-2000), that the melodramatic teen serial could be profitable – and because as the WB and UPN moved in, FOX was seeking to broaden its audience beyond teens, leaving a gap in market address. [...] By the late 1990s, then, WB programming was teen programming from a pop culture standpoint. To a degree, this seems due as much to the WB's official marketing of itself as a teen network as to the content of the programming proper. The WB continued the trend of incorporating teen perspectives into family shows [...like] *7th Heaven* (1996-), *Gilmore Girls* (2000-) and *Everwood* (2002-06), [...] yet it was in fact teen and young adult-dominated programming that came to represent the network [...] The “break-out” hits were *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* [...] and *Dawson's Creek*, series in which the parents were secondary (as had been the case with FOX's *Beverly Hills, 90210* and *Party of Five*) and the comedy and media literacy components strong (as had not been the case with *Beverly Hills, 90210* and *Party of Five*).

The WB's teen branding approach aimed at creating a sense of collective identity that allowed viewers to relate with the network as a whole, thus ensuring a wider form of loyalty that extended beyond single shows. As Wee (in Ross and Stein 2008: 43) explains, “the decision to target the teen demographic resulted in the creation of programs and a format that collectively constituted the WB as a teen-oriented cultural artifact in itself.” The network's self-construction as a teenage universe can be seen as one of the first attempts to target a genre-specific cult audience: the WB's target viewership comprised teenagers (and teenage wannabes) who were willing to commit to a full relationship with the shows, participating in the game of intertextuality and extending the

construction of each storyworld beyond the duration of each episode, by purchasing the products advertised in the commercials and using the emerging World Wide Web resources to interact with other fans (and create a profitable buzz). As described in 3.2.2, the dawsoncreek.com website and particularly its “Dawson’s Desktop” section constituted an early example of transmedia storytelling, which lulled viewers into a comforting sense of belonging and encouraged a deeper appreciation of the show. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* enjoyed an even deeper scrutiny, both via forums and dedicated websites and through the abundant academic literature on the Whedonverses (the universes based on creator Joss Whedon’s series) that is still growing eleven years after the conclusion of the show.⁵⁹ The following paragraphs will present the two shows and explore their linguistic identity, highlighting how the domesticating and censorship-oriented approach to dubbing adopted by the Italian networks that imported the shows (Italia 1 for *Buffy* and Tele+/Italia 1 for *Dawson’s Creek*) deeply affected the perception of the two worlds and of their main characters.

6.1 *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

As McKee (in Miller 2002: 69) summarizes, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is a post-network television production about a young woman who discovers that she has a birthright to protect the world from vampires.” Consistently with its heroine’s double life, the show is much more than meets the eye: the deliberate homemade look of the featured monsters and the sarcasm and self-irony with which the characters face their tasks, be these school assignments or world-saving missions, constitute aesthetic and discursive devices used to highlight the horrors of growing up, surviving high school, and finding one’s place in the world – an “angst-ridden thematization of the relationship between one’s own self and the others” (Braga 2003: 79, my translation). Just like Brandon and Brenda

⁵⁹ Much Ado About Whedon, the 6th Biennial *Slayage* Conference on the Whedonverses, was just held at California State University in Sacramento, on June 19-22, 2014.

Walsh, Buffy Summers starts her sophomore year in a new school; however, unlike her predecessors, she soon chooses the outsiders over the in-crowd, as she befriends sweet and geeky Willow Rosenberg and unpopular wisecracker Xander Harris; most significantly, she also outdoes the Walshes' social activism by embarking on an endless set of missions for the ultimate "greater good" – saving the world from apocalypse-minded monsters. Rhonda Wilcox (2005: 17-18) highlights *Buffy's* creator Joss Whedon's deliberate choice to move away from series like *Beverly Hills, 90210*, rejecting the moralistic problem-of-the-week approach by using monster metaphors as a visual, tangible substantiation of the horrors of adolescence:

Whedon repudiates those television series which aim for redeeming social value by focusing on unmediated presentations of social topics such as AIDS or alcoholism: sending Hallmark cards of virtue. [...] Whedon expected more mental action from his audience. The opening seasons sets the template. In *Buffy's* world, the problems teenagers face become literal monsters. Internet predators are demons; drink-doctoring frat boys have sold their souls for success in the business world; a girl who has sex with even the nicest-seeming male discovers that he afterwards becomes a monster. From the earliest episodes, it was apparent to attentive viewers that *Buffy* operated on a symbolic level. Furthermore, some of the symbols began to extend. For example, underlying the various threats is a repeated one: the horror of becoming a vampire often correlates with the dread of becoming an adult. Yet even in the face of all these monstrosities, the context of dialogue and interaction makes the characters believable.

Whedon wanted "to write a fantasy-horror teen drama able to accomplish the mission of the genre – to both represent and address an adolescent audience" (Scaglioni in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 39, my translation); he also aimed at "subverting familiar generic signifiers of feminine weakness" (Bavidge in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 42) by reversing traditional slasher movie conventions, where the blonde girl is almost always the victim, "the sexually active teenagers are killed and the final girl is either literally a virgin or not interested in boys" (Cherry 2009: 28). *Buffy* personifies teenage and female empowerment, but is never depicted as unapproachable, since the burden of her mission is immediately evident; like most teenagers, she longs for a 'normal' life, but her "position as a vampire slayer underscores the performance of [her] alienation" (Bolte in Ross and Stein 2008: 95) and is a source of infinite loneliness and insecurities, as Moseley (2002: 43) underlines: "the challenges faced by having superhuman powers are seen to be intensified examples of those love trials and social tribulations experienced by the average teen and therefore, texts [like *Buffy*] make it

clear that to be a teenager is to be ‘not quite human.’” Bolte (in Ross and Stein 2008: 95) highlights that “Buffy is inherently alone”: as the voice-over that opens each episode immediately points out, Buffy is “one girl in all the world, a chosen one. She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons, and the forces of darkness, to stop the spread of their evil and the swell of their numbers. She is the Slayer.” Her hope to start a new life in the (fictional) Californian town of Sunnydale vanishes on her first day of school, when the Sunnydale High librarian, Rupert Giles, reveals that he is the Watcher (mentor and trainer) appointed to guide her in her slaying mission and that Sunnydale sits on the Hellmouth and is thus the epicenter of dark, supernatural activity, including not only vampires, but the whole nine yards of evil creatures (demons, shapeshifters, mutants, robots, and evil masterminds). Albeit reluctantly, Buffy steps up, since she knows she cannot back away from her destiny; her pre-ordained role as the Slayer will be a central topic throughout the series, as she struggles to define her identity knowing that slaying is a fundamental, empowering part of her life, but also trying to live normal teenage moments. Significantly, in episode 3x20, “The Prom,” she devotes her energies to preventing a monster attack at senior prom because she does not want her friends to miss this traditional rite of passage, which she cannot experience because her vampire boyfriend Angel has just left her for her own good; her troubled relationship with him has led to a great deal of suffering, both for herself and for others, as their first intercourse lifted the curse binding Angel’s soul and unleashed his evil power. Even though Angel manages to turn ‘good’ again, the acknowledgment that their story is doomed and can only bring harm leads him to move away for good,⁶⁰ leaving an understanding but distraught Buffy behind. Throughout the series, Buffy has several other relationships, including another tormented story with redeemed vampire Spike, a key figure in the show, first as a villain and then as an associate of Buffy and her friends (the “Scooby gang”). Nonetheless, Buffy’s fate prevents her from settling down in a healthy, fulfilling relationship; as Driscoll (2011: 233) highlights, “Buffy remains an exception to the generic convention of romance as growing up because she cannot proceed to any absorbing future

⁶⁰ The successful spinoff *Angel* (Joss Whedon and David Greenwalt, 1999-2004) narrates the vampire’s adventures in Los Angeles, where he works as a private detective against the forces of darkness, aided by several characters (including Buffy’s Cordelia and Wesley).

domesticity. The destiny articulated for Buffy is magical and deathly rather than heteronormative bliss.” Buffy thus also embodies the irreconcilability between women’s love lives and their career goals, a dichotomy that the fight for gender equality has yet to fully eradicate, both in real life and in fiction.

As both a cause and a compensation for her unfulfilling love life, Buffy is endowed with exceptional fighting skills, which she integrates with Giles’ training and guidance and with her resourceful use of her established and improvised artillery. Together with her stake, affectionately nicknamed “Mr. Pointy,” Buffy’s main weapon is language, which she uses both as a source of energy in combat (to the point that a vampire in episode 4x01, “The Freshman,” comments: “Are we gonna fight? Or is there just gonna be a monster sarcasm rally?”) and as a way to reclaim her identity beyond her role as the Slayer. In his exhaustive analysis *Slayer Slang – A Buffy the Vampire Slayer Lexicon*, Michael Adams (2003: 3) observes that “Buffy needs slang, as means of shrugging off millennial expectations, as a weapon, and as an expression of personality officially denied her by her role: in a sense she IS slang, as are those who associate with her.” In “Staking in Tongues: Speech Act as Weapon in Buffy,” Overbey and Preston-Matto (in Wilcox and Lavery 2002: 73) add that “Buffy is able to survive longer than the other Slayers because she is embedded in language and because she embodies language.”

A similar statement could apply to the show as a whole: much of its appeal originates from Whedon’s fascination with language and with his ability to use it to experiment with narrative formats; two of the best-crafted and most appreciated episodes pivot on linguistic somersaults. In “Hush” (4x10) no one utters a single word for 29 of the total 44 minutes, as the frightening, skeletal villains known as “the Gentlemen” steal the voices of the Sunnydale population to act undisturbed as they kill their victims and procure the hearts they need for their ritual. The loss of language is a loss of power and defense tools, as Jowett and Abbott (2013: 134) highlight: “horror at its most primal is elicited through constructing violence with the silence of the Gentlemen’s actions: as they

pin down a young college student to cut out his heart, he screams silently.” Significantly, Buffy will only be able to save the day as she regains her voice, since “a princess’s scream” is required to break the spell. Conversely, “Once More With Feeling” (6x07) explores the power of song language through its musical format and represents “a special Buffy episode, recognized as such both by the producers (it was written and directed by showrunner Joss Whedon) and by the audience (it is one of the most referenced episodes in fandom cultures),” as Scaglioni (in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 38, my translation) observes. Whedon managed to write⁶¹ and direct an episode that adheres completely to the conventions of the musical genre (it is shot in letterbox format, with a static use of space and characters looking straight into the camera; Maio 2009: 197) while still fitting perfectly in the Buffyverse and leading to a significant turning point in the overarching plot. Without considering the consequences of his action, Xander evokes a demon who forces the Sunnydale population to randomly break into song to reveal concealed truths. The glossy musical format creates a striking contrast with the characters’ painful disclosures; in a final climax, Buffy (whom Willow had brought back from the dead at the beginning of the season) reveals that she has actually been pulled away from Heaven (Poli 2003: 81). The simple lyrics “I live in Hell / ‘Cause I’ve been expelled from Heaven / I think I was in Heaven” and the slowing tempo highlight the inexorability of her revelation, once again bearing witness to the power of language in the show.

The slang spoken by Buffy and her friends also constitutes a discursive performance of the generation gap, as it is wielded in contrast to the normal, institutionalized ‘adult language.’ Buffy’s life is complicated by the fact that no adult knows of her secret identity and her actions are always interpreted as aberrant teenage antics. The only exception is obviously Giles, whose growing fatherly affection for Buffy, already posited in the pilot episode, as Pateman (2006: 54) notes, is one of the few steady bonds in the Slayer’s life. However, for two whole seasons, Buffy’s own divorced mother Joyce ignores her daughter mission, which creates enormous friction between the two of them, as Joyce inadvertently hinders Buffy’s tasks while trying to protect her, as is evident from the

⁶¹ The script, the music, and the lyrics.

following dialogue from episode 1x02, “The Harvest,” in which she grounds Buffy and unwittingly prevents her from fulfilling her world-saving duties:

Joyce: The tapes all say I should get used to saying it. No.

Buffy: This is really, really important.

Joyce: I know. If you don't go out it'll be the end of the world. Everything is life or death when you're a sixteen-year-old girl.

The other adults that appear on the show are usually incapable of understanding teenage issues (like Principal Snyder, whose self-appointed mission is to keep adolescents at bay, even though he eventually proves not to be a force of evil; Poli 2003: 152) or veritable monstrous threats, as is the Mayor, who turns into a giant snake on graduation day at the end of season 3. The rift between the two generations is thus highlighted through a distinctive use of language, as Wilcox (2005: 18) underlines: “the language of the teens starkly contrasts with that of the adults. This linguistic separateness emphasizes the lack of communication between the generations, as does the series’ use of the symbolism of monsters to represent social problems.” Giles, “the only adult that is virtually omnipresent in the show” (Francesca 2011: 50, my translation), speaks a language that stands out as a further dimension: while the librarian develops a close relationship with Buffy and her friends and actively tries to come to terms with their world, since his role entails inter-generational collaboration, his proper British English and his bookish language are often a source of comic relief as the characters translate back and forth, as in the following example from episode 4x01, “The Freshman”:

Buffy: It's too bad Giles can't be librarian here. Be convenient.

Willow: Well, he says that he's enjoying being a gentleman of leisure.

Buffy: Gentleman of leisure? Isn't that just British for unemployed?

The language spoken by the Scooby gang is a masterful combination of typical word-forming processes in youth talk, pop culture references, and witty irony; while it originates from creator Joss Whedon’s own idiolect, the entire screenwriting team made a specific effort to maintain the features of Buffyspeak throughout the 122 episodes of the show. Adams identifies a variety of

word formation patterns in Slayer Slang, including clippings (like “bail” for “bail out” or “mist” for mistake; 2003: 49); prefixes like “über-,” expressing intensification (“übevamp,” “überwitch”; 2003: 53) or “un-,” implying negation (“uncomputered,” “unbad,” “unrelationship”; 2003: 53-54); suffixes like –ness (“mathiness,” “neat-freakishness”; 2003: 59) and the prolific –age (“breakage,” “drinkage,” “kissage,” “poundage,” “punnage,” “stakage,” and even “Christian Baleage”; 2003: 63); and shifts from nouns to verbs or from proper names to common nouns, such as “Exorcist twist” or “Houdini” (2003: 73). This last category plays a central role in my analysis, since it is frequently used with Extralinguistic Cultural References and implies conversance with popular culture: as Bianchi (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 190) underlines,

neologisms form a consistent part of Buffyspeak, especially the ones created by turning proper names (usually pop culture references) into common names and verbs. These lexical items are important in the show for two reasons. On the one hand they have a poetic function in that they provide humorous imagery and expressiveness to the teen language, on the other hand they function as a social ‘gauge,’ by signaling that Buffy and her friends are ‘competent teens’ who have a solid knowledge of the popular culture of their time.

As previously mentioned, *Buffy* is also a show-long exercise in intertextuality and culture-bound jokes,⁶² and part of the fun of watching the series lies in reconstructing the network of references weaved throughout the episodes, thus demonstrating one’s own viewing 2.0 skills. Eco (1994: 88-89) describes the higher-profile interpretation game triggered by similar texts:

What is more interesting is when the quotation is explicit and recognizable, as happens in post modern literature and art, which blatantly and ironically play on the intertextuality [...]; aware of the quotation, the spectator is brought to elaborate ironically on the nature of such a device and to acknowledge the fact that one has been invited to play upon one’s encyclopedic knowledge.

Buffy marks the advent of a type of show that is best appreciated through an active effort to trace its intertextual trail and its ironic self-teasing, as McKee (in Miller 2002: 69), observes:

This self-reflexive series, aimed at an audience of intelligent young adults, exhibits a great knowingness about the conventions of television programming and of its own genre, and usurps these for comic and emotional effect: “If the Apocalypse comes, beep me.”

⁶² Pop culture references start to appear even before the beginning of each episode, as the show “plays out with a tune by Nerf Herder, named after one of Leia’s insults to Han Solo” (Brooker 2002: 2) in the *Star Wars* saga.

The show's fabric of intratextual and intertextual references and its appeal for pop-culture savvy, pro-active viewers established both *Buffy* and the WB network as cardinal components of teenage life in the late 1990s. However, very little of the show's structure and linguistic identity filtered through dubbing; the next paragraph will explain why the Italian version of the series only conveys a limited portion of the power of the original.

6.2 - *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* – Episode analysis

Buffy the Vampire Slayer played a crucial role in the expansion of the WB Network. Parks (in Jancovich and Lyons 2003: 119) underlines that “in 1999 alone the series increased the WB's viewership by 41 per cent, and its spinoff *Angel*, which premiered that season, further expanded the network's audience share.” However, *Buffy*'s multi-layered structure, its use of language and irony, and its literal use of metaphors made the show hard to appraise, and several overseas importers failed to recognize its complexity and ended up trying to turn into a daytime-friendly teen drama, only to find themselves at a loss as the show grew darker and more intense, as demonstrated by the troubled history of the show on Italian television (TVBlog 2008). All seven seasons were eventually broadcast on Italia 1, which was the most youth-oriented of the three main commercial channels before the advent of the DTT; yet different seasons (or even parts of seasons) were aired in completely different slots and times of the year, with frequent interruptions due to poor scheduling or censorship strategies, which destroyed continuity and made it almost impossible for fans to follow the show, especially considering its poor dubbing with conspicuous mistakes. The pilot was first aired on June 11, 2000, three years after the US premiere; the first two seasons were broadcast in the post-primetime slot, after *The X-Files*, as an attempt to lure the paranormal-loving audience into following another horror/supernatural show – a genre which was closely associated with summer (Italia 1 also used to run a “Horror Night” feature on summer Tuesdays). Seasons one and

two were aired every day until September, when the network decided to broadcast only an episode per week, but inexplicably placed *Buffy* right after the *Pokémon* animated series, causing an immediate downfall in ratings and the subsequent suspension of the show before the end of season 2. *Buffy* returned in March 2001, when the remaining episodes of the second season and seasons 3 and 4 were aired in the late afternoon, a children-friendly slot that required countless cuts and rearrangements, including the omission of two whole episodes, 3x10, “Amends” (which was aired in 2002) and 4x19 “New Moon Rising,” which featured Willow’s coming out and her first kiss with college friend Tara. The decision to suppress “New Moon Rising,” which contained pivotal developments for most storylines, triggered a significant fan reaction that highlights the growth of the Internet as a daily tool, as viewers flooded the network’s inbox with protest e-mails and vented their anger on the numerous forums dedicated to the show. Scaglioni (2001: online, my translation) reports a fan comment that anticipates the type of criticism so frequently visible on the forums and websites on current television shows:

I’m speechless, like all of you. The mess they made is nearing downright stupidity. Cuts are so wild that one is left breathless. Do we really have to move to another country or learn another language to be able to enjoy a TV show and fully appreciate it in spite of the continuous translational adaptations?

In spite of their protests, *Buffy* fans failed to convince the network, which only broadcast “New Moon Rising” in 2004; the series also continued to be butchered through the dubbing process and through inconsistent programming choices, which comprised the abrupt interruption of season 5 until 2003, when new episodes were aired at 3 p.m. (a truly perplexing choice, given that the show grows darker and more disturbing after season 4). Season 6 was then aired at night-time,⁶³ but it was scheduled after the popular talent show *Amici di Maria De Filippi*, which often ended much later than its allotted time, causing *Buffy* episodes to be postponed or even cancelled. Season 7 was eventually aired at night in 2004, finally allowing viewers to achieve closure. Since then, the show

⁶³ Many of its episodes were heavily censored, both in the US and in Italy, but cut scenes of the heated relationship between Buffy and Spike are available online and are frequently used for fanvideos (especially those from episodes 6x09, “Smashed”; 6x10, “Wrecked”; 6x12, “Double Meat Palace”; and 6x13, “Dead Things”).

in its entirety has enjoyed numerous reruns on Italia 1 itself (2007), on DTT networks Italia 2 and La 5 and pay-TV network Fox (2011) and on MTV (2012), bearing witness to the appreciation of the show by its loyal fandom.

The troubled acquisition and programming of the show probably affected the dubbing process as well; while the entire show was dubbed by the Rome-based studio PUMAI Sdue under the supervision of usually appreciated directors Fabrizio Pucci and Giuppy Izzo, the adaptation team changed five times, with most adaptors rotating and coming back to the show for later seasons, as highlighted in the following list from antoniogenna.net:

- **Italian dubbing:** PUMAI Sdue
- **Italian dialogues:**
 - Season 1: Carlo Dell'Ongaro, Deddi Savagnone, Silvia Gavarotti, Simona Esposito, Luciano Roffi, Edoardo Salerno, Fabrizio Pucci, Francesco Chillemi, Eugenio Marinelli
 - Seasons 2-4: Carlo Dell'Ongaro, Chiara Bertoli, Deddi Savagnone, Luciano Donda, Simona Esposito, Edoardo Salerno, Francesco Chillemi, Claudia Pittelli, Giovanni Petrucci
 - Season 5: Carlo Dell'Ongaro, Deddi Savagnone, Luciano Donda, Simona Esposito, Edoardo Salerno, Francesco Chillemi, Chiara Bertoli, Luciano Roffi, Orietta Regina, Mauro Pelliccioni, Roberta Fregonese
 - Season 6: Carlo Dell'Ongaro, Silvia Gavarotti, Edoardo Salerno, Mauro Pelliccioni, Roberta Fregonese, Fausta Fascetti, Alessandro Spadorcia, Giovanni Petrucci, Antonella Cenni, Edoardo Cannata
 - Season 7: Carlo Dell'Ongaro, Chiara Bertoli, Alessandro Spadorcia, Luciano Roffi, Mauro Pelliccioni, Fausta Fascetti, Giovanni Petrucci, Roberta Fregonese
- **Dubbing directors:**
 - Seasons 1-5: Fabrizio Pucci, Giuppy Izzo

Several characters (including Spike) were also voiced by different people in different seasons, which certainly did not improve the overall quality of the Italian dubbing:

Main characters	Played by	Dubbed by
Buffy Summers	Sarah Michelle Gellar	Barbara De Bortoli
Xander Harris	Nicholas Brendon	Riccardo Onorato (seasons 1-5) Christian Iansante (seasons 6-7)
Willow Rosenberg	Alyson Hannigan	Myriam Catania
Rupert Giles	Anthony Stewart Head	Stefano Benassi
Spike	James Marsters	Giorgio Borghetti (seasons 2-3) Fabio Boccanera (seasons 4-7)
Anya Jenkins	Emma Caulfield	Laura Latini Ilaria Latini (ep.5.2-3, 5.5-7)

Tara Maclay	Amber Benson	Sabrina Duranti (seasons 4-5) Georgia Lepore (season 6)
Joyce Summers	Kristine Sutherland	Chiara Salerno
Angel	David Boreanaz	Francesco Bulckaen
Cordelia Chase	Charisma Carpenter	Francesca Fiorentini
Daniel “Oz” Osbourne	Seth Green	Davide Lepore

In spite of the troubled and delayed programming, it appears that only a small fraction of the acquisition time was dedicated to the dubbing process, since the show contains numerous mistranslations, including the now infamous rendition of the line “the Master rose” (indicating that the vampire Master had been resurrected) as “il Maestro rosa” (“the pink Master”) in episode 3x09, “The Wish.” The poor dialogue adaptation was often criticized, yet PUMAISdue only agreed to redub the final lines of the season 6 finale, “Grave,” which contained a mistranslation that had crucial repercussions on the following season (the Italian version stated that Spike got his “identity” back, which would make him a villain again, while what had been restored was actually his soul, which turned him into an ally and love interest for Buffy). In addition to introducing translation mistakes, the Italian version fails to convey most of the features of Slayer Slang described in 6.1, as Bianchi (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 187) highlights:

the linguistic distinctiveness of Buffyspeak is not reproduced in the Italian version, where teenagers’ speech style is, at most, characterized by an informality which does not have any particular connotation as “youth language.” In fact the register may sometimes be so high as to seriously affect characterization.

Bianchi (in Chiaro et al. 2008: 192-193) convincingly attributes this normalization to the Italian perception of teen shows as lower, interchangeable forms of television that need to be compatible with daytime restrictions and are consumed by an audience that is used to televisual clichés:

The socio-cultural context of the dubbing of series like Buffy which tend to be perceived as fillers for a non-discriminating audience is one where the work is quickly and cheaply adapted and is often rushed for a market that favors non-controversial products (Paolinelli and Di Fortunato 2005: 42). The request for programs that are linguistically non-sophisticated (ibid.: 42) leads to the use not only of standard language but the ready-made language of the most formulaic popular narratives. Linguistic and technical problems resolved in such working conditions lead to a sort of back door ideology, where a difficult expression or an over-explicit term is rendered with the language of cliché.

The examples analyzed in this section, drawn from the episodes listed in the following table, bear witness to the validity of Bianchi's assessment, both in terms of the general rendition of Buffyspeak and even more so in terms of Extralinguistic Culture-bound References, given the relevance of intertextuality and popular culture in the show. Full episode tables can be found in **Appendix B**.

Episode number	Title	Reason	Original broadcast (WB)	Italian broadcast (Italia 1)
1x01	Welcome to the Hellmouth (Benvenuti al college)	Pilot, high school cliques	March 10, 1997	June 11, 2000
1x06	The pack (Il branco)	Monsters as a metaphor for adolescence (hyenas)	April 4, 1997	June 20, 2000
1x09	The Puppet Show (Il teatro dei burattini)	Talent show	May 5, 1997	July 9, 2000
1x11	Out of mind, out of sight (Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore)	Invisibility as a metaphor for adolescence	May 19, 1997	July 16, 2000
2x02	Some assembly required (Pezzi di ricambio)	Geek culture	September 22, 1997	July 23, 2000
2x05	Reptile boy (Festa macabra)	Monsters as a metaphor for adolescence	October 14, 1997	August 6, 2000
2x06	Halloween (id.)	Halloween	October 27, 1997	August 6, 2000
2x09	What's My line - part 1 (L'unione fa la forza - 1)	Career day	November 17, 1997	August 20, 2000
2x10	What's My line - part 2 (L'unione fa la forza - 2)	Career day	November 24, 1997	August 20, 2000
2x11	Ted (Il fidanzato di mamma)	Generation gap	December 8, 1997	August 27, 2000
2x13	Surprise (Sorpresa)	Sex issues	January 19, 1998	September 3, 2000
2x14	Innocence (Un attimo di felicità)	Sex issues / Angel loses his soul again	January 20, 1998	September 10, 2000
3x20	The Prom (Il ballo)	Prom	May 11, 1999	March 27, 2001
4x01	The Freshman (La matricola)	Starting college	October 5, 1999	March 29, 2001
4x10	Hush (L'urlo che uccide)	Wicca / female identity	December 14, 1999	April 9, 2001

Table 4. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* – Selected episodes

As highlighted in section 6.1, *Buffyspeak* plays on word formation patterns, puns, and rhetorical figures to achieve a humorous effect: for instance, in the pilot episode, Buffy makes fun of Giles' grave, obscure speech by using the verb 'to vague up,' which fully conveys her frustration at being forced to fight vampires again when she thought she was about to start a new life:

English	Dubbed version	Back translation
Buffy: Gee, can you vague that up for me?	Buffy: Insomma, sia più esplicito .	Buffy: Gee, be more explicit .

Example 1, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x01, "Welcome to the Hellmouth"

Later in the same episode, Giles tells her she should learn to recognize vampires at first sight and she uses a pun to show that she can already do that based on their obsolete outfits:

Buffy: And the shirt? Deal with that outfit for a moment. Giles: It's dated ? Buffy: It's carbon dated .	Buffy: E la camicia? Osservi un attimo com'è vestito. Giles: È datata ? Buffy: Accidenti se è datata .	Buffy: And the shirt? Take a look at what he's wearing. Giles: It's dated ? Buffy: Damn dated .
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Example 2, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x01, "Welcome to the Hellmouth"

In episode 1x11, "Out of Mind, Out of Sight," which focuses on a girl who has become invisible because everybody ignored her, Buffy notices that all the messages in the girl's yearbook read "Have a nice summer" and uses a cogent metaphor to underline the social implications of such greeting:

Buffy: "Have a nice summer" is what you write when you have nothing to say. It's the kiss of death .	Buffy: "Buone vacanze" è quello che si scrive quando non si ha niente da dire. A chi ti è indifferente .	Buffy: "Have a nice summer" is what you write when you have nothing to say. To those who are indifferent to you .
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Example 3, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x11, "Out of mind, out of sight"

In all three of these examples, the Italian dubbing normalizes *Buffyspeak* so much that it does not only lose its idiolectic peculiarities, but barely has any features of teen talk in general; the

adaptation works in terms of content, but does nothing to convey the show’s linguistic identity. When ECRs are involved (which happens very frequently, given the highly intertextual nature of the show), normalization has an even stronger impact, as is evident from the abundance of omissions and generalizations, which lead to a general weakening of the series’ witty dialogues. Hypernyms are among the most frequent solutions for ECR issues; while their use is justifiable in many cases, their overabundance still impoverishes the overall rendition. For instance, in the pilot episode Sunnydale’s it-girl, Cordelia, tries to assess Buffy’s coolness by asking her what she thinks of Frappuccinos; since it was reasonable to presume that the Italian audience was not yet familiar with Starbucks, the chain’s trademark beverage became a more common “cappuccino” (although there was no reason to make it “heavy” instead of “tasty”).

Cordelia: Frappuccinos? Buffy: Trendy but tasty.	Cordelia: Il cappuccino? Buffy: Trendy ma pesante.	Cordelia: Cappuccino? Buffy: Trendy but heavy [to digest].
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Example 4, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x01, “Welcome to the Hellmouth”

Later on, Cordelia makes fun of Buffy’s future best friend Willow, who wears childish clothes; her remark on Sears was rendered with the hypernym “mall,” which was a relatively effective solution, but shifts the meaning of Cordelia’s insult, since “Sears” also implied a social status judgment.

Cordelia: Nice dress! Good to know you've seen the softer side of Sears.	Cordelia: Bel vestito. Ti servi al reparto educande dei grandi magazzini?	Cordelia: Nice dress! Do you buy your clothes from the boarder girl section of the mall?
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Example 5, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x01, “Welcome to the Hellmouth”

In episode 2x09, Willow is led to a secluded area by two mysterious men on career day; the suspense is broken by a waiter offering her some canapés as a welcoming gesture to an interview with representatives from a prestigious IT corporation who want to hire her right after graduation. In the Italian version, “canapés”⁶⁴ is generalized as “appetizers”:

⁶⁴ Significantly, ten years later the same word will be maintained in the Italian version of *Gossip Girl*, which construes the characters’ social status also through an accurate depiction of their eating habits (see **chapter 7**).

Waiter: Try the canapé . It's excellent.	Waiter: Assaggi gli antipasti . Sono squisiti.	Waiter: Try the appetizers . They're excellent.
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Example 6, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x09, “What’s My Line – part 1”

“Appetizers” is a reasonable solution in this context, yet it loses the humorous effect conveyed by the sophistication of the term “canapés.” Similarly, in episode 4x10 Spike’s reference to the quintessentially British flaked wheat bars Weetabix is replaced with the imprecise hypernym “cookies,” which fails to underline the weirdness of the situation – Giles is temporarily forced to host Spike, who is still a half-enemy, but is also the only other major British character on the show.

Spike: We're out of Weetabix .	Spike: Sono finiti i biscotti .	Spike: We're out of cookies .
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Example 7, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 4x10, “Hush”

In episode 2x06, when the protagonists absorb the characteristics of the costumes they wear on Halloween, Willow complains about Buffy’s choice to wear an 18th-century damsel outfit, which renders her useless in the battle against the dark forces:

Willow: She couldn't have dressed like Xena?	Willow: Non poteva vestirsi da guerriera?	Willow: She couldn't have dressed as a female warrior?
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Example 8, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x06, “Halloween”

The Italian rendition proves functional, yet the omission of the “Xena” reference was probably unnecessary, since the episode was broadcast in 2000 and *Xena the Warrior Princess* (John Schulia and Robert Tapert, 1995 – 2001) had been on the air in Italy since 1998. Similarly, a reference to Brian De Palma’s *Carrie* (1976) was rendered with a generalization in episode 3x20, “The Prom,” even though the movie (or at least the prom scene in which Carrie uses her power to set the school on fire) would have been transparent for the Italian audience (and especially for supernatural/horror fans, which were likely to watch *Buffy* as well):

Buffy: I've got to stop a crazy from pulling a Carrie at the prom.	Buffy: Devo impedire che un pazzo faccia una strage al ballo.	Buffy: I've got to stop a madman from killing everyone at the prom.
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Example 9, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 3x20, “The Prom”

Along the same line, Xander’s reference to *The Usual Suspects* (Bryan Singer, 1995) was replaced with a general “hoodwinked / tricked” (which sits on the fence between hypernym and omission), yet the movie had been a huge success in Italy as well and the peculiar nickname of the double-crosser was likely to be easily identifiable:

Xander: Does anybody feel they've been Keyser Söze'd ?	Non avete la sensazione di essere stati fregati ?	Xander: Does anybody feel they've been hoodwinked ?
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Example 10, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x09, “The Puppet Show”

Sheer omissions are used just as frequently: in the same episode, Xander pretends to lend his voice to an allegedly demonic ventriloquist’s puppet and references the child protagonist of the movie *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980), who voices the imaginary/supernatural character in his mouth:

Xander (making Sid speak): Bye-bye now. I'm inanimate. Redrum, redrum!	Xander (making Sid speak): Ciao ciao, guarda, sono completamente inanimato. Sono senza anima, senza anima!	Xander (making Sid speak): Bye-bye, look, I'm completely inanimate. I'm soulless, soulless!
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Example 11, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x09, “The Puppet Show”

The adaptors chose to eliminate the reference to “redrum,” a pivotal word in the movie that spells ‘murder’ when read backwards; however, most *Buffy* viewers would probably have recognized the Italian equivalent used in the movie, “etrom” (‘morte,’ meaning ‘death’). Similarly, at the beginning of season 4, Buffy visits Giles to seek his help, but finds her former Watcher (now unemployed, since the whole school has been destroyed) wearing a bathrobe and with a female guest that is dressed just as scantily:

Buffy: OK, remember before you became Hugh Hefner , when you used to be a Watcher?	Buffy: Ma come? Si è completamente dimenticato del suo ruolo di Osservatore?	Buffy: What? Did you completely forget about your Watching duties?
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Example 12, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 4x01, “The Freshman”

While the name ‘Hugh Hefner’ might have been opaque to Italian viewers, a more general reference to *Playboy* would have maintained at least some of Buffy’s humor. The Slayer’s witty banter is also neutralized in the following example from episode 1x06, in which her reference to skeptical agent Dana Scully from *The X-Files* is omitted in translation:

Buffy: I cannot believe that you, of all people, are trying to Scully me! There is something supernatural at work here. Get your books! Look stuff up!	Buffy: Non posso credere che proprio lei stia cercando di voltarmi le spalle! Qui c’è qualcosa di soprannaturale. Cerchi sui libri, documentiamoci!	Buffy: I cannot believe that you, of all people, are turning your back on me! There is something supernatural at work here. Look in your books, let's study it!
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Example 13, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x06, “The Pack”

Admittedly, one- or two-word ECRs are harder to maintain, but *The X-Files* was a major hit in Italy and Italia 1 also used it to launch the first season of *Buffy*, hence a full omission is not entirely justifiable. A similar obliteration occurs in 4x10, when one of the members of the Initiative (a secret government organization that captures and studies supernatural creatures) comments on the effect their job would have on girls if only they could reveal it:

Forest: We have a gig that would inevitably cause any girl living to think we are cool upon cool. Yet we Clark Kent our way through the dating scene, never to use our unfair advantage.	Forest: E' come un sortilegio che costringe tutte le ragazze a pensare che siamo più super del super, tuttavia dobbiamo usare con parsimonia sia questo vantaggio che il tempo da dedicare a loro.	Forest: It's like a curse that forces all girls to think we are beyond super. Yet we have to use both this advantage and the time we spend with them most sparingly.
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Example 14, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 4x10, “Hush”

The Italian version completely shifts the meaning of Forest’s talk, which could have been saved by maintaining the transparent reference to Clark Kent / Superman, hinting at a double life and at the inability to use one’s secret identity to their advantage in their daily existence. Apparently, the adapting team generally underestimated the Italian audience’s knowledge of superheroes, since in episode 2x02 an easily understandable reference to the Batsignal (the projected bat shape that functions as Batman’s call to arms) was also obliterated, even though the official equivalent “bat-segnale” would have worked for lip-synching purposes as well:

Buffy: Sorry to interrupt, but it's the Batsignal .	Buffy: Scusa se disturbo, Willow, ma devi venire .	Buffy: Sorry to bother you, Willow, but you have to come .
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Example 15, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x02, “Some Assembly Required”

Capes and superpowers aside, even references to “regular” heroes tend to disappear from the show, as happens with Cordelia’s attempt to flirt with new Watcher Wesley Wyndham-Price (who is British as well) by comparing him to James Bond:

Cordelia: That’s too bad, because I bet you would look way 007 in a tux.	Cordelia: È un vero peccato, perché sono certa che saresti uno schianto in smoking.	Cordelia: That’s too bad, because I’m sure you would look so hot in a tux.
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Example 16, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 3x20, “The Prom”

References to cartoon characters undergo the same neutralization process, even when the Italian audience would have been familiar with them; in the following example, “Care Bear” could have been translated with its official equivalent “Orsetto del Cuore,” from the popular franchise established in 1981, which included an animated series (*The Care Bears*, Linda Denham and Elena Kucharik, 1985 – 1988) which was aired in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Italy (first on Odeon TV and then on Italia 1 itself). Even without maintaining the full reference, just “orsetto” (little bear, teddy bear) would have had a stronger impact than complete omission:

Cordelia: Oh, he's a vampire. Of course. But a cuddly one. Like a Care Bear with fangs?	Cordelia: Ah, è vero che è un vampiro. Ma di quelli buoni, giusto? Ora non morde più sul collo...	Cordelia: Oh, so it's true he's a vampire. A nice one, right? He doesn't bites necks anymore...
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Example 17, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x06, “Halloween”

Not even references to teenpics survive the adaptation process: in spite of the crucial role played by actress Molly Ringwald in the John Hughes movies of the 1980s (see **chapter 4**), “the Ringwald oeuvre” becomes “cartoni animati” (cartoons, animated series), which infantilizes Buffy’s attitude in a way that fails to convey the actual meaning of her plan. Rather than wishing to give up her agency to regress to a carefree childhood dimension, she yearns for a share of “regular”

adolescence, with comfort food and feel-good movies as a reward for her duties; a reference to “teen movies” would have succeeded in delivering at least part of Buffy’s longing for normality “amid the insanity of her world” (Bolte in Ross and Stein 2008: 104).

Kendra: Perhaps when this is over, you can show me how to work it. Buffy: When this is over, I'm thinking pineapple pizza and teen video movie fest . Possibly something from the Ringwald oeuvre .	Kendra: Forse quando tutto sarà finito mi mostrerai come funziona. Buffy: Quando tutto sarà finito farò una scorpacciata di pizza e film in videocassetta . Forse persino di cartoni animati .	Kendra: Perhaps when this is over, you can show me how to work it. Buffy: When this is over, I'm gonna binge on pizza and movies on videotape . Maybe even cartoons .
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Example 18, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x10, “What’s My Line – part 2”

The Italian version as a whole does exhibit a few attempts to render ECRs in a way that partially maintains the features of Buffyspeak: for instance, in episode 2x09 Buffy’s reference to life coach Tony Robbins would have been opaque for Italian viewers, which justified an omission strategy, partially compensated by the presence of the intensifying prefix “super,” which adequately renders “hyper”:

Buffy: First I have to deal with Giles. He's on this Tony Robbins hyper-efficiency kick.	Buffy: Ma prima devo vedere Giles. Gli è presa la mania della super-efficienza.	Buffy: First I have to see Giles. He's developed this hyper-efficiency mania .
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Example 19, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x09, “What’s My Line – part 1”

In the pilot episode an opaque reference to the R&B sibling music group DeBarge was replaced with a more transparent reference to *Happy Days*, which mocks the outdated vampire outfit in a similar way:

Buffy: OK, first of all, what's with the outfit? Live in the now, OK? You look like DeBarge .	Buffy: Senti, prima di tutto, ma come ti sei vestito? Vivi nel presente, dai, sembri uscito da Happy Days!	Buffy: Listen, first of all, what are you wearing? Live in the present, come on, you look like you just popped out of Happy Days .
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Example 20, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x01, “Welcome to the Hellmouth”

Following a similar process, substituting an obscure reference to sideshow performer “Jo-Jo the Dog-faced Boy” with a more understandable “King Kong” successfully conveyed Cordelia’s ironic depiction of the monster that had chased her:

Cordelia: I was attacked by Jo-Jo the Dog-faced Boy .	Cordelia: Sono appena stata attaccata da un King Kong imbestialito .	Cordelia: I was just attacked by an angry King Kong .
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Example 21, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x06, “Halloween”

In episode 2x13, a “round robin,” which the Scooby gang uses to indicate a series of phone calls to one another’s parents to cover a night out, was translated with an adequate “chiama-mamma” (“call-mom”), which also conveyed a certain youth flavor through its alliteration:

Willow: Better do a round robin . Xander, you go first. Giles: Round robin? Willow: Everybody calls everybody else's mom and says they're staying at everyone's house.	Willow: Meglio fare un chiama-mamma . Xander, prima tu. Giles: Chiama-mamma? Willow: E' quando tutti telefonano alla mamma e dicono che restano a studiare a casa di qualcun altro.	Willow: Better do a call-mom . Xander, you go first. Giles: Call-mom? Willow: Everybody calls everybody else's mom and says they're staying at someone's else's house to study.
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Example 22, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x13, “Surprise”

In episode 2x14, Xander pretends to be a soldier and a ladies’ man to convince a guard to let him and Cordelia into a military base. The guard’s reference to Nimrod, Noah’s great-grandson, famous for his hunting prowess, was effectively replaced with a reference to Leonardo DiCaprio as the quintessential heartthrob:

Guard: You got 20 minutes, Nimrod .	Guard: Hai 20 minuti, DiCaprio .	Guard: You got 20 minutes, DiCaprio .
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Example 23, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x14, “Innocence”

Nevertheless, these few instances do not compensate for the much higher number of impoverishing adaptations, let alone for the mistranslations that appear to originate from sheer carelessness. In episode 1x06, a reference to the well-known, 15th-century treatise on the prosecution of witches *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Witches’ Hammer*) was altered into a meaningless “Mellius Malipacarium,” presumably based on the English pronunciation of the Latin title:

Giles: The Malleus Maleficarum deals in the particulars of demonic possession, which may apply.	Giles: Il Mellius Malipacarium parla di una particolare possessione demoniaca che può scomparire	Giles: The Mellius Malipacarium deals with a particular demonic possession which may disappear.
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Example 24, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x06, “The Pack”

In episode 1x11, the word “extant,” very appropriate for Giles’ bookish language, was interpreted as a proper name and thus translated as “Extan,” which made little sense because obviously there was no other reference to a person or place with such a name:

Giles: I’ve studied all the extant volumes, of course. But the... most salient books of slayer prophecy have been lost.	Giles: Ho già studiato tutti i libri di Extan , ma i testi più salienti sulla profezia della cacciatrice sono andati perduti.	Giles: I’ve studied all the books of Extan , of course. But the most salient books of slayer prophecy have been lost.
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Example 25, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x11, “Out of Sight, Out of Mind”

A particularly aberrant rendition occurs in the dubbing of episode 4x01: upon starting campus, Buffy is intimidated by the lively campus environment in which everyone seems to be engaged in thousands of activities and she gets flooded with leaflets, including one for a frat party, where freshmen women will get “free Jell-O shots.” Probably for lip-synching reasons, “Jell-O” becomes hair gel, which makes no sense in a party context; while “Jell-O shots” (jelly made with liquor, typically vodka) are a staple of American college culture and would have been hard to understand outside the US, the words “shot” and “party” should have provided enough context to insert a drink / girly drink reference of some sort.

Frat boy: Party Thursday at Alpha Delta. Free Jell-O shots for freshman women.	Frat boy: La festa è giovedì all’Alfa-Delta. Devi venire, gel gratis per le matricole femmine.	Frat boy: Party Thursday at Alpha Delta. You have to come, free [hair] gel for freshman females.
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Example 26, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 4x01, “The Freshman”

The rendition of the following dialogue provides an even more convoluted example. Buffy and Xander catch Giles practicing lines to ask computer teacher Jenny Calendar on a date and Buffy decides to offer some advice. The Italian version is completely ineffective: while the omission of “Gene and Roger” (a reference to movie critics Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert, meaning “advice”) is justifiable, the neutralization of Xander’s sexual allusion reverses the meaning of his comment, which no longer makes sense in Italian; moreover, the final joke on Giles’s erudite language loses its comic appeal through the implausible indication of “proponendo” (‘suggesting,’ ‘proposing’) as

a “difficult word,” thus also reducing the effectiveness of the reasonable rendition of the England joke:

<p>Giles: I was just working on... Buffy: Your pickup lines? Giles: In a manner of speaking, yes. Buffy: Then if you don't mind a little Gene and Roger, leave out the ‘idiot’ part. Being called an idiot tends to take people out of the dating mood. Xander: It actually kinda turns me on. Buffy: I fear you. [To Giles] You might wanna avoid words like ‘amenable’ and ‘indecorous.’ Speak English, not whatever they speak in... Giles: England?</p>	<p>Giles: I-io stavo provando... Buffy: Come rimorchiare? Giles: Sì, in un certo senso sì. Buffy: Allora ascolti un consiglio disinteressato: lasci stare la parte relativa ‘all'idiota’. Alle donne non piace essere chiamate così, neanche per sbaglio. Xander: A me la cosa farebbe arrabbiare. Buffy: Beh, lo terrò presente. [to Giles] Dovrebbe anche evitare di usare parole difficili come ‘proponendo’, ‘inopportuno’... parli semplice, non è mica alla corte... Giles: ...d'Inghilterra?</p>	<p>Giles: I was just working on... Buffy: How to pickup girls? Giles: Yes, in a certain sense, yes. Buffy: Then listen to an unbiased piece of advice: leave out the ‘idiot’ part. Women don't like being called that way, not even by mistake. Xander: It would make me mad. Buffy: Well, I'll keep that in mind. [To Giles] You should also avoid difficult words like ‘suggesting’ and ‘indecorous.’ Speak simply, you're not at the court... Giles: ...of England?</p>
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Example 27, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x02, “Some Assembly Required”

Yet the instances in which the normalization/neutralization process is more evident are those involving potentially sensitive topics: references to death, religion/magic, and sex are almost always “tamed” (Bianchi in Chiaro et al. 2008) for clear censorship purposes. In episode 1x06, “The Pack,” Principal Flutie is eaten alive by a pack of students transformed into hyenas; when his successor, Principal Snyder, refers to his demise in episode 1x09, “being eaten” becomes “being put aside”:

<p>Principal Snyder: I know Principal Flutie would have said: “Kids need understanding, kids are human beings.” That's the kind of woolly-headed, liberal thinking that leads to being eaten.</p>	<p>Principal Snyder: So che il preside Flutie avrebbe detto che i giovani devono essere compresi, i giovani sono esseri umani; pensandola in questo modo, è ovvio che si venga messi da parte.</p>	<p>Principal Snyder: I know Principal Flutie would have said: “Kids need understanding, kids are human beings.” With that kind of thinking, it is obvious that one gets put aside.</p>
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Example 28, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x09, “The Puppet Show”

In 2x02, Jenny Calendar (Giles’ love interest) is described as a “technopagan,” a believer in Neopaganism who does not have proper witch powers, but uses technology in her rituals; unsurprisingly, references to Neo-paganism are completely omitted, even though they originally served to introduce Willow’s later exploration of Wicca (modern-day Witchcraft) and her subsequent, disastrous addiction to magic that almost caused the world to end.

Buffy: She's a technopagan , ask her to bless your laptop.	Buffy: Provi con le stampe cinesi , è un vecchio trucco, però è buono.	Buffy: Try with Chinese prints , it's an old trick, but it's still good.
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Example 29, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x02, “Some Assembly Required”

Giles: No, no, I just assumed you spent your evenings downloading incantations and casting bones .	Giles: Non è che sono sorpreso, è che pensavo che passassi le serate in casa, magari in pantofole a guardare qualche bel film...	Giles: It's not that I am surprised, I just assumed you spent your evenings at home, perhaps wearing your slippers and watching a good movie...
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Example 30, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x02, “Some Assembly Required”

Sexual references undergo an even more consistent taming, starting from the pilot episode, in which Buffy tries on different outfits for her first night out in Sunnydale and her ironic use of the word “slut” becomes a less direct “mangiauomini,” which means “man-eater,” but sounds much less explicit in Italian:

Buffy: Hi! I'm an enormous slut! Hello. Would you like a copy of " The Watchtower "?	Buffy: Salve! Sono una tremenda mangiauomini . Salve, vuole una copia del nostro giornoletto ?	Buffy: Hi! I'm a terrible man-eater! Hello. Would you like a copy of our magazine ?
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Example 31, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x01, “Welcome to the Hellmouth”

In 1x09 Xander jokes that his underpants are more entertaining than the talent show contestants; his reference to “edible” shorts is tamed into “embroidered.”

Xander: You call those jokes? My jockey shorts are made out of better material. And they're edible!	Xander: E tu le chiami battute? Ti giuro che fanno più ridere le mie mutande. E sono anche ricamate!	Xander: You call those jokes? My jockey shorts are funnier! And they're embroidered!
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Example 32, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 1x09, “The Puppet Show”

In 2x14, in the scene described in example 23, Xander’s attempt to convince the guard to let him and Cordelia into the army base involves claiming that women like “to see the big guns,” which “get them all hot and bothered”; however, the Italian version eliminated the reference to the “big guns” and replaced the rest with a tamer “they like thrills.”

<p>Xander: Look, I just wanna give her the tour. You know what I'm sayin'. Guard: The tour. Xander: Well, the ladies like to see the big guns. Gets them all hot and bothered.</p>	<p>Xander: Ehi, ascolta, voglio solo farle fare un giretto. Sai che voglio dire, no? Guard: Un giretto. Xander: Sai come sono fatte le donne, a loro piacciono le emozioni forti.</p>	<p>Xander: Look, I just wanna give her the tour. You know what I'm sayin'? Guard: The tour. Xander: You know how ladies are, they like thrills.</p>
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Example 33, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x14, “Innocence”

Censorship strategies were applied even more frequently to season four, which gradually introduces the theme of female homosexuality, as a broken-hearted Willow finds herself attracted to Tara, whom she meets at Wicca group. The depiction of Wiccanism in *Buffy* highlights the phoniness of “wanna-blessed-bes” as opposed to the real magic which Willow and Tara manage to perform and which is also used as a metaphor for sex. In 4x10, at the first meeting of the group, the other girls only appear interested in the trivial aspects of Wicca (which is a recognized religion in the US); the Italian version annihilates the humorous effect of the “empowering lemon bundt” and of the “Bacchanal” party, replacing the latter with a neutralized “dance show.”

<p>Wicca group leader: We should have a bake sale. [...] And I make an empowering lemon bundt! [...] Ok, let's talk about the theme for the Bacchanal.</p>	<p>Wicca group leader: Dovremmo aprire un piccolo bar. [...] E io faccio una limonata stupenda! [...] Affrontiamo l'argomento dello spettacolo di danza.</p>	<p>Wicca group leader: We should open a small café. [...] And I make a wonderful lemonade! [...] Ok, let's talk about the dance show.</p>
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Example 34, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 4x10, “Hush”

Willow and Tara’s eyes meet during this exchange, and at the end of this episode the two girls perform their first full-fledged levitation; in the following episodes, their bond grows stronger, until in 4x19, “New Moon Rising,” Willow eventually decides she wants to be with Tara instead of with her former boyfriend Oz, who has come back to town. As the episode features Willow and Tara’s first kiss, Italia 1 decided not to broadcast it, as explained in **section 6.1**, and only aired it three years later. Given the crucial role of the relationship between Willow and Tara in the subsequent developments of the rest of the series, the decision to censor the entire episode epitomizes the general tendency to use “radical alterations [...] to ‘clean up the text’ and meet with the demands of

the network producers in relation to the most explicit sexual allusions” (Bianchi in Chiaro et al. 2008: 192). This tendency also highlights the network’s poor understanding of the evolving viewership in the early 2000s, which eventually backfired, since Italia 1 lost a major opportunity to increase audience loyalty.

6.3 *Dawson’s Creek*

Dawson’s Creek premiered in 1998, a year after *Buffy*, and followed in the footsteps of its predecessor’s portrayal of teenage angst through a wide use of intertextual and cultural references – minus the supernatural component: Dawson and his friends have no superpowers, nor do they inhabit a particularly wealthy neighborhood, like their *Beverly Hills, 90210* counterparts. They face the challenges of growing up in the unexceptional, fictional Massachusetts coastal town of Capeside, close enough to Boston and Providence to allow for the occasional bar trip, but also far enough from any metropolitan area so as to constitute a safe harbor from urban temptations. The plot opens precisely with Jen Lindley’s arrival from New York City: as a consequence of her “reprehensible” city behavior, the fifteen-year-old blonde beauty is sent to live with her very Catholic grandmother in Capeside. As had happened with Brandon and Brenda’s arrival in Los Angeles and *Buffy*’s transfer to Sunnydale High, Jen’s egression from the taxicab that constitutes a last glimpse of the City sets the whole story in motion (Palin in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 91), undermining the precarious balance between protagonists Dawson Leery and Joey Potter, who have been best friends since when Joey was old enough to climb the ladder to Dawson’s first floor window (a recurrent scene in the show) and are awkwardly trying to come to terms with post-puberty issues. Dawson’s other best friend, Pacey Witter, inherits the role of the joker from *Beverly Hills*’ Steve Sanders and mainly from *Buffy*’s Xander Harris, but also proves reliable and protective, especially during season 2, in which he stands by his girlfriend Andie McPhee’s side as she struggles with mental health issues. Andie and her brother Jack have moved to Capeside with their family

after the death of their other brother Tim, and Andie shows frequent symptoms of both clinical depression and desire for control, which provide a way for the show to address the topic of mental health without falling into a *Beverly Hills*-type “problem of the week” approach. The McPhee family also allows the series to portray male homosexuality, as Jack comes out as gay and tries to explore his new identity aided by Jen, who becomes his best friend. Meanwhile, once Pacey and Andie break up, the love triangle between Dawson, Joey, and Pacey, which had been hinted at in season 1, becomes the dominant theme from season 3 until the end of the series, even though all three of the characters go through other steady relationships (especially after they move to Boston for college in season 4).

Dawson’s Creek is deeply rooted in cinema: when producer Paul Stupin approached him to create a TV series, showrunner Kevin Williamson was already famous for his teenage slasher movie hits *Scream* (1996), *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997), and *Scream 2* (1997), from which Dawson inherits his passion for horror movies and his Friday the 13th fright fest ritual (depicted in episode 1x10, “The Scare,” in which “the program displays an anxiety about stressing its influences and its ‘cinematic’ status, and through this, a need to display itself as ‘quality teen TV,’” as Hills underlines in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 62). The series is also filmed with a single camera (which is usually reserved for motion pictures) and frequently shot on location, rather than in a studio. The whole show is a celebration of cinematic and televisual intertextuality, from the very first scene in which Dawson and Joey are portrayed as they watch *E.T.* (Steven Spielberg, 1982) in Dawson’s room, which is a full-sized Steven Spielberg shrine, complete with movie posters, props, and useful tools for an aspiring filmmaker. Gray (2010: 55) notes that the show reflects “Spielberg’s Twainian idolization of adolescence,” and indeed, Dawson’s own creed is based on a Spielberg-based form of celluloid escapism. When Jen asks him what he finds in movies, later in the pilot episode, he candidly replies “I reject reality,” which aptly summarizes his tendency to analyze his life so obsessively that he almost feels able to reduce it to a script that he can alter at will, only to feel crushed whenever he realizes it does not work that way. In his start-of-the-show naïveté, he

considers his favorite director as a Yoda-like dispenser of ultimate wisdom, as he explicitly declares: “Whenever I have a problem, all I have to do is look to the right Spielberg movie and the answer is revealed.” As Lori Bindig (2008: 1) highlights,

the fact that Dawson is the protagonist of the program [...] and this quote was included in the show’s very first episode indicates that the media are important, accessible and omnipresent forces in our daily lives. Dawson’s quote also illustrates the increased intertextuality within today’s media landscape. These knowing references to other parts of the mediated realm exemplify the implicit expectations that viewers are supposed to be immersed in media and be knowledgeable about all the elements of incongruent popular culture.

However, as Andrews (2001: 7) notes, Spielberg’s youth-based corpus fails to provide answers to issues of love, sex, and relationships, and Dawson often ends up wandering in a maze of unresolved sexual tension, perpetually choosing paths that lead to dead ends or backing out of promising tracks. When Dawson finally kisses Joey in 2x01, “The Kiss,” Pacey comments: “After years of gratuitous self-examination, you finally did it, you acted” (quoted in Hills in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 58), summarizing a whole season’s worth of introspective inactivity. Later on, when Dawson eventually manages to have sex with Jen, after four and a half seasons and countless plot reversals, he finally realizes that sometimes unscripted reality can even beat cinematic fantasies:

Dawson: So that's what everyone's talking about.
Jen: That's it.
Dawson: Hmm... it wasn't... what I imagined.
Jen: It's not?
Dawson: No. Everyone always told me your first time is never as good as you'd imagine it to be. That was... every bit the fantasy.

Episode 5x08, “Hotel New Hampshire”

Nonetheless, Williamson’s own script has other plans for Dawson, as Jen soon breaks up with him because she feels it was not the right thing to do. Once again, Dawson goes back to his lifelong dreams, filmmaking and Joey Potter; eventually, however, he is excluded from the eternal love triangle as Joey ends up with Pacey in the series finale, but his professional dreams do come full circle as he writes and directs a meta-teen drama entitled *The Creek* and manages to set up a work appointment with none other than Spielberg himself.

If Dawson is a walking testimonial for intertextuality, the rest of the gang are no less prone to resorting to pop cultural references to make sense of their own love lives and adolescent issues, even though most of them appear to have a firmer grasp of reality. Like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Dawson's Creek* literally stages the process of identity formation through the adoption or rejection of models provided by film and television described in **chapter 4**. The show's acknowledgment of the importance of pop culture examples in the path towards adulthood validates a typical teenage strategy to learn the ways of the world: Bindig (2008: 16) quotes a 2003 study on *Dawson's Creek* conducted by E. Graham McKinley (2003: 22) which "revealed that young viewers were 'still learning basic rules – what to wear, how to act, how to handle a situation, what a relationship should be like' from television." The relevance of movies and television for the show's "self-reflexive high-schoolers" (Wee in Ross and Stein 2008: 48) is not surprising: together with the increasingly fundamental group of close friends, these resources provided guidance and support that was frequently missing in the numerous broken homes of the show. Of the main protagonists, only Dawson starts out with an apparently functional family (Francesca 2011: 51), yet his mother's affair soon leads to a see-saw marital relationship that only ends when his father dies in a car accident. Joey lives with her older sister Bessie and the latter's black boyfriend (whom the Capeside population has yet to fully accept), since she lost her mother to cancer and her father is in prison for drug trafficking. Pacey lives with a father who appears to think very little of him, two sisters and a brother who works as a policeman and eventually comes out as gay; as previously mentioned, Jen moves in with her grandmother and barely ever talks with her parents in New York, even though she occasionally tries to reconcile with them. "Grams" also serves as a counterpoint to Jen's religious views, since her fervent Catholicism is a frequent cause of disagreements with her atheist granddaughter. Jen's position is another sign of the new age of television that had started with *Buffy* and *Dawson's Creek*: as Francesca (2011: 56, my translation) underlines, "until a few years earlier, it would have been impossible to create a teen-targeted products in which one of the protagonists explicitly declared herself an atheist. In Clinton's America, it was no longer impossible."

Dawson's Creek also broke previous televisual conventions by portraying male homosexuality, including the first (albeit very discreet) on-screen kiss between two male characters on a teen show. The show proved less daring than *Buffy*, as it did not portray any form of female homosexuality (traditionally perceived as a greater taboo than its male counterpart). Nonetheless, the fact that Jack was one of the main characters for most of the seasons provided numerous opportunities to explore his search for his place in the world, from his maladroit attempts to date Joey to make sure he was not heterosexual to his troubles with the football team on which he plays and later with his 'brothers' at the fraternity he joins in college. As Bindig (2008: 140-1) highlights,

the willingness of *Dawson's Creek* to offer viewers a homosexual main character that displays affection appears to illustrate a progressive change in society. For instance, Jack is not the stereotypical gay character who is effeminate or predator. In fact, *Dawson's Creek* eschews any overtly negative depictions of homosexuality. While Jack is quite and sensitive, all the lead male characters on *Dawson's Creek* exhibit thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Furthermore, Jack also engages in traditionally masculine activities such as football and fraternity life. [...] *Dawson's Creek* [also] had the first onscreen male kiss. This groundbreaking imagery can be attributed to the fact that the creator of *Dawson's Creek*, Kevin Williamson, is gay. [...] However, as groundbreaking as *Dawson's Creek* is for representations of male homosexuality, the program fails to provide any instance of female homosexuality.

The absence of lesbian characters was probably among the factors that avoided major continuity disruptions on Italian TV, even though the show was moved from primetime to an afternoon slot; however, male homosexuality still underwent a bowdlerizing process, which culminated in the series finale with the rendition of Pacey's brother Doug's last line "I love you" as "ti voglio bene" ("I love you as a friend"). References to heterosexuality were also frequently tamed, especially when they involved Joey Potter, whose overall attitude ended up being completely shifted, as will be described in the following paragraph.

6.4 *Dawson's Creek* – Episode analysis

The history of *Dawson's Creek* on Italian television was certainly less troubled than *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's*, yet Williamson's show underwent a similar relocation from primetime to daytime; Italia 1's adaptation and placement strategies reduced the cult value and transgenerational appeal of the show, forcing it into an age-group specific categorization which the original version had clearly transcended. Matt Hills (in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 54-67) highlights how *Dawson's Creek's* stress on "teenage agency" (54) and "hyper-articulacy" (Birchall, quoted in Hills 59) attracts a type of "'crossover' transgenerational audiences" (62) precisely "due to the program's bid for cultural value" (59). Reflecting on the frequent criticism that "the teens in *Dawson's Creek* speak in voices well beyond their years," Birchall (in Davis and Dickinson 2004: 184) mentions an interview in which James Van Der Beek (who played Dawson) stated: "Of course, we've gotten criticism that our characters sound too smart. And while the show isn't representative of the way every teenager speaks, it's absolutely representative of the way every teenager *feels*" (emphasis added). Birchall (186) also underlines the way in which the characters' "therapeutically charged language" might imply "a fear of unconscious work, for [...] everything gets articulated, everything gets brought out in the open, and, equally, nothing is allowed to slip back, perhaps irrevocably, into the underworld of the unconscious." Expanding Birchall's cogent claim, Hills (61) quotes producer Paul Stupin's defense of the show's hyper-articulacy on the basis that "[*Dawson's Creek's*] characters feel the same things as we do, they are just better at expressing them." Indeed, Stupin's conversion of "teen articulacy into a front for more 'universal' emotional experiences" (Hills 61) worked both for adolescents, who could enjoy a truly in-depth treatment of their unexpressed anxieties, and for older viewers, who could still relate to the issues universalized through hyper-articulate, self-reflexive language.

However, the carefully developed linguistic identity of the show underwent major alterations during the Italian dubbing process, which eventually caused the series to be downgraded

to one of the afternoon slots. In January 1999, *Dawson's Creek* premiered on the now terminated Italian subscription-based network Telepiù, which broadcast the first two seasons obtaining successful ratings and paving the way for a cult appreciation of the show. Mediaset thus decided to buy the series for its Thursday primetime slot; starting on January 13, 2000, season 1 was then broadcast on Italia 1; yet in spite of the positive reception (with peaks of over 3 million viewers, an 11% share; Mediaset 2000), the show did not attract sufficient followers for the network's evening schedule and ended up in the afternoon slot, where its 1,5 million viewers still represented a 14.59% share (Film.it 2006). On the one hand, it should be noted that a generalist network operates on a different competition level than that on which pay-TV operates and that, all in all, *Dawson's Creek* performed relatively well for a teen show; on the other hand, *Dawson's Creek* had the potential to attract a wider audience than the adolescent niche, yet the afternoon rescheduling inhibited the perception of the show as a production that could be interesting for other age groups. Moreover, the fact that the dubbing process had been assigned to a different studio exacerbated the sanitizing trend that was already present in the dubbing of the first two seasons (commissioned by Telepiù), causing the original self-aware quips to become closer to whiny, self-centered laments and affecting the audience's perception of the characters, especially of Joey Potter, as previously mentioned.

As is visible from the following table,⁶⁵ when Multimedia Network took over from Mac 3 Movies, the entire dubbing team changed, with the exception of Daniela Mazzarotta, who remained for two more seasons. The number of adaptors also decreased from five (seasons 1 and 2) to three (seasons 3 and 4) to two (season 5) and eventually to one (season 6), which certainly favored consistency, but also signaled a much lower interest in investing in the show.

- **Italian dubbing:** Mac 3 Movies (seasons 1-2); Multimedia Network (seasons 3-6)
- **Italian dialogues:**
 - Seasons 1-2: Paola Villa, Antonella Damigelli, Raffaella Caso, Daniela Mazzarotta, Vittorio Amandola
 - Season 3-4: Maria Rita Ruffini, Daniela Mazzarotta, Maurizio Pradeaux

⁶⁵ Available at <http://www.antonioanna.net/doppiaggio/televisione/dawsonscreek.htm> (accessed July 5, 2014).

- Season 5: Maria Rita Ruffini, Mariolina Pinto
- Season 6: Mario Cordova
- **Dubbing directors:**
 - Seasons 1-2: Sonia Scotti
 - Seasons 3-5: Mario Cordova, Enzo Bruno
 - Season 6: Mario Cordova

Luckily, the carefully-cast dubbers remained the same throughout the six seasons, as highlighted in the following table:

Main characters	Played by	Dubbed by
Dawson Leery	James Van Der Beek	Francesco Pezzulli
Joey Potter	Katie Holmes	Ilaria Latini
Jen Lindley	Michelle Williams	Stella Musy
Pacey Witter	Joshua Jackson	Nanni Baldini
Gail Leery	Mary Margaret Humes	Antonella Rinaldi
Mitch Leery (s.1-5)	John Wesley Shipp	Roberto Pedicini
Nonna Evelyn Ryan	Mary Beth Peil	Graziella Polesinanti
Doug Witter	Dylan Neal	Mauro Gravina
Abby Morgan	Monica Keena	Rachele Paoletti
Jack McPhee	Kerr Smith	Stefano Crescentini
Andie McPhee	Meredith Monroe	Barbara De Bortoli

The remarkable performances of the voice actors (especially Nanni Baldini’s rendition of Pacey Witter, played by Joshua Jackson) allowed for a generally positive perception of the dubbed version of the show in spite of the numerous adaptation *faux-pas*. A selection of examples from the episodes listed in **table 5** will illustrate the abundance of mistranslations, omitted cultural references, and censorship strategies that altogether transformed the original show into a different product.

Episode number	Title	Reason	Original broadcast (WB)	Italian broadcast (Tele+ / Italia 1)
1x01	Pilot (Emozioni in movimento)	Pilot, relationships, sex	January 1, 1998	January 13, 2000 (Tele+)
1x02	Dance (Festa di ballo)	Prom, relationships	January 28, 1998	January 13, 2000 (Tele+)
1x03	A prelude to a kiss (Momenti magici)	Relationships, sex	February 3, 1998	January 20, 2000 (Tele+)

1x07	Detention – The Breakfast Club (Convivenza forzata)	John Hughes tribute; stereotyping	March 3, 1998	February 3, 2000 (Tele+)
1x10	The scare (Venerdì 13)	Slasher movies	May 5, 1998	February 17, 2000 (Tele+)
2x06	The dance (Il ballo)	Prom; relationships	November 11, 1998	March 16, 2000 (Tele+)
2x07	The all-nighter (Tutto in una notte)	College applications; sex	November 18, 1998	March 16, 2000 (Tele+)
2x19	Rest in peace (Riposa in pace Abby)	Grieving; relationships	May 5, 1999	April 25, 2000 (Tele+)
2x20	Reunited (Riuniti)	Mental health	May 12, 1999	May 2, 2000
3x03	None of the above (Test psicoattitudinale)	SAT tests, college applications	October 13, 1999	October 11, 2000 (Italia 1)
3x14	Valentine's Day Massacre (Una serata particolare)	Dating, homosexuality	February 2, 2000	April 2, 2001 (Italia 1)

Table 5. *Dawson's Creek* – Selected episodes

Ironically, the dubbed version of the pilot episode features a rare example of *meta-mistranslation*: when asked about his interest in movies, Dawson replies that he “dabs,” yet his attempt to play casual was misinterpreted as “dub,” generating an unintended, hilarious substitution that makes little sense both within the show (which makes it clear from the very beginning that Dawson is into directing) and in general, given America’s limited usage of dubbing:

English	Dubbed version	Back translation
Cliff: Oh, yeah? You into movies? Dawson: I dab.	Cliff: Ah sì? Lavori nel cinema? Dawson: Faccio doppiaggio.	Cliff: Oh, yeah? You into movies? Dawson: I dub.

Example 1, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x01, “Emotions in Motion”

In the same episode, Dawson tries to discredit potential competitors by telling Jen that the jock she has noticed leads a double life as a transvestite:

Dawson: Jock quarterback by day, schizophrenic transvestite by night. Jen: Oh, really? Dawson: Has a Tori Spelling complex . He's partial to Victoria's Secret . Just so you know.	Dawson: Quarterback di giorno e travestito paranoico di notte. Jen: Davvero? Dawson: È come se fosse Jekyll e Hyde , ma al femminile, e ha un debole per una di qui , tanto perché tu lo sappia.	Dawson: Quarterback by day, paranoid transvestite by night. Jen: Oh, really? Dawson: He's like a female Jekyll and Hyde . He has a crush on a girl from here . Just so you know.
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Example 2, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x01, “Emotions in Motion”

While it was reasonable to substitute the reference to Tori Spelling (*Beverly Hills, 90210*'s Donna Martin), which would have proven unclear in that context, replacing the brand name Victoria's Secret with "a girl from here" reverses the meaning of the whole sentence, with which Dawson meant to imply that the quarterback liked to purchase female lingerie for himself from the popular US chain. Later, in episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss," Dawson eventually manages to be included in the project on which the school's film class is working, but is assigned a role as a personal assistant to annoying, despotic Nellie (who, incidentally, was named after a *Little House on the Prairie* character):

Dawson: I'm on the crew for <i>Helmets of Glory</i> . I'll be P.A. for Nellie.	Dawson: Sono nel gruppo per <i>Caschi gloriosi</i> . Farò il papà di Nellie.	Dawson: I'm on the crew for <i>Helmets of Glory</i> . I'll be Nellie's dad .
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Example 3, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

The acronym "P.A.," Personal Assistant, was replaced with "papà" ('dad'), presumably for isochrony and articulatory synching purposes, yet it soon becomes clear that Dawson has no acting role (in the original version, he clearly specifies he is "on the crew," not the cast) and that Nellie deeply enjoys bossing him around, as is visible in the following example (which was tamed in the Italian version):

Nellie: We need more tape from the film lab. Go fetch, doggy Dawson.	Nellie: Ci serve altro nastro dal laboratorio cinematografico. Corri a prenderlo , Dawson.	Nellie: We need more tape from the film lab. Go get it , Dawson.
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Example 4, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

Meanwhile, Joey meets charming, upper-class boy Anderson, whose parents have just docked their boat in Capeside to go shopping for antiques. Anderson's attempt to flirt with Joey acquires a nonsensical undertone in the Italian version:

Anderson: So do you come with a name or just an attitude ?	Anderson: Tu hai anche un nome o sei un'extraterrestre ?	Anderson: So do you also have a name or are you an extraterrestrial ?
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Example 5, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

While “extraterrestre” was presumably chosen to mirror the abundance of [t] phonemes in the original line, the word makes little sense even as a joke (not to mention the fact that aliens can still have names, or at least abbreviations, as Joey herself learns from Spielberg in the pilot episode). Similarly, in the dubbed version of episode 1x10, Joey replies to Dawson’s panegyric of the horror genre by telling him to “study classic movies,” which sounds much less convincing than the original “save it for film class,” especially since the episode had started with the two friends watching *From Here to Eternity* (Fred Zinnemann, 1953).

<p>Dawson: I love the adrenaline rush. Besides, horror films provide positive examples of ordinary people overcoming their worst fears and conquering evil. Joey: Save it for film class, Dawson.</p>	<p>Dawson: È una scarica d'adrenalina. E poi un film horror fornisce esempi lampanti di gente comune che supera le proprie paure e sconfigge il male. Joey: Studiati i film classici, Dawson.</p>	<p>Dawson: It's an adrenaline rush. Besides, horror films provide positive examples of ordinary people overcoming their fears and conquering evil. Joey: Study classic movies, Dawson.</p>
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Example 6, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 1x10, “Modern Romance”

In the episode-long tribute to *The Breakfast Club* (1x07, “Detention”), the four protagonists (plus wildcard, *agent provocateur* Abby Morgan) earn themselves “Saturday detention,” which was translated as “a one-day suspension,” even though the entire story is based on their forced cohabitation of the school library during a Saturday, hence on a compulsory extra day at school, not on a day off for disciplinary reasons.

<p>Teacher: You just bought yourself Saturday detention.</p>	<p>Teacher: Si è appena guadagnata una sospensione di un giorno.</p>	<p>Teacher: You just earned a one-day suspension.</p>
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Example 7, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 1x07, “Detention”

In 2x07 the main characters are getting ready for the SAT standardized test for college admission; to prompt them to attend his study session, their teacher underlines the importance of test scores to get into a good university and jokes on the fact that the only other way to be admitted to a top college is to have their parents donate “a wing or two to an Ivy League institution.” However,

instead of generalizing the Ivy League reference (as had happened in *Beverly Hills, 90210*; see **5.1, example 19**), the adaptors mistakenly replaced it with “this precious institution,” i.e. the Capeside High School, even though a donation to it would hardly get the students any closer to a first-rate university.

Teacher: ...Unless, of course, your parents have dedicated at least a wing or two to an Ivy League institution.	Teacher: ... A meno che naturalmente i vostri genitori non abbiano donato un'ala o due a questo prezioso istituto.	Teacher: ...Unless, of course, your parents have dedicated at least a wing or two to this precious institution.
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Example 8, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x07, “The All-Nighter”

Adaptation mistakes or the adoption of an easier, “back door ideology” (see Bianchi in **6.2**) often generate translational short-circuits that are hard to ignore, considering that they generate solutions that verge on utter nonsense. However, in a deeply intertextual, meta-narrative show like *Dawson's Creek*, drops in translational voltage caused by inadequate renditions of ECRs can prove just as detrimental. For instance, in the following example the substitution of the reference to clothing retailer “J. Crew” with Sylvester Stallone’s character “Rambo” might work context-wise because Dawson is referring to a football player, but eliminates the ironic effect based on the fact that the cast wore J. Crew clothes (including Dawson’s trademark khaki trousers) and featured in the retailer’s 1998 catalogue.

Dawson: I'm the one who should be kissing her, Joey, not some J. Crew ad.	Dawson: Devo baciarla io, Joey, non quella sottospecie di Rambo.	Dawson: I should be kissing her, Joey, not that sort of Rambo.
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Example 9, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x02, “Dance”

Similarly, the frequent omission of references to other shows or movies may not be clearly perceivable in single instances, but it does affect the overall intertextual fabric, as is visible in the following examples:

Dawson: What have we learned from tonight's 90210 evening?	Dawson: Che cosa abbiamo imparato da una serata come questa?	Dawson: What have we learned from an evening like this?
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Example 10, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x02, “Dance”

Pacey: We are this far away from the Peach Pit .	Pacey: Siamo a un passo così da Beautiful .	Pacey: We are this far away from The Bold and the Beautiful .
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Example 11, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x20, "Reunited"

As noted in the introduction, the characters' comparison between their lives and *Beverly Hills, 90210* are among the numerous instances through which *Dawson's Creek* prompts its audience to acknowledge the self-reflexivity of the adolescent experience as constructed by a continuum of teen shows. Eliminating these reference broke a relevant link in the chain of intertextuality, in addition to making Dawson's comment sound much more tedious and moralistic and turning Pacey's appropriate allusion to the Peach Pit (the diner where the *90210* gang hangs out) into an off-the-mark reference to the soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful* (William J. Bell and Lee Phillip Bell, 1987 – present). Similarly, in episode 2x06 Pacey's mockery of Andie's enthusiasm for *Footloose* (Herbert Ross, 1984) and for the homecoming dance gets lost in translation through an unnecessary omission: *The Brady Bunch* (Sherwood Schwartz, 1969-1974) had been aired on Canale 5 since 1987, and even though the Italian audience might not have been too familiar with specific characters, a general reference to the show would have been enough to suggest an idealized adolescence rooted in participation in school activities.

Pacey: The homecoming dance? My God, we're hanging out with Marcia Brady .	Pacey: Il ballo degli ex-studenti? Pff, il modo peggiore di passare una serata .	Pacey: The homecoming dance? Mmh, the worst way to spend an evening .
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Example 12, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x06, "The Dance"

In the same scene, Pacey jokingly feigns an interest in Kevin Bacon's hairstyle, which is equally omitted even though the Italian audience would have been able to associate the actor with the movie (which the soundtrack gave away anyway):

Pacey: Now, Dawson, would you turn the video back on? I wanna see who's responsible for Kevin Bacon's devil-may-care hairdo .	Pacey: Ora, Dawson, se non ti dispiace, potresti riaccendere il video, per favore? Sono curioso di vedere come va a finire questo splendido balletto .	Pacey: Now, Dawson, would you turn the video back on? I wanna see how this wonderful dance number is going to end .
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Example 13, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x06, "The Dance"

Omission even affected the numerous references to *Star Wars*, a pivotal text in pop culture intertextuality and in the show itself: in the following example from episode 1x10, “The Scare,” it might have been wise to remove the references to processed cheese sauce “Cheez Whiz” (even though “ketchup” could have provided a good substitution) and to movie critic Roger Ebert (as had happened in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x02, **example 27**), yet the reference to the “dark side” could have been rendered with its official equivalent “lato oscuro,” instead of just “darkness”:

<p>Joey: I don't like watching horror movies that are loaded with Cheez Whiz. Dawson: Forgive me Roger Ebert. But I figured in honor of Friday the 13th tomorrow, a little horror marathon was mandatory. Joey: It's tired, Dawson, just like these movies. I mean, you have this fascination with the dark side.</p>	<p>Joey: A me non piace guardare questi stupidi film horror pieni di sangue e di cadaveri sbudellati. Dawson: Scusa se ho urtato la tua sensibilità, ma in onore di venerdì 13 domani una breve maratona horror è d'obbligo. Joey: E' scontato, Dawson, come questi film. Tu subisci il fascino delle tenebre.</p>	<p>Joey: I don't like watching horror movies that are loaded with blood and gutsed corpses. Dawson: Forgive me if I hurt your sensitivity. But I figured in honor of Friday the 13th tomorrow, a little horror marathon was mandatory. Joey: It's tired, Dawson, just like these movies. You have this fascination with darkness.</p>
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Example 14, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x10, “The Scare”

The same reference was likewise omitted in 3x14, “Valentine’s Day Massacre”:

<p>Joey: Well, I came to make sure that I don't lose Dawson to the dark side.</p>	<p>Joey: Sono qui per assicurarmi che Dawson non si perda nell'oscurità.</p>	<p>Joey: I came to make sure that I Dawson doesn't get lost in the dark.</p>
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Example 15, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 3x14, “Valentine’s Day Massacre”

Aside from the specific connotation they have in these two instances (Dawson eventually gets annoyed at Joey’s constant attempts to dictate how he should or should not behave), these references to the dark side also served as indicators of the role of *Star Wars* in daily conversation on the show, which never filtered in the Italian version. In the same episode, an entire dialogue based on *Star Wars* references is modified through repeated generalizations, thus completely eliminating the humorous component of the scene in which Dawson and Pacey debate whether to go to a wild senior party on Valentine’s Day:

<p>Pacey: Is this doubt I'm hearing, young Skywalker? Dawson: I'm not exactly cut out for a career in hedonism. Pacey: Pick up the phone already. This is your call to action, okay? Your hero's journey begins now, my friend. Dawson: Pacey Witter, the poor man's Yoda. Pacey: I've actually always seen myself more as the Han Solo type. Roguish good looks. Devil-may-care attitude. Jack: Guys. Guys, wait up. Pacey: Hey, here comes my Chewbacca.</p>	<p>Pacey: Che fai adesso? Già ci ripensi? Dawson: Scusa, ma io non sono tagliato per la carriera edonistica. Pacey: Dawson, prendi il telefono e usalo, è ora di entrare in azione. Da oggi inizia una nuova vita per noi. Dawson: Pacey Witter, l'uomo che non schioda. Pacey: Eh già, io mi sono sempre visto come un ragazzo atipico, rude ma affascinante. Uno che ama il rischio e non ha paura. Jack: Ragazzi! Un attimo, aspettate. Pacey: Ecco la mia famosa spalla.</p>	<p>Pacey: What are you doing? Are you having second thoughts? Dawson: Sorry, I'm not exactly cut out for a career in hedonism. Pacey: Dawson, pick up the phone and use it, it's time for action. Our new life starts today. Dawson: Pacey Witter, the man who doesn't give up. Pacey: Oh yes, I've always seen myself as an atypical guy, rude but charming. One who loves danger and is never afraid. Jack: Guys! Wait up. Pacey: Here comes my famous sidekick.</p>
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Example 16, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 3x14, "Valentine's Day Massacre"

In other examples the generalization or substitution of ECRs proved more reasonable, as is the case with Dawson's comparison between Pacey's sexual prowess and the late basketball player Wilt Chamberlain, who, according to his own autobiography, had slept with over 20,000 women:

<p>Dawson: He has sex once and he thinks he's Wilt Chamberlain.</p>	<p>Dawson: Ha fatto sesso solo una volta e si sente una star a luci rosse.</p>	<p>Dawson: He has sex once and he thinks he's a porn star.</p>
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Example 17, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x07, "Detention"

Given that a young audience in the early 2000s might have been unfamiliar with the player's off-court statistics (Chamberlain died in 1999, but had retired in 1974), using a more general "porn star" was probably more effective to allow for instant comprehension. The following example adopts an equally practical substitution, as Dawson puts his right thumb and index finger in the shape of an L on his forehead, mimicking the "loser" sign that would be later popularized by *Glee*, but was not easy to understand back then:

<p>Dawson: No, I pulled the pin, I tossed the grenade. I got a big old L right here.</p>	<p>Dawson: No, no, sono io che ho il cervello di una lumaca. Forse dovrebbero mettermi una L qui.</p>	<p>Dawson: No, no, it's that I have the brain of a snail. Maybe they should put me an L right here.</p>
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Example 18, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x01, "Emotions in Motion"

To insert a word that started with “L,” the adaptors chose “lumaca” (“snail”); while the term by itself sounds slightly unusual for the show, the hyperbole “cervello di una lumaca” (“brain of a snail”) is an existing Italian expression and is completely in character, since Dawson is prone to exaggeration (as is visible from the original version of this very same line). An equally functional adaptation strategy is the omission of Joey’s reference to the peanut butter candy “Reese’s Pieces” in *E.T.*, which have never been sold on the Italian market and thus had no official equivalent in the Italian version of the movie (they were translated as general “caramelle,” “candy”):

Joey: An alien who eats Reese's Pieces and flies around on a bicycle?	Joey: E non ti fa male la testa a vedere un bambino che va quasi sulla luna in bicicletta?	Joey: Don't you get a headache from seeing a kid who almost flies to the moon on a bicycle?
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Example 19, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 1x07, “Breakfast Club”

Along a similar line, it was probably a good choice to omit Joey’s reference to the Exxon Valdez disaster, since young viewers might have been unfamiliar with the massive 1989 oil spill:

Joey: So I spilled a little. It's not exactly the Exxon Valdez .	Joey: Stavo facendo il pieno e ne ho versata un po', non è esattamente la fine del mondo .	Joey: I was filling the tank and I spilled a little, it's not exactly the end of the world .
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Example 20, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 3x03, “None of the Above”

Nevertheless, in many similar cases it would have been possible for the adaptors to use alternative solutions that did not impoverish humor so markedly. For instance, in the previous example a general reference to an oil tanker accident would have still had a stronger impact than just “the end of the world.” Even when omission was the only possible way to render ECRs with which the target audience was not familiar, compensation strategies or even just a better rendition of the rest of the lines would have maintained at least part of the original flavor and humor. Consider the following example from 3x03, in which Dawson is watching TV with his new love interest Eve:

<p>Dawson: Movies are an art form. This is just the pabulum between beer commercials.</p> <p>Eve: Don't be such a snob, Dawson. I mean, a TV show is just like a movie. Except shorter, with built-in bathroom breaks. And you get a new sequel every week.</p> <p>Dawson: Sequels I hate on principle.</p> <p>Eve: Suit yourself. I'm hooked.</p> <p>Dawson: All right, you know what? Take Felicity, for example. Come on, you've seen an hour of whiny teen angst, you've seen them all. Don't take me wrong, she's pretty but what kind of heroine is she? She's indecisive, she's basically paralyzed by some romantic notions of the way things are supposed to be. If you ask me, she's kind of chatty.</p> <p>Eve: She's you!</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Dawson: You know what else I hate about television? They cut to commercial at the best part.</p> <p>[commercial break]</p>	<p>Dawson: I film sono una forma d'arte. Questa è solo robaccia tra una pubblicità e l'altra.</p> <p>Eve: Non essere così snob, Dawson. Un telefilm è esattamente come un film, solo più breve, con pause bagno incluse e una nuova puntata ogni settimana.</p> <p>Dawson: Io odio i telefilm a puntate.</p> <p>Eve: Peggio per te. Io li adoro.</p> <p>Dawson: Ecco. Ecco, vedi? Prendi questo qui, per esempio. Insomma, è solo un'ora di lamenti noiosissimi sui problemi degli adolescenti. E hai visto lei? Intendiamoci, è carina, ma che tipo di ragazza è? E' sempre indecisa, fossilizzata in una concezione romantica di come vorrebbe che fosse la realtà, in fondo è soltanto un'illusiva.</p> <p>Eve: Come te.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Dawson: Sai cos'altro odio della televisione? Mettono la pubblicità sempre sul più bello. [commercial break]</p>	<p>Dawson: Movies are an art form. This is just junk between commercials.</p> <p>Eve: Don't be such a snob, Dawson. I mean, a TV show is just like a movie. Except shorter, with built-in bathroom breaks. And you get a new episode every week.</p> <p>Dawson: I hate episode-based series.</p> <p>Eve: Suit yourself. I love them.</p> <p>Dawson: All right, you know what? Take this one, for example. Come on, it's only an hour of boring whining about teen issues. And did you see her? Don't take me wrong, she's pretty but what kind of girl is she? She's indecisive, she's basically fossilized in some romantic notion of the way she would want reality to be. If you ask me, she's delusional.</p> <p>Eve: Like you!</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Dawson: You know what else I hate about television? They cut to commercial at the best part.</p> <p>[commercial break]</p>
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Example 21, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 3x03, "None of the Above"

This long, wordy exchange epitomizes the whole spirit of the show; while attempting to establish the superiority of movies over television series (and trying to impress Eve, who is slightly older and much more liberal), Dawson inadvertently winds down one of his over-analytic monologues which eventually backfires, as Eve points out the similarity between him and the on-screen character he is claiming not to appreciate. The scene expresses the show's clever use of self-irony, which is iterated through the insertion of a commercial break on Dawson's unwitting cue. However, the Italian translation reduces the effect of this exchange by downplaying Dawson's jeremiad, replacing the bombastic term "pabulum" with a lower "junk," removing the reference to beer commercials, and substituting "sequels" with "episode-based TV series," which neutralizes his instinctive reaction to Eve's misstep (since sequels barely match the quality of the original movies, using this terms could only increase Dawson's aversion to television shows). While the omission of the reference to *Felicity* (a coeval WB show) was entirely justified, since the show had not yet been aired in Italy, the poor rendition of the rest of the dialogue affected the impact of the whole scene.

Next to ECRs, the area in which adaptation diverge more evidently from the original dialogues is invariably that of sexuality, as had happened in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The characters on *Dawson's Creek* do not use sexual references as a weapon, as Buffy did, but rather as a way to address the elephant in the room, the omnipresent sphere of sexuality that is both alluring and scary. Predictably, Dawson is the one who appears most intimidated by his own sex-related jokes, which has a funny effect in the original version, conveying the idea of an adolescent who is trying to act cool about things with which he has no experience. However, the adaptors frequently used substitution strategies to amend his lines: for instance, in 1x03 his suggestion to include an unexpected pregnancy in the script for the film class project is replaced with a reference to a sudden break-up:

Dawson: What if we give the split end some kind of a problem? Like drugs, alcohol, his girlfriend got knocked up ?	Dawson: Ci serve qualcosa di forte per risolvere il problema, come droga, alcol, la ragazza che lo pianta in asso .	Dawson: We need something big to solve the problem, like drugs, alcohol, his girlfriend dumping him .
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Example 22, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

In the same episode, Dawson's fear of Jen's physical involvement with other boys is tamed into a more general "bribe":

Dawson: What are you doing here? Jen: Just living a fantasy . Dawson: No, seriously. Jen: Cliff gave me a part. Dawson: No couch was involved , right?	Dawson: Che ci fai qui? Jen: Sono venuta a fare le pulizie . Dawson: No, seriamente. Jen: Cliff mi ha dato una parte. Dawson: Hai dovuto corromperlo per averla?	Dawson: What are you doing here? Jen: I came to clean up . Dawson: No, seriously. Jen: Cliff gave me a part. Dawson: Did you have to bribe him to get it?
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Example 23, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

Along the same line, in 2x06 Dawson's attempt to joke on his parents' previous sexual activity (which could be read as a means to exorcize both the image of his mother and father having sex on the coffee table and the idea that this will no longer happen now that they have separated) was replaced with a sanitized "hugging in the living room":

Dawson: So then my dad drove off and left my mother crying over the kitchen sink. God, what I wouldn't give now for them to go back to their coffee table sex antics.	Dawson: Quindi mio padre se n'è andato, lasciando mia madre in lacrime. Dio, quanto vorrei vederli di nuovo abbracciati nel loro salotto.	Dawson: So then my dad drove off and left my mother crying. God, what I wouldn't give to see them hugging in the living room again.
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Example 24, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x06, "The Dance"

In the following episode, Dawson is incredulous when Pacey, who is all but an academic overachiever, suggests they participate in a study group; in the Italian version his deliberate over-the-top reference to a brothel became a non-sexual "after-hour party":

Dawson: Different study session? Is this Pacey Witter code for party? Brothel? Trip to Disneyland?	Dawson: Un gruppo di studio? È un nome in codice per un party, un after-hour , una gita a Disneyland?	Dawson: A study group? Is this code for party? After-hour? Trip to Disneyland?
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Example 25, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x07 "The All-Nighter"

Dawson's self-righteous character may have been one of the reasons behind the frequent sanitization of his talk, yet the lines spoken by other, less inhibited protagonists often underwent a similar censorship process. In the same episode, Jen claims to enjoy getting to know fellow student Cliff by chatting during a break from studying, without the pressure of a date (though they do kiss in the end); yet her reference to sexuality is completely omitted:

Jen: I think we're getting to know each other minus sexual overtones.	Jen: Credo che questo sia uno dei modi migliori per conoscere una persona.	Jen: I think this is one of the best ways to get to know someone.
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Example 26, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 2x07 "The All-Nighter"

In 1x02, the purification of Jen's lines even introduces an element of homophobia: apparently the adaptors thought it was their duty to reassure the audience about Jen's "normality," instead of her heterosexuality (which she mentions to make sure that standoffish Joey does not misunderstand her uninterested compliment):

Jen: You have nice breasts. I mean, don't get the wrong idea, I'm completely hetero.	Jen: Hai un bel seno. Ora non farti idee sbagliate, sono del tutto normale.	Jen: You have nice breasts. I mean, don't get the wrong idea, I'm completely normal.
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Example 27, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x02, "Dance"

A scene from episode 2x07 in which the characters take a ‘purity test’ from a magazine then provides two highly censored examples; as the characters take turns in reading the questions aloud, Jen’s query about bondage is predictably tamed, which might have been a reasonable choice to comply with network restrictions, had it not been replaced with a weird reference to intercourse with a servant, which does not necessarily imply a “purer” act than bondage and makes little sense in a magazine that presumably targets middle-class youngsters, who are unlikely to even have servants (none of the protagonists does).

Jen: Number 13. Have you ever experimented with bondage?	Jen: Numero 13, rispondete. L'avete mai fatto con la servitù?	Jen: Number 13. Have you ever done it with a servant?
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Example 28, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 2x07, “The All-Nighter”

The same purity test contains an even trickier reference; as Pacey reads a question hinting at incest, his inborn sarcasm prompts him to joke that it might be a “Southern test”; in the Italian version, his comment is omitted, while the question is shifted from incest fantasies to being caught in the act by a relative:

Pacey: Have you ever been intimately aroused by a relative? So it's a Southern test?	Pacey: Domanda numero uno. Siete mai stati sorpresi in momenti intimi da un parente? Che razza di test è questo, eh?	Pacey: Have you ever been caught in an intimate moment by a relative? What kind of a test is this, eh?
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Example 29, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 2x07 “The All-Nighter”

While sanitizing strategies are applied to lines spoken by all protagonist, the depiction of Joey’s character is most deeply affected by explicit censorship techniques, which tend to tame her jokes and sexual references. For instance, in the pilot episode she tries to convince Dawson that adolescence is making their friendship awkward because it introduces topics about which they are unable to speak comfortably:

Joey: How often do you walk your dog ? [...] Dawson: Usually in the morning, with Katie Couric!	Quante volte giochi con il tuo gioiellino ? [...] Dawson: Di solito la mattina con Sharon Stone!	Joey: How often do you play with your little jewel ? [...] Dawson: Usually in the morning, with Sharon Stone!
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Example 30, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x01, "Emotions in Motion"

The adaptors correctly substituted the reference to journalist Katie Couric with the internationally recognizable actress Sharon Stone, another attractive public figure in her forties; yet Joey's made-up, ironic phrase "walk your dog" was translated with a formulaic, obsolete reference to the male "tiny jewel," which was also reprised in episode 1x07 to render the far wittier and more modern metaphor "joystick":

Joey: She might choose the guy with the faster car or the bigger bicep... Or the bigger joystick.	Joey: Non ammetti che possa preferire quello con la macchina più veloce, i bicipiti più forti o... il più grosso gioiellino.	Joey: She might choose the guy with the faster car or the bigger bicep... Or the bigger jewel.
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Example 31, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x07, "Breakfast Club"

In episode 1x03, Joey's insult aimed at Pacey was replaced with a non-vulgar "shut your mouth":

Joey: You butt plug!	Joey: Tappati la bocca!	Joey: Shut your mouth!
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Example 33, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

In the same episode, during Anderson's attempt to flirt with her (see **example 5**), Joey's ironic depiction of her father as the CEO of a tampon conglomerate is rendered without the reference to feminine products, a choice which conveys naïveté instead of her sarcastic reply to Anderson's description of his rich family:

Joey: He's a CEO of a huge conglomerate. Anderson: Really? Which one? Joey: One of the nation's best-selling tampons.	Joey: Il mio è a capo di un grosso gruppo. Anderson: Davvero? E quale? Joey: Uno dei più grossi della nazione.	Joey: He's a CEO of a huge conglomerate. Anderson: Really? Which one? Joey: One of the nation's largest.
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Example 34, *Dawson's Creek*, episode 1x03, "A Prelude to a Kiss"

Finally, when Dawson tells her that if she were less cynical, she could have her own Deborah Kerr moment, passionately kissing her sweetheart on the beach as the actress does in *From Here to Eternity*, Joey jests that she is not attracted by the idea of ending up with sand in her bathing suit; yet the ironic reference to her crotch was tamed into a far more poetic image of “sand between her fingers,” which obliterated her sarcasm:

Joey: Sand in my crotch. Heaven.	Joey: La sabbia tra le dita... il cielo...	Joey: Sand between my fingers... The sky...
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Example 32, *Dawson’s Creek*, episode 1x03, “A Prelude to a Kiss”

The Italian rendition of Joey’s lines poorly mirrored the witty, daring sarcasm in which she frequently indulged in the original version and many Italian viewers remember her as an irksome, conceited character. For instance, in March 2014, a follower of the facebook page for Radio DeeJay (a “cool,” youth-oriented Italian radio channel) commented on a post dedicated to Joey by saying that she recalled her as “the prototype of the annoying woman, a pain in the ass who scared countless men.”⁶⁶

The forum “Dawson’s Creek Italia” also features a very interesting thread on the dubbing of *Dawson’s Creek*:⁶⁷ even though the following comments were posted in March 2008, when viewers had had the opportunity to scrutinize the show on DVD, the accurate appraisal of the dubbing process and of the evolving AVT scenario illustrates the emergence of a self-appointed “more cultured viewership.” Female viewer Hillela thinks that the cultural substitution in **example 11** was not a wise move:

Replacing “Peach Pit” with “*Beautiful*” was a risky choice. Even if they did not want to use “Peach Pit” because they feared people wouldn’t understand it, they could have used “*Beverly Hills, 90210*” and all would have been resolved. However, the absurd distortions of *Dawson’s Creek*’s dubbing are also due to the fact that 10 years ago both dialogue adaptors and fans of the “US TV world” had a lower awareness, meaning that today it is possible to render dialogues with a higher fidelity to the original version because we (the viewers) know the other TV series much better and thus understand references to other series and we also know American culture better. We are “more cultured viewers,” so to speak.

⁶⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/RadioDeeJay/posts/10203599422693147> (last accessed July 2, 2014)

⁶⁷ Available at <http://dci.freeforumzone.leonardo.it/discussione.aspx?idd=7352960> (last accessed July 2, 2014)

Male user GoodOldChuck completes Hillela's analysis with references to the higher level of intertextuality introduced by shows like *Dawson's Creek* and to the development of the Internet:

We can proudly say that *Dawson's Creek* is the forefather of all modern US TV series, because it was one of the first shows that wove a similar amount of references to the TV/movie world (how many were there in the pilot episode? 46, or something like that...). So let's say that Italian dialogue adaptors were not yet used to this enormous fabric of references (and to this multiplicity of reading levels, I'd add) and they didn't always manage to render them effectively. Moreover, the Internet was much less widespread and developed 10 years ago. I imagine that today if a dialogue adaptor needs to check the Italian title of an American movie, he only has to type it into Google and he gets his result in less than two seconds.

Finally, female user AngelS84 agrees on the role of the Internet in the development of a higher viewer awareness:

I agree, today, in the Internet era, there's no way [for adaptors] to get away with [mistranslations]. They know how much attention we pay to these things, especially after the emergence of websites dedicated to TV show subtitles.

These comments pave the way for the analysis of viewership 2.0, which will be explored in the **next chapter** drawing examples from three teen (and post-teen) shows from the Internet age: *Gossip Girl*, *Glee*, and *The Big Bang Theory*.

CHAPTER 7. VIEWERSHIP 2.0 (LATE 2000s- EARLY 2010s)

Leonard: Sheldon, clear your weekend. Starting Saturday morning, *Star Wars* marathon!

Raj: Woo-hoo!

Sheldon: Movies or video-games? Or board games? Or trading card games? Or Legos? Or dress-up? Or comic books? Or dramatic readings of novelizations? Yes to all!

Leonard: We are going to play the on-line game.

Sheldon: The on-line game. Bully!

The Big Bang Theory, episode 5x19 – “The Weekend Vortex”

Expanding John Ellis’s (2000) definition of the ages of television, the late 2000s and early 2010s could be defined as the age of ‘Internet-driven plenty,’ if not of ‘overabundance.’ As described in **chapter 1**, the post-millennial mediascape pivots around narrowcasting, customization, transmediality, and global connectivity. The proliferation of both free and subscription-based channels is inscribed in a larger system of which the televisual medium proper is only a component, even if still the central one: other types of media allow for the time-shifted and place-shifted consumption of televisual texts (e.g. through tablets or other portable devices), for the expansion of fictional storyworlds (for instance, through comics, websites, or videogames) and for the numerous forms of audience appropriation and remediation described in **1.8**. The increasing diffusion of television-based interaction and social watching practices leads to a perspective from which a percentage of viewers 2.0 (whose ratio depends on the type of program) should be posited for most contemporary television productions. As Boeey (in Abbott 2010: 28) highlights, “this is the point of the sea-change when a cult audience [becomes] something which, rather than emerging unexpectedly through viewer response, [can] be factored in during production.” This does not imply that all television scripts must now be tailored to suit the needs of pro-active viewers alone, since casual consumption is not going to disappear soon (if at all), as frequently underlined throughout this dissertation. However, factoring in at least a portion of active viewers conversant with

technology is probably the wisest choice in the current long tail / niche marketing model, since the so-called “80/20 rule” has proven particularly valid for the entertainment industry: “for most consumer products, 80% of their purchases are made by 20% of their consumer base” (Jenkins 2006a: 72). Wilcox (in Abbott 2010: 31-32) defines cult texts as “characterized by textual plenitude” and highlights how “the audiences for these texts are unusual in their attentiveness, and [...] the makers seem to create their work in the hope (or sometimes expectation) of having such audiences.” In “Playing Hard to ‘Get’ – How to Write Cult TV” (in Abbott 2010: 45-53), screenwriter Jane Espenson (of *Buffy* fame) best summarizes the crux of writing for a viewership 2.0:

Don’t stuff a cookie in their mouth. Make them walk across the room for it. Make them look under the rug for it. They might even have to lift a floorboard. When they do that, they’re a cult. (45)

[producers should factor in] audience members who don’t just turn on the television faucet, but who actually buy DVDs, tune in for special events, and find their way to the network’s web sites for commentaries, video blogs, and downloads [...] – an audience that will go out of its ay for a cookie. (53)

The cookie metaphor could be expanded to include non-cult viewers, positing a tray of plain vanilla wafers that is placed right on the coffee table, so that the casual viewer can access it without leaving the couch, and a batch of almond-flavored, cinnamon-sprinkled, triple chocolate chip cookies that can only be tasted if the viewer participates in the baking process by retrieving the various ingredients scattered in the different aisles of the intertextual, transmedia grocery store. The largest part of the audience will probably still enjoy the vanilla wafers within easy reach, yet the viewers who decide to assist the creators/bakers will have the opportunity to taste an appetizing specialty that boasts the additional flavor of their own agency.

Collaborative ‘cookie-baking’ requires audiences to be familiar with all the tools of the trade: just as pastry chef assistants need to know how to use whisks, rolling pins, and spatulas, viewers 2.0 must be able to bring into play the Internet and the other new media that can boost the process of appropriation and remediation. Conversely, master bakers (creators and producers) can

(and should) factor in at least a portion of tech-savvy viewers who will be willing to play the game of transmediality and intertextuality with them. The role of technology and constant connectivity is particularly relevant in the lives of teenagers, who “live in an increasingly multi-mediated environment” (Ross in Ross and Stein 2008: 67). Showrunners and producers who aim at targeting a niche adolescent audience should thus consider that a significant portion of their ideal viewership is part of the so-called generation of ‘digital natives,’ who have been growing up within the digital paradigm and are accustomed to using technology to address most aspects of their lives, to shape their identities, and to engage in instant communication. Borrowing Ross’s definition of the former “N” network⁶⁸ (in Ross and Stein 2008: 61), it could be argued that over the past decade teen channels have been operating in “a digital communication environment that assumes teens and young adults are conversant in Internet and texting protocols.” **Chapter 6** illustrates the fundamental role of the WB network in paving the way for web-mediated viewer interaction; this chapter will present the new wave of teen and post-teen shows that posit an even savvier adolescent audience, to the point that they incorporate text messaging and tech slang (*Gossip Girl*) or scientific jargon and geek references (*The Big Bang Theory*) or that they are meant to be experienced through a variety of media outlets and in-person events (*Glee*). The analysis of a selection of examples from these three shows will outline a scenario in which the specific constituents of the identity of these series must be taken into consideration in the AVT process, highlighting the Italian viewers’ perception of the limits of the dubbed version (*Gossip Girl*), the positive effect of successful changes in dubbing strategies (*Glee*, from season 2 onwards) and the disastrous outcome of an adulterating adaptation (the first eight episodes of *The Big Bang Theory*).

⁶⁸ A Viacom channel now known as TeenNick.

7.1 - *Gossip Girl*

Gossip Girl ran from September 19, 2007 to December 17, 2012 and was one of the leading teen shows of the post-WB era, conceived as a way to renovate teen-targeted programming through a dedicated network (the CW) born from the merger of the two channels that had previously competed for the adolescent demographic, the WB and UPN. Wee (in Ross and Stein 2008: 57) describes the foundation of the CW as an attempt to join forces and to cater to an audience whose life was increasingly informed by other media:

Despite the WB's success in targeting a teen audience, the network continued to struggle for profitability. This became even more difficult when UPN, the other newly launched network, also began to target a youth audience. While the teen market was undeniably a significant one, the demographics' numbers were ultimately still insufficient to support two competing television networks targeting the same niche 18-34-year-old demographic, particularly in an environment where teens had access to multiple other forms of entertainment in a variety of media. On January 24, 2006, CBS, UPN's parent company, and Warner Bros. Entertainment, which controller the WB, announced that the two networks would merge into the CW, a new youth-oriented network that would pool the resources and programming from both the WB and UPN. While this decision confirms the value and viability of the teen market and of the narrowcasting strategy, it also highlights the intensely competitive nature of contemporary television and the limits of targeting any niche market.

Since then, the CW has confirmed its role as the main destination for teen shows in the US, first with the successful series inherited from the WB and UPN, such as *Gilmore Girls* (2006 – 2007; originally on the WB, 2000 – 2006), *Smallville* (2006 – 2011, originally on the WB, 2001 – 2006), *One Tree Hill* (2006 – 2012, initially on the WB, 2003 – 2006), and *Veronica Mars* (2006 – 2007, originally on UPN, 2004 – 2006), and then with a new wave of programs designed to cater to the late-2000s, early 2010s teen audience, including *90210*⁶⁹ (2008 – 2013), *The Vampire Diaries* (2009 – present), *Hart of Dixie* (2011 – present), and *The 100* (2014 – present).

Gossip Girl harbingered the new wave in 2007, facing the hard task of filling the void left by the end of *Gilmore Girls* and the much bemoaned cancellation of *Veronica Mars* (on which the **Conclusions** chapter will provide more details). To prove competitive in the new scenario,

⁶⁹ A contemporary spin-off of the original *Beverly Hills, 90210*, with a whole new set of characters and recurring guest stars from the original series.

showrunners Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage decided to explore a completely new direction for teen dramas, trading the typical small-town, middle-class setting for its utmost opposite – Manhattan’s flamboyant, aristocratic Upper East Side. *Gossip Girl* ventured much further than a mere East Coast transposition of its creators’ previous series, *The O.C.* (which had run on Fox from 2003 to 2007 and had portrayed the life of the opulent Orange County youth): the New York City setting led to an acceleration of the characters’ lives, of the anthology and horizontal storylines,⁷⁰ and of the show’s own language, as will be illustrated in 7.2. Francesca (2011: 110, my translation) observes that “if *Dawson’s Creek* seemed to exasperate the length of storyline development, *Gossip Girl* [...] end[ed] up reducing them to a minimum, almost to zero.” The show unfolds through the voice-over narration provided by the eponymous blogger, who is the true fulcrum of the series’ micro-society: even though she is only present through her voice (that of *Veronica Mars* lead actress Kristen Bell),⁷¹ *Gossip Girl* governs the lives of the young Upper East Siders (and often those of their parents as well) as the self-appointed “one and only source into the scandalous lives of Manhattan's elite.” Her constant blog updates reveal the dirtiest secrets of the main characters thanks to her capillary network of adolescent informers, who send in juicy news and incriminating snapshots. Her role is clearly closer to an omniscient narrator than to a believable character, as Calhoun (2009: 169) notes:

from the first episode of the show, it became clear that while *Gossip Girl* has agency in the plot and affects the lives of these characters (spreading information, encouraging characters to take action, ruining Blair’s birthday party), she’s a narrative device. Period. She has the omniscient ability to see and know things no army of cell-phones-in-hands gossipmongers could tell her.

And yet, as many clever in-show reflections underline, the point is not that a single person could not possibly know all the things that she posts, even with the best informers, but rather that the entire adolescent population of the Constance Billard / St Jude’s High School leads a media-saturated life which pivots around instant communication, information disclosure, and the dichotomy between

⁷⁰ Stories that begin and end within a single episode vs. longer story arcs that can last for an entire season (or even a whole show).

⁷¹ The revelation of her (or rather, his) identity in the series finale only appeared as a lame attempt to provide closure when the show was left with only eight episodes to wrap up loose ends, instead of an entire final season.

appearance and reality. The affluent Manhattan setting raises the bar of traditional adolescent dynamics: for the new-millennium ‘brat pack,’ Sundays involve five-star brunches, going from one place to another entails using the family’s limousine, and sleepovers turn into bar crawls and risky dares. The city pervades and informs the show with its specific, unique iconicity; popular landmarks are integrated with a careful representation of the series’ microcosm as deeply rooted in the real history and topography of the city. Even though the show does not claim historical-genealogical credibility, the authors aptly mixed the social and financial heritage of families like the Waldorfs and the Vanderbilts, cultural institutions like the Metropolitan Museum, financial scandals à la Tom Wolfe, and high-society events that resemble Gatsby’s parties (especially in the summer, which the protagonists spend at the Hamptons). The setting thus determines the construction of a new type of adolescents, who already lead an emancipated lifestyle and are used to playing a much riskier version of the game of life than that in which their small-town predecessors engaged. Francesca (2011: 122, my translation) notes that “Obama’s direct reference to ‘teens engaged in endless sexual escapades’ seems to be directly addressed to the shows that pivot around the generation of the ‘everything, now.’ [In] *Gossip Girl* [...], sex is consumed in a hurry, rarely has consequences and is only aimed at personal pleasure.” Feelings still play a key role as the driving force behind storyline developments, as is most evident in the fairy-tale relationship between hipster-minded it-girl Serena Van Der Woodsen and Brooklynite literary type Dan Humphrey (which adheres to more classic teen drama conventions) and in the troubled love story between ‘queen bee’ Blair Waldorf and tormented *kynikos* Chuck Bass (Vagni in Malagamba et al. 2010: 187), heir of the billionaire Bass Industries; yet the main focus of the show is not on what actually happens, but on how appearances are constructed and dismantled through the media-based disclosure of information and on how these processes shape the actual lives of the protagonists. As Calhoun (2009: 53) highlights, “rumors and reputations matter in this world, and the biggest secrets have no hope of staying unknown when the order of this mini-society is in turmoil and information travels at the speed of bytes.” In a society in which the most glamorous façades tend to conceal the darkest secrets, information acquires a higher

value than money itself; “the media seem to have swallowed reality, and there is no longer a way to understand which of the two is the original matrix” (Vagni in Malagamba et al. 2010: 181, my translation). Instant communication informs both the show’s specific language (see the next paragraph) and its later diegetic developments: the fifth season, which is irredeemably over the top content-wise⁷² (especially for a series that had already started out as particularly flamboyant), still provides an interesting meta-reflection on the role of the media in the diffusion of information, as several of the characters end up working for a scandal-revealing website and the role of Gossip Girl changes hands several times to fight power struggles that pivot on gossip as a currency.

7.2 *Gossip Girl* – Episode Analysis

The Italian dubbed version of *Gossip Girl* was first aired starting from January 19, 2008; the pilot episode inaugurated Mya, a new pay-TV channel in the Mediaset Premium package which was created to broadcast exclusive previews of American television shows “dedicated to relationships, feelings, and glamour”⁷³ within a few months from their US premiere. While the channel also features soap operas, documentaries, and action movies, its main palimpsest targets a female adolescent audience, with series such as *The Vampire Diaries*, *Hart of Dixie*, and *Pretty Little Liars* and reruns of *Gilmore Girls* and *One Tree Hill*. The promise to reduce the hiatus between the American and the Italian airings was respected in the case of *Gossip Girl*, which was launched four months after its US première – a significant improvement over the major teen shows described in the previous chapters. The show was dubbed in the Roman studio SEDIF (Società Edizioni Italiane Film, Society for the Italian Edition of Movies) and involved a rotating team of adaptors, as indicated in the following table:⁷⁴

⁷² The revelation that Chuck’s father’s death had only been staged represents the moment in which the show “jumped the shark” – an expression coined by comedian Jon Hein to indicate the beginning of the decline of a show, originating from a fifth-season episode of *Happy Days* in which Fonzie actually jumped over a shark while water-skiing.

⁷³ Description taken from the official Mya website, available at http://www.mediasetpremium.it/articolo/mya_252.html (accessed July 2, 2014)

⁷⁴ Available at <http://www.antoniogenna.net/doppiaggio/televisione/gossipgirl.htm> (accessed July 2, 2014)

- **Italian edition:** Antonio Restivo (Tomara) (seasons 1-5); Alberto Porto (season 6)
- **Italian dubbing:** SEDIF
- **Italian dialogues:**
 - Season 1: Lorena Bertini, Daniele Mancini, Lucia Paccoi, Olivia Papili, Claudia Pittelli, Rossella Pretto
 - Seasons 2-3: Emanuela Baroni, Emanuela D'Amico, Fabrizio Manfredi, Lucia Paccoi, Claudia Pittelli, Tatiana Visonà
 - Season 4: Emanuela D'Amico, Fabrizio Manfredi, Lorena Bertini, Veronica Cacciatore, Emiliano Coltorti, Daniele Giuliani, Rossella Pretto, Evita Zappadu
 - Season 5: Lorena Bertini, Emanuela D'Amico, Fabrizio Manfredi
 - Season 6: Lorena Bertini, Emanuela D'Amico, Veronica Cacciatore
- **Dubbing directors:**
 - Francesca Guadagno, Marco Guadagno

The cast of voice actors selected for the show was a blend of good and bad matches: on the one hand, casting Valentina Mari as Gossip Girl was consistent with the dubber's previous work on Kristen Bell's role as Veronica Mars and provided a sort of continuity between the two shows; on the other hand, some of the voices were much less suited to represent the original characters, especially Chuck Bass, to whom Daniele Raffaeli gave a much different pitch from Ed Westwick's deep, self-assured voice.

Main characters	Played by	Dubbed by
Gossip Girl (voice)	Kristen Bell	Valentina Mari
Serena Van Der Woodsen	Blake Lively	Francesca Manicone
Blair Waldorf	Leighton Meester	Eleonora Reti
Dan Humphrey	Penn Badgley	David Chevalier
Nate Archibald	Chace Crawford	Davide Perino
Chuck Bass	Ed Westwick	Daniele Raffaeli
Lily Van Der Woodsen	Kelly Rutherford	Francesca Guadagno
Rufus Humphrey	Matthew Settle	Francesco Bulckaen
Eleanor Waldorf	Florencia Lozano (ep.1.1) Margaret Colin (ep.1.2+)	Daniela D'Angelo
Vanessa Abrams	Jessica Szohr	Federica De Bortoli
Jenny Humphrey	Taylor Momsen	Alessia Amendola
Eric Van Der Woodsen	Connor Paolo	Alessio Puccio
Carter Baizen	Sebastian Stan	Andrea Mete
Georgina Sparks	Michelle Trachtenberg	Emanuela D'Amico

Aside from voice casting, one of the least successful traits of the Italian dubbing is the affectation with which the dubbers pronounce the names and terms that were left in English, which gives away the artificiality of the Italian dialogues and the overtness of their translation. While it is common for Italian dubbed shows to adopt an easier, “Italianized” pronunciation of foreign names so as to allow comprehension, some of the solutions used in *Gossip Girl* sound decidedly phony: for instance, Blair’s mother’s name, Eleanor, is pronounced as “eel-ya-nor,” even though the Italian equivalent “Eleonora” is much closer to the English pronunciation. User ‘marci’ on the Gossip-Girl.forumcommunity.net forum also comments on the exasperated pronunciation of the second “e” in “Serena,” joking that “she is from Manhattan, not downtown Milan.”⁷⁵ *Gossip Girl*’s trademark valediction “XOXO” (which stands for “hugs and kisses”) was also replaced with inconsistent solutions, among which “kiss kiss,” which conveys a fake American flavor and an idea of shallow, naïve female adolescence that poorly mirrors *Gossip Girl*’s irony and the high life led by the show’s protagonists. Together with “XOXO,” many of the show’s frequent acronyms and abbreviations were eliminated from the dubbed version, partly because of synching constraints, and partly – presumably – because the reduced time allotted for dubbing prompted the adaptors to choose easier, more immediate solutions (which they also did for numerous cultural references). A selection of examples⁷⁶ from the episodes listed in the following table will illustrate the main issues that penalized the effect of the dubbed version in spite of the higher care in fact-checking and term verification, which resulted in a much lower number of mistranslations than in the shows analyzed in the previous chapters.

Episode number	Title	Reason	Original broadcast (the CW)	Italian broadcast (Mya)
1x01	Pilot (Buongiorno Upper East Side)	Pilot / relationships	July 19, 2007	January 19, 2008
1x02	The Wild Brunch (Il brunch selvaggio)	Brunch / "Kiss on the lips" party	July 26, 2007	January 24, 2008

⁷⁵ <http://gossip-girl.forumcommunity.net/?t=23322663>

⁷⁶ Six of these examples were first presented in my paper “XOXO *Gossip Girl* and dubbing in the age of ‘Net lingo,’” in Elena Di Giovanni and Silvia Bruti (eds), *Audiovisual Translation Across Europe*; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013.

1x04	Bad News Blair (Che botte se incontri Blair)	Partying, acronyms	October 10, 2007	February 7, 2008
1x05	Dare Devil (id.)	Sleepover party	October 17, 2007	February 14, 2008
1x06	The Handmaiden's Tale (Il racconto dell'ancella)	Masked ball, Manhattan vs. Brooklyn	October 24, 2007	February 21, 2008
1x09	Blair Waldorf Must Pie! (La torta ti fa bella)	Thanksgiving / bulimia / body image / generation gap	November 28, 2007	March 13, 2008
1x10	Hi, Society (Amori in corso)	Ballo delle debuttanti / abuso di alcol	December 5, 2007	March 20, 2008
1x15	Desperately Seeking Serena (Cercasi Serena disperatamente)	SATs	April 28, 2008	August 21, 2008
1x16	All About My Brother (Tutto su mio fratello)	Homosexuality/ virginity/ slang and acronyms	May 5, 2008	August 21, 2008
2x06	New Haven Can Wait (Il nuovo paradiso può attendere)	Visiting Yale / fraternities	October 13, 2008	September 15, 2009
2x16	You've Got Yale! (L'ammissione a Yale)	College admission	January 1, 2009	May 27, 2009
2x25	The goodbye Gossip Girl (Arrivederci Gossip Girl)	End of the school year / cliques	May 18, 2009	July 29, 2009
3x02	The Freshman (La matricola)	Starting college	September 21, 2009	February 10, 2010

Table 7. *Gossip Girl* – Selected episodes

As previously mentioned, the frequency with which the adaptors employed omissions, rather than other, less abusive TL-oriented strategies such as substitutions or generalizations (or even SL-oriented strategies of retention, specification, or direct translation) suggests a general attempt to minimize the risk of drops in translational voltage while accelerating the adaptation process. Removing ECRs and plays on words clearly reduces the number of potential bumps, yet it also causes a marked impoverishment of the show's linguistic identity. For instance, in episode 1x04 sleazy Carter Baizen crashes Chuck's party dressed in a highly informal outfit after coming back from a community outreach trip; Chuck thus refers to his old-time rival as "the Sasquatch," which

was correctly maintained in ItaSA’s fansubs (“Bigfoot”), but rendered with a simpler “beggar” in the dubbed version:

Original version	Italian dubbing	Back translation	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation
Chuck: Who brought the Sasquatch ?	Chuck: E quel pezzente chi l'ha invitato?	Chuck: Who invited the beggar ?	Chuck: Chi ha portato Bigfoot ?	Chuck: Who brought Bigfoot ?

Example 1, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x04, “Bad News Blair”

In the following episode, Blair makes fun of Serena’s once-frequent antics by picturing her drunk in a limousine: aside from substituting “Schnapps” with “cocktails” (which could have been acceptable), the Italian version completely omits the reference to Serena baring her bottom from the limousine’s window while being driven through the area of the New York University dorms:

Blair:...while you get drunk on Schnapps and moon the NYU dorms from the limo.	Blair: ...mentre tu ti ubriacherai di cocktail dentro una limousine.	Blair:...while you get drunk on cocktails in a limousine.	Blair: ...mentre tu ti ubriacherai di liquori e mostrerai le chiappe ai dormitori dell'Università di New York dalla limousine.	Blair:...while you get drunk on liquor and show your bottom to the NYU dorms from the limo.
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Example 2, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x05, “Dare Devil”

In 1x06, Dan’s best friend Vanessa, who has just come back to town, suggests they have dinner at the Ukrainian restaurant where they used to go before she left, yet the Italian version omits both the reference to *pierogis* (a type of dumplings) and the name “Veselka,” an actual, popular diner in the East Village. Even though neither reference would have been transparent per se, both terms served to convey the idea of a previous relationship between the two characters, based on shared rituals.

Vanessa: Pirogis at Veselka ?	Vanessa: Mi porti a cena fuori ?	Vanessa: Will you take me out to dinner ?	Vanessa: Pierogi da Veselka ?	Vanessa: Pirogis at Veselka ?
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Example 3, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x06, “The Handmaiden's Tale”

Later on, Vanessa tries to make Dan’s younger sister Jenny realize that Blair is using her; the reference to Jane Austen, which conveyed Vanessa’s literary personality, was eliminated from the dubbed version, even though it would have been transparent for Italian viewers:

Vanessa: So this Blair girl used you as her slave. Jenny: No, I was her handmaiden. Vanessa: ‘Handmaiden’ is ‘Jane Austen’ for ‘slave.’	Vanessa: E così Blair ti ha usato come schiava. Jenny: No, ero la sua ancella. Vanessa: ‘ Ancella ’ è un modo carino per dire ‘schiava’.	Vanessa: So Blair used you as her slave. Jenny: No, I was her handmaiden. Vanessa: ‘Handmaiden’ is a nice way to say “slave”.	Vanessa: Quindi questa Blair ti ha usata come schiava? Jenny: No, ero la sua damigella . Vanessa: ‘ Damigella ’ e’ il corrispettivo di ‘schiava’ per Jane Austen .	Vanessa: So this Blair used you as her slave. Jenny: No, I was her handmaiden. Vanessa: ‘Handmaiden’ is equivalent to ‘slave’ for Jane Austen .
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Example 4, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x06, “The Handmaiden's Tale”

In episode 1x15, Vanessa’s reference to the *Wizard of Oz* was equally replaced with a non-specific sentence:

Vanessa: Subway. Click those heels all you want, you're not in Portland anymore.	Vanessa: Metropolitana. Il metodo migliore per girare la città è questo.	Vanessa: Subway. This is the best way to move around town.	Vanessa: Metropolitana. Batti quei tacchi quanto vuoi. Non sei piu' a Portland ormai.	Vanessa: Subway. Click those heels all you want, you're not in Portland anymore.
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Example 5, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x16, “All About My Brother”

Similarly, the larger-than-life expressions with which Blair refers to her personal battles and Dan’s mockery thereof are frequently rendered with much simpler sentences devoid of any epic, war-appropriate tone. While the meaning comes across anyway, the abundance of these choices impoverishes the overall effect of the dialogues:

Blair: So, what’s it gonna be? Aromatherapy or annihilation?	Blair: Allora, che cosa scegliamo? Ci lasciamo battere o la distruggiamo?	Blair: So, what do we choose? Do we let her win or do we destroy her?	Blair: Quindi... che si fa? Aromaterapia o annientamento?	Blair: So... what are we doing? Aromatherapy or annihilation?
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Example 6, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x15, “Desperately Searching Serena”

Serena: What if I do and Blair doesn't? Dan: Fire and - and brimstone and a lot of bitchy asides, death by Dorota.	Serena: Se vengo ammessa io e Blair no? Dan: Sarebbe una tragedia senza precedenti, non voglio neanche pensarci.	Serena: What if I get in and Blair doesn't? Dan: It would be an unprecedented tragedy, I don't even want to think about it	Serena: Cosa succede se io vengo presa e Blair no? Dan: Fuoco e fiamme, un sacco di velenose ripicche, ti farà uccidere da Dorota.	Serena: What if I get in and Blair doesn't? Dan: Fire and flames, lots of poisonous revenge, she'll have Dorota kill you.
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Example 7, *Gossip Girl*, episode 2x16, “You’ve Got Yale!”

In a limited number of instances, the adaptors did resort to substitution, rather than omission; however, in the following example “horror movie” proves much less effective than “the Warped Tour,” since Dan’s father Rufus used to play in a band and Serena’s mother Lily was a groupie of his, while tattoos have more to do with the music scene than with horror cinema. Retaining “the Warped Tour” would have worked better, since the popular music festival has also toured Europe and is well-known in the indie-rock scene in Italy (aside from the fact that the term “tour” made it clear that it referred to music).

Lily: I’d like to get out of here before someone throws me down and tattoos me. Rufus: This is Brooklyn, Lil, not the Warped Tour.	Lily: Vorrei andarmene prima che qualcuno mi legni per farmi un tatuaggio. Rufus: Siamo a Brooklyn, non in un film dell'orrore.	Lily: I’d like to get out of here before someone ties me and tattoos me. Rufus: This is Brooklyn, not a horror movie.	Lily: Vorrei uscire di qui prima che qualcuno mi butti a terra e mi tatui. Rufus: Questa e' Brooklyn, Lil, non il Warped Tour.	Lily: I’d like to get out of here before someone throws me down and tattoos me. Rufus: This is Brooklyn, Lil, not the Warped Tour.
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Example 8, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x02, “The Wild Brunch”

In the one case in which the dubbed version featured an effective cultural substitution, the original line probably did not need to be adapted in the first place, since the reference to Britney Spears alone sufficed as a metaphor for a sanctimonious teenage icon’s transformation into a bad girl:

Gossip Girl: Will J take the bait and go from Brady to Britney or will her goody-two-shoes mindset turn into the night's biggest buzz kill?	Gossip Girl: J. abbraccherà all'amo e si trasformerà da Hello Kitty a Catwoman o la sua indole da brava ragazza prevarrà e rovinerà i piani criminali di Blair?	Gossip Girl: Will J take the bait and go from Hello Kitty to Catwoman or will her goody-two-shoes mindset prevail and ruin Blair’s criminal plans?	Gossip Girl: J. abbraccherà e si trasformerà da una Brady a una Britney? O il suo atteggiamento da brava ragazza sarà la massima rovina della serata?	Gossip Girl: Will J take the bait and go from Brady to Britney or will her goody-two-shoes mindset turn into the night's biggest buzz kill?
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Example 9, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x05, “Dare Devil”

Food references and restaurant etiquette proved to be a frequent source of translational challenges. While placing an order at a café, Rufus checks with Lily to confirm that she still wants an extra (coffee) shot in her Americano, as she always did when they used to date; the Italian version replaced the double-caffeine drink (which suited Lily’s active personality) with a “tall” American coffee – a tautological definition, since Italians use “American coffee” to indicate caffeinated drinks with a high amount of water or milk. However, it should be noted that in this case the fansub version was not fully clear either, since it referred to a nondescript “addition” that could imply anything from coffee to milk and to flavored syrup:

Rufus: Two Americanos. One with an extra shot ?	Rufus: Due caffè americani. Lo prendi lungo , giusto?	Rufus: Two Americanos. You want yours tall , right?	Rufus: Due caffè americani... uno con l'aggiunta ?	Rufus: Two Americanos. One with an addition ?
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Example 10, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x02, “The Wild Brunch”

Episode 1x09, “Blair Waldorf Must Pie!”, focuses on Blair’s attempts to face Thanksgiving without her father, who has left her mother and moved to Paris with his male partner. In a moving scene that shows the girl’s fragility behind her queen bee mask, Blair discovers that Eleanor has deliberately gotten rid of the traditional pumpkin pie (which Blair used to bake with her father) and falls back into the chasm of bulimia, which she had previously battled for years. The meaning of this crucial moment was twisted in the Italian version, which had Eleanor say that she sent the pumpkin pie to the doorman “so that someone would appreciate it,” instead of as a Thanksgiving token, which suited her appearance-keeping façade much better (and made her remark much crueler).

Blair: Where’s Daddy’s pie? I don’t see his pumpkin pie? Eleanor: Well, there were so many delicious choices coming from the caterer, we just sent that one down to the	Blair: Dov’è la torta di zucca? Dov’è la torta di papà? Eleanor: Oh, beh, tesoro, il catering ha portato tante di quelle delizie che la tua torta l’abbiamo data al portiere. Se non	Blair: Where’s the pumpkin pie? Where’s Daddy’s pie? Eleanor: Well, honey, the caterer brought so many delicious choices, we just sent your cake down to	Blair: Dov’è la torta di papà? Non vedo la sua torta di zucca. Eleanor: Beh, il catering ha portato così tante cose deliziose, che quella abbiamo deciso di mandarla giu' al	Blair: Where’s Daddy’s pie? I don’t see his pumpkin pie? Eleanor: Well, the caterer brought so many delicious things, we just sent that one down to the doorman. What is
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doorman. Well, it is Thanksgiving after all, huh?	altro avrai qualcuno che l'apprezza, no?	the doorman. At least you'll have someone who appreciates it, right?	portiere. Cos'è il Ringraziamento dopo tutto?	Thanksgiving after all?
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Example 11, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x09, “Blair Waldorf Must Pie!”

In episode 2x25, Nate pretends to go “close the tab” (i.e. pay the check) to leave some privacy to Serena and Dan, yet in the Italian version he says he is going to the restroom (which his character was unlikely to announce so openly in a first-rate hotel bar).

Nate: I'm gonna go close the tab.	Nate: Vado in bagno.	Nate: I'm gonna go to the restroom.	Nate: Vado a saldare il conto.	Nate: I'm gonna go pay the check.
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Example 12, *Gossip Girl*, episode 2x25, “The Goodbye Gossip Girl”

In 1x02, Dan tries to impress Serena by taking her to an expensive restaurant which he cannot afford; when she pretends to use the “ladies room” (which was translated with the typical calque “bagno delle signore,” instead of the usual term “bagno”) to pay the check, he jokes that he is very comfortable in the company of beluga caviar, which became “Belgian caviar” in translation:

Serena: I, uh... Need to use the ladies' room. You think you'll be okay by yourself for a while? Dan: Yeah, come on, me and some beluga caviar? Can't get enough of the stuff.	Serena: Ehm, io devo andare un attimo al bagno delle signore, posso lasciarti un momento da solo? Dan: Sì, me ne sto col... caviale belga, ne mangerei fino a scoppiare.	Serena: I, uh... need to use the ladies' restroom. You think you'll be okay by yourself for a while? Dan: Yeah, come on, me and some Belgian caviar? I'd eat it until I explode.	Serena: Devo usare il bagno. Credi che ce la fai a stare da solo per un po'? Dan: Ma certo. Come no, io e un po' di caviale Beluga? Non ne ho mai abbastanza.	Serena: I, uh... Need to use the restroom. You think you'll be okay by yourself for a while? Dan: Yeah, come on, me and some beluga caviar? Can't get enough of the stuff.
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Example 13 *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x02, “The Wild Brunch”

The dichotomy between Manhattanites and Brooklyn “outsiders” is frequently underlined in the show. Dan’s sister Jenny is particularly determined to gain access to the in-crowd; in episode 1x15 she tries to get herself an upper-class boyfriend to climb the social ladder, but she initially dismisses cute Asher Hornsby thinking he is a dog walker. Her reference to the popular classified ads website Craigslist (a staple for American temporary job seekers) was omitted in the Italian version:

Jenny: What did I tell you about that dog walker ? There are no kings on Craigslist.	Jenny: Te l'ho già detto che quello non va bene. I re non fanno i dogsitter.	Jenny: I already told you that guy doesn't work? Kings don't work as dogsitters.	Jenny: Cosa ti ho detto di quel dog sitter? Non ci sono re sulla Craigslist.	Jenny: What did I tell you about that dog walker ? There are no kings on Craigslist.
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Example 14, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x15 “Desperately Seeking Serena”

In 3x02, Blair tries to export her queen bee status from the Upper East Side to the NYU microcosm, unsuccessfully attempting to convince her classmates that going out on weekend nights is unfashionable because it is “strictly bridge and tunnel”; admittedly, her disdain for the boroughs other than Manhattan was hard to convey in a sentence that maintained isochrony, and both the dubbed and the fansubbed versions employed the generalization “commuters”:

Blair: Wrong. You should never be seen at a club on a Saturday night. It's strictly bridge and tunnel on the weekends.	Blair: Sbagliato. Mai farsi vedere in un locale il sabato sera, il weekend è solo per i pendolari.	Blair: Wrong. You should never be seen at a club on a saturday night. Weekends are strictly for commuters.	Blair: Mai farsi vedere in un locale di sabato sera. Il weekend è per i pendolari.	Blair: You should never be seen at a club on a saturday night. Weekends are strictly for commuters.
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Example 15, *Gossip Girl*, episode 3x02, “The Freshman”

Blair’s aversion for public transportation and non-Manhattan residencies frequently emerges in her attempts to discredit Jenny’s Brooklyn origins; in the following example from episode 1x05, the fansubs maintained at least part of the reference to Jenny having to take the subway (and not a limousine), while the dubbed version merely refers to “going home,” which eliminates Blair’s snobbish insult:

Blair: It's a party, Jenny. Either you swallow that, or you swipe your MetroCard back home.	Blair: E' una festa, Jenny. O lo butti giù, oppure te ne torni a casa.	Blair: It's a party, Jenny. Either you swallow that, or go back home.	Blair: E' una festa, Jenny. O lo butti giù o ti ributti in metropolitana.	Blair: It's a party, Jenny. Either you swallow that, or you get yourself on a subway train.
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Example 16, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x05, “Dare Devil”

Card-swiping images are frequently used in a world in which most relationships are commoditized: in this example from episode 1x16, *Gossip Girl*’s sarcastic comment on the (false) rumor that Jenny

“swiped her V-card” at the register of Asher Hornsby (the dog walker who had turned out to be a young aristocrat) perfectly captures the commercial value of the transaction, while still hinting at Jenny’s usage of the MetroCard to move around town. Reproducing a similar comment in Italian was hard to accomplish, given the presence of the “V” abbreviation; yet while fansubs chose a more direct but relatively effective solution, the dubbed version ineffectually chose to revive an anachronistic flower metaphor, losing not only the original’s contemporary teen slang feel, but also its sarcastic hint at the monetary value of this piece of information (which Jenny actually spreads herself to cover up Asher’s homosexuality). Given that the line is spoken by Gossip Girl in voice-over, the adaptors could have used any more modern expression without articulatory syncing issues.

Gossip Girl: Asher Hornsby overheard bragging that Little J swiped her V card at his register.	Gossip Girl: Ho sentito Asher vantarsi di aver finalmente colto il fiore della piccola J.	Gossip Girl: I heard Asher bragging that he had finally picked Little J’s flower.	Gossip Girl: Hanno sentito Asher Hornsby vantarsi del fatto che la piccola Jenny gli ha ceduto la sua verginità.	Gossip Girl: Asher Hornsby overheard bragging that Little J gave him her virginity.
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Example 17, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x16, “All About My Brother”

Moreover, the anachronistic sexual metaphor does not appear to be determined by a censorship strategy, since the dubbed version displays an ambivalent treatment of sexual references, starting from the very first episode, in which Chuck’s reference to ‘having sex’ was replaced with the stronger, more vulgar form equivalent to ‘to fuck’:

Chuck: Nathaniel, you're finally about to have sex with your girlfriend.	Chuck: Nate, stai finalmente per scopare con la tua ragazza.	Chuck: Nate, you're finally about to fuck your girlfriend.	Chuck: Nathaniel, finalmente stai per fare sesso con la tua ragazza.	Chuck: Nathaniel, you're finally about to have sex with your girlfriend.
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Example 18, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x01, Pilot

Yet the areas that are most affected by the abundance of omissions in the dubbed version are those which should have been translated more carefully since they represented the main features of the show’s techno-politan sociolect – acronyms and technology-related slang. The media-based society

in which the characters are fully integrated caters to a viewership that is equally “tech-savvy” (Schwartz, quoted in Calhoun 2009: 14) and media-literate, yet many references to technology were eliminated from the dubbed version. In episode 1x06, Vanessa promises to “deprogram” Jenny once she gets back from attending an Upper East Side party; however, the adaptors decided to use a more general ‘to brainwash’ instead of the equivalent verb ‘riprogrammare,’ which would have provided a better solution in terms of both articulatory synching and semantic value, maintaining the reference to a sort of mental software necessary to live the soulless, quasi-robotic existence of the rich and famous:

Vanessa: We'll deprogram you later.	Vanessa: Più tardi ti farò il lavaggio del cervello .	Vanessa: I'll brainwash you later.	Vanessa: Ti deprogrammeremo dopo.	Vanessa: We'll deprogram you later.
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Example 19, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x06, “The Handmaiden's Tale”

In 1x04, Nate’s request to receive the address of the poker club via text message was entirely removed from the dubbed version:

Nate: Hey, hey man. Is that card game tonight? Carter: Yeah. Nate: Text me the address later.	Nate: Ehi, aspetta. Stasera giochi a carte? Carter: Sì. Nate: Allora cerco di raggiungerti.	Nate: Hey, wait. Are you playing cards tonight? Carter: Yeah. Nate: I'll try to come meet you.	Nate: Ehi. Ehi, amico. Stasera c'e' quella partita di carte? Carter: Sì. Nate: Ehi, mandami l'indirizzo via SMS dopo.	Nate: Hey, hey man. Is that card game tonight? Carter: Yeah. Nate: Hey, text me the address later.
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Example 20, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x04, “Bad News Blair”

Similarly, in episode 1x15, after the Asher Hornsby debacle with which Jenny fails to ‘dethrone’ Blair, the latter establishes her own return to power by organizing a multi-location night out and promising to have her maid Dorota “blackberry everyone an itinerary.” However, the generalization “I’ll e-mail you the address” in the dubbed version obliterates all three of the elements that Blair used to emphasize her restored status: her personal servant (“Dorota”), her ability to organize articulated, unforgettable nights out (“itinerary,” as opposed to a single-venue party) and her

efficient use of technology (the verb “to blackberry,” which implies that her friends will receive the itinerary directly on their portable devices, eliminating the need to print or write down addresses).

Blair: I'll have Dorota Blackberry everyone an itinerary .	Blair: Vi mando una mail con l'indirizzo .	Blair: I'll e-mail you the address .	Blair: Vi farò spedire da Dorota l'itinerario sul BlackBerry .	Blair: I'll have Dorota send you the itinerary via Blackberry .
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Example 21, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x16, “All About My Brother”

Technological terminology is not the only way in which the omnipresent media tools affect the show's linguistic identity: the fast-ticking metropolitan clock based on jam-packed ‘New York minutes’ prompts the characters to incorporate language compression techniques from text messaging into their own daily conversations. Acronyms played a crucial role in the development and promotion of the show, since their usage provided a token of linguistic exclusiveness both for the characters and for the viewers. The CW even designed controversial but effective promotional campaigns for the second and third seasons based on the acronyms “OMFG” (“Oh My F*** God”) and “WTF,” which allegedly stood for “Watch This Fall.” Nevertheless, the abundant in-show acronyms were almost always eliminated in the dubbed version. Admittedly, acronyms rarely have effective isochronic equivalents, yet their regular obliteration affected the overall perception of the show and could have been avoided in the numerous cases in which they were spoken in voice-over. For instance, the acronym BFF (“Best Friends Forever”) could have been explained once and then retained in the following occurrences, considering that it is now used in Italian as well (usually with a sarcastic connotation):

Gossip Girl: Sure, they're BFFs ...	Gossip Girl: Erano molto amiche ...	Gossip Girl: They were good friends ...	Gossip Girl: Certo, loro sono 'Migliori Amiche Per Sempre' ...	Gossip Girl: Sure, they're 'Best Friends Forever' ...
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Example 22, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x01, Pilot

Gossip Girl: As much as a BFF can make you go WTF ...	Gossip Girl: Anche se a volte capita che gli amici ci fanno saltare i nervi ...	Gossip Girl: Even if sometimes it happens that friends irritate us...	Gossip Girl: Per quanto un migliore amico possa farti arrabbiare ...	Gossip Girl: As much as a best friend can make you mad ...
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Example 23, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x04, “Bad News Blair”

Acronyms involving swearwords are harder to retain; however, if eliminating “WTF” (“What The Fuck”) was a reasonable solution, Chuck’s line in the following example could have been rendered with a more characterizing sentence, perhaps substituting the “F-words” with an alliteration, since Ed Westwick is clearly seen mouthing [f] sounds twice:

Chuck: Don’t F with an F-er!	Chuck: Chi vuoi prendere in giro?	Chuck: Who do you think you’re kidding?	Chuck: Non cercare di fregare il maestro.	Chuck: Don’t try to trick the master.
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Example 24, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x10, “Hi, Society”

Similarly, in episode 3x02 Blair’s loss of her queen bee status has a much different flavor when expressed in plain words, rather than with sarcastic acronyms; the Italian equivalent “MST”. (“Malattie Sessualmente Trasmissibili,” STDs) used in the fansubs might have been too opaque for the dubbed version, but there was still plenty of room to maintain “VIP.” and replace “VD” with an alliterating word.

Gossip Girl: Spotted: Blair Waldorf going from VIP to VD.	Gossip Girl: Avvistata: Blair Waldorf spodestata da regina.	Gossip Girl: Spotted: Blair Waldorf dethroned from her queen role.	Gossip Girl: Avvistata: Blair Waldorf che da VIP diventa MST.	Gossip Girl: Spotted: Blair Waldorf going from VIP to VD.
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Example 25, *Gossip Girl*, episode 3x02, “The Freshman”

The most detrimental acronym omission, however, is the greeting “XOXO,” which *Gossip Girl* uses at the end of each episode. Even though there was no easy way to retain the acronym, the narrator’s trademark leave-taking lost much of its appeal in the Italian version, not just because it was initially replaced with the aforementioned, phony-sounding “Kiss kiss,” but also because the adaptors kept going back and forth from one translation to another, as illustrated in the following examples, when

the whole point of “XOXO” was to restate the comradeship between the blogger and the audience through a codified salutation.

Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss! [fake American flavor]	[not translated]	[not translated]
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Example 26, *Gossip Girl*, episode 1x01, Pilot

Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Baci e abbracci , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Kisses and hugs , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl
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Example 27, *Gossip Girl*, episode 2x06, “New Haven Can Wait”

Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.
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Example 28, *Gossip Girl*, episode 2x25, “The Goodbye Gossip Girl”

As anticipated in **chapter 3**, episode titles underwent a similarly inconsistent adaptation, which further undermined the intertextual fabric of the American version. Original episode titles combined hints to their own narrative content with trademark puns on movie or book references, placing the stories and characters in a direct connection with other literary and cinematic texts, while the Italian titles oscillated between effective renditions (or transcreations) of both the puns and the diegetic references and poor adaptations that reflected neither of the two components, most frequently settling on an intermediate level in which only one of the two elements was maintained, as highlighted in the following table:

Ep.	Original title	References in the original title	Italian translation	References in the Italian version
1x03	Poison Ivy	<i>Poison Ivy</i> (Katt Shea, 1992)	La mia peggiore amica	Official equivalent: Italian title of the movie
1x09	Blair Waldorf Must Pie!	<i>John Tucker Must Die</i> (Betty Thomas, 2006)	La torta ti fa bella	Substitution: pun on the Italian title of <i>Death Becomes Her</i> (<i>La morte ti fa bella</i> ; Robert Zemeckis, 1992).

1x10	Hi, Society	<i>High Society</i> (Charles Walters, 1956)	Amori in corso	No reference to the movie or the debutante ball; later used for 2x13 as well.
1x14	The Blair Bitch Project	<i>The Blair Witch Project</i> (Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, 1999).	Vite da strega	Reference to a different show/movie, presumably for censorship purposes (<i>Bewitched</i> ; series by Sol Saks 1964 – 1972, movie by Nora Ephron, 2005)
1x18	Much “I do” about nothing	Shakespeare’s <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	Molto terrore per nulla	Altered Shakespearean title, no marriage reference.
2x06	New Haven Can Wait	<i>Heaven Can Wait</i> (Warren Beatty and Buck Henry, 1978)	Il nuovo paradiso può attendere	Attempted pun on the Italian title <i>Il paradiso può attendere</i> ; no Yale reference.
2x08	Pret-a-Poor-J	<i>Prêt-à-Porter</i> (Robert Altman, 1994)	Dillo con parole tue	No reference to the movie or to fashion.
2x13	O Brother, Where Bart Thou?	<i>O Brother, Where Bart Thou?</i> (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2000)	Amori in corso	No reference to the movie; already used for 1x10.
2x16	You’ve Got Yale!	<i>You’ve Got Mail!</i> (Nora Ephron, 1998)	L’ammissione a Yale	No reference to the movie
3x09	They Shoot Humphreys, Don’t They?	<i>They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?</i> (Sydney Pollack, 1969)	Il ballo delle debuttanti	No reference to the movie; later used for 6x05 as well.
3x12	The Debarred	<i>The Departed</i> (Martin Scorsese, 2006)	Il fantasma di Bart	No reference to the movie.
3x16	Inglorious Bassterds	<i>Inglourious Basterds</i> (Quentin Tarantino and Eli Roth, 2009)	Bass-Tardi Senza Gloria	Official equivalent: Italian title of the movie (<i>Bastardi senza gloria</i>).
6x01	Gone Maybe Gone	<i>Gone Baby Gone</i> (Ben Affleck, 2007)	Cercasi Serena disperatamente	No reference to the movie; already used for 1x15.
6x05	Monstrous Ball	<i>Monster’s Ball</i> (Marc Forster, 2001)	Il ballo delle debuttanti	No reference to the movie; already used for 3x09.

Table 7. *Gossip Girl* – Episode titles

In a few cases the adaptors managed to maintain or recreate references effectively: for instance, “La mia peggiore amica” (1x03) corresponds to the Italian title of the movies *Poison Ivy* and equally hints at complicated friendships; “Bass-Tardi senza Gloria” maintains the pun in “Inglorious Bassterds” (blending Chuck’s last name “Bass” with the 2009 movie *Inglourious Basterds*); and “La torta ti fa bella” (1x09) recreates the pun on “pie” by referencing the Italian title of *Death Becomes Her, La Morte ti fa Bella* (Robert Zemeckis, 1992). In many other instances, however, puns and/or

storyline references were entirely omitted, even when it would have been possible to retain the original English titles (1x14, “The Blair Bitch Project,” in which “bitch” is used as “evil, annoying”; 2x08, “Pret-a-Poor-J”; 2x13, “O Brother, Where Bart Thou?”; 2x16, “You’ve Got Yale!”). Several Italian titles were also used for different episodes: “Amori in corso” (“Love stories in progress”) indicates both 1x10 and 2x13, “Il ballo delle debuttanti” (“The debutante ball” designates both 3x09 and 6x05, and “Cercasi Serena Disperatamente” (“Desperately Seeking Serena”) was used for both 1x15 and 6x01, favoring the perception of the show as a highly repetitive narrative. Poorly translated titles would probably have had a limited effect on pre-DVD and pre-Internet audiences, yet viewers 2.0 pays far more attention to details that were previously negligible; an Italian user on a former *Gossip Girl* forum even commented “I hate it when they change the episode titles, the original ones are brilliant while ours are completely unrelated to the show.”⁷⁷ Many Italian viewers acknowledged or even predicted the effect of the general impoverishment of the dubbed version, correctly assessing that it would affect ratings, as is visible from the following comments⁷⁸ (my translation; emphasis added):

I’m awaiting the Italian dubbed version anyway to see what kind of *catastrophes* it comes up with!”

(posted on <http://gossipgirlvideos.com/chuckblair-quella-che-non-sei> in October 2010; thread no longer accessible)

The Italian dubber for Chuck Bass is *an insult*... I had heard a couple of lines on YouTube and after two episodes I can confirm my first impression: AWFUL! Moreover, as was easy to foresee since more than half the audience *has already seen the show* on digital TV or elsewhere, last night the première scored a mere 2 million viewers; it will definitely be moved to the afternoon slot. Too bad. But not for me, I have *already watched it all*.”

(posted on <http://spuffy87.spaces.live.com/blog/cns!48D18C55F64FDFCC!2809> in January 2009; thread no longer accessible)

“The Italian dubbing *belittles* the show. I am watching *Gossip Girl* in English (with Italian fansubs, my English is *not so good yet*)... And Blair’s lines are so much better when spoken in HER voice!”

(posted on <http://www.mentedubbiosa.com/blog/2009/09/17/its-a-me-mario/> in September 2009; thread no longer accessible)

⁷⁷ <http://forum.teamworld.it/forum1657/122340-gossip-girl-2.html> (01/2009); thread no longer accessible. Emphasis added.

⁷⁸ These comments were included in my paper “XOXO *Gossip Girl* and dubbing in the age of ‘Net lingo,’” in Elena Di Giovanni and Silvia Bruti (eds), *Audiovisual Translation Across Europe*; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013.

These comments bear witness to the evolved reception skills of the Italian audience, who proved to be aware of the difference between the fast-paced original dialogues, replete with acronyms, puns, and cultural references, and the flattened dubbed version, the effect of which was also exacerbated by inadequate voice-casting choices. *Gossip Girl* thus provides additional proof that AVT practices need to be reassessed to cater to a viewership that has plenty of opportunities to appraise each show's specific identity and will hardly tolerate a traditional 'anything goes' policy, as the two other shows analyzed in this chapter will also demonstrate.

7.3 - *Glee*

The musical dramedy *Glee* was created by Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan and premiered on Fox on May 19, 2009. As of July 2014, the show has been confirmed for its sixth and final season, which will comprise 13 episodes and will be aired starting from January 2015. While the CW explored the fast-paced, tech-informed lives of the Upper East Siders, Fox chose to revamp traditional teen drama conventions by pairing them with an innovative musical format, addressing classic teen fiction dynamics through music and singing. The show is set at the fictional William McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio, and pivots around the glee club "New Directions," led by Spanish teacher Will Schuester and comprising a motley crew of social outcasts that integrate traditional teenpic stock types (the 'reformed jock' Finn; the 'delinquent' Puck; the cheerleaders Quinn, Santana, and Brittany) with more modern stereotypes such as the high-maintenance but kind-hearted diva (Rachel); the male homosexual 'fashionista' (Kurt); the overweight African-American girl (Mercedes); the Asian-American *goth girl* (Tina); and the disabled geek (Artie). As they sing and dance their way up to the national glee championship and compete for funding against the all-popular Cheerios, the cheerleading team marshaled by iron lady Sue Sylvester, the protagonists learn to bond and to channel musical energy into finding their own place in the world.

While this losers-versus-the-in-crowd premise echoes countless teen movies (*Bring it On* or *Mean Girls*, to name but two), what makes *Glee* stand out in the high school dramedy tradition is its revolutionary format. Each 44-minute episode constitutes an actual musical show with diegetically-relevant tunes performed by the show's own cast; if music already played a key role in the construction of televised adolescence (as highlighted in **chapter 4**), *Glee*'s entire diegetic and aesthetic structure relies on musical numbers, complete with matching stage design, costumes and choreographies. While the horizontal plots based on pursuing success in the music field only have a limited appeal, since the repetitive storylines in which the glee club risks losing one or more members or flunking the sectional/regional/national championship soon cease to create narrative suspense, the passion and dedication with which the cast members embrace the entire spectrum of musical genres remains fresh throughout the seasons and the lyrics of the numbers they perform are always consistent with their own lives and misfortunes. The show's self-irony (especially in terms of social stereotyping) and its wholehearted and well-executed tributes to the power of music clearly target a type of musically-minded viewers 2.0 who are interested in the singing and dancing numbers as much as in plot developments and are willing to re-mediate both the fictional world of the show and the actual performances. This type of cult viewership has been on the rise over the past decade with the advent of 'younger,' hip shows on both Broadway and London's West End (such as *Rent* and *Wicked*) and the explosion of music-based television programs, ranging from teen-oriented series like *Hannah Montana* (Michael Poryes, 2006 – 2011) to acclaimed talent shows such as *American Idol* (Simon Fuller, 2002 – present) and *America's Got Talent* (Simon Cowell, 2006 – present). Non-musical television series also began to feature musical episodes as a special treat to their regular fans and a way to explore different narrative formats, starting from *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*'s pioneer episode 6x07 "Once More with Feeling" (see **chapter 6**) and spanning to shows as diverse as the sit-com *Scrubs* (Bill Lawrence, 2001 – 2010; episode 6x06, "My Musical," 2007) and the medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* (Shonda Rhimes, 2005 – present; episode 7x17, "Song Beneath the Song," 2011). *Glee* was not the first television show that transformed the

exceptionality of musical episodes into a regular format, yet previous attempts like the Spanish drama *Paso Adelante* (Daniel Ecija and Ernesto Pozuello, 2002 – 2005) lacked its ironic appeal and its ability to cater to the audience 2.0; according to CNN's Lisa Respers France (2009: online) "ordinarily, a show about a group of high school students who at any moment might burst into song is a recipe for disaster as far as most adults are concerned. But *Glee* does it with such quirky charm and bravado that it is impossible not to get swept up." Stereotyping is addressed in an alluring and entertaining way, as characters step in and out of their social roles and try to smooth the edges of their personalities, but make repeated mistakes, as anyone who is experiencing a phase of transition would do. Musical numbers are chosen wisely from contemporary chart toppers, older ballads, classic rock and rhythm and blues, and Broadway musicals, both to maintain the show's fresh and ironic outlook and to mirror the different emotions with which the characters have to deal; a moving example is episode 5x03, "The Quarterback," in which each cast member sings a tribute to the memory of Finn and thus of actor Cory Monteith, who died on July 13, 2013 (the songs include "Seasons of Love" from the musical *Rent*, The Pretenders' "I'll Stand by You," and Bob Dylan's "Make You Feel My Love").

Glee also stands out for its open treatment of LGBT themes: gay creator Ryan Murphy strongly advocates televisual visibility for non-heteronormative couples, and even though he certainly has less room for action on a primetime show than he does in other works of his like *Nip/Tuck* (2003 – 2010) and especially *American Horror Story* (2011 – present), he did include a genuine depiction of both male and female homosexual relationships and transgender identity on *Glee*. As Francesca (2011: 123, my translation) underlines,

until the end of the 2000s, homosexuality, a theme that is often present in teen dramas of all eras, had almost always been portrayed with a gaze that could oscillate between compassion and reprehension. *Dawson's Creek's* Jack, for instance, was depicted as a sort of kind brother to Jen Lindley and had no real personality of his own until season 5, except for stereotypical traits. [...] It is with *Glee* that we finally witness a complete, unbiased representation of several homosexual characters.

Kurt's struggle for acceptance by his peers and his father is portrayed from season one onwards; even though his depiction as a very effeminate gay boy who wears flamboyant clothes and has a

passion for Madonna has sparked much controversy (some claimed that it challenged television conventions too openly, while others complained that it reinforced stereotypes), actor Chris Colfer's astonishing performance and Murphy's writing have undoubtedly done much to foster the representation of homosexuality on family-friendly shows, especially through Kurt's first serious relationship with Blaine Anderson (which includes a delicate depiction of their implied first intercourse). Heteronormativity is also challenged by cheerleading best friends Brittany Pierce and Santana Lopez, whose "friends with benefits" arrangement later develops into a full relationship, even though both girls experiment with heterosexual liaisons as well, and by Wade "Unique" Adams, the first transgender character ever portrayed in a teen show; as she fights for self-definition and acceptance, Unique learns to use music and acting to literally perform her gender.

Murphy, Falchuk, and Brennan also managed to design the show as an Expanded Text that favored user remediation and transmedia spreadability, combining industry-driven advertising with the fans' grassroots endorsement. The top-down promotional campaign for *Glee* made extensive use of brand stretching and experiential marketing strategies based on a wide range of ancillary products through which the viewers' could step right into the show's storyworld. Aside from the predictable distribution of the show's music (according to Wikipedia, *Glee*'s impressive discography boasts "sixteen soundtrack albums, six compilation albums, eleven EPs, and four hundred and fifty singles"),⁷⁹ Fox licensed the *Glee* chapter of the hit *Karaoke Revolution* franchise for Nintendo Wii, the pay-per-song iPhone app *Glee Karaoke*, and the meta-performance film *Glee: The 3D Concert Movie* (Kevin Tancharoen, 2011), based on the cast's 2011 tour. The revenue table for Season 1 (2009 – 2010) compiled by *The Hollywood Reporter*⁸⁰ highlights the multimedia marketability of the series, which earned over three hundred million dollars against a seventy-five million dollar outlay. Advertising was only responsible for a third of the assessed revenues: the remaining two thirds originated from worldwide album sales and from consumer products and DVDs. Yet the show also enjoys a costless bottom-up promotion volunteered by its highly creative

⁷⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee_discography (accessed July 2, 2014).

⁸⁰ <http://www.badtvtv.it/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/4-FEA-Glee-Portfolio.jpg> (accessed July 2, 2014).

fans, the self-appointed gleeks, who share a sort of ‘loser pride’ (as they stress by imitating the show’s trademark ‘Loser’ sign, the shape of an L on one’s forehead which had represented a translational challenge for the adaptors of *Dawson’s Creek*; see 6.4) and mirror the bonding dynamics of the glee club by recreating online communities based on their love for the show and on their desire to interact with it (for instance, see <http://gleeksunited.com/>). Fans have contributed to the diffusion and re-mediation of the show so much that the *Glee* phenomenon has been defined as “a user-generated musical epidemic” (Zaccone 2009: online, my translation). *Glee* fans tend to be not only affirmational (celebrating the show as it is) but also transformational,⁸¹ determined to make the show their own by writing *Glee* fanfiction, organizing flash mobs and tributes, and “spend[ing] hours perfecting videos based on the musical numbers featured in the series” (Oliver 2010: 74). This level of engagement clearly requires a significant amount of time and energy and does not necessarily improve ratings: Colletti and Materia (2012: 28, my translation) underline the “*Glee* paradox,” an increase in user engagement and a parallel decline in ratings (after a peak in season 2, US viewers gradually decreased to about five million for season five, half the number scored by season 1). Nevertheless, in a long tail model a lower number of highly-engaged viewers can still play a bigger role than a larger non-participatory audience, and gleeks have always been keen on advertising their activities and the show itself, especially online. Oliver (2010: 72) comments that “social networking sites have played a big part in the mobilization of *Glee* fans, while Colletti and Materia (2012: 20, my translation) highlight Fox’s effective social watching strategies: “each time the #glee hashtag appears on-screen, viewers double their tweets.” As will be highlighted in the next paragraph, Italian gleeks immediately proved as eager to interact with the show as their Anglophone counterparts, prompting Fox Italia to adjust its AVT practices to favor the local appropriation and remediation of the series and of its remarkable transmedia apparatus.

⁸¹ See <http://obsession-inc.dreamwidth.org/82589.html> (accessed July 2, 2014).

7.4 *Glee* – Episode Analysis

On December 21, 2009, four days before the Christmas première of the dubbed version of *Glee* on Fox Italia, in a popular mall in Rome all of a sudden two hundred people started to sing and dance a medley of Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believing” and Queen’s “Somebody to Love.”⁸² While the mock-impromptu event was actually organized by Fox to launch its new show, it was the first time that a flash mob was used to promote a TV series, and the hordes of Christmas shoppers at the Galleria Alberto Sordi enjoyed the network’s direct approach as much as the fans who commented the news online during the following days. The Italian fan base had proved to be closely familiar with the show even before it premiered on Italian television; a glance at the frequent discussions on popular cult television websites such as Serialmente⁸³ confirms that numerous Italian viewers have been following the original US programming from the very beginning, in spite of the linguistic effort it required. Many Italian fans resorted to fansubs, which ItaSA provides in two versions to accommodate different viewing preferences: regular subtitles offer a translation of the song lyrics to clarify their narrative impact, while the karaoke version provides lyrics in English to allow for sing-along viewing. Conversely, the dubbed version did not provide any subtitles for the songs, which were left in English, thus inhibiting both comprehension and singing along while watching. Nevertheless, Fox Italia proved much more receptive than its competitors and soon realized that favoring viewer interaction was a key strategy to secure a dedicated local audience; starting from the second half of season two, the network has been offering a weekly double-feature comprising the subtitled version of the latest episode (forty-eight hours after the US broadcast) and the dubbed version of the previous one (only nine days after the original airing). Adaptation strategies have also shifted towards a less domesticating approach, decreasing the distance between the fansubbed and the dubbed versions that had been more evident in the show’s early episodes.

⁸² Video available on Fox’s YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhbK2bMTRbI> (last accessed July 2, 2014).

⁸³ <http://www.serialmente.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=21124> (last accessed July 2, 2014).

A comparative analysis of the two translated versions of season one highlights how the two forms of AVT initially catered to two different types of audiences. Even though it remained relatively true to the original dialogues, the dubbed version tended to favor transparency over fidelity and to make a wider use of TL-oriented strategies, allowing for a smoother, effortless reception; however, it also suffered from the inevitable limitations imposed by articulatory synching and perhaps by a standard, non-fan knowledge of the show, which sometimes resulted in sheer mistranslations. On the other hand, fansubs usually provided a more complete and accurate rendition, often including clarifications, yet they also tended to cram information into lengthy chunks that were frequently less precise in terms of segmentation and reading speed. Nonetheless, the distance between the two types of AVT decreased significantly from season 2 onwards, in terms of both delivery times and the degree of domestication/foreignization.

The dubbing team remained the same for the entire run of the show, with the two adaptors Davide Quatraro and Francesca Romana Raffi working under the supervision of experienced dubber and dubbing director Francesco Pezzulli (who had also lent his voice to Dawson Leery in *Dawson's Creek*).

- **Italian edition:** Fox Channels Italy
- **Italian dubbing:** E.T.S – European Television Service
- **Italian dialogues:** Davide Quatraro, Francesco Pezzulli, Francesca Romana Raffi
- **Dubbing director:** Francesco Pezzulli

The team's ability to create fluent dialogues that mimicked natural language was complemented by effective voice-casting choices, including Francesco Prando (who had risen to teen show fame by voicing Dylan McKay in *Beverly Hills, 90210*), Roberta Greganti (whose authoritative, scornful voice is a great match for Jane Lynch's Sue Sylvester), and Nanni Baldini (who had voiced Pacey Witter in *Dawson's Creek*) as Kurt's boyfriend Blaine Anderson.

Main characters	Played by	Dubbed by
Will Schuester	Matthew Morrison	Francesco Prando
Sue Sylvester	Jane Lynch	Roberta Greganti
Rachel Berry	Lea Michele	Domitilla D'Amico

Emma Pillsbury	Jayma Mays	Ilaria Latini
Mercedes Jones	Amber Riley	Alessia Amendola
Kurt Hummel	Chris Colfer	Jacopo Bonanni
Artie Abrams	Kevin McHale	Alessio Puccio
Tina Cohen-Chang	Jenna Ushkowitz	Letizia Ciampa
Noah “Puck” Puckerman	Mark Salling	Andrea Mete
Quinn Fabray	Dianna Agron	Valentina Mari
Santana Lopez	Naya Rivera	Valeria Vidali
Brittany S. Pierce	Heather Elizabeth Morris	Sabine Cerullo
Mike Chang	Harry Shum Jr.	Davide Quatraro
Finn Hudson (seasons 1 - 4)	Cory Monteith	Flavio Aquilone
Blaine Anderson (from season 2)	Darren Criss	Nanni Baldini

The evolution of the dubbing strategies used for the show will be explored through a selection of examples⁸⁴ from the episodes listed in the following table. While the first half of season one still contains a few mistranslations and several instances of excessive domestication, the following episodes denote a successful attempt to resort to generalizations and omissions only when strictly necessary. The parallel decision to accelerate the delivery of the dubbed version highlights Fox’s ability to gauge the needs of a cult fandom like *Glee*’s, which paves the way for a general, industry-wide attempt to adjust AVT practices to cater to the emerging viewership 2.0.

Episode number	Title	Reason	Original broadcast (Fox)	Italian broadcast (Fox)
1x03	Acafellas (id.)	Relationships / homosexuality	September 16, 2009	January 28, 2010
1x06	Vitamin D	Vitamina D	October 7, 2009	February 18, 2010
1x09	Wheels (Musica su due ruote)	Disability / homosexuality / bake sale (fundraising)	November 11, 2009	March 11, 2010
1x10	Ballads (Canzoni d’amore)	Pregnancy / crush on the teacher	November 18, 2009	March 18, 2010
1x11	Hairography (Capellografia)	Deaf glee club	November 25, 2009	March 25, 2010
1x12	Mattress (La televendita)	Popularity	December 2, 2009	April 1, 2010
1x14	Hell-O (id.)	Relationships, sexuality	April 13, 2010	September 15, 2010

⁸⁴ Some of these examples were included in my paper “Chorus Lines. Translating Musical Television Series in the Age of Participatory Culture: the Case of *Glee*,” which was submitted for publication.

1x15	The Power of Madonna (Come Madonna)	Sex	April 20, 2010	September 15, 2010
1x16	Home (Casa)	Family issues / body image	April 27, 2010	September 22, 2010
1x17	Bad Reputation (Cattiva reputazione)	Identity	May, 4 2010	September 22, 2010
1x21	Funk (Anima e rabbia)	Relationships	June 1, 2010	October 13, 2010
2x05	The Rocky Horror Glee Show (id.)	Identity, sexuality	October 26, 2010	December 23, 2010
2x06	Never been kissed (Il primo bacio)	Sex	November 9, 2010	January 6, 2011
2x10	A very Glee Christmas (Buon Natale)	Holidays / relationships	December 7, 2010	February 3, 2011
3x05	The first time (La prima volta)	Sex / virginity / homosexuality	November 8, 2011	November 16, 2011

Table 8. *Glee* – Selected episodes

The dubbing of the first half of season one displays a stronger focus on the reproduction of natural language, which generated a few mistranslations that did not appear in the corresponding fansubs. In episode 1x07, guidance counselor Emma Pillsbury recalls that her parents used to give her gold star stickers when she did housework, yet the dubbed version translated “chores” with “cori” (“choirs”), probably under the influence of the show’s main theme:

Original version	Italian dubbing	Back translation	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation
Emma: That’s how my parents got me to do chores .	Emma: I miei è così che mi facevano studiare nei cori .	Emma: That’s how my parents got me to study in choirs .	Emma: E' così che i miei genitori mi hanno convinta a fare le pulizie .	Emma: That’s how my parents got me to do chores .

Example 1, *Glee*, episode 1x06, “Vitamin D”

The dubbing of episode 1x11 lapses into an irrational rendition: the deaf singers from a rival club are referred to as “sordomuti”, “deaf-mute,” reflecting a usage that is not only obsolete (based on the superseded belief that all deaf people are also incapable of speech) but also illogical, since the club members actually sing:

Dalton: I run the glee club at a school for the deaf . You think I’m rolling around in	Dalton: Gestisco un coro in una scuola per sordomuti . Pensa che mi rotoli nei	Dalton: I run the glee club at a school for the deaf-mute . You think I’m rolling	Dalton: Dirigo il Glee club in una scuola per sordi . Crede che mi	Dalton: I run the glee club at a school for the deaf . Do you think they fill me
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deaf choir money?	soldi per un coro di sordi ?	around in deaf choir money?	riempiano di soldi per un coro di sordi ?	with money for a deaf choir?
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Example 2, *Glee*, episode 1x11, “Hairgraphy”

Episode 1x09 introduces an unwitting derogatory comment: the generalization “Italian restaurant” (which was adopted in both the dubbed and the fansubbed versions) was a reasonable choice since the Olive Garden chain is not well-known outside the US, yet the fact that Finn did not get a job there because he is too tall “for their stock room” (instead of “to be a busboy”) seems to imply that Italian immigrants tend to be either on the short side or unable to afford a full-sized storage area.

Finn: I almost got in at Olive Garden , but they said I was too tall to be a busboy .	Finn: Mi avrebbero preso al ristorante italiano, ma ero troppo alto per il loro magazzino .	Finn: I almost got in at the Italian restaurant , but they said I was too tall for their stock room .	Finn: Mi avrebbero preso al ristorante italiano , ma ero troppo alto per fare il lavapiatti .	Finn: I almost got in at the Italian restaurant , but they said I was too tall to be a busboy .
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Example 3, *Glee*, episode 1x09, “Wheels”

In the following episode, Finn compliments Quinn’s mother on her “lovely meat medallions,” yet a whole roasted ham is visible on screen:

Finn: Mmm, it's a lovely ham .	Finn: Ottimi i medaglioni .	Finn: Lovely meat medallions .	Finn: Un prosciutto delizioso .	Finn: It's a lovely ham .
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Example 4, *Glee*, episode 1x10 “Ballads”

Aside from mistranslations (which almost disappear starting from the second half of season one, as previously mentioned), the *Glee* adaptation team generally made an effective use of TL-oriented rendition strategies, providing clarifications that were actually needed, rather than using generalization or omission as easy ways out. In episode 1x12, Quinn’s reference to the theme park Cedar Point (located in Sandusky, Ohio) was rendered with the hypernym ‘amusement park,’ since most Italian viewers only associate American theme parks with Disneyland and Disneyworld, both of which are too far away from Ohio to be plausible.

Quinn: ...season tickets to Cedar Point .	Quinn: ...abbonamenti stagionali al luna park .	Quinn: ...season tickets to the amusement park .	Quinn: ...season tickets to Cedar Point .	Quinn: ...biglietti stagionali per il Cedar Point .
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Example 5, *Glee*, episode 1x12, “Mattress”

In 1x14, Rachel’s usage of the abbreviated form “*Phantom*” was replaced with the extended title “*Phantom of the Opera*” for more clarity:

Rachel: On the 6 th we’re going to see <i>Phantom</i> .	Rachel: C’è il <i>Fantasma dell’Opera</i> .	Rachel: The <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> is playing.	Rachel: Il sei andremo a vedere <i>Phantom</i> .	Rachel: On the 6 th we’re going to see <i>Phantom</i> .
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Example 6, *Glee*, episode 1x14, “Hell-O”

The omission of Kurt’s reference to comedian Carrot-Top in episode 1x16 was an equally reasonable choice:

Kurt: That was Carrot-Top funny compared to this comedic tour de force.	Kurt: Quello è niente in confronto a questo spettacolo tristissimo .	Kurt: That’s nothing compared to this really lame show .	Kurt: Quello era penoso come il comico Carrot Top in confronto a questo spasso.	Kurt: That was as lame as the comedian Carrot Top compared to these antics.
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Example 7, *Glee*, episode 1x17, “Bad Reputation”

The adaptation team also introduced a series of effective cultural substitutions, as is evident from the following examples. In episode 1x03, choreographer Dakota replies to Rachel’s mention of Barbra Streisand with a reference to the singer’s movie *Yentl* (1983); since the film is not popular in Italy, the dubbed version substituted it with the musical *Hello, Dolly* (Gene Kelly, 1969), in which the leading role was also played by Streisand. While this choice loses the reference to Jewishness intrinsic to *Yentl*, it succeeds in conveying Dakota’s criticism of Rachel’s *prima donna* attitude:

Dakota: Where’s this going, Yentl! ?	Dakota: Cosa vuoi dire, Hello Dolly! ?	Dakota: What do you mean, Hello Dolly! ?	Dakota: Cosa vuoi dire, Yentl! ?	Dakota: What do you mean, Yentl! ?
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Example 8, *Glee*, episode 1x03, “Acafellas”

In episode 1x09 Kurt’s father fights his own homophobia to defend his son’s singing skills and to convince the teachers to assign him the leading solo in the performance of the high-pitched song “Defying Gravity” from the musical *Wicked*. Mr. Hummel’s reference to Ronnie Spector was adequately replaced with Cyndi Lauper, whom Italian viewers could more easily associate with girly music (Lauper’s “Girls Just Want To Have Fun” is frequently played in Italian discos, together with a few other 1980s hits like Alphaville’s “Forever Young” or Wham!’s “Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go”).

Burt: Put on a blindfold and listen to my kid sing and you will swear you hear Ronnie Spector .	Burt: [...] vi sembrerà di sentire Cyndi Lauper .	Burt: [...] you’ll think you hear Cyndi Lauper .	Burt: [...] giurerete di aver sentito Ronnie Spector .	Burt : [...] you will swear you heard Ronnie Spector .
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Example 9, *Glee*, episode 1x09, “Wheels”

In another attempt to deal with his son’s homosexuality, Mr. Hummel mentions the Irish dance show *Riverdance*, which the adaptors reasonably substituted with the more mainstream musical *Billy Elliot*, whose protagonist becomes a ballet star.

Burt: Suddenly I’m not the guy who sat through Riverdance three years in a row?	Burt: E chi ti ha portato a vedere Billy Elliot per tre volte di fila?	Burt: And who took you to see Billy Elliot three times in a row?	Burt: Improvvisamente dimentichi chi ti ha portato a vedere la Riverdance per tre anni?	Burt: Suddenly you forget who took you to see Riverdance three years in a row?
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Example 10, *Glee*, episode 1x16, “Home”

In 1x15, Will gets his revenge on Sue’s constant jokes about his hair by making fun of her own short-styled hairdo; while *The Brady Bunch* had been aired in Italy, as previously mentioned, contemporary viewers are probably unfamiliar with Florence Henderson’s name and even more so with her hair style. The adaptors thus replaced this reference with Angela Lansbury’s correspondingly coiffed character Jessica Fletcher, since *Murder, She Wrote* (Peter S. Fischer,

Richard Levinson, and William Link, 1984 – 1996) enjoys constant reruns in Italy and its protagonist is a well-known figure among all generations.

Will: How's the Florence Henderson look working out for you?	Will: Ti hanno mai detto che assomigli alla signora Fletcher ?	Will: Has anyone ever told you you look like Mrs Fletcher ?	Will: Ti sta dando risultati il look alla Florence Henderson ?	Will: Is the Florence Henderson look working out for you?
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Example 11, *Glee*, episode 1x15, “The Power of Madonna”

Along a similar line, in episode 1x16 African-American journalist Tracy Pendergast resents Sue for comparing him to Freddy “Rerun” Stubbs from the sit-com *What’s Happening!*; since the show was never aired in Italy, the reference was replaced with Arnold Jackson from *Diff’rent Strokes*, whom the Italian audience could more easily identify as the archetypal African-American TV character.

Tracy Pendergast: You're bossy, insulting, and the fact that twice you called me Rerun makes me think you're a little racist.	Tracy Pendergast: E' prepotente, aggressiva e il fatto che mi abbia chiamato Arnold due volte mi fa pensare che sia un pochino razzista.	Tracy Pendergast: You're bossy, aggressive, and the fact that twice you called me Arnold makes me think you're a little racist.	Tracy Pendergast: E' prepotente, offensiva e il fatto che mi abbia chiamato due volte Rerun mi fa pensare che sia un pochino razzista.	Tracy Pendergast: You're bossy, insulting, and the fact that twice you called me Rerun makes me think you're a little racist.
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Example 12, *Glee*, episode 1x16, “Home”

Nonetheless, gauging the knowledge of potential viewers remains a difficult, often subjective task, especially for what Ranzato (2010: 98-99, my translation) defines as “threshold references”:

elements with which an international audience is potentially familiar, but which still require a knowledge of art, entertainment, literature or famous events related to the source culture that cannot always be expected of the target audience, which prompts adaptors to employ strategies that often eliminate or generalize the original reference.

In several instances from season one, the *Glee* adaptors thus chose to play it safe by omitting or substituting references which the Italian audience would have probably been able to understand. In episode 1x10, Quinn’s mother’s reference to UPS was replaced with a more general “shipping center,” even though UPS is one of the most popular carriers in Italy as well:

Mrs. Fabray: My first married a wonderful Christian man who owns his own chain	Mrs. Fabray: La prima ha sposato un fantastico ragazzo cristiano, proprietario	Mrs. Fabray: My first married a wonderful Christian man who owns his own chain	Mrs. Fabray: La prima ha sposato un fantastico ragazzo cristiano, proprietario	Mrs. Fabray: My first married a wonderful Christian man who owns his own chain
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of UPS stores .	di una catena di centri di spedizioni .	of shipping centers .	di una catena di negozi UPS .	of UPS stores .
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Example 13, *Glee*, episode 1x10 “Ballads”

Internet-savvy Italian viewers would probably have understood the references to celebrity rumormonger Perez Hilton as well:

Kurt: What does a C-lister do when their tiny star is about to fall off Perez Hilton's radar screen ?	Kurt: Che cosa fa una celebrità di serie C quando la sua minuscola stella rischia di diventare invisibile ?	Kurt: What do C-list celebrities do when their minuscule star is about to become invisible ?	Kurt: Cosa fanno gli pseudo-famosi quando la loro stella sta per uscir fuori dallo schermo radar di Perez Hilton ?	Kurt: What do pseudo-famous people do when their tiny star is about to fall off Perez Hilton's radar screen ?
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Example 14, *Glee*, episode 1x17, “Bad Reputation”

Similarly, Finn’s usage of MILF (Mother I’d Like to Fuck) was probably transparent for Italian viewers, since the acronym (which indicates an attractive older woman) was popularized by the *American Pie* saga⁸⁵ and is frequently used in Italian as well, together with its literal equivalent MIMF (“Mamma che Io Mi Farei”); thus the dubbed version eliminated a reference that provides a crucial explanation of the sentence in which it was pronounced (16-year-old Finn tries to reassure his teacher’s ex wife regarding her sexual appeal, but then realizes she cannot be defined as a MILF since she has faked her pregnancy and was never a real Mother).

Finn: And you'd be a total MILF if it weren't for the whole faking-the-mother thing.	Finn: E sarebbe perfetta se non fosse per la storia della finta gravidanza	Finn: And you'd be perfect if it weren't for the fake pregnancy thing.	Finn: E sarebbe una MILF assurda se non fosse per la storia della finta gravidanza	Finn: And you'd be an absurd MILF if it weren't for the fake pregnancy thing.
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Example 16, *Glee*, episode 1x21, “Funk”

Finally, in episode 1x09 “cupcakes” was replaced with “tortini”; as Cervino (2014: presentation) highlights, the term had frequently been translated with more general terms such as “dolce”

⁸⁵ Theatrical films: *American Pie* (Paul Weitz, 1999; *American Pie 2* (James B. Rogers, 2001); *American Wedding* (Jesse Dylan, 2003); *American Reunion* (Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg, 2012). Spin off films: *American Pie Presents: Band Camp* (Steve Rash, 2005); *American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile* (Joe Nussbaum, 2006); *American Pie Presents: Beta House* (Andrew Waller, 2007); *American Pie Presents: Book of Love* (John Putsch, 2009).

(“dessert”; *Scrubs* 4x04, 2004) or “tortina” (“small cake”; *How I Met Your Mother* 1x16, 2006); however, *Sex and the City*’s (Darren Star, 1998 – 2004) popularization of the English word⁸⁶ left room for its retention (which was later used in the adaptation of *New Girl*, Elizabeth Meriwether, 2011 – present; and *2 Broke Girls*, Whitney Cummings and Michael Patrick King, 2011 – present).

Will: What's all this? Rachel: Ingredients for cupcakes.	Will: Cos'e' tutta questa roba? Rachel: Gli ingredienti per i tortini.	Will: What's all this? Rachel: Ingredients for tiny cakes.	Will: Cos'è tutta questa roba? Rachel: Gli ingredienti per i cupcake.	Will: What's all this? Rachel: Ingredients for cupcakes.
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Example 17, *Glee*, episode 1x09, “Wheels”

Starting from season 2, however, the adaptors began to retain threshold references more and more frequently, which signaled a more accurate assessment of the Italian gleeks’ skills. Finn’s reference to the multi-dimensional narrative of the movie *Inception* was thus maintained in episode 2x05:

Finn: I have no idea what's going on in this script, and it's not in a cool <i>Inception</i> kind of way.	Finn: Non ci ho capito niente di questa storia, e non è in senso buono, come quando ho visto <i>Inception.</i>	Finn: I don't understand anything in this script, and not in a good way, as happened when I saw <i>Inception.</i>	Finn: Non sto capendo un bel niente della storia. E non nel senso figo, come in <i>Inception.</i>	Finn: I don't understand anything in this script, and not in a cool way, as in <i>Inception.</i>
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Example 18, *Glee*, episode 2x05, “The Rocky Horror Glee Show”

In the same episode, Sam promises to be “ab-ulous” when showing off his six packs while playing Rocky, Dr. Frank’n’Furter’s creature in the glee club’s performance of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*; his comment was rendered with an adequate “addominabile,” “abdominabile,” which hints at both “abdominals” and “adorable” and sounds closer to natural language than the fansubs’ version “addominaloso” (“abdominalous,” which mirrors the original blend of “abs” and “fabulous,” but is trickier to pronounce with its stress on the penultimate of six syllables).

Sam: It's gonna be ab-ulous.	Sam: Sarò addominabile.	Sam: I'm gonna be ab-orable.	Sam: Sarò addominaloso.	Sam: I'm gonna be abdominalous.
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⁸⁶ Carrie and Miranda enjoyed cupcakes at the now famous Magnolia Bakery in the Village.

Example 19, *Glee*, episode 2x05, “The Rocky Horror Glee Show”

Puck’s reference to *Star Wars*’ Jedi knights in episode 2x06 was maintained as well:

Puck: Watch and learn, young Jedi in a wheelchair .	Puck: Guarda e impara, piccolo Jedi in carrozzella .	Puck: Watch and learn, young Jedi in a wheelchair .	Puck: Guarda e impara, giovane Jedi in sedia a rotelle .	Puck: Watch and learn, young Jedi in a wheelchair .
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Example 20, *Glee*, episode 2x06, “Never Been Kissed”

Similarly, the adaptors correctly assessed that a young audience would be familiar with Taylor Lautner, who played werewolf Jacob in the *Twilight* saga:

Kurt: Okay, number five. All right, this one's really embarrassing. I wrote this before I met you. Have relations on a dewy meadow of lilac with Taylor Lautner before he gets fat.	Kurt: Saliamo al numero cinque. È imbarazzante, l'ho scritto prima di conoscerti. Intrattenermi su un prato di lillà con Taylor Lautner prima che ingrassi	Kurt: Up to number five. It's embarrassing. I wrote this before I met you. Have relations on a meadow of lilac with Taylor Lautner before he gets fat.	Kurt: Ok, numero 5... ok, questa è imbarazzante, l'ho scritta prima di conoscerti. Avere rapporti su un prato di lillà bagnati dalla rugiada... con Taylor Lautner , prima che diventi grasso.	Kurt: Okay, number five. All right, this one's really embarrassing. I wrote this before I met you. Have relations on a dewy meadow of lilac with Taylor Lautner before he gets fat.
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Example 21, *Glee*, episode 3x05, “The First Time”

TL-oriented rendition strategies were reserved for instances in which the source text was decidedly opaque for Italian viewers. For instance, Sam’s reference to the Pillsbury doughboy (as opposed to his ab-ulous physique) was reasonably substituted with the equally inflated, fluffy Michelin mascot:

Sam: You get up on that stage and look like the Pillsbury doughboy , no way you're staying popular.	Sam: Se vado in scena e sembro l'omino Michelin , addio popolarità.	Sam: If I get up on that stage and look like the Michelin mascot , goodbye popularity.	Sam: Se vai sul palco e sembri l'omino della Michelin , non resterai popolare.	Sam: If you get up on that stage and look like the Michelin mascot , you won't stay popular.
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Example 22, *Glee*, episode 2x05, “The Rocky Horror Glee Show”

In episode 2x10, Brittany’s reference to actress Ricki Lake was rendered with an explicitation of her role in the original *Hairspray* movie (John Waters, 1988):

Brittany: Was her name Ricki Lake ?	Brittany: Era l' attrice di Hairspray ?	Brittany: Was she the Hairspray actress?	Brittany: Si chiamava Ricki Lake ?	Brittany: Was her name Ricki Lake ?
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Example 23, *Glee*, episode 2x10, “A Very Glee Christmas”

Similarly, the adaptors correctly chose to use an explicitation to clarify Sue’s reference to Mary Kay Letourneau, a former teacher who pleaded guilty to two counts of felony second degree rape of a 12-year-old student of hers (whom she married after serving her time in prison):

Sue: Make Beiste into the next Mary Kay Letourneau .	Sue: Trasforma la Beiste in una seduttrice di minorenni .	Sue: Make Beiste into a seductress of underage kids .	Sue: [...] trasformare Beiste nella nuova Mary Kay Letourneau .	Sue: [...] transform Beiste into the new Mary Kay Letourneau .
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Example 24, *Glee*, episode 2x06, “Never Been Kissed”

Finally, the adaptation of episode 3x05 featured an ingenious compensation strategy in which the reference to French brandy ‘Courvoisier’ was postponed so that it could be preceded by the explicitation “cognac”:

Blaine: I can't believe you asked for a shot of Courvoisier in your coffee. Sebastian: I forget how lame this town is. When I lived in Paris, I drank it like it was mother's milk.	Blaine: Non ci posso credere che hai chiesto di farti cognac il caffè. Sebastian: Questa città è una palla. Quando abitavo a Parigi bevevo Corvoisier al posto del latte.	Blaine: I can't believe you asked for a shot of cognac in your coffee. Sebastian: This town is lame. When I lived in Paris, I drank Corvoisier instead of milk.	Blaine: Non posso credere che tu abbia chiesto un goccio di Courvoisier nel caffè. Sebastian: Dimenticavo quanto fa pena questa città. Quando vivevo a Parigi, lo bevevo come il latte materno.	Blaine: I can't believe you asked for a shot of Courvoisier in your coffee. Sebastian: I forget how lame this town is. When I lived in Paris, I drank it like it was mother's milk.
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Example 25, *Glee*, episode 3x05, “The First Time”

The adaptation of *Glee* represents a good compromise between the fluency of traditional dubbing and the fidelity and fast delivery of fansubbing; appropriate rendition strategies were applied in a case-by-case manner, reducing the degree of domestication without jeopardizing the aural delivery of the translated dialogues. The successful results of the new approach to dubbing bears witness to Fox Italia’s attention to its seriophiles’ needs, which the network has demonstrated in a variety of

ways; for instance, Scaglioni (2011: 113) notes that *Lost* was aired respecting the original slots for commercial breaks, so as not to interrupt its complicated narratives haphazardly. However, most other Italian networks have yet to learn how to follow Fox's example; the next two paragraphs will thus illustrate the effects of inadequate, adulterating adaptation in an era in which viewers can easily access original texts or alternative forms of AVT.

7.5 The Big Bang Theory

As previously mentioned, the situation comedy *The Big Bang Theory* is the only series in the present corpus that does not fully belong to the teen drama genre, since its protagonists are in their late twenties. Nonetheless, the main characters and their friends can be said to live a sort of 'enhanced adolescence,' since their lifestyles comprise many typical teenage traits and issues; moreover, the painstakingly woven fabric of *geek culture* references and *geek talk* that underpins the show constitutes a unique example of screenwriting that requires a highly careful interlinguistic treatment, lest the entire flavor of the show is lost in translation. The Italian fans' pro-active response to the poor dubbing of the first eight episodes of the series bears witness to the increased cultural and linguistic awareness of the Italian audience and posits a scenario in which spectators are increasingly willing to resort to alternative sources of AVT when the official providers fail to assess their needs.

The Big Bang Theory premiered on CBS in September 2007 and immediately earned itself a loyal audience, which has almost tripled over these seven years, rising from the average 8.34 million viewers of the first season to the average 19.96 million viewers of season 7, thanks to which the series ranked second in all of syndication ratings for 2013 – 2014. The story revolves around the lives and misfortunes of four researchers as they struggle to balance their high-profile academic

jobs and their idiosyncrasies with the challenges of daily life and with social relationships with ‘normal’ people, first and foremost with their new neighbor Penny, an attractive and much more down-to-earth waitress and aspiring actress. Notwithstanding the seemingly hackneyed tòpos of the ‘beauty and the geek(s)’ (popularized by the 2005 – 2008 reality show bearing the same name, but also recurrent throughout the history of the teenpic) and the numerous generic conventions such as format, episode length and a limited number of indoor settings, the series stands out both as a situation comedy and in the wider gamut of contemporary TV productions, thanks to its meticulous construction and its unwavering consistency. Beyond its surface-level, default-bestowed measure of lighthearted entertainment, the show provides a far more complex comic dimension “addressing not the ‘homogenous mass’” public (Gwenllian Jones and Pearson 2004: xiii), but a specific, profitable niche audience, engaging it in a viewing process that demands intellectual participation, attention to detail and allegiance to an appreciation ritual involving not only the series itself, but the integration of its aspects into the viewers’ own lives through what Philippe LeGuern (in Gwenllian-Jones and Pearson 2004: 16) defined as “an initiatory culture based on hyperknowledge of textual or paratextual elements.” Avid fans of *The Big Bang Theory* await new episodes with a religious fervor that is atypical for 22-minute comedy shows (with the notable exception of NBC’s *Friends*); they recognize and appreciate references to previous seasons even though episodes tend to be self-conclusive, they quote the main characters, reenact the games played on screen and even buy the vintage T-Shirts worn by one of the protagonists (see www.sheldonshirts.com). Such a degree of participation, which is normally less frequent in comedy than in other genres such as science fiction or mystery, highlights the *cult* aspect of the show and its ability to bring an immersive storyworld to life. Creators Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady crafted each aspect with painstaking care in order to create a microcosm that functions flawlessly in terms of diegesis, internal logic, and character consistency. Each of the five protagonists has a unique, full-fledged personality, complete with plot-driving idiosyncrasies. Lovesick Leonard, awkward, shortsighted, and lactose-intolerant, juggles his research in experimental physics with his perpetual crush on Penny; Howard, a Jewish space

engineer who is always mocked for having a Master's degree and not a PhD, pretends to be the ultimate ladies' man while he actually lives with his overprotective mother (but eventually marries microbiologist Bernadette Rostenkovski); Raj, an astrophysicist from New Delhi, suffers from a pathological inability to speak to women unless he is drunk; and Sheldon, the true fulcrum of the show, is an übergenius with an IQ of 187, two PhDs, and a hyperlogical way of perceiving the world in terms of science while failing to grasp (and care for) interpersonal dynamics. Penny's character, with her distance from the planet of physics, her mixture of happy-go-lucky attitude, streetwise remarks, and feminine charm, functions as the litmus paper that reacts with each of the four different identities of the male protagonists, generating countless humorous moments as she is progressively drawn into their world and discovers that even a frivolous, Nebraska-bred waitress can have an unsuspected geeky side.

While the partial osmosis between these two universes is far from unpredictable, given the premises of the show, Penny's outsider perspective also serves to underline the precision with which the geek world is portrayed. In the season 1 DVD commentary, Chuck Lorre states that "this is a level of intelligence that's never been looked at before and these are characters that actually change the world." The traditional nerd stereotype of a brainy, socially inept, computer-dependent outcast is incorporated into a new vision according to which, as the show's tagline points out, "smart is the new sexy," and the characters' utmost devotion to science and logic comes with both self-irony and self-satisfaction. The series is a true hymn to geek culture, embracing its logic and taking pride in scientific accuracy and cultural references. A standing consultant, Professor David Salzberg (who teaches Physics and Astronomy at UCLA), is responsible for every scientific detail on the show, from writing equations on the whiteboards that frequently appear on screen to providing the science-based dialogue lines for which the authors simply leave blank spaces marked as "science to come" (as described in the season 1 DVD). Yet perhaps even more important is the depiction of the other aspects usually associated with geek culture: the careful treatment of the protagonists' perpetual involvement in gaming, comic books, and science fiction draws viewers into

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an additional meta-cult dimension in which they find themselves discussing superhero dynamics, yearning for *Halo* videogame nights and original props from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, or playing an expansion of the traditional Janken game renamed “Rock – Paper – Scissors – Lizard – Spock,” which Sheldon suggests because “Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the game of rock-paper-scissors, players familiar with each other tie 75-80% of the time due to the limited number of outcomes.” Sheldon defines the rules of the game as “very simple: scissors cuts paper, paper covers rock, rock crushes lizard, lizard poisons Spock, Spock smashes scissors, scissors decapitates lizard, lizard eats paper, paper disproves Spock, Spock vaporizes rock, and – as it always has – rock crushes scissors” (episode 2x08, aptly entitled “The Lizard-Spock Expansion”). This quotation (together with the one at the beginning of this chapter) provides an example of Sheldon’s typical idiolect and of the degree to which the characters incorporate details from their favorite series, movies, and comics into their daily lives. The show owes much of its success to the feeling of double exclusiveness created by meta-fandom and intertextual references pointing to a set of products and behaviors that has overcome the original, derogatory stereotype of the nerd and transcended the borders of the English-speaking world, even though most of the referenced texts still belong to the Anglophone culture. The following paragraph will illustrate the disastrous effect of the adaptation of the first eight episode, which completely failed to maintain the show’s identity and to assess the needs and skills of the Italian audience.

7.6 *The Big Bang Theory* – Episode analysis

When *The Big Bang Theory* premiered on the Italian pay-TV network Steel (part of the Mediaset Premium package) on January 19, 2008, the viewers who were already familiar with the show thanks to fansubbing were in for an unpleasant surprise: whether because the dubbing company had failed to appraise the show’s meta-cult appeal or because it deemed the references to geek culture

too opaque for a situation comedy, the dubbing process had collapsed the multi-layered complexity of the original version onto a flat filler program that replaced the clever humor of the original version with vulgar jokes and nonsensical dialogues. As underlined throughout this dissertation, until a few years ago most Italian importers of American television products tended to consider ‘lower’ genres such as teen dramas and situation comedies as a perpetual succession of interchangeable products, which led them to downplay content or language specificity in favor of a convergence towards genre prototypes that were believed to be more easily digested by a drill-trained audience. In spite of the constant search for original comedy products, many Italian networks still seem to aim at triggering a Pavlovian conditioned laughter response in their audiences by continually presenting them with well-tested formulas with minimal variation. What they fail to recognize, however, is that the Italian viewership (or at least a part thereof) should now be seen as a “skilled audience” (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998: 122), given that its members have honed their reception skills to an unparalleled degree for a traditional dubbing country, as described in **chapters 1 and 2**. A growing part of the Italian audience is also ready to strike back: in the case of *The Big Bang Theory*, the first eight episodes were so full of mistakes, omissions, and inconsistent substitutions that the viewers who had already watched the show with fansubs addressed their criticism directly to the Rome-based dubbing company, Post In Europe, prompting it to change the entire adaptation team (as is visible from the following table),⁸⁷ which resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of translation starting from the ninth episode.

- **Italian dubbing:** Post In Europe
- **Italian dialogues:**
 - Season 1: Silvia Pepitoni (episodes 1x01-2, 1x05-7), Ella Giampaoli (episodes 1x03, 1x04, 1x08), Anton Giulio Castagna (episodes 1x09-1x17)
 - Season 2: Anton Giulio Castagna
 - Season 3: Luca Intoppa, Federico Di Pofi, Giselle Spiteri Miggiani
 - Seasons 4-5: Luca Intoppa, Anton Giulio Castagna
- **Dubbing directors:**
 - Episodes 1x01-1x08: Silvia Pepitoni
 - Episodes 1x09 -1x17, season 2: Leslie La Penna, Monica Patrizi
 - Seasons 3-5: Monica Patrizi

⁸⁷ Available online at <http://www.antoniogenna.net/doppiaggio/televisione/thebigbangtheory.htm> (accessed July 2, 2014)

The dubbers who voiced the main characters remained the same throughout the various seasons, with the exception of Leonardo Graziano, who was on sick leave for five episodes during season 2 and was briefly replaced by Emiliano Coltorti. This change was ill-received by the fans, who kept protesting until the five episodes were redubbed in 2011 (but only after they had already been broadcast on Steel and on Italia 1).

Main characters	Played by	Dubbed by
Leonard Hofstadter	Johnny Galecki	Gabriele Lopez
Sheldon Cooper	Jim Parsons	Leonardo Graziano
Penny	Kaley Cuoco	Eleonora Reti
Howard Wolowitz	Simon Helberg	Federico Di Pofi
Rajesh “Raj” Koothrappali	Kunal Nayyar	Alessio Buccolini
Bernadette Rostenkowski	Melissa Rauch	Gemma Donati
Amy Farrah Fowler	Mayim Bialik	Emilia Costa

Given the aberrant nature of the early dubbing of the show, examples will mainly be drawn from the first eight episodes of season 1, both to illustrate the extent of the initial divergence from the original version and because the number of translational power shortages decreased significantly from episode 1x09 onwards.

Episode number	Title	Reason	Original broadcast (CBS)	Italian broadcast (Steel)
1x01	Pilot	Pilot / poor dubbing choices / geek culture	September 24, 2007	January 19, 2008
1x02	The big bran hypothesis (Il cervellone)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	October 1, 2007	January 19, 2008
1x03	The Fuzzy Boots Corollary (Il corollario del gatto)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	October 8, 2007	January 19, 2008
1x04	The Luminous Fish Effect (L’effetto del pesce fluorescente)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	October 15, 2007	January 19, 2008
1x05	The Hamburger Postulate (Il postulato dell’hamburger)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	October 22, 2007	August 22, 2008
1x06	The Middle-Earth Paradigm (Il paradigma della Terra di mezzo)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	October 29, 2007	August 22, 2008

1x07	The Dumpling Paradox (Il paradosso del raviolo a vapore)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	November 05, 2007	August 25, 2008
1x08	The Grasshopper Experiment (L' esperimento del cocktail)	Poor dubbing choices / geek culture	November 12, 2007	August 25, 2008
2x03	The Barbarian Sublimation (La sublimazione barbarica)	Geek culture: MMORPG	October 26, 2008	June 15, 2009
2x08	The Lizard-Spock Expansion (L' espansione di Lizard e Spock)	Geek culture: cult tv / Star Trek	November 17, 2008	June 18, 2009
2x11	The Bath Item Gift Hypothesis (L' ipotesi dei sali da bagno)	Geek culture: cult TV / Star Trek / Christmas	December 15, 2008	June 19, 2009
2x15	The Maternal Capacitance (La capacità materna)	Parents / children conflict	February 2, 2009	June 23, 2009

The pilot alone was an episode-long mistranslation, containing over 18 mistakes or unacceptable alterations in 22 minutes. As Maestri and Innocenti (2010: online) observe, most geek references were inexplicably altered or eliminated even when they concerned movies or activities that would have been transparent for Italian viewers, as the example selection will illustrate. Similarly, the protagonists' personalities and idiolects, a fundamental factor for cult and meta-cult practices, were constantly betrayed in favor of a simplistic language and a much baser humor that was completely out of character and deprived the show of its complexity. The pilot episode opens with a scene in which Leonard and Sheldon go to a high-IQ sperm bank to earn money for a faster Internet connection; in the original version, Sheldon has deontological second thoughts because their DNA is not guaranteed to generate genius children, since his own sister "hosts at Fuddruckers." This line was meant to introduce viewers to the idiosyncratic perspective from which Sheldon evaluates other people's intelligence against his own, clearly finding everyone else lacking – a leitmotif that recurs throughout the series and is a frequent source of humor. ItaSA's fansubs maintained the entire original dialogue, yet the dubbed version transformed Sheldon's perfectly normal sister into a particularly slow learner. When Leonard comments that he does not know how to back out, his suggestive yet not downright vulgar joke on reneging a sperm donation becomes a

disgusting gag with a random reference to a bedspread that does not even befit the sperm bank setting:

Original version	Italian dubbing	Back translation	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation
<p>Sheldon: We are committing genetic fraud. There's no guarantee that our sperm's going to generate high-IQ offspring, think about that. I have a sister with the same basic DNA mix that hosts at FuDDRuckers.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Leonard: Well, what do you wanna do?</p> <p>Sheldon: I want to leave. What's the protocol for leaving?</p> <p>Leonard: I don't know, I've never reneged on a proffer of sperm before.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Questa è frode genetica vera e propria. Che garanzia c'è che dal nostro seme venga generata prole superintelligente. Mia sorella disse le prime parole a sei anni e fece la stessa classe cinque volte.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Leonard: Allora? Cosa vuoi fare?</p> <p>Sheldon: Tutto tranne quello. Come ci si ritira?</p> <p>Leonard: Non lo so, è la prima volta che il mio seme non finisce sul copri letto.</p>	<p>Sheldon: This a veritable genetic fraud. What guarantee is there that our sperm is going to generate superintelligent offspring? My sister said her first words when she was six and repeated the same class five times.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Leonard: So, what do you wanna do?</p> <p>Sheldon: Anything but that. How do we step back?</p> <p>Leonard: I don't know, It's the first time my sperm doesn't end up on the bedspread.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Stiamo commettendo una frode genetica. Non c'e' alcuna garanzia che il nostro sperma genererà una prole ad alto quoziente intellettivo. Ho una sorella con il mio stesso corredo genetico di base che fa la cameriera da FuDDRucker.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Leonard: Beh, cosa vuoi fare?</p> <p>Sheldon: Voglio andarmene. Qual è il protocollo per andarsene?</p> <p>Leonard: Non lo so... Non ho mai ritrattato una donazione di sperma prima d'ora.</p>	<p>Sheldon: We are committing genetic fraud. There's no guarantee that our sperm's going to generate high-IQ offspring, think about that. I have a sister with the same basic DNA mix that hosts at FuDDRuckers.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Leonard: Well, what do you wanna do?</p> <p>Sheldon: I want to leave. What's the protocol for leaving?</p> <p>Leonard: I don't know, I've never reneged on a proffer of sperm before.</p>

Example 1, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

After sneaking out of the bank and climbing the stairs to their third floor apartment, the two friends meet their new neighbor Penny, who has replaced the transvestite Louie/Louise. Leonard immediately falls for Penny and decides to invite her over for lunch, but Sheldon does not see the point of real-life interactions:

<p>Sheldon: We never invited Louie-slash-Louise over.</p> <p>Leonard: And that was wrong of us. We need to widen our circle.</p> <p>Sheldon: I have a very wide circle. I have 212 friends on MySpace.</p> <p>Leonard: Yes, and</p>	<p>Sheldon: Non invitavamo mai il pachiderma che abitava lì prima.</p> <p>Leonard: Infatti è stato un grosso errore. Dobbiamo fare delle nuove amicizie.</p> <p>Sheldon: Ti pregherei di guardare più in là del tuo pianerottolo.</p>	<p>Sheldon: We never invited over the pachyderm who used to live there.</p> <p>Leonard: And that was a big mistake. We need to make more friends.</p> <p>Sheldon: Please look further than your landing. I have 210 friends on my</p>	<p>Sheldon: Non abbiamo mai invitato qui Louis/Louise.</p> <p>Leonard: Ed e' stato sbagliato da parte nostra. Dobbiamo allargare la nostra cerchia.</p> <p>Sheldon: Io ho una cerchia vastissima. Ho 212 amici su MySpace.</p>	<p>Sheldon: We never invited Louis-slash-Louise over.</p> <p>Leonard: And that was wrong of us. We need to widen our circle.</p> <p>Sheldon: I have a very wide circle. I have 212 friends on MySpace.</p> <p>Leonard: Yes, and</p>
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<p>you've never met one of them. Sheldon: That's the beauty of it. Leonard: I'm gonna invite her over. We'll have a nice meal and... chat. Sheldon: Chat? We don't chat. At least not offline. Leonard: It's not difficult. You just listen to what she says and then you say something appropriate in response. Sheldon: To what end?</p>	<p>Io ho già 210 amici nel mio sito. Leonard: Peccato tu non ne abbia mai incontrato uno. Sheldon: Io direi che questa è la parte migliore. Leonard: Beh, io invece la voglio invitare. Per mangiare e anche... per parlare. Sheldon: Per parlare? E dire "Ciao, come va, bene, ciao"? Leonard: Non arrenderti alle prime difficoltà, in fondo per lei siamo due sconosciuti che hanno l'arduo compito di metterla a suo agio. Sheldon: Fino a che punto?</p>	<p>website. Leonard: Too bad you've never met one of them. Sheldon: I'd say that's the best part. Leonard: Well, I want to invite her over. To eat and... to chat. Sheldon: Chat? And say "Hi, how are you, fine, bye"? Leonard: Don't give up at the first difficulty, after all for her we are just two strangers who have the hard task to make her feel comfortable. Sheldon: To what extent?</p>	<p>Leonard: Sì, e non ne hai mai incontrato uno. Sheldon: E' questo il bello. Leonard: La inviterò qui. Faremo una bella mangiata e una bella chiacchierata. Sheldon: Chiacchierata? Noi non chiacchieriamo, almeno non offline. Leonard: Non e' difficile, devi solo ascoltare cosa dice, e poi rispondi qualcosa di appropriato. Sheldon: A quale fine?</p>	<p>you've never met one of them. Sheldon: That's the beauty of it. Leonard: I'm gonna invite her over. We'll have a nice meal and... chat. Sheldon: Chat? We don't chat. At least not offline. Leonard: It's not difficult. You just listen to what she says and then you say something appropriate in response. Sheldon: To what end?</p>
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Example 2, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

Aside from the replacement of “Louie/Louise” with “pachyderm” (which can be partly justified because in the previous scene Sheldon had mentioned that their former neighbor was overweight), the Italian version of this dialogue removes the references to Sheldon’s inability to understand interpersonal dynamics, especially through the substitution of “To what end?” with “To what extent?”. The reference to the then-popular MySpace community was also unnecessarily replaced with “my site,” even though it would have been transparent for Italian viewers. When Leonard eventually manages to have a conversation with Penny, the dubbed version twists the entire dialogue, replacing the references to geek culture with nonsensical sentences, as is evident from the substitution of the (made-up) *Star Trek*-based game “Klingon Boggle” in the following examples:

<p>Sheldon: Tuesday night, we played Klingon Boggle till 1:00 a.m. Leonard: Yeah, I remember.</p>	<p>Sheldon: L'altro ieri a Risiko non hai vinto una partita fino alle tre di mattina. Leonard: Colpa di Messico e Cuba.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Two days ago you didn't win a Risk game till 3:00 a.m. Leonard: Blame Mexico and Cuba.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Martedì notte, abbiamo giocato a Klingon boggle fino all'una. Leonard: Già, ricordo.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Tuesday night, we played Klingon Boggle till 1:00 a.m. Leonard: Yeah, I remember.</p>
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Example 3, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

Penny: So... Klingon Boggle? Leonard: Yeah. It's like regular Boggle, but... In Klingon.	Penny: Voi giocate anche a Scarabeo? Leonard: Ah, certo, ma non siamo mai più di... 450.	Penny: Do you play Scrabble too? Leonard: Yes, but we're never more than... 450.	Penny: Quindi... Klingon boggle? Leonard: Sì, è come il normale Boggle, ma in Klingon.	Penny: So... Klingon Boggle? Leonard: Yeah. It's like regular Boggle, but... In Klingon.
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Example 4, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

As Maestri and Innocenti (2010: online, my translation) observe, “replacing Klingon Boggle with the more ‘banal’ Risk (in which Mexico and Cuba do not even feature as separate territories) and Scrabble does not do justice to the creativity of the original screenwriters, who managed to perfectly characterize Leonard and Sheldon as hard-core *Star Trek* fans.” Moreover, the most opaque reference in these sentences was probably the word-based board game Boggle (whose Italian equivalent is Paroliere), rather than ‘Klingon,’⁸⁸ so perhaps ‘Paroliere Klingon’ or even ‘Klingon Scrabble’ would have been better compromises. The protagonists’ veneration of the *Star Wars* saga is equally obliterated in what is perhaps the most infamous example of the show’s early adaptation: while Penny uses the boys’ shower (since hers is broken), Sheldon mocks Leonard’s *Star Wars* toiletries, yet the Italian version substitutes the globally recognizable references to Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker with cheesy, inane shampoo and conditioner names used to suggest effeminacy, rather than geekery:

Sheldon: Do you think this possibility will be helped or hindered when she discovers your Luke Skywalker No More Tears shampoo? Leonard: It’s Darth Vader shampoo. Luke Skywalker’s the conditioner.	Sheldon: E credi che questa ipotesi andrà in meta quando lei scoprirà che Gocce di Seta e Miele è il nome del tuo shampoo? Leonard: Fusa e coccole è lo shampoo. Seta e miele è il balsamo.	Do you think this possibility will score a try when she discovers your Silk & Honey Drops shampoo? Leonard: It’s Purring & Cuddling shampoo. Silk & Honey is the conditioner.	E credi che questa possibilità sarà aiutata o ostacolata quando scoprirà il tuo shampoo Luke Skywalker Niente Più Lacrime? Leonard: È lo shampoo di Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker è l’emolliente.	Do you think this possibility will be helped or hindered when she discovers your Luke Skywalker No More Tears shampoo? Leonard: It’s Darth Vader shampoo. Luke Skywalker’s the softener.
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Example 5, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

⁸⁸ The Klingons are recurrent humanoid antagonists in the original *Star Trek* series; viewers that were not familiar with the franchise could still infer that the term referred to a type of language from the context of these dialogues.

References to the BBC’s popular, long-lived *Doctor Who* (Sydney Newman, C.E. Webber, and Donald Wilson, 1963–1989, 1996, 2005–present) were also replaced with a made-up show about physicists:

Sheldon: Every Saturday since we've lived in this apartment I have awakened at 6:15 , poured myself a bowl of cereal, added a quarter cup of two percent milk, sat on this end of this couch, turned on BBC America , and watched <i>Doctor Who</i> .	Sheldon: Ogni sabato mi sveglio alle sei in punto, metto la vestaglia , mi preparo una ciotola di cereali, aggiungo latte al 2% di grassi, mi siedo a quell'estremità del divano, accendo la televisione e guardo <i>Fisici si nasce</i> .	Sheldon: Every Saturday I wake up at 6 o'clock sharp, put on my robe , pour myself a bowl of cereal, add two percent milk, sit on that end of the couch, turn on the TV , and watch <i>Physicists are born this way</i> .	Ogni sabato, da quando viviamo in questo appartamento mi sveglio alle 6:15 , mi verso una tazza di cereali, aggiungo un quarto di latte scremato , mi siedo a quell'estremità' di quel divano, giro sulla BBC America , e guardo <i>Doctor Who</i> .	Sheldon: Every Saturday since we've lived in this apartment I have awakened at 6:15 , poured myself a bowl of cereal, added a quarter liter of reduced-fat milk, sat on that end of that couch, turned on BBC America , and watched <i>Doctor Who</i> .
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Example 6, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x07, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

Sheldon: I'll watch the last 24 minutes of <i>Doctor Who</i> . Although at this point, it's more like Doctor Why Bother?	Sheldon: E io mi guarderò gli ultimi 24 minuti di <i>Fisici si nasce</i> e giuro che il primo che parla è in pericolo di vita .	Sheldon: And I'll watch the last 24 minutes of <i>Physicists are born this way</i> , and I swear the first person who speaks is dead .	Sheldon: E io mi guarderò gli ultimi 24 minuti del <i>Doctor Who</i> . Anche se, a questo punto, è più tipo Doctor chi me lo fa fare?	Sheldon: I'll watch the last 24 minutes of <i>Doctor Who</i> . Although at this point, it's more like Doctor Why Bother?
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Example 7, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x07, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

In some cases the adaptors even decided to insert additional, mainstream pop culture references that had nothing to do with the show’s themes, as is the case with the following example from episode 1x05, in which the choice to throw in a random reference to Brad Pitt constitutes a double drop in translational voltage, since physical appearance cannot be purposely imposed by parents (like names, schools, or hobbies) and since the lack of coordination between subjects and verbs also introduces an anacoluthon, which Leonard would never use.

Penny: I didn't know you played the cello. Leonard: Yeah, my parents felt that naming me Leonard	Penny: Leonard, non sapevo che suonassi il violoncello. Leonard: Già, per i miei genitori	Penny: Leonard, I didn't know you played the cello. Leonard: Yeah, my parents felt that	Penny: Leonard, non sapevo suonassi il violoncello. Leonard: Già, i miei genitori ritenevano	Penny: I didn't know you played the cello. Leonard: Yeah, my parents felt that naming me Leonard
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and putting me in Advanced Placement classes wasn't getting me beaten up enough.	chiamarmi Leonard, mettermi in classi di livello avanzato e non somigliare a Brad Pitt non era una punizione sufficiente.	naming me Leonard and putting me in advanced classes and not looking like Brad Pitt wasn't enough of a punishment.	che chiamarmi Leonard ed iscrivermi ai corsi avanzati di preparazione all'universita' non fosse una punizione sufficiente.	and putting me in Advanced Placement classes wasn't enough of a punishment.
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Example 8, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x05, “The Hamburger Postulate”

The usage of Penny’s (initial) lack of knowledge of the geek universe as a way to underline geekery by contrast was also frequently lost in translation. In the following example from episode 1x02, her surprise at the discovery that there are several Superman movies is completely eliminated:

Penny: A marathon? How many Superman movies are there? Sheldon: You're kidding, right?	Penny: Una maratona? Wow, me li vedo tutti molto volentieri! Sheldon: Stai scherzando, vero?	Penny: A marathon? Wow, I'd love to see them all! Sheldon: You're kidding, right?	Penny: Una maratona? Quanti film di Superman avete? Sheldon: Stai scherzando, vero?	Penny: A marathon? How many Superman movies are there? Sheldon: You're kidding, right?
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Example 9, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x02, “The Big Bran Hypothesis”⁸⁹

In episode 1x06, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm,” Penny invites the four friends to a Halloween party at her apartment. Sheldon only accepts when he learns that it is a costume party, but it soon becomes clear that Penny and the boys attribute a different importance to the costume component. Using an unnecessary hyponymy, the Italian version replaces “animes” (Japanese animated series) with “*Pokémon*” (which are never mentioned among Sheldon’s interests), but removes the references to TV series, mangas, the popular role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons*, and Norse gods (yet Raj eventually shows up dressed as Thor).

Sheldon: Yes, but are the costumes random, or genre-specific ? Penny: As usual, I'm not following. Leonard: He's asking if we can come as anyone from science fiction, fantasy...	Sheldon: Ma i costumi sono a piacere o hanno un tema specifico? Penny: Scusa, ma non ti seguo. Leonard: Ti sta chiedendo se il costume lo possiamo	Sheldon: Yes, but are the costumes random, or theme-specific? Penny: Sorry, I'm not following. Leonard: He's asking if we can pick our costumes based on what we like most.	Sheldon: Sì, ma i travestimenti sono casuali, o di una categoria specifica? Penny: Come al solito, non ti seguo. Leonard: Sta chiedendo se possiamo venire	Sheldon: Yes, but are the costumes random, or category-specific? Penny: As usual, I'm not following. Leonard: He's asking if we can come as a character from science fiction,
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⁸⁹ The title was also mistranslated as “Il cervellone” (“The Big Brain”), while the original title referred to Sheldon’s habit to sort breakfast cereals according to their fiber contents.

Penny: Sure. Sheldon: What about comic books? Penny: Fine. Sheldon: Anime? Penny: Of course. Sheldon: TV , film, D- and-D, manga , Greek gods, Roman gods, Norse gods...	scegliere noi ispirandoci a ciò che più ci piace . Penny: Certo. Sheldon: Compresi i fumetti? Penny: Perfetto. Sheldon: E i Pokémon? Penny: Ottimo. Sheldon: Possiamo ispirarci a film e divinità greche o romane o travestirci da maghi?	Penny: Sure. Sheldon: Including comic books? Penny: Perfect. Sheldon: And Pokémon? Penny: Of course. Sheldon: Can we get our inspiration from movies and Greek or Roman gods or come as wizards?	travestiti da qualche personaggio di fantascienza, fantasy... Penny: Certo. Sheldon: Fumetti? Penny: Va bene. Sheldon: Anime? Penny: Certamente. Sheldon: TV , film, Dungeons and Dragons, manga, dei greci, dei romani, dei scandinavi...	fantasy... Penny: Sure. Sheldon: Comic books? Penny: Fine. Sheldon: Anime? Penny: Of course. Sheldon: TV , film, Dungeons and Dragons, manga , Greek gods, Roman gods, Norse gods...
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Example 10, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x06, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

Sheldon eventually wears his Doppler effect costume, a suit with broader and narrower stripes that represents the change in wavelength of the sound of a moving object (e.g. an ambulance’s siren). Even if viewers did not understand the exact meaning of his costume, they could still laugh at the fact that it represented a science-based joke (as Raj’s explicit mention of the Doppler effect pointed out) and that none of the other partygoers understood it either, which provided the basis for a recurrent gag throughout the episode. Yet the Italian version replaced it with an explanation that made no sense, only to restore the reference to the Doppler effect in a later exchange which worked even less:

Raj: Sheldon is neither sound nor light, but he's obviously the Doppler effect.	Raj: Sheldon sembra un carcerato che dalla cella vede fuori un'astronave aliena.	Raj: Sheldon looks like an inmate who sees an alien spaceship from his cell.	Raj: Sheldon non è né suono né luce, ma è chiaramente l'effetto Doppler.	Raj: Sheldon is neither sound nor light, but he's obviously the Doppler effect.
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Example 11, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x06, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

Sheldon: I'm the Doppler effect. Girl: Okay, if that's some sort of learning disability, I think it's very insensitive.	Sheldon: Sono vestito da effetto Doppler. Girl: Senti, di' al signor Doppler che ti ha ridotto una vera schifezza.	Sheldon: I'm dressed as the Doppler effect. Girl: Well, tell Mr. Doppler he got you in a really bad shape.	Sheldon: Sono l' Effetto Doppler. Girl: Se è una qualche specie di difficoltà d'apprendimento, lo trovo davvero insensibile.	Sheldon: I'm the Doppler effect. Girl: Okay, if that's some sort of learning disability, I think it's very insensitive.
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Example 12, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x06, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

Sheldon’s own idiolect frequently underwent similar alterations in the dubbed version. The original script depicted a sort of hyper-intelligent, asexual entity with a slightly robotic voice and an obsession for proper syntax and lexis as much as for scientific exactitude and geek culture. The Italian dubbing of the first eight episodes, however, delivered a character that resorted to imprecise definitions, approximate grammar, vernacular phrases, and an unfathomable usage of rhyming sentences, and whose idiosyncrasies seemed to be attributed to a deficient intellect and a latent homosexuality, rather than a hyperlogical mind. For instance, Sheldon would never have uttered an absurd scientific reference such as wishing for gravity to crash down; the humorous effect of his line in the following example from episode 1x02 is thus lost in the dubbed version. Fansubs provide a more adequate rendition, even though the term “puttana” is stronger than “bitch” and sounds slightly weird when pronounced by Sheldon, who usually replaces swearwords with entertaining paraphrases:

Sheldon: Ah, gravity, thou art a heartless bitch.	Sheldon: Oh, gravità, che tu possa sfracellarti a terra!	Sheldon: Ah, gravity, may you crash on the ground.	Sheldon: Ah, gravità, sei una puttana senza cuore.	Sheldon: Ah, gravity, you are a heartless whore.
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Example 13, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x02, “The Big Bran Hypothesis”

In the same episode, Sheldon’s obsessive-compulsive dependence on order and organization prompts him to try to convince Penny to let him help her clean the mess in her apartment. For unknown reasons, the adaptors decided to have him express his thoughts in rhyming sentences and to replace Leonard’s attempt to contain his roommate’s inadvertent intrusiveness with similar alliterations:

Sheldon: I just want you to know that you don't have to live like this. I'm here for you. Penny: What's he talking about? Leonard: It's a joke. Penny: I don't get it.	Sheldon: Dove tutto è accatastato il disordine è conclamato. Urge cura all'ammalato. Penny: Parla a me o a te? Leonard: C'è un casino orribile.	Sheldon: Where all is a mess, confusion is manifest. The patient needs some rest. Penny: Is he speaking to me or to you? Leonard: There's a	Sheldon: Volevo solo che sapessi che non devi vivere così. Sono qui per te. Penny: Di che sta parlando? Leonard: E' una battuta. Penny: Non l'ho	Sheldon: I just want you to know that you don't have to live like this. I'm here for you. Penny: What's he talking about? Leonard: It's a joke. Penny: I don't get it.
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Leonard: Yeah, he didn't tell it right.	Penny: Cosa?! Leonard: Il tuo visino è adorabile.	horrible chaos. Penny: What?! Leonard: You've got a lovely face.	capita. Leonard: Già, gli è uscita male.	Leonard: Yeah, he didn't tell it right.
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Example 14, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x02, “The Big Bran Hypothesis”

Word order inversion and alliteration are also reprised in other instances; in the following example, the dubbing of Sheldon’s line proves particularly inadequate as it inserts a reference to a silly, old-fashioned joke⁹⁰ which is completely out of character:

Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the limp and the lazy eye?	Sheldon: La dietologa della mensa che ha l'occhio pigro e sbilenca ha un'anca?	Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the lazy eye and a hip that's flipped?	Sheldon: La dietista della cafeteria zoppa e con l'occhio pigro?	Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the limp and the lazy eye?
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Example 15, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x03, “The Fuzzy Boots Corollary”

In episode 1x05, Sheldon asks for Penny’s help to figure out the meaning of the tie hanging from Leonard’s doorknob; when Penny explains it means that Leonard has a girl in his room and asks who it might be, Sheldon glances at the clarinet case on the couch and presents Penny with two hypotheses: it is either Leslie Winkle (who had come over for band practice) or a 1930s gangster. However, the adaptors presumably decided that Sheldon’s joke on the fact that instrument cases were once used to hide guns was too hard to grasp, and replaced it with a line that was not only humorless, but also inadequate, since it had already been established that Leonard was more than willing to be in that room:

Penny: So, do you know who's in there? Leonard: Well, there's Leonard. And he's either with Leslie Winkle or a 1930s gangster.	Penny: Tu sai chi c'è là dentro? Sheldon: Sì, c'è Leonard. E se c'è anche Leslie Winkle forse lo trattiene contro la sua volontà.	Penny: So, do you know who's in there? Leonard: Yes, there's Leonard. And if Leslie Winkle is in there too, she might be keeping him there against his will.	Penny: Allora, sai chi c'è lì dentro? Sheldon: Beh, c'è Leonard. Ed è con Leslie Winkle, oppure con un gangster anni 30.	Penny: So, do you know who's in there? Leonard: Well, there's Leonard. And he's either with Leslie Winkle or a 1930s gangster.
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Example 16, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x05, “The Hamburger Postulate”

⁹⁰ The joke goes: “What is the name of the Czech prima ballerina?,” to which the answer was “Ciolanka Sbilenska.” The (debatable) humorous component is based on the fact that the name sounds Slavic, but is actually a contraction of “Ci ho l’anca sbilenca,” “I have a lopsided hip.”

Wondering how to let Leonard know he had understood the tie code, Sheldon ends up deciding to call him on his cell phone. Once again, the dubbed version failed to convey the extent of his uneasiness with the situation by replacing his awkward line with an entirely out-of-character cheer:

Sheldon: You're welcome. You carry on.	Sheldon: Dacci dentro, amico. Fatti valere!	Sheldon: Go for it, buddy! Prove your worth!	Sheldon: Prego. Continua pure.	Sheldon: You're welcome. You carry on.
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Example 16, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x05, “The Hamburger Postulate”

Numerous other instances failed to reproduce Sheldon’s countless idiosyncrasies, from which much of the humor of the original version originated: for instance, a long scene from episode 1x07, “The Dumpling Paradox,” revolves on the fact that Sheldon rejects all of his friends’ order choices at the Chinese restaurant because their usual order pattern is based on four dining companions, but on that night there are only three of them and his OCD prevents him from accepting uneven divisions (a serving contains four dumplings, and he claims that a third of a dumpling is no longer a dumpling). When they finally seem to be settling for easily-shareable soup, Sheldon points out that they would still have to find a way to divide the wontons in it, yet the Italian version eliminated the punch line by having him say he will order wontons:

Raj: How about soup? Leonard: Yeah, we can always divide soup. Sheldon: What about the wontons?	Raj: Vi va una zuppa? Leonard: Sì, si può dividere la zuppa. Sheldon: Io prendo dei wonton.	Raj: How about soup? Leonard: Yeah, soup can always be divided. Sheldon: I'll have wontons.	Raj: Che mi dite della zuppa? Leonard: Già, possiamo sempre dividere la zuppa. Sheldon: E che mi dite dei wonton?	Raj: How about soup? Leonard: Yeah, we can always divide soup. Sheldon: What about the wontons?
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Example 17, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x07, “The Dumpling Paradox”

The recurrent alteration of Raj’s character has even stronger consequences, since it tends to introduce a racist undertone. In the original version, Raj’s status as a non-American citizen is a frequent pretext for jokes and plot turns based on his habits, his accent, his overbearing parents with whom he video-chats over Skype, and even his status as a legal alien, yet there are no traces of racist references and his linguistic heritage is expressed through his usage of atypical words and

through an accent that is clearly perceptible but never overtly parodic. Conversely, in the dubbed version he speaks with a much stronger accent and utters sentences that only serve to convey a disparaging, inaccurate stereotype of Indian culture. In episode 1x02, his casual remark that Penny's perfume is "intoxicating" was replaced with a reference to the smell of the Ganges (an implausible comparison, considering the pollution of the river):

Howard: Is that her perfume I smell? Raj: Intoxicating, isn't it?	Howard: È il suo profumo questo? Raj: Sa di Gange al mattino presto.	Howard: Is this her perfume? Raj: It smells like the Ganges early in the morning.	Howard: E' il suo profumo quello che sento? Raj: Intossicante, vero?	Howard: Is that her perfume I smell? Raj: Intoxicating / poisonous, isn't it?
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Example 18, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x02, "The Big Bran Hypothesis"

In 1x04, an innocuous reference to a bagel was substituted with an allusion to Raj's "rustic" brother-in-law (a reference which is also disproved later in the series, since his sister Prys is unmarried and appears as a new love interest for Leonard):

Leonard: You don't have buffets in India? Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. You can't find a bagel in Mumbai to save your life.	Leonard: Non li avete i buffet in India? Raj: Certo, ma c'è solo cibo indiano. A Bombay di rustico c'è solo mio cognato.	Leonard: You don't have buffets in India? Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. The only rustic thing in Mumbai is my brother-in-law.	Leonard: Non avete buffet in India? Raj: Ovvio, ma c'e' solo cibo indiano. A Bombay non trovi un bagel manco morto.	Leonard: You don't have buffets in India? Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. You can't find a bagel in Mumbai to save your life.
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Example 19, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x04, "The Luminous Fish Effect"

In the following episode, Raj's selective mutism prevents him from placing his order with Penny at the Cheesecake Factory. The adaptors replaced his complaint with a reference to "a bacon hamburger," which was a risky choice to say the least, considering that Hindus do not eat beef (Raj will later reveal that he does, but it had not been mentioned this early in the season).

Raj: Oh, dear . Howard: What's the matter? Raj: She didn't take my order. Howard: How can she take your order when you're too	Raj: Oh, per Shiva . Howard: Che succede? Raj: Non ha preso la mia ordinazione. Howard: Ma come si fa a prendere un'ordinazione da	Raj: Oh, dear Shiva . Howard: What's the matter? Raj: She didn't take my order. Howard: How can one take an order from a mute	Raj: Oh, cavoli . Howard: Che succede? Raj: Non ha preso la mia ordinazione. Howard: Come fa a prendere la tua ordinazione se sei	Raj: Oh, dear . Howard: What's the matter? Raj: She didn't take my order. Howard: How can she take your order when you're too
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neurotic to talk to her? Raj: Nevertheless, this will be reflected in her tip.	un muto? Raj: Ma era ovvio che volevo un hamburger al bacon.	person? Raj: It was obvious I wanted a bacon hamburger.	troppo nevrotico per parlarle? Raj: Tuttavia, la cosa si ripercuoterà sulla sua mancia.	neurotic to talk to her? Raj: Nevertheless, this will be reflected in her tip.
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Example 20, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x05, “The Hamburger Postulate”

In episode 1x08 the Koothrappalis arrange for Raj to meet a childhood ‘friend’ who has just moved to Los Angeles; during their video-chat, the humorous usage of “samosas” (fried, savory pastries) is eliminated even though its meaning could be easily inferred from the context:

Mrs Koothrappali: Do you remember Lalita Gupta? Raj: The little fat girl that used to kick me in the samosas and call me untouchable?	Mrs Koothrappali: Raji, te la ricordi Lalita Gupta? Raj: La ragazzina grassa che mi dava calci ovunque e mi chiamava intoccabile?	Mrs Koothrappali: Raj, do you remember Lalita Gupta? Raj: The little fat girl that used to kick me everywhere and call me untouchable?	Mrs. Koothrappali: Ti ricordi di Lalita Gupta? Raj: La ragazzina grassa che mi prendeva a calci nelle samosa e mi chiamava intoccabile?	Mrs Koothrappali: Do you remember Lalita Gupta? Raj: The little fat girl that used to kick me in the samosas and call me untouchable?
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Example 21, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x08, “The Grasshopper Experiment”

Howard then calls Lalita pretending to be Raj, mimicking a strong Indian accent; Raj’s transparent reference to *The Simpsons* (which features a regular Indian character, Apu, the owner of the Springfield Quick-E-Mart) was replaced with a funny yet less direct reference to Blake Edwards’ *The Party* (1968):

Howard: You may now thank me. Raj: For what? Making me sound like a Simpsons character?	Howard: Ora puoi ringraziarmi. Raj: Io non parlo come Peter Sellers in Hollywood Party!	Howard: You may now thank me. Raj: I don't speak like Peter Sellers in The Party!	Howard: Ora puoi ringraziarmi. Raj: Per cosa? Per avermi fatto sembrare un personaggio dei Simpson?	Howard: You may now thank me. Raj: For what? Making me sound like a Simpsons character?
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Example 22, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x08, “The Grasshopper Experiment”

Back on Skype, the conversation reverts to Raj’s “samosas”; yet the dubbed version (which also transformed Mrs. Koothrappali’s fairly good English into a highly broken Italian) once again eliminated the reference, replacing it with a much less refined allusion to Raj’s “python”:

Mrs. Koothrappali:	Mrs. Koothrappali:	Mrs. Koothrappali:	Mrs. Koothrappali:	Mrs. Koothrappali:
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<p>You are wearing the boxers that we sent you, aren't you? Raj: Yes, Mumi. Mrs. Koothrapalli: Because you know what happens to the samosas when you wear tighty-whities.</p>	<p>Hai addosso boxer che ti abbiamo mandato, vero Raji? Raj: Sì, mamma. Mrs. Koothrapalli: Boxer non costringono parti basse, pitone respira, che è bello.</p>	<p>You are wearing boxers that we sent you, right Raj? Raj: Yes, mom. Mrs. Koothrapalli: Boxers not constrict lower body parts, python breathes, which is beautiful.</p>	<p>Stai indossando i boxer che ti abbiamo inviato, vero Raj? Raj: Sì, mamma. Mrs. Koothrapalli: Perche' sai cosa succede alle tue samosa quando indossi gli slippini.</p>	<p>You are wearing the boxers that we sent you, aren't you? Raj: Yes, mom. Mrs. Koothrapalli: Because you know what happens to the samosas when you wear tighty-whities.</p>
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Example 23, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x08, “The Grasshopper Experiment”

Numerous examples highlight the tendency of the initial dubbing of *The Big Bang Theory* to insert cheap, obscene jokes; rather than being due to the fact that the show did not (only) target adolescents, this trend probably originated from the widespread belief that the Italian audience has a penchant for trashy humor.⁹¹ In the pilot episode, a joke that merely highlighted Sheldon’s idiosyncrasies was turned into a reference to bowel movements:

<p>Sheldon: We can't have Thai food, we had Indian for lunch. Penny: So? Sheldon: They're both curry-based cuisines. Penny: So? Sheldon: It would be gastronomically redundant. I can see we're going to have to spell out everything for this girl.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Niente thai, abbiamo mangiato indiano a pranzo. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Il curry impazza da quelle parti. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Troppo fa venire la curryte. Se la bimba non capisce, sfodera il rotolo per l'uso.</p>	<p>Sheldon: No Thai food, we had Indian for lunch. Penny: So? Sheldon: Curry is all the rage down there. Penny: So? Sheldon: Too much curry causes currytis. If the chick doesn't understand, get the [toilet paper] roll out.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Non possiamo mangiare thailandese, abbiamo mangiato indiano per pranzo. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Sono entrambe cucine a base di curry. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Sarebbe gastronomicamente ridondante. So già che dovremo spiegare chiaramente ogni cosa a questa ragazza.</p>	<p>Sheldon: We can't have Thai food, we had Indian for lunch. Penny: So? Sheldon: They're both curry-based cuisines. Penny: So? Sheldon: It would be gastronomically redundant. I can see we're going to have to spell out everything for this girl.</p>
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Example 24, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

Similarly (or rather, conversely), Leonard’s attempt to compliment Penny on her job at the Cheesecake Factory even though he cannot eat cheesecake because he is lactose intolerant became an excuse for a reference to the lack of bowel motility. It should also be noted that this dialogue originally opened with Leonard merely asking whether Penny had a job, yet the Italian version

⁹¹ A belief that is at least partly justified by the enduring box office success of gross slapstick comedies that are generally referred to as “cinepanettoni,” since they are released over Christmas.

switched his line with a random reference to Penny possibly working as a caretaker to pay for her education (yet she is not enrolled in any course at the beginning of the series):

<p>Leonard: Well... do you have some sort of a job? Penny: I'm a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Leonard: I love cheesecake. Sheldon: You're lactose intolerant! Leonard: I don't eat it... I just think it's a good idea.</p>	<p>Leonard: Ti mantieni agli studi facendo la badante? Penny: No, faccio la cameriera alla Fabbrica del Cheesecake. Leonard: Adoro il cheesecake. Sheldon: Ma se sei intollerante al lattosio! Leonard: Se vuoi parlarle anche della mia stipsi...</p>	<p>Leonard: Do you pay for your education by working as a caretaker? Penny: No, I'm a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Leonard: I love cheesecake. Sheldon: You're lactose intolerant! Leonard: If you want to tell her about my constipation too...</p>	<p>Leonard: Lavori da qualche parte? Penny: Sono cameriera alla "fabbrica del Cheesecake" Leonard: Adoro il cheesecake. Sheldon: Sei intollerante al lattosio. Leonard: Non lo mangio. Penso solo che sia una buona idea.</p>	<p>Leonard: Well... do you have some sort of a job? Penny: I'm a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Leonard: I love cheesecake. Sheldon: You're lactose intolerant! Leonard: I don't eat it... I just think it's a good idea.</p>
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Example 25, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x01 – Pilot

The Italian version also made Penny sound ruder than she actually is; even though her Nebraska childhood taught her how to take care of herself and though she rarely minces her words, the adaptors of the first eight episodes unnecessarily stressed her straightforwardness to insert cheap humor, as in the following examples:

<p>Leonard: Leslie, this is Penny. She lives across the hall from Sheldon and me. Howard: And walks in quiet beauty like the night. Penny: Howard, I've asked you not to do that.</p>	<p>Leonard: Leslie, questa è Penny. Abita proprio di fronte a Sheldon e me. Howard: E procede in silenziosa bellezza come la notte. Penny: Io russo la notte.</p>	<p>Leonard: Leslie, this is Penny. She lives right across the hall from Sheldon and me. Howard: And walks in quiet beauty like the night. Penny: I snore at night.</p>	<p>Leonard: Leslie, lei è Penny. Vive dall'altro lato del nostro pianerottolo. Howard: E cammina, bella e silenziosa, come la notte. Penny: Howard, ti ho chiesto di non farlo.</p>	<p>Leonard: Leslie, this is Penny. She lives across the hall from Sheldon and me. Howard: And walks in quiet beauty like the night. Penny: Howard, I've asked you not to do that.</p>
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Example 26, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x05, “The Hamburger Postulate”

<p>Penny: And I can't go back to my party because he's there. And I know you don't want to hear this...</p>	<p>Penny: E ora io non posso tornare di là perché lo conosco e so che mi spappolerebbe i cosiddetti...</p>	<p>Penny: And I can't go back there because I know him and I know he'd smash my so-called...</p>	<p>Penny: Non posso tornare alla mia festa perché lui è lì. E tu questo non vuoi sentirlo...</p>	<p>Penny: And I can't go back to my party because he's there. And I know you don't want to hear this...</p>
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Example 27, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x06, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

Yet it is Howard’s character that was most often twisted to accommodate sexual humor that were inappropriate even for his constant flirting attempts. The clever original puns often became gross jokes, as is the case with the following example, in which the adaptors replaced the punch line with an unneeded reference to the “canyon” of the girl with whom Howard is trying to flirt:

Howard: If that's a working stethoscope, maybe you'd like to hear my heart skip a beat? Girl in a nurse costume: No, thanks. Howard: No, seriously, you can. I have transient idiopathic arrhythmia.	Howard: Ho notato che hai uno stetoscopio, auscolteresti il mio cuore che salta un battito? Girl in a nurse costume: No, grazie. Howard: Se non vuoi, io auscolterò il tuo canyon, non è un problema per me.	Howard: I see you have a stethoscope, maybe you'd like to hear my heart skip a beat? Girl in a nurse costume: No, thanks. Howard: If you don't want to, I'll listen to your canyon, it's no problem for me.	Howard: Se quello stetoscopio funziona, potresti voler sentire il mio cuore che perde un colpo? Girl in a nurse costume: No, grazie. Howard: No, sul serio, puoi farlo. Ho un'aritmia idiopatica transitoria.	Howard: If that's a working stethoscope, maybe you'd like to hear my heart skip a beat? Girl in a nurse costume: No, thanks. Howard: No, seriously, you can. I have transient idiopathic arrhythmia.
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Example 28, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x06, “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

In episode 1x07, Howard is so thrilled to have finally hooked up with a hot girl that he secretly records a new message for his voicemail in which she confirms that they are having sex; yet the original, straightforward but amusing reference was replaced with a cheap pun on the verb “to come”:

Howard and Christy’s answering machine: Hi, this is Howard Wolowitz. And this is Christy Vanderbilt. We can’t get to the phone right now because we’re having sex!	Howard and Christy’s answering machine: Sono Howard Wolowitz. E io sono Christy Vanderbilt. Non possiamo venire al telefono perché siamo già venuti!	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Hi, this is Howard Wolowitz. And this is Christy Vanderbilt. We can't come to the phone because we already came!	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Salve, sono Howard Wolowitz. E io sono Christy Vanderbilt. Non possiamo rispondere al telefono perché stiamo facendo sesso!	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Hi, this is Howard Wolowitz. And this is Christy Vanderbilt. We can't answer the phone right now because we're having sex!
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Example 29, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x07, “The Dumpling Paradox”

Finally, in episode 1x05 Howard makes fun of Leonard’s sexual activity with clarinet player Leslie Winkle. The fansubs created equivalent (and equally funny) jokes using the Italian names of musical notes to evoke sexual imagery (“Fa Mi, La Do,” which represent the notes F E G C, can be

read as “Do me, I’ll give it,” an equivalent of which could be something to the effect of “major lift, B sharp”). Yet the dubbed version substituted “Dr. Stud” which a far more vulgar “Dr. Squirt” and attempted to recreate a lame joke based on the colloquial verb “trombare,” which derives from “tromba” (“trumpet”) and means “to fuck.” To force this alleged punch line into the dialogue, the adaptors also introduced a grammatical mistake, since “tromba” (third person singular) should have been conjugated as “trombi” to fit with the second person singular subject “you.”

Howard: Look. It's Dr. Stud! Leonard: Dr. What? Howard: The blogosphere is a-buzzin' with news of you and Leslie Winkle making eine kleine bang-bang Musik.	Howard: Ehi, salve, Dottor Spruzzo! Leonard: Dr. cosa? Howard: La blogosfera è tutta un chiacchiericcio di te e Leslie Winkle che dal violoncello passa al clarinetto mentre tu la tromba.	Howard: Look. It's Dr. Squirt! Leonard: Dr. What? Howard: The blogosphere is buzzing with news of Leslie Winkle moving from the cello to the clarinet while you "trumpet" her.	Howard: Ehi, guarda... c'è Dottor Fusto! Leonard: Dottor che? Howard: La blogosfera è in fermento alla notizia che tu e Leslie Winkle avete fatto un po' di "Fa Mi, La Do".	Howard: Look. It's Dr. Stud! Leonard: Dr. What? Howard: The blogosphere is a-buzzin' with news of you and Leslie Winkle doing a bit of “major lift, B sharp.”
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Example 30, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 1x05, “The Hamburger Postulate”

The profusion of lame, gross jokes, racist allusions, obliterated cultural references, and unnecessarily explicit sexual humor of the dubbing of the first eight episodes (from which all thirty of the above examples were taken) did no justice to the witty, carefully created original scripts and only managed to transform the protagonists in yet another bunch of juvenile sit-com oddballs. The fans’ rapid reaction to the adulteration of the show bears witness to the evolution of the Italian audience and to the need for a more careful approach to AVT, as repeatedly underlined. Consumer activism was not unheard-of in the history of television, with cases such as the legendary letter-writing campaign that saved *Star Trek – The Original Series* from cancellation in 1968, or the more recent fan crusade advocating a late-night UK broadcasting of uncensored episodes of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and its spin-off series *Angel*. In Italy, however, the protest of the fans of *The Big Bang Theory* had a revolutionary value, not only because it meant that viewers were taking a precise lingua-cultural stand, which was significant in itself, but also because it was the first attempt to channel the brewing discontent about low-quality television dubbing into a constructive

counteraction, rather than just averting dubbed products. For it to constitute a genuine watershed, however, the first eight episodes should have been redubbed for the show’s second airing on Italia 1 to avoid a further mis-presentation of the show to the Italian audience, which probably affected revenues much more than redubbing costs would have done. Nonetheless, the fact that Post In Europe readily responded to fan criticism paves the way for a wider reassessment of AVT techniques, which the company has proven able to perform successfully. The dubbed version created by new adaptation team contains a significantly lower number of drops in translational voltage; references to geek culture are usually maintained, and the few renditions that sound weird tend to be a matter of register or nuance, rather than content alterations. For instances, the curse phrase “son of a bitch” is translated with softened expressions that real-life Italian twenty-somethings would probably never use: “mannaggia ai pescetti” is used in the Rome area, but not in the rest of Italy, and was employed as a cartoon-esque imprecation in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (Robert Zemeckis, 1988), while “porca paletta” is more frequent, but also noticeably milder.

Penny: Oh, son of a bitch!	Penny: Oh, mannaggia ai pescetti.	Penny: Oh, darn! [lit. “darn the small fish!”, regional Italian phrase]	Penny: Ma porca puttana!	Penny: Oh, son of a bitch!
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Example 31, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 2x03

Howard: Son of a bitch!	Howard: Porca paletta!	Howard: Oh, bloody hell! [lit. damn the small spade]	Howard: Porca puttana!	Howard: Son of a bitch!
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Example 32, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 2x08

Aside from the occasional lapses, the improved quality of the dubbed version is undoubtedly due to the adaptation team’s better evaluation of the needs of the show’s Italian audience and to the legitimization of non-domesticating strategies promoted by fansubbing. In some cases, the adaptors even appear to have “borrowed” the solutions used in the corresponding fansubs, as is the case with the following reference to Jar Jar Binks, the most ridiculed character in the *Star Wars* saga:

Raj: You're like the Jar Jar Binks of the Hofstadter family. Howard: Oh, mesa think yousa lookin' so so sad.	Raj: Sei il Jar Jar Binks della famiglia Hofstadter. Howard: Oh, mi pensa che tu es maxi maxi triste.	Raj: You're like the Jar Jar Binks of the Hofstadter family. Howard: Oh, mesa think yousa lookin' so so sad.	Raj: Sì, sei come il Jar-Jar Binks della famiglia Hofstadter. Howard: Oh, mi pensa que tu es maxi maxi triste.	Raj: You're like the Jar Jar Binks of the Hofstadter family. Howard: Oh, mesa think yousa lookin' so so sad.
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Example 33, *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 2x15

Fansubbing communities frequently complain that adaptors have taken to incorporating part of fansub translations in the dubbed version, since their goal is to provide a non-profit service to fellow fans and obviously not to allow someone else to make money off their efforts. However, the fact that the dubbed version borrowed the exact line used in the fansubs (which adhered to the Spanish-sounding rendition of Jar Jar's Gungan language in the Italian dubbing of the *Star Wars* saga) also signals that the AVT industry is opening up to less domesticating translation strategies and is trying to be more in tune with the evolving audience. Together with the positive results of Fox Italia's new AVT strategies for *Glee* and with other successful experiments such as Sub-Ti's Fans & Subs contest (see **page 93**), this trend might pave the way for a further collaboration with engaged viewers, as suggested in **2.9**. Fansubbers or particularly knowledgeable fans could thus be hired (and credited) as consultants or proofreaders for specific shows, reducing the distance between translators and audiences and promoting an approach to dubbing which would be better suited to cater to the needs of viewers 2.0, as will be illustrated in the closing chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

Leonard: Well, uh, remember when you tried to learn how to swim using the internet?

Sheldon: I *did* learn how to swim.

Leonard: On the floor.

Sheldon: The skills are transferable. I just have no interest in going in the water.

Leonard: Then why learn how to swim?

Sheldon: The ice caps are melting, Leonard. In the future, swimming isn't going to be optional.

The Big Bang Theory, episode 2x13, “The Friendship Algorithm”

Over the past two decades, the new media (and particularly the Internet) have rewritten both the modes of television watching and the theories and terminology necessary to describe them. The paradigm in which ‘the box’ had been inscribed for over sixty years has become too narrow to accommodate the new forms of time-shifted and place-shifted consumption and the increasing amount of transmedia narratives that overflow onto different devices and are appropriated and remediated through social media. Adding an intercultural and interlinguistic perspective creates a further refraction of televisual texts that cannot be framed in traditional distribution and consumption models and thus increases the urgency of a paradigm redefinition in the wake of the evolution of audience practices toward active participation in a global dialogue that generally pivots around US schedules, at least for television series. This dissertation thus aimed at creating a framework that combined the theories and practical guidelines of audiovisual translation (described in **chapter 2**) with an up-to-date media studies approach based on the concepts of media convergence, cult television, transmedia storytelling, social watching, and user participation (see **chapter 1**). This framework was then applied to the analysis of the Italian reconstruction of American youth culture through the dubbing and fansubbing of a selection of six teen shows that covered the past 25 years, from 1990 to the first half of 2014 (*Beverly Hills, 90210*; *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; *Dawson’s Creek*; *Gossip Girl*; *The Big Bang Theory*; and *Glee*). Teen television

constituted a particularly relevant area of study since its development as a full-fledged genre with a variety of subgenres coincided with the final years of traditional consumption modes and the inception of Internet-mediated fandom practices; moreover, its reliance on sociolects based on age groups and subcultures provided an abundance of material worthy of translational appraisal.

A diachronic study proved most suited to analyze the evolution of adapting practices from an era in which dubbing operated in a regime of non-competitiveness (Chiaro in Chiaro et al. 2008: 246-247; see 2.9), since it held the monopoly of television translation in Italy, to the current scenario in which its domain is challenged by other forms of AVT (fansubbing and partly subtitling). The empirical analysis mainly focused on the rendition of Extralinguistic Cultural References (Pedersen 2005: online) / Culture-Specific References (Antonini and Chiaro 2005: 39), which provided a general barometer of the dubbing approach, since the adaptors of all six shows tended to use target-language oriented rendering strategies (at least for the first seasons). This high degree of domestication was partly due to the role of dubbing as a comprehension facilitator and to the synchrony constraints imposed by multimodal texts, yet the dialogue samples collected in this corpus highlight a tendency to oversimplify or adulterate scripts with unnecessary cultural substitutions and to tame or omit sexual references, which is partly due to the fact that teen shows were and are still frequently broadcast in daytime slots which give little credit to their specific identities. The existing moralistic streak in *Beverly Hills, 90210* was thus intensified by toning down or obliterating potentially prurient innuendos, while cultural references were often generalized or replaced with Europe-friendly equivalents (see 5.1). These strategies might have been justifiable for the first veritable teen dramas, but their usage continued well after the initial adjustment period. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, many ECRs that would have been fairly transparent for the Italian audience were omitted or replaced with phrases that bordered nonsense in those contexts. The show also suffered a poorly-crafted, censorship-oriented translation that thwarted the power of the heroine's slang (which had been conceived to be as sharp as her stake), thus affecting the perception of the whole series for the tenacious viewers that managed to follow it in its entirety

in spite of its troubled broadcast history (see **6.1**). *Dawson's Creek* underwent a similar cleansing process, which deeply impacted the audience's perception of the main characters, particularly of Dawson's best friend / on-and-off girlfriend Joey Potter, whose trademark tangy, sarcastic comments and daring jokes frequently became tedious, impersonal complaints, to the extent that most Italian viewers recall her as a whiny and insufferable character (see **6.4**). The adaptation of the three shows from the past decade (analyzed in **chapter 7**) generally denotes a more careful verification of references and terminology, which generated a lower number of mistranslations; however, the *Gossip Girl* adaptors achieved this result by making a large use of omissions and generalizations, which constituted a "safer" choice, but also impoverished the rendition of the show's linguistic identity (see **7.2**). The initial dubbing of *The Big Bang Theory* also betokens a complete misunderstanding (and thus a deliberate adulteration) of the show's appeal, since the first eight episodes transformed its carefully created geek universe into a sequence of hardly amusing crass jokes and nonsensical dialogues (see **paragraph 7.6**).

The significant improvement of the show's adaptation starting from the ninth episode (as a result of the studio's replacement of the original dubbing team) and the overall successful, timely-delivered dubbing of *Glee* (especially from season 2 onwards, as described in **paragraph 7.4**) anticipate a favorable, efficient evolution of adapting and dubbing practices in Italy, yet the fact that many other AVT providers have yet to follow in the footsteps of Post In Europe and Fox Italia signals that there is still much room for improvement. On the one hand, the industry appears to have recognized the growing knowledge of American culture that viewers have developed over decades of exposure to Anglo-American televisual and cinematic products: the perceptibly lower amount of mistranslations and inconsistencies signals a higher care in terminology verification, which the Internet has made far more accessible than in previous eras. Some networks (most notably, those that belong to the Sky Group, including Fox) have also shown a clear interest in accelerating the dubbing process and using subtitling as a temporary compensation of the delivery delay that dubbing entails. On the other hand, the continual, excessive use of domestication strategies and the

insufficient attention to the specific identity of each show signal a still widespread inability to gauge the audience's evolving relationship with televisual texts and a persistence of the habit to consider teen shows and situation comedies as interchangeable products of minor genres that can and should be homogenized for a sort of Pavlovian consumption. The comparison between dubbed and fansubbed dialogues and the comments retrieved from forums and social media show that at least a part of the Italian audience has grown interested in a different form of television watching that is consistent with the paradigm of media convergence and networked publics described in **chapter 1**. While casual consumption is still predominant and is not bound to disappear completely, the growing complexity and specificity of quality TV products and the rising numbers of viewers who express their disappointment with dubbing by commenting online or subscribing to fansubbing communities foreshadow a near future in which lengthy, target-culture oriented forms of AVT will be tolerated less and less. Full engagement with a show is comparable to a high-profile game that puts a whole set of specific viewing skills to the test, promising a meritocratic reward system that offers dedicated viewers a proportionally immersive experience: as Fornasiero (in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 78, my translation) notes,

the more a show challenges its viewers, the clearer it must be to them that their loyalty, their patience, and their attention (which often extend beyond the main text to a myriad of ancillary media contents) will be eventually rewarded with a satisfying solution.

Since the game is mainly played in English and following US schedules, the delayed delivery of the translated texts basically disqualifies viewers before they even start playing, while an excessively domestication might penalize the decoding and re-encoding process. Moreover, the audience's increasing awareness of the hiatus between original and translated texts generates additional frustration and is likely to prompt an intensification of the usage of alternative forms of AVT such as fansubs. The *Big Bang Theory* dubbing debacle and the persistence of adulterating strategies in adaptation indicate that most Italian AVT providers have yet to assess the new audience's power and willingness to engage with their favorite shows. And yet, as Jenkins (2006a: 263) points out,

this is “a time when small niches of consumers who are willing to commit their money to a cause might ensure the production of a minority-interest program.” A case in point is the recent production of the *Veronica Mars Movie* (Rob Thomas, 2014), an entirely crowdfunded project which revived the popular CW show seven years after its cancellation. Back in 2007, when the show was abruptly terminated without a proper conclusion after its third season, the numerous fans of the teenage detective Veronica Mars organized a campaign to flood the CW offices with Mars bars and marshmallows⁹² (referenced in the series); their protest was to no avail, but the continued engagement with the show eventually prompted creator Rob Thomas to launch a crowdfunding project on the Kickstarter website (Checcaglini 2013: online). Even though six years had gone by, fans flocked to donate money for the movie, partly attracted by the appealing rewards,⁹³ but certainly mostly animated by the strong desire to see their heroine back on screen and to finally achieve closure after so many years. Their dedication became tangible as the crowdfunding campaign broke two of the Kickstarter records: it was the fastest campaign to reach its goal (gathering two million USD in under twelve hours) and it had the highest number of backers in the history of the now-popular crowdfunding platform, as 91,585 people donated a total of 5,702,153 USD (Cohen 2013: online). Admittedly, hypes and fan devotion can be fickle and hard to gauge, and the *Veronica Mars Movie* Project is not necessarily representative of typical fan reactions; nonetheless, a scenario in which fans from all over the world (including Italy) are willing to invest their own money to allow a storyworld to achieve completion is clearly incompatible with outdated forms of mediation based on the delayed spoon-feeding of highly processed dialogues. In other words, to refer to the *Big Bang Theory* quote at the beginning this chapter, we are moving toward a

⁹² The candy-based protest echoed the “Send Nuts” campaign through which viewers had managed to save *Jericho* from cancellation by shipping a massive amount of nuts to the offices of CBS, the show’s home network.

⁹³ The reward system operated in “an expectation economy that transformed the pre-launch phase into a form of entertainment” (Gallio and Martina 2013: 6, my translation). Jason Mittell (2013; quoted in Checcaglini 2013: 35) highlights the appeal of the *Veronica Mars Movie* project: “I’m getting something more palpable: I’m entering into a commercially-facilitated, serialized one-way relationship with a mass media text and its production crew – which is a pretty good definition of fandom in general.” Rewards ranged from a limited-edition *Veronica Mars Movie* T-shirt available only to Kickstarter backers in return for a 25 USD donation to the grand prize of a guaranteed speaking role in the movie (a one-line restaurant scene) for the backer who donated 10,000 USD. See <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/559914737/the-veronica-mars-movie-project> (accessed June 10, 2014).

mediascape in which user engagement “is not going to be optional,” and neither are AVT strategies that allow full participation in the global appropriation and remediation processes.

At the time of writing (July 2014), the Italian AVT industry appears to be slowly shifting toward a paradigm reassessment: many providers still cling to the traditional dubbing model, but the past few years have witnessed a gradual change in the translation services offered by pay-TV networks and since DTT channels often acquire dubbed TV shows from premium networks, it might be possible that the adjustments operated by Sky, Mediaset Premium, and other subscription-based providers will eventually extend to a larger number of channels. The current strike of dubbing professionals might also constitute a precious litmus paper to evaluate future trends. During the previous strike, which was organized in 1998 and lasted two months, infuriated viewers flooded Mediaset’s phone lines to protest against the network’s decision to broadcast subtitled episodes of *The Guiding Light* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*. The reasons behind their reaction were easily understandable: beside the destabilizing novelty of an AVT approach to which they were not used, older viewers complained that they had problems reading text on screen, especially since the improvised subtitles were not segmented and were thus displayed as a single text flow which made it hard to figure out who was saying what. Yet aside from the issues with those specific subtitles, articles on the 1998 strike also underline that the general perception of subtitling still equated on-screen written AVT to a form of intellectual affectation: Stefano Munafò (quoted in Costantini 1998, my translation), director of RAI’s fiction department, stated that RAI “would not broadcast subtitled series because it made no sense to use an elitist procedure for a popular product,” while voice actress Lella Costa (also quoted in Costantini 1998, my translation) commented that average viewers “were not the fans of Enrico Ghezzi’s night-time, original language movies,” referring to the popular program *Fuori Orario*, which presented subtitled, non-mainstream films. Sixteen years later, the audience appears much less opposed to the usage of subtitles as a temporary measure until the current strike of the dubbing industry reaches its conclusion: while joking that “Italian viewers

have to endure subtitles,” the *Guardian*’s Rome-based correspondent Lizzy Davies (2014: online) also points out that

this time, at least one commentator voiced approval of the subtitled shows, declaring the dubbers' strike “a blessing.” “Finally, for example, I saw *Revolution* [a US science-fiction drama]... with the real voices and real behavior of the actors,” wrote blogger Aldo Lastella on Repubblica.it. “I’m not saying we have to all be chained to the subtitles, but at least give us the option of choosing.”

The Sky group (which is usually more open to subtitles) chose to postpone the new episodes of *24: Live Another Day* (Joel Surnow and Robert Cochran, 2014) and *Modern Family* (Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan, 2009 – present) until dubbing resumes, yet they are screening the musical talent show *Britain’s Got Talent* with subtitles. Mediaset Premium channels chose to broadcast as many as seven shows with subtitles: *Revolution* (Eric Kripke, 2012 – present), *Grimm* (David Greenwalt and Jim Kouf, 2011 – present), *Parenthood* (Jason Katims, 2010 – present), *Mike and Molly* (Mark Roberts, 2010 – present), *The Middle* (Eileen Heisler and DeAnn Heline, 2009 – present), *Suits* (Aaron Korsh, 2011 – present), and *The Mentalist* (Bruno Heller, 2008 – present). The network promises to re-air the episodes once their dubbed versions are available, yet their choice to broadcast subtitled versions in order to provide the fans of each show with the final episodes of the current seasons signals a shift in their assessment of the audience (which is most likely a correct evaluation: with so many shows heading toward their season finales, they risked losing a significant part of their viewership, while Sky faces a lower risk with just two series).

Contingent solutions to a temporary problem cannot be considered as necessarily representative of future trends, yet Italy’s higher openness toward subtitling is undeniable, considering the response to the dubbing industry’s strike, the growing usage of fansubs, the increasing number of DTT and pay-TV channels offering optional subtitles, and cases like the attempt to distribute the subtitled version of the unaired final seasons of *The Guiding Light* (see **paragraph 2.8.1**). The next two or three years will probably be crucial for the future developments of AVT and distribution strategies, especially because most DTT networks usually buy TV series

from pay-TV groups like Sky and Mediaset Premium, which have already started to consider the impact of the new modes of consumption (both by accelerating the dubbing process, as Sky did for *Glee* and other shows, and by offering subtitles, either regularly or as a response to the current strike). While upcoming developments obviously depend on a combination of factors, many of which are hardly predictable, the configuration of the current mediascape, the diffusion of social watching practices, and the growth of the fansubbing phenomenon all point to a relatively near future in which a significant portion of the audiences in traditional dubbing countries will no longer tolerate current dubbing strategies. Should this occur, three possible scenarios might unfold:

1. In the unlikely case in which DTT networks and AVT providers choose not to adjust their translation and distribution system, the polarization between the traditional adaptation of products for the general public and the updated AVT forms used for quality TV programs would reach dangerous levels. As Barra and Scaglioni (in Grasso and Scaglioni 2009: 17, my translation) highlight, “since the end of the 1990s, the evolution of the media landscape has led to a double track in [television] production, which has paired mainstream products for wider audiences with series that targeted more specific, refined, and demanding niche audiences.” The growing bifurcation in the AVT approaches adopted to import these two types of programs might then lead to a true schism, which would eventually force the general audience into a cultural bubble that is off-tune with the increasingly globalized culture. However, given that digital natives are growing up within the paradigm of quality TV, cult fandoms, and networked viewing, chances are that this scenario will not be sustainable over a long time span.
2. If more networks and AVT providers proceed to reassess their approach to the translation and delivery of television shows, there might be room for a partial convergence of dubbing and fansubbing practices, which would ideally merge the advantages of both AVT forms, as described in 2.9. The best features of the long-standing Italian dubbing tradition, such as

dialogue fluency, careful synching, and powerful voice-acting, could thus be combined with the less domesticating approach and the deep knowledge of each show's specificity that are typical of fansubbers. Hiring the latter (or particularly conversant fans) as consultants would allow adaptation teams to benefit from a collaborative epistemic pool that is imperative in the contemporary scenario, as O'Hagan (2014: presentation) highlights: with the introduction of a new model based on user empowerment and participatory culture, on a personal interest in the subjects to be translated, and a paradigm of devotion ("affinity spaces"), it is "no longer possible for a single expert to grasp increasingly complex systems" (Gee and Hayes 2011, quoted in O'Hagan 2014). Fan consultants could thus provide the highly specific knowledge needed to craft effective audiovisual translations in the age of intertextuality, transmedia storytelling, and cult viewership.

3. AVT providers could also capitalize on Italy's increasing openness toward subtitling to provide optional English and Italian subtitles for more and more programs, allowing viewers to switch languages for both the audio and the subtitle tracks (which is currently only possible for a selection of shows on a limited number of channels). Should the audience respond positively to an increased offer of subtitles, there might even be room for the introduction of visual pop-up glosses like the ones frequently used for Japanese animes, which would allow for a larger retention of the original contents through written clarifications. Pop-up glosses could also be loaded on a different device and synchronized with the primary televisual text, as happens with the information provided by second-screen companion applications; this method would allow casual viewers to continue to watch dubbed programs without visual additions, while still providing extra information for those who are interested in a more complete form of consumption and willing to engage with two screens at the same time.

Possible future research projects could thus focus on mapping the elements that point toward one of these scenarios (or to a combination of the second and third hypotheses, which might well coexist). However, the area of analysis will probably have to be redefined, since teen drama is currently undergoing a major crisis, with the mass cancellation of shows like *One Tree Hill*, *Gossip Girl* itself, *Skins* (Jamie Brittain and Bryan Elsley, UK, 2007 – 2013), *Misfits* (Howard Overman, UK, 2009 – 2013), *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* (Brenda Hampton, 2008 – 2013), *90210* (Darren Star, Rob Thomas, Gabe Sachs, and Jeff Judas, 2008 – 2013), and *The Carrie Diaries*. Aside from *Glee*,⁹⁴ the shows that have managed to survive and in some cases even thrive are those that capitalize on the audience's growing proclivity for the supernatural and for a blend of adventure and science-fiction, fostered by literary and cinematographic sagas like *Harry Potter*,⁹⁵ *Twilight*, *The Hunger Games*,⁹⁶ *The Mortal Instruments*,⁹⁷ and *Divergent*⁹⁸. Based on the current scenario, a possible direction for future research could thus focus on the analysis of the translation and distribution strategies used for shows such as *The Vampire Diaries* (based on L.J. Smith's 1990s saga), *Teen Wolf* (Jeff Davis, 2011 – present; based on the eponymous 1985 movie starring Michael J. Fox), *Pretty Little Liars* (Marlene King, 2010 – present; based on the book series by Sara Shepard), and the post-apocalyptic *The 100* (Jason Rothenberg, 2014 – present; based on the novel by Kass Morgan). The combination of the teen and supernatural/science-fiction genres can potentially create a linguistic dimension that is twice as specific as 'regular' teen dramas or science fiction show and weave a more intricate fabric of cultural and intertextual references. Analyzing the rendition of these shows might thus provide some indications on the extent to which the system of Italian networks and AVT providers is going to embrace a type of translation and a broadcast schedule that are better fit to match the needs of a meta-niche audience. Last but not least, the

⁹⁴ *The Big Bang Theory* has been confirmed as well, yet the current age of its protagonists prevents it from being considered a teen drama, even though its analysis was crucial for this dissertation. *Glee* itself is going to end in 2015.

⁹⁵ *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Chris Columbus, 2001), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Chris Columbus, 2002), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2004), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (Mike Newell, 2005), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (David Yates, 2007), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (David Yates, 2009), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 1* (David Yates, 2010), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2* (David Yates, 2011); based on the novels by J. K. Rowling.

⁹⁶ *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross, 2012), *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (Francis Lawrence, 2013), *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1* (Francis Lawrence, 2014), *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2* (Francis Lawrence, 2015). Based on the novels by Suzanne Collins.

⁹⁷ *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* (Harald Zwart, 2013); based on the novels by Cassandra Clare.

⁹⁸ *Divergent* (Neil Burger, 2014). Based on the novels by Veronica Roth.

analysis of the future translational approach to teen shows might also provide material for an investigation of the correlation between AVT and language acquisition: the popularization of subtitling for teen television would have a strong impact on young people's exposure to foreign languages and favor the improvement of their linguistic skills, since, as *Buffy* quipster Xander jokes in episode 1x08 "I Robot, You Jane," "to read makes our speaking English good."

APPENDIX A

BEVERLY HILLS, 90210 – EPISODE ANALYSIS

Dubbing studio: MAR International

Highlighted lines indicate the examples analyzed in chapter 5.

Episode 1x01 – “Class of Beverly Hills”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	1x01	Class of Beverly Hills	Benvenuti a Beverly Hills	October 4, 1990	November 19, 1992

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:34	Brenda doesn't know what to wear and is concerned about making a great first impression.	Brenda: Everybody here looks like they just stepped out of a music video.	Brenda: Ma che avete, mi sembrate tutti marziani stamattina, o sono io che ho sbagliato pianeta?	Brenda: What's with everyone, you all look like aliens to me , or am I on the wrong planet?	Substitution (music video culture had not taken over Italy yet).
00:01:59	Brenda dreams about creating a new identity for herself.	Brenda: I could be anyone. I could be someone. Brandon: Like what, homecoming queen?	Brenda: Potrei essere chiunque. Potrei essere qualcuno. Brandon: Chi, la principessa sul pisello?	Like who, the princess on the pea? (Reference to a popular fairy tale about a princess who couldn't sleep because a pea placed underneath her dozens of mattresses).	Poor substitution; it loses the reference to power relationships in American high schools, while “la reginetta del ballo” would have been an easier and more effective solution.
00:02:26	Brenda tries billions of outfits.	Brandon: So, she spends an hour in front of the mirror, and now she's gotta go change her clothes.	Brandon: Ci vorrà il semaforo in camera di Brenda, c'è un traffico di vestiti che fa paura.	Brandon: Brenda will need a traffic lights in her room, there's such a frantic clothes traffic.	Substitution, possibly better.

00:06:38	Steve and Kelly meet months after breaking up.	Steve: You got a nose job. Kelly: Yeah, I did. Steve: It looks good. Kelly: Big improvement, huh? Steve: They took about a foot off.	Steve: Ehi, ma ti sei rifatta il naso! Kelly: Sì, infatti. Steve: Stai benissimo! Kelly: Sì, piace anche a me. Steve: Bene! E un'accorciatina alle mani no?	Steve: Hey, you got a nose job! Kelly: Yes, I did. Steve: It looks so good! Kelly: Yes, I like it too? Steve: What about a hand trimming now?	Mistranslation.
00:08:01	The student counselor welcomes Brandon and Brenda.	Counselor: ...almost a straight-A student.	Counselor: ...uno studente di categoria A.	Counselor: ...an A-list student.	Generalization; A is the top grade in the US system, "straight-A" does not just refer to a good student, but to someone who only gets As (relevant for GPA calculations)
00:15:17	Scott (a freshman) is the victim of a jock prank.	Scott: I hate jocks!	Scott: Io odio gli scherzi!	Scott: I hate jokes!	Probable mistranslation, even though the Italian solution suits the context.
00:16:06	Kelly is telling Brenda about Marianne's parties.	Kelly: I hear her house is so big, you need a map to get around.	Kelly: Dicono che abbia una casa così grande che le serve il motorino per girarla.	Kelly: I hear her house is so big, she needs a moped to get around.	Unnecessary Italian flavor.
00:26:11	David ogles Kelly, a drunken Steve comments on her.	Steve: She is the biggest bitch at West Beverly High.	Steve: E' la più grande puttana del West Beverly High.	Steve: She is the biggest whore at West Beverly High.	Connotation shift (frequent in the translation of the word "bitch").
00:28:38	Steve is too drunk to drive and asks David to drive him home.	Steve: I live at Doheny Road , 4203.	Steve: Io abito al 4203 di Doheny Drive.	Steve: I live at Doheny Drive , 4203.	Increased "California" effect (echoes Rodeo Drive).
00:39:04	Andrea's goal is to get into an Ivy League school.	Andrea: I already spend 10 hours of community service a week. That the Ivies love.	Andrea: [...] Questo mi farà entrare all'università.	Andrea: [...] This will get me into college.	Generalization. Andrea is an overachiever and goes to WBH even though she comes from a poorer neighborhood in order to get a good education and get into an Ivy League school.
00:43:03	Jason, who is 25, chats up Brenda at an over-21 club, not knowing she is 16.	Jason: Can I get you anything? Brenda: I'll have a... a... banana daiquiri.	[...] Brenda: Un frappè alla banana.	[...] Brenda: A banana milkshake.	Unnecessary substitution. Brenda is trying to look sophisticated in an over-21 club, but comes up with a weird mix of alcohol and childish flavor.
00:47:51	Marianne and Brandon enjoy a hot jacuzzi bath. Marianne wants to have sex.	Brandon: Didn't your mother teach you about playing hard to get?	Brandon: Tua madre non ti ha detto che ci sono dei valori da rispettare?	Brandon: Didn't your mother tell you there are values to uphold?	Overplaying Walsh ethics.

00:48:02	Marianne and Brandon enjoy a hot jacuzzi bath. Marianne wants to have sex.	Marianne: He met my mom on the road, she was this major groupie .	Marianne: [...] Lei era una cantante .	Marianne: [...] She was a singer .	Tamed (Marianne is depicting her parents as transgressive).
01:08:30	David admits to having smashed Steve's Corvette.	David: I'm probably gonna have to work in McDonald's for the rest of my life.	David: Per ripagarti lavorerò come cameriere per tutta la vita.	David: I'll work as a waiter for the rest of my life to pay you back.	Generalization / "de-Americanization."
01:13:04	Brenda is having a hard time keeping up her lies about being in college.	Jason's friend: So, Jason tells us your entire sorority house transferred here from Minnesota.	Amica di Jason: ci ha detto che tutta la sezione femminile universitaria si è trasferita qui dal Minnesota.	Jason's friend: Jason tells us the entire female student body transferred here from Minnesota.	Mistranslation: a sorority may include dozens of women, but the female student body may amount to thousands.
01:25:19	Brenda confesses she is actually 16.	Brenda: Jason, I am a junior at West Beverly High.	Brenda: Jason, io frequento il West Beverly High.	Brenda: Jason, I attend West Beverly High.	Generalization ("junior" would not have been transparent for Italian viewers).
Episode notes					
Steve's Corvette has a 18A-4RE plate ('I ate a Ferrari').					
Campus intro: looks like a summer resort, people drive to school in posh cars and everyone seems to get there early to do fun stuff, skating around, dancing randomly etc. Images of diversity: different cultures and subcultures, Arabic people, Asian students, skaters, preppy girls, etc. Campus radio immediately introduced: the DJ welcomes students (and viewers) to the new school year, frequent zoom-ins on speakers.					
Counselor: obliteration of the importance of grades in the American school system (3.8 mistaken as a running record, straight-A as A-league).					
Emargination: in chemistry class Kelly pretends the seat next to hers is taken in order to avoid having a fat girl as a lab partner; the issue is not explored any further, here it only serves as a marker of Kelly's personality and as the event that leads her to meet Brenda.					
School paper scene: importance of the school paper ranking system; usual mistake editor = editore (publisher). Pool party introduced as typical Californian high school scene.					
Marianne eats sushi listening to her walkman; Brandon eats a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, translated as "pane, burro e marmellata" ("bread, butter, and jelly"). The translation maintains the difference in food status, but loses the typical PBJ connotation (the first-grader food par excellence) and the Americanness of peanut butter.					

Episode 1x02 – “The Green Room”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	1x02	The Green Room	La camera verde	October 11, 1990	November 26, 1992

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:03:49	Cindy is on the phone with Jim, who asks how the kids are.	Cindy: In fact, they're totally bad , or I don't know, maybe it's rad .	Cindy: Sono tremendi... tremendamente in gamba , volevo dire.	They are tremendous... ahem, tremendously good .	Tries to reproduce the pun, but misses Cindy's attempt to talk in cooler way.
00:04:12	DJ Flash hails to the weekend on KWBH.	DJ Flash: Yo, West Beverly, this is TGIF in a major way today.	DJ Flash: [...] Giornata alla grande .	DJ Flash: [...] Amazing day.	Omission of the the Friday reference; later compensated by references about major weekend events.
00:08:16	Scott shows Dylan is electronic plan for the perfect club.	Scott: I've never set foot inside a club. Every time I try, I get carded .	Scott: Ogni volta che ci provo, mi schedano .	Scott: I've never set foot inside a club. Every time I try, they put me in their files .	Mistranslation.
00:14:53	Kelly wants to buy clothes for the beach. Brenda can't see why she discards so many good options.	Kelly: We're going to the beach, not the Valley .	Kelly: Per la campagna , non per il mare.	Kelly: For the countryside , not the beach.	Generalization; earlier in the same episode Sarah had depicted the Valley as "darkness at the edge of town", correctly translated as "il quartiere ai confini della realtà".
00:15:21	Kelly is paying for her clothes.	Saleswoman: Hi. Paper or plastic? Kelly: Plastic. Toujours plastic.	Saleswoman: Contanti o con la carta? Kelly: Con la carta, mi sembra ovvio .	Saleswoman: Hi. Cash or card? Kelly: Card, obviously .	Kelly sounds just as obnoxious, but her attempt at sophistication is lost.
00:16:38	Cindy is on the phone with Jim, who is in Chicago.	Cindy: Eighteen degrees in October? Welcome to tropical Chicago.	Cindy: Avete diciotto gradi in ottobre? È incredibile per Chicago.	Cindy: Eighteen degrees [Celsius] in October? It's incredible for Chicago.	Mistranslation (Fahrenheit vs. Celsius); it makes no sense, since Jim is always complaining about the Midwest cold.
00:17:12	Brandon comes home and says hi to his mother.	Brandon: Hey . Cindy: Hey, yourself.	Brandon: Buonasera . [...]	Brandon: Good evening . [...]	Wrong register (too formal); several dialogues at the Walsh house have been similarly altered, as if communication between parents and kids had been much more formal.

00:19:08	Brenda tries to adjust her clothes to look like the posh garments Kelly buys.	Brenda: Yeah, well, that doesn't mean I like watching Kelly give her credit cards a workout.	Brenda: Ma questo non mi fa gioire quando guardo Kelly che fa acquisti.	Brenda: Yeah, well, that doesn't mean I like watching Kelly shop.	Generalization.
00:19:32	Brandon and Dylan on the Sunset Strip.	Brandon: So, is this what you call the Sunset Strip , man? Dylan: No, that's what the tourists call it.	Brandon: Questo sarebbe il famoso Sunset Boulevard? Dylan: Già, è la gioia di tutti i turisti.	Brandon: So, is this the famous Sunset Boulevard? Dylan: Yes, the joy of all tourists.	"Americanization."
00:25:17	Brenda and Brandon discuss Dylan.	Brandon: He's in my tech class. His name's Dylan McKay	Brandon: Viene al college , si chiama Dylan McKay	Brandon: He goes to our college , his name is Dylan McKay.	Mistranslation. College / high school confusion.
00:25:38	Brenda and Brandon discuss Dylan.	Brandon: You know, I think for a while I'm just gonna go back to being my old, basic uncool self.	Brandon: Senti Brenda, penso che ogni persona sia libera di fare ciò che vuole, non ho pregiudizi e non voglio averne.	Brandon: Look, Brenda, I think everyone should be free to do whatever they want, I don't have any biases and I don't want to have any.	Moralization.
00:26:25	Brenda asks Brandon how she looks in her self-decorated outfit.	Brenda: So, how great? Brandon: Greater than that fashion victim out there. Brenda: Kelly? How does she look? Brandon: Like a reject from a Megadeth video.	Brenda: Allora, sto bene? Brandon: Sei certo meglio di quel manichino là fuori. Brenda: Kelly? È elegante, vero? [...] Sì, sembra che sia appena scappata dalla vetrina.	Brenda: So, do I look great? Brandon: Certainly much better than that mannequin out there. Brenda: Kelly? She's elegant, right? Brandon: Yes, he looks as if she had just escaped from a shop window.	Generalization. A possibly obscure reference to music video culture is replaced with a hint at Kelly's fashion addiction.
00:27:55	Kelly is cold in her much-too-skimpy outfit.	Kelly: Donna, I didn't pay a small fortune to look like an Eskimo.	Kelly: Con quello che ho pagato questo top, preferirei morire.	Kelly: Considering how much I paid for this top, I'd rather die.	Generalization.
00:41:49	Steve asks David whether his father is Mel Silver the producer.	David: No, Mel Silver the oral surgeon.	David: No, Mel Silver il chirurgo estetico.	David: No, Mel Silver the plastic surgeon.	Exasperation of the importance of appearance in BH.

Episode notes

Dylan's first appearance: he emerges from the darkness of the tech rooms, sports a James Dean hairdo and plays tough, but only to defend the weak.

Time references are often altered for no apparent reason. Brenda: "We have school in 16 minutes." = "Tra mezz'ora"

("in half an hour").

Sarah: Well, we're here every morning at 6:00. Sunrise surf. = "Noi veniamo qui tutti i pomeriggi per fare il surf."
("We come here to surf every afternoon.")

Cindy: "I don't hear from you for hours." = "Non vi fate vivi per un giorno intero." ("I don't hear from you for a whole day.")

Parents (esp. Jim & Cindy) talk in a much cooler way in the original version; the Italian dubbing fails to reproduce their cooler side, depicting them as more conservative.

College / high school confusion, probably because of the campus setting and because the actors were much older than 16.

Episode 1x04 – “The First Time”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	1x04	The First Time	La prima volta	October 25, 1990	December 31, 1992

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:06:01	Brandon complains that no girl in BH compares to his Minneapolis girlfriend.	Dylan: Brandon, I think your memory's playing tricks on you. We have some major lookers at this school.	Dylan: Brandon, credo che la tua memoria non funzioni bene, ci sono certi tipetti in questa scuola...	Dylan: Brandon, I think your memory's not working well. We have some cool types at this school.	Aesthetic evaluation replaced with "cool type".
00:07:38	Andrea thinks Brandon is too nervous about Sheryl to concentrate on his writing.	Andrea: No wonder you've been staring at that flashing cursor for almost an hour.	Andrea: [...] quello schermo .	Andrea: [...] that screen .	Generalization of tech terminology.
00:10:10	Cindy got to spend time with Sheryl since she took an earlier flight.	Cindy: We've been gabbing forever just having the best time .	Cindy: Siamo andate un po' in giro per cercare di far passare il tempo .	Cindy: We've been hanging around to kill time .	Mistranslation. Spending time with Sheryl actually made Cindy feel happier and younger (she is always complaining she has no friends in Beverly Hills).
00:15:37	Brandon confirms he has condoms.	Brandon: Lots of protection, but no one to protect	Brandon: Tanta protezione e nessuno da cui proteggermi .	Brandon: Lots of protection, but no one to protect myself from .	Mistranslation. Brandon is more of a knight in shining armor than a scaredy cat.
00:18:02	Brenda walks in on Brandon and Sheryl kissing in the kitchen.	Brenda: Hey , don't let me interrupt anything. Fresh O.J.!	Brenda: Salve , spero di non disturbare. Oh, spremuta d'arancia!	Brenda: Howdy , I hope I'm not bothering you. Oh, fresh orange juice!	Wrong register. “Salve” is too formal for young people.
00:21:17	Dylan has connections which could get Brandon and Sheryl into a private VIP club.	It's private, but I think I can get us in.	E' privato, ma a me mi fanno entrare	[grammar mistake]	Insertion of an unnecessary grammar mistake. Dylan plays tough, but knows how to speak.
00:28:06	Dylan tries to calm down Brandon, who had to crash his way into the club.	Dylan: Wait a minute, B...	Dylan: Aspetta un momento, Brandon...	Dylan: Wait a minute, Brandon...	Use of initials to address people (see <i>Gossip Girl</i>).

00:29:57	Brandon argues with Sheryl.	Brandon: Well, after last night, I thought we'd be closer than ever.	Brandon: Pensavo che eravamo più intimi da dopo ieri sera.	[grammar mistake: the sentence required a subjunctive]	Insertion of an unnecessary grammar mistake. Brandon is an intellectual and a journalist and would never make grammatical mistakes.
00:32:09	Sheryl leaves in a cab.	Brandon: Damn.	Brandon: Cavolo.	[slightly downplayed]	Slightly higher register.

Episode notes

First intercourse topos: when he wakes up Brandon jams loud upbeat music, slides all over the room on his office chair, dances around, juggles oranges.

Walsh ethics: Cindy (on Brandon and Sheryl possibly having sex): Jim, I just feel it's not acceptable behavior in our house.

Use of ice-cream to tackle tough conversations (Brandon / Sheryl, Jim / Brandon)

Basketball playing to tackle tough conversations (Jim / Brandon)

Episode 1x07 – “Perfect Mom”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	1x07	Perfect Mom	Serata di beneficenza	November 22, 1990	December 31, 1992

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:04:51	David wants to shoot an interview in Kelly's dressing room before the mother/daughter fashion show.	Scott: What do you think she'll do when you get in there? David: I think she'll get off on it.	Scott: Cosa credi che farà quando entrerai? David: Credo che le piacerà molto.	Scott: What do you think she'll do when you get in? David: I think she'll like it a lot.	Censorship / tamed.
00:11:46	Brenda is skipping breakfast because she is late for school.	Cindy: Take a muffin!	Cindy: Prendi una brioche!	Cindy: Take a croissant!	Substitution (yet Cindy is clearly not holding a croissant).
00:14:07	Kelly wants to have dinner at Brenda's.	Kelly: So do you think your mom would care if I stayed for dinner? Brenda: She'll make you clean your plate.	Kelly: A tua madre darà fastidio se resto per cena? Brenda: Ti farà lavare il tuo piatto.	Kelly: Would it bother your mom if I stayed for dinner? Brenda: She'll make you wash your plate.	Mistranslation.
00:19:20	Kelly is undressing her drunken mother.	Jackie: Hang up everything nice, okay?	Jackie: Non parlare di cose belle, va bene?	Jackie: Don't talk about anything nice, okay?	Mistranslation / diminished effect (Jackie only cares about her clothes).
00:30:34	Brenda tells Kelly she is sorry she hasn't figured out something was wrong with Jackie.	Kelly: But you, like, can't tell. She does a great job of hiding it.	Kelly: Ma non potevi capirlo. Lei sa fingere benissimo.	Kelly: But you can't tell. She does a great job of hiding it.	Omission of the typical teen talk marker 'like.'

Episode notes

This episode juxtaposes Kelly's mom and Cindy (clothes, appearance, interests, values)

Episode 1x21 – “Spring Dance”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	1x21	Spring Dance	Il ballo di primavera	May 2, 1991	May 9, 1993

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:15:18	Brenda and Kelly discover that they are wearing identical dresses.	Kelly: Like we planned to go as the Bobbsey twins .	Kelly: Penseranno che ci siamo vestite come due gemelline .	Kelly: They'll link we're dressed like two little twins .	Generalization.
00:16:11	Steve jokes about Donna's huge dress.	Steve: I think she's hiding an army of midgets under here.	Steve: Ma che c'è qua sotto, la Banda Bassotti?	Steve: What's under here, the Beagles?	Substitution (probably to avoid political incorrectness).
00:14:07	David takes part in a dancing competition to win a dance with Kelly.	David: Wish me luck, Kel. Kelly: Break a leg .	David: Dimmi in bocca al lupo. Kelly: Rompiti una gamba .	David: Wish me "Break a leg". [metaphorically] Kelly: Break one of your legs . [literally]	Mistranslation.

Episode notes

Andrea watches a prom-related horror movie on the night of the dance.

Episode 2x08 – “Wildfire”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	2x08	Wildfire	Fuoco greco	September 12, 1991	1993

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:08:50	Emily has just transferred to West Beverly High.	Emily: So any survival tips? Brandon: Stay away from the meatloaf .	Emily: Allora come si sta al West Beverly? Brandon: La minestra è pessima.	Emily: So, how's West Beverly High? Brandon: The soup is awful.	Substitution.
00:11:07	Brenda, Kelly, and Donna are preparing their act for the school's talent show.	Brenda: Why don't we do a show tune ? Something like “ Somewhere Over the Freeway .” Kelly: Right, we'll dress up like Munchkins .	Brenda: Facciamo una canzone country tipo “Laggiù nella grande vallata” . Kelly: Sì, con pistole e cinturoni .	Brenda: Why don't we do a country tune ? Something like “ Down there in the big valley .” Kelly: Right, with guns and cowboy belts .	Substitution.
00:21:12	Emily dates both Brandon and Dylan. Brenda is jealous.	Brenda: Did you know that she was going out with Brandon tonight? Dylan: Bren, why don't you just knit her a scarlet letter ?	Brenda: Lo sai che stasera esce con Brandon? Dylan: Se vuoi diffondere una notizia, devi attaccare dei manifesti .	Brenda: Did you know that she was going out with Brandon tonight? Dylan: If you want to spread some news, you should hang posters .	Generalization.

Episode 2x13 – “Halloween”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	2x13	Halloween	La notte di Halloween	October 31, 1991	1993

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:05:21	Kelly and Donna's dance partners are no longer taking the girls to the Halloween party.	Kelly: The worst part is, two months ago, we rented Lucy and Ethel costumes . Now we're gonna look like fools .	Ma la cosa peggiore è che avevamo affittato i costumi di Fred Astaire e Ginger Rogers , adesso sembrerò una pazza!	Kelly: The worst part is, two months ago, we rented Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers costumes . Now I'm gonna look crazy!	Substitution.
00:29:13	A guy dressed up as a cowboy pursues a scantily dressed Kelly.	Cowboy Guy: I can't believe you're into David Letterman .	Cowboy Guy: Davvero ti piace quella trasmissione?	Cowboy Guy: Do you really like that show?	Generalization.
00:33:33	A guy dressed up as a cowboy pursues a scantily dressed Kelly.	Cowboy Guy: No, have these quesadillas . They're much better.	Cowboy Guy: Assaggia queste frittelle , sono molto meglio.	Cowboy Guy: Try these fritters . They're much better.	Generalization.

Episode 2x21 – “Everybody’s Talkin’ ‘Bout It”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	2x21	Everybody's Talkin' 'Bout it	Cinture di sicurezza	February 6, 1992	1994

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:05:35	Due a cancelled assembly, English Literature class is reinstated.	Steve: Great. Now I actually have to read <i>Brave New World</i> .	Steve: Magnifico, ora devo pure leggermi tutto l' <i>Otello</i> .	Steve: Great. Now I have to read the whole <i>Othello</i> .	Substitution.

Episode notes

Andrea directly addresses the issue of HIV and AIDS: “Every year, 3 million teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases. [...] More Americans have died from the AIDS virus than were killed in the Vietnam and Korean wars combined. More are gonna die in the next two years than in the ten years since the virus was discovered. How can people ignore this problem?” Later in the episode, after a heated Parents’ Association meeting to discuss the proposal to provide free condoms for students, Brenda comments I mean, ever since Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV-positive, it seems like all you hear about is condoms and safer sex.”

Episode 3x24 – “Perfectly Perfect”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i>	3x24	Perfectly Perfect	Amore a prima vista	March 24, 1993	1995

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:59	Kelly (who is starving herself and overdosing on dieting pills) is angry at David, who has eaten the banana she was saving for breakfast.	David: Would you like half of my jelly donut ?	David: Vuoi metà del mio krapfen ?	David: Would you like half of my krapfen ?	Substitution.

Episode notes

Steve inadvertently adds to the body image pressure that Kelly feels as her 18th birthday approaches. “Picture it, Brandon. Girls with legs all the way to their neck. Not an ounce out of place. Perfect.”

APPENDIX B

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER – EPISODE ANALYSIS

Dubbing studio: PUMAI Sdue

Highlighted lines indicate the examples analyzed in chapter 6.

Episode 1x01 – “Welcome to the Hellmouth”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	1x01	Welcome to the Hellmouth	Benvenuti al college	March 10, 1997	June 11, 2000
Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:09:50	Cordelia is testing whether Buffy is trendy enough for her clique.	Cordelia: Frappuccinos? Buffy: Trendy but tasty.	Cordelia: Il cappuccino? Buffy: Trendy ma pesante.	Cordelia: Cappuccino? Buffy: Trendy but heavy [to digest].	Generalization.
00:10:01	Cordelia mocks Willow for her goody-goody clothes.	Cordelia: Nice dress! Good to know you've seen the softer side of Sears.	Cordelia: Bel vestito. Ti servi al reparto educande dei grandi magazzini?	Cordelia: Nice dress! Do you buy your clothes from the boarder girl section of the mall?	Generalization.
00:12:04	Buffy wants to check out a book. Giles tells her it is not what she is actually looking for.	Giles: Are you sure? Buffy: I'm way sure.	Giles: Ne sei sicura? Buffy: Sì, super sicura.	Giles: Are you sure? Buffy: I'm way sure.	Teen talk (effective rendition).
00:15:46	Buffy parts from her friends.	Buffy: I gotta book. I'll... I'll see you guys later. Xander: What's her deal?	Buffy: Mi serve un libro. ok? Ci vediamo dopo. Xander: Ma che storia è?	Buffy: I need a book, ok? I'll see you later. Xander: What kind of story is it?	Mistranslation. Quite effective rendition of teen talk.
00:17:11	Giles inquires about a dead student.	Giles: Is he... will he rise again?	Giles: Tu pensi che si alzerà di nuovo?	Giles: Do you think he will stand up again?	Imprecise translation.
00:19:53	Buffy complains that Giles is unclear.	Buffy: Gee, can you vague that up for me?	Buffy: Insomma, sia più esplicito.	Buffy: Gee, be more explicit.	Loss of Buffyspeak features.

00:21:18	Buffy is trying out outfits for her first night out in Sunnydale.	Buffy: Hi! I'm an enormous slut! Hello. Would you like a copy of " The Watchtower "?	Buffy: Salve! Sono una tremenda mangiaumini. Salve, vuole una copia del nostro giornaletto ?	Buffy: Hi! I'm a terrible maneater! Hello. Would you like a copy of our magazine ?	Tamed.
00:30:06	Cordelia is talking to her trendy friends and wishes her mother had a "cooler" illness.	Cordelia: Mom doesn't get out of bed. The doctor says it's Epstein-Barr. I'm, like, "It's chronic hepatitis or at least chronic fatigue syndrome." I mean, nobody cool has Epstein-Barr any more.	Cordelia: Mia madre ormai non si alza neanche dal letto. Il dottore crede che si tratti di depressione. Gli ho fatto: "La prego, che sia almeno epatite o sindrome da affaticamento cronico, la depressione è completamente out.	Cordelia: Mom doesn't get out of bed anymore. The doctor says it's depression. I'm, like, "Please, let it be at least hepatitis or chronic fatigue syndrome, depression is completely out.	Generalization.
00:31:56	Giles tells Buffy she has to hone her vampire-recognizing skills. Buffy spots a vampire from his outdated outfit.	Buffy: And the shirt? Deal with that outfit for a moment. Giles: It's dated? Buffy: It's carbon dated.	Buffy: E la camicia? Osservi un attimo com'è vestito. Giles: È datata? Buffy: Accidenti se è datata.	Buffy: And the shirt? Take a look at what he's wearing. Giles: It's dated? Buffy: Damn dated.	Loss of Buffyspeak features.
00:39:04	Buffy mocks a vampire for his outfit.	Buffy: OK, first of all, what's with the outfit? Live in the now, OK? You look like DeBarge.	Buffy: Senti, prima di tutto, ma come ti sei vestito? Vivi nel presente, dai, sembri uscito da Happy Days!	Buffy: Listen, first of all, what are you wearing? Live in the present, come on, you look like you just popped out of Happy Days.	Substitution.

Episode notes

Title translation: "Benvenuti al college" ("Welcome to College") – usual high school / college confusion.

Blonde girl posited as victim turns out to be a vampire (Darla) - anticipates Buffy's dominant role.

Buffy dreams of the Master rising.

Zooming in on campus at night – sets the mood.

Episode 1x06 – “The Pack”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	1x06	The Pack	Il branco	April 4, 1997	June 20, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:03:32	The zoo keeper warns Buffy and her group not to approach hyenas.	Zoo keeper: Because hyenas are very quick to prey on the weak.	Zoo keeper: Le iene non sono animaletti di peluche.	Zoo keeper: Hyenas are not plush toys.	Missed intratextual reference (the second occurrence is consistent with the original script).
00:20:47	Buffy is upset because Giles does not seem to take the hyena threat seriously.	Buffy: I cannot believe that you, of all people, are trying to Scully me! There is something supernatural at work here. Get your books! Look stuff up!	Buffy: Non posso credere che proprio lei stia cercando di voltarmi le spalle! Qui c'è qualcosa di sovrannaturale. Cerchi sui libri, documentiamoci!	Buffy: I cannot believe that you, of all people, are turning your back to me! There is something supernatural at work here. Look in your books, let's study it!	Omission / loss of Buffyspeak features.
00:21:21	Xander has a déjà-vu.	Xander: They prey on the weak. I've heard that somewhere before...	Xander: Se la prendono con i deboli. Qualcuno diceva proprio...	Xander: They prey on the weak. Somebody mentioned that exactly...	Missed intratextual reference (the previous occurrence had been replaced with "hyenas are not plush toys").
00:27:46	Buffy jokes about Xander's animal instinct.	Buffy: No, but it's safe to say that in his animal state his idea of wooing doesn't involve a Yanni CD and a bottle of Chianti.	Buff: Non lo so, ma se non è stato un istinto animale, o ha fatto uso di droghe, o si è bevuto un intero barile di mescal?	Buffy: I don't know, but if that wasn't his animal instinct, he either did drugs or drank an entire barrel of mezcal.	Omission.
00:29:15	Giles refers to one of his sources.	Giles: The Malleus Maleficarum deals in the particulars of demonic possession, which may apply.	Giles: Il Mellius Malipacorum parla di una particolare possessione demoniaca che può scomparire.	Giles: The Mellius Malipacorum deals with a particular demonic possession which may disappear.	Mistranslation.

Episode 1x09 – “The Puppet Show”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	1x09	The Puppet Show	Il teatro dei burattini	May 5, 1997	July 9, 2000

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:31	Buffy, Willow, and Xander mock Giles, who has been forced to direct the school's talent show.	Buffy: The school talent show. How ever did you finagle such a primo assignment?	Buffy: La regia dello show scolastico. Come ha fatto ad ottenere un incarico così importante?	Buffy: Directing he school talent show. How did you obtain such an important assignment?	Loss of teen talk / Buffyspeak.
00:03:08	Principal Snyder disagrees with the creed of his predecessor (who was devoured by hyenas in episode 1x06).	Principal Snyder: Mr. Flutie, may have gone in for all that touchy-feely relating nonsense. But he was eaten .	Principal Snyder: [...] Ma è stato eliminato .	Principal Snyder: [...] But he was eliminated .	Tamed.
00:04:59	Xander criticizes the talent show.	Xander: You call those jokes? My jockey shorts are made out of better material And they're edible!	Xander: E tu le chiami battute? Ti guiro che fanno più ridere le mie mutande. E sono anche ricamate!	Xander: You call those jokes? My jockey shorts are funnier! And they're embroidered!	Tamed.
00:08:52	Principal Snyder disagrees with the creed of his predecessor (who was devoured by hyenas in episode 1x06).	Principal Snyder: I know Principal Flutie would have said: "Kids need understanding, kids are human beings." That's the kind of woolly-headed, liberal thinking that leads to being eaten .	Principal Snyder: So che il preside Flutie avrebbe ditto che i giovani devono essere compresi, I giovani sono esseri umani; pensandola in questo modo, è ovvio che si venga messi da parte .	Principal Snyder: I know Principal Flutie would have said: "Kids need understanding, kids are human beings." That's the kind of thinking that leads to being put aside .	Tamed.
00:26:31	Xander pretends to voice the ventriloquist's puppet.	Xander: Bye-bye now. I'm inanimate. Redrum, redrum!	Xander: Ciao ciao, guarda, sono completamente inanimato. Sono senza anima, senza anima!	Xander: Bye-bye, look, I'm completely inanimate. I'm soulless, soulless!	Omission.
00:36:28	Xander comments on the outcome of the puppet issue.	Xander: Does anybody feel they've been Kaiser Soze'd?	Non avete la sensazione di essere stati fregati?	Xander: Does anybody feel they've been hoodwinked?	Omission.

Episode 1x11 – “Out of Mind, Out of Sight”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	1x11	Out of mind, out of sight	Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore	May 19, 1997	July 16, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:28	Cordelia talks about her outfit for the Spring Fling dance.	Cordelia: I am, of course, having my dress specially made. Off-the-rack gives me hives .	Cordelia: Quest'anno mi sono rifatta un guardaroba completo , e sono tutti modelli originali.	Cordelia: This year I had my whole wardrobe remade, and they're all original models.	Mistranslation / omission.
00:17:11	Giles cannot find any references on the Slayer prophecy.	Giles: I've studied all the extant volumes, of course. But the... most salient books of Slayer prophecy have been lost.	Giles: Ho già studiato tutti i libri di Extan , ma i testi più salienti sulla profezia della cacciatrice sono andati perduti.	Giles: I've studied all the books of Extan , of course. But the most salient books of slayer prophecy have been lost.	Mistranslation.
00:24:19	While checking the yearbook of the missing girl, Buffy realizes the girl had no friends.	Buffy: "Have a nice summer" is what you write when you have nothing to say. It's the kiss of death .	Buffy: "Buone vacanze" è quello che si scrive quando non si ha niente da dire. A chi ti è indifferente .	Buffy: "Have a nice summer" is what you write when you have nothing to say. To those who are indifferent to you .	Loss of Buffyspeak features.
00:24:48	Xander does not remember meeting the now-invisible girl.	Willow: Xander, we each had four classes with her last year .	Willow: Xander, noi siamo stati quattro anni in classe con lei.	Willow: Xander, we were in the same class as her for four years .	Mistranslation.
00:25:07	Giles realizes the girl has turned invisible due to physical reasons.	Giles: I've been investigating the mystical causes of invisibility, when I should have looked at the quantum mechanical! Physics!	Giles: Ho studiato le cause occulte dell'invisibilità giustappunto quando mi sono occupato di meccanica quantistica. Fisica.	Giles: I investigating the mystical causes of invisibility precisely when I was studying quantum mechanics! Physics!	Mistranslation.

Episode 2x02 – “Some Assembly Required”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x02	Some Assembly Required	Pezzi di ricambio	September 22, 1997	July 23, 2000
Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:04:13	Buffy and Xander catch Giles practicing lines to ask computer teacher Jenny Calendar on a date and Buffy decides to offer some advice.	Giles: I was just working on... Buffy: Your pickup lines? Giles: In a manner of speaking, yes. Buffy: Then if you don't mind a little Gene and Roger , leave out the "idiot" part. Being called an idiot tends to take people out of the dating mood . Xander: It actually kinda turns me on . Buffy: I fear you . [To Giles] You might wanna avoid words like " amenable " and "indecorous." Speak English , not whatever they speak in... Giles: England?	Giles: I-io stavo provando... Buffy: Come rimorchiare? Giles: Sì, in un certo senso sì. Buffy: Allora ascolti un consiglio disinteressato: lasci stare la parte relativa "all'idiota". Alle donne non piace essere chiamate così, neanche per sbaglio . Xander: A me la cosa farebbe arrabbiare . Buffy: Beh, lo terrò presente . [to Giles] Dovrebbe anche evitare di usare parole difficili come " proponendo ", "inopportuno"... parli semplice, non è mica alla corte... Giles: ... d'Inghilterra?	Giles: I was just working on... Buffy: How to pickup girls? Giles: Yes, in a certain sense, yes. Buffy: Then listen to an unbiased piece of advice : leave out the "idiot" part. Women don't like being called that way, not even by mistake . Xander: It would make me mad . Buffy: Well, I'll keep that in mind . [To Giles] You should also avoid difficult words like " suggesting " and "indecorous." Speak simply, you're not at the court... Giles: of England?	Generalization, mistranslations, censorship.
00:07:24	A "nerd" takes a picture of Cordelia.	Cordelia: I didn't think yearbook nerds came out of hibernation till spring .	Cordelia: Da quando in qua certi deficienti possono girare liberamente?	Cordelia: Since when can these idiots walk around freely?	(Offensive) generalization.
00:07:42	Buffy needs Willow to go with her.	Buffy: Sorry to interrupt, but it's the Batsignal .	Buffy: Scusa se disturbo, Willow, ma devi venire .	Buffy: Sorry to bother you, Willow, but you have to come .	Omission.

00:09:36	Xander jokes on the group's plans for a grave-digging night.	Xander: So we're set then? Say nine-ish, BYO shovel?	Xander: E per l'appuntamento? Facciamo alle nove, muniti di pala?	Xander: What about the time? Shall we say nine, equipped with shovels?	Generalization, loss of teen talk markers.
00:19:38	Giles is still planning how to court Ms. Calendar.	Buffy: She's a technopagan, ask her to bless your laptop.	Buffy: Provi con le stampe cinesi, è un vecchio trucco, però è buono.	Buffy: Try with Chinese prints, it's an old trick, but it's still good.	Omission (censorship).
00:20:40	Giles tries to ask Ms. Calendar on a date.	Giles: No, no, I just assumed you spent your evenings downloading incantations and casting bones.	Giles: Non è che sono sorpreso, è che pensavo che passassi le serate in casa, magari in pantofole a guardare qualche bel film...	Giles: It's not that I am surprised, I just assumed you spent your evenings at home, perhaps wearing your slippers and watching a good movie...	Omission (censorship).

Episode 2x05 – “Reptile Boy”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x05	Reptile Boy	Festa macabra	October 14, 1997	August 6, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:38:12	Xander punches a fraternity boy.	Xander: And this is for the last 16 1/2 years.	Xander: E questo invece è per i prossimi vent'anni.	Xander: And this is for the next 20 years.	Mistranslation.
00:38:44	Buffy challenges the reptile monster.	Buffy: Let her go, Wormy!	Buffy: È giunta la tua ora!	Buffy: Your time has come!	Higher register, loss of Buffyspeak features.

Episode 2x06 – “Halloween”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x06	Halloween	Halloween	October 27, 1997	August 6, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:09:42	Giles claims he has hobbies too.	Giles: Well, I enjoy cross-referencing . Buffy: Do you stuff your own shirts or do you send them out?	Giles: Beh, io adoro catalogare libri . Buffy: E lo fa per argomento o per autore?	Giles: Well, I enjoy cataloguing books . Buffy: Do you do it by topic or by author?	Omission (sentence replacement; downplays Buffy's irony)
00:12:33	Cordelia thinks Buffy and Willow are telling her that Angel is a vampire to keep her away from him.	Cordelia: Oh, he's a vampire. Of course. But a cuddly one. Like a Care Bear with fangs?	Cordelia: Ah, è vero che è un vampiro. Ma di quelli buoni, giusto? Ora non morde più sul collo...	Cordelia: Oh, so it's true he's a vampire. A nice one, right? He doesn't bite necks anymore...	Omission (sentence replacement; eliminates Cordelia's irony)
00:26:45	Everyone has turned into the character as whom they had dressed up. Buffy has turned into a swoony 19th-century dame.	Willow: She couldn't have dressed like Xena?	Willow: Non poteva vestirsi da guerriera?	Willow: She couldn't have dressed as a female warrior?	Generalization.
00:27:43		Cordelia: I was attacked by Jo-Jo the Dog-faced Boy .	Cordelia: Sono appena stata attaccata da un King Kong imbestialito .	Cordelia: I was just attacked by an angry King Kong .	Substitution.

Episode notes

Buffy defends Xander from a bully; issues of masculinity.

Use of costumes to explore otherness.

Episode 2x09 – “What’s My Line – Part 1”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x09	What's My line - part 1	L'unione fa la forza – 1	November 27, 1997	August 20, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:10:18	The career-match test reveals that Cordelia is most suited to be a personal shopper or motivational speaker.	Cordelia: Oh, here I am. Personal shopper or motivational speaker. Neato.	Cordelia: Ah, eccomi qua. Commessa specializzata o conferenziere. Forte!	Cordelia: Oh, here I am. Specialized sales assistant or conference speaker. Cool!	Mistranslation.
00:10:52	The career-match test reveals that Xander is most suited to be a prison guard.	Xander: When you look at me, do you think prison guard? Buffy: Uhm, crossing guard, maybe, but prison guard?	Xander: Per esempio, quando mi guardi, pensi mai a un secondino? Buffy: Secondino no davvero. Terzino, magari.	Xander: For instance, when you look at me, do you ever think prison guard? Buffy: Uhm, not really prison. Soccer guard, maybe.	Effective pun substitution (secondino echoes "second" and means "prison guard", while "terzino" echoes "third" and is a soccer fullback).
00:11:48	Buffy has promised to meet Giles.	Buffy: First I have to deal with Giles. He's on this Tony Robbins hyper-efficiency kick.	Buffy: Ma prima devo vedere Giles. Gli è presa la mania della super-efficienza.	Buffy: First I have to see Giles. He's developed this hyper-efficiency mania .	Omission.
00:17:01	A bewildered Willow is offered canapés in a secret area of the school's career fair.	Waiter: Try the canapé . It's excellent.	Waiter: Assaggi gli antipasti . Sono squisiti.	Waiter: Try the appetizers . They're excellent.	Generalization (the term 'canapés' will be maintained in Italian in <i>Gossip Girl</i> ten years later).

Episode notes

Buffy climbs through her window and scares Angel who was waiting in her room (references to Joey climbing through Dawson's window in *Dawson's Creek* and to Sydney's boyfriend Billy climbing into Sydney's room in Kevin Williamson's *Scream*).

Episode 2x10 – “What’s My Line – Part 2”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x10	What's My line - part 2	L'unione fa la forza – 2	November 27, 1997	August 20, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:16:03	Xander and Cordelia are locked in Buffy's basement and end up kissing.	Xander: We so need to get outta here.	Xander: Domani è un altro giorno.	Xander: Tomorrow's another day.	Insertion of an unnecessary reference to <i>Gone With the Wind</i> .
00:24:38	Kendra and Buffy try to overcome their slaying differences (rigorous studying and excessive self-discipline vs. improvisation skills and irony).	Kendra: Perhaps when this is over, you can show me how to work it. Buffy: When this is over, I'm thinking pineapple pizza and teen video movie fest. Possibly something from the Ringwald oeuvre.	Kendra: Forse quando tutto sarà finito mi mostrerai come funziona. Buffy: Quando tutto sarà finito farò una scorpacciata di pizza e film in videocassetta. Forse persino di cartoni animati.	Kendra: Perhaps when this is over, you can show me how to work it. Buffy: When this is over, I'm gonna binge on pizza and movies on videotape. Maybe even cartoons.	Mistranslation which infantilizes Buffy's character.

Episode 2x11 – “Ted”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x11	Ted	Il fidanzato di mamma	December 8, 1997	August 27, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:07:19	Buffy catches her mother kissing a man she doesn't know.	Buffy: Ok, I admit it's weird. Seeing your mother Frenching a guy is a ticket to therapy-land , but it's more than that.	Buffy: D'accordo, sono un po' scossa. Sorprendere tua madre allacciata a uno sconosciuto non è uno scherzo , ma non è solo questo.	Buffy: Ok, I'm a bit upset. Seeing your mother wrapped around a stranger is no joke , but it's not just that.	Censorship / normalization.

Episode 2x13 – “Surprise”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x13	Surprise	Sorpresa	January 19, 1998	September 3, 2000

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:08:56	Willow tries to overcome her shyness and talk to Oz.	Oz: See, our band's kinda moving towards this new sound where... we suck , so... Practice.	Oz: Con la mia band stiamo cercando un sound diverso, più aggressivo , così mi esercito.	Oz: See, our band's trying to move towards a new, more aggressive sound , so I practice.	Mistranslation.
00:32:06	Willow devises a plan for everybody to spent the night out (for demon-hunting purposes).	Willow: Better do a round robin . Xander, you go first. Giles: Round robin? Willow: Everybody calls everybody else's mom and says they're staying at everyone's house.	Willow: Meglio fare un chiamamamma . Xander, prima tu. Giles: Chiamamamma? Willow: E' quando tutti telefonano alla mamma e dicono che restano a studiare a casa di qualcun altro.	Willow: Better do a call-mom . Xander, you go first. Giles: Call-mom? Willow: Everybody calls everybody else's mom and says they're staying at someone's else's house to study.	Effective neologism.

Episode 2x14 – “Innocence”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	2x14	Innocence	Un attimo di felicità	January 20, 1998	September 10, 2000

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:29:27	Xander tries to convince the guard to let him and Cordelia into the army base.	Xander: Look, I just wanna give her the tour. You know what I'm sayin'. Guard: The tour. Xander: Well, the ladies like to see the big guns . Gets them all hot and bothered .	Xander: Ehi, ascolta, voglio solo farle fare un giro. Sai che voglio dire, no? Guard: Un giro. Xander: Sai come sono fatte le donne, a loro piacciono le emozioni forti .	Xander: Look, I just wanna give her the tour. You know what I'm sayin'? Guard: The tour. Xander: You know how ladies are, they like thrills .	Censorship.
00:31:03	The guard agrees.	Guard: You got 20 minutes, Nimrod .	Guard: Hai 20 minuti, Di Caprio .	Guard: You got 20 minutes, Di Caprio .	Substitution.
00:36:40	Buffy discusses combat strategy.	Buffy: Get the lesser vamp. I'll handle Smurf .	Buffy: Eliminate i vampiri più deboli. Al mostro penso io.	Buffy: Get the lesser vamps. I'll take the monster .	Loss of Buffyspeak features.

Episode 3x20 – “The Prom”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	3x20	The Prom	Il ballo	May 11, 1999	March 27, 2001

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:08:12	Cordelia flirts with new Watcher Wesley Wyndham-Price.	Cordelia: That's too bad, because I bet you would look way 007 in a tux.	Cordelia: È un vero peccato, perché sono certa che saresti uno schianto in smoking.	Cordelia: That's too bad, because I'm sure you would look so hot in a tux.	Omission.
00:25:37	Buffy wants to save her classmates and let them enjoy their prom.	Buffy: I've got to stop a crazy from pulling a Carrie at the prom.	Buffy: Devo impedire che un pazzo faccia una strage al ballo.	Buffy: I've got to stop a madman from killing people at the prom.	Generalization.

Episode notes

Angel dreams of marrying Buffy and seeing her burst into flames right out of the church.

At the prom, Buffy receives a glittery umbrella as a prize for being "class protector".

Episode 4x01 – “Freshman”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	4x01	Freshman	La matricola	October 5, 1999	March 29, 2001

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:19	Buffy mocks Willow's excitement for the start of college.	Buffy: Sorry, Miss I-Chose-My-Major-in-Playgroup.	Buffy: Allora scusami, signorina ‘Mi preparo in anticipo’.	Buffy: Sorry then, Miss ‘I get ready in advance.’	Generalization.
00:04:18	A fraternity boy hands out party flyers on campus.	Frat boy: Party Thursday at Alpha Delta. Free Jell-O shots for freshman women.	Frat boy: La festa è giovedì all'Alfa-Delta. Devi venire, gel gratis per le matricole femmine.	Frat boy: Party Thursday at Alpha Delta. You have to come, free [hair] gel for freshman females.	Mistranslation.
00:05:24	Willow is excited about college.	Willow: It's just in high school, knowledge was pretty much frowned upon. You really had to work to learn anything	Willow: Vedi, è che al liceo apprendere era faticoso, dovevi studiare sul serio per imparare tutto.	Willow: You see, in high school, learning was hard, you really had to study hard to learn everything.	Mistranslation.
00:21:49	Buffy goes to Giles's house and finds him wearing a bathrobe with a scantily-dressed female guest.	Buffy: OK, remember before you became Hugh Hefner, when you used to be a Watcher?	Buffy: Ma come? Si è completamente dimenticato del suo ruolo di Osservatore?	Buffy: What? Did you completely forget about your Watching duties?	Omission.

Episode notes

"Images of Pop Culture." This is good. They watch movies, TV shows, even commercials.

Sunday and her vampire gang - bullying.

Episode 4x10 – “Hush”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>	4x10	Hush	L'urlo del terrore	December 14, 1999	April 9, 2001

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:03:14	Willow leaves for Wicca group.	Buffy: I'll see you after Wicca group.	Buffy: Ci vediamo al club delle streghe.	Buffy: I'll see you at the witches' club.	Misleading paraphrase (Wicca is a recognized religion in the US and Willow develops actual magic powers in the Buffyverse).
00:06:40	Giles is forced to keep Spike at his apartment.	Spike: We're out of Weetabix.	Spike: Sono finiti i biscotti.	Spike: We're out of cookies.	Imprecise generalization (loss of Britishness).
00:08:35	The Wicca group discusses future projects.	Wicca group leader: We should have a bake sale. [...] And I make an empowering lemon bundt! [...] Ok, let's talk about the theme for the Bacchanal.	Wicca group leader: Dovremmo aprire un piccolo bar. [...] E io faccio una limonata stupenda! [...] Affrontiamo l'argomento dello spettacolo di danza.	Wicca group leader: We should open a small café. [...] And I make a wonderful lemonade! [...] Ok, let's talk about the dance show.	Censorship and mistranslations (misses the irony on "empowering").
00:10:58	Forrest regrets not being able to disclose his secret job at the demon-hunting Initiative.	Forrest: We have a gig that would inevitably cause any girl living to think we are cool upon cool. Yet we Clark Kent our way through the dating scene, never to use our unfair advantage.	Forrest: E' come un sortilegio che costringe tutte le ragazze a pensare che siamo più super del super, tuttavia dobbiamo usare con parsimonia sia questo vantaggio che il tempo da dedicare a loro.	Forrest: It's like a curse that forces all girls to think we are beyond super. Yet we have to use sparingly both this advantage and the time we spend with them.	Mistranslation.

Episode notes

Willow and Tara's first levitation

The silent / written part is not subbed.

APPENDIX C

DAWSON'S CREEK – EPISODE ANALYSIS

Dubbing studios: Mac 3 Movies (seasons 1-2);

Multimedia Network (seasons 3-6)

Highlighted lines indicate the examples analyzed in chapter 6.

Episode 1x01 – “Emotions in Motion”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	1x01	Emotions in motion	Emozioni in movimento	20/01/1998	13/01/2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:31	Dawson and Joey are watching E.T. Joey asks whether the movie won the Oscar for best film.	Dawson: Gandhi. Spielberg was robbed. This is before he outgrew his Peter Pan syndrome.	Dawson: Gandhi. Quell'anno l'Oscar l'ha vinto Gandhi. Secondo me a E.T. non gli lega neanche le scarpe.	Dawson: Gandhi. Gandhi won the Oscar that year. I think it cannot even compare to E.T.	Omission.
00:26:24	Dawson tries to discredit potential competitors by telling Jen that the jock she has noticed leads a double life as a transvestite.	Dawson: Jock quarterback by day, schizophrenic transvestite by night. Jen: Oh, really? Dawson: Has a Tori Spelling complex. He's partial to Victoria's Secret. Just so you know.	Dawson: Quarterback di giorno e travestito paranoico di notte. Jen: Davvero? Dawson: E' come se fosse Jekyll e Hyde, ma al femminile, e ha un debole per una di qui, tanto perchè tu lo sappia.	Dawson: Quarterback by day, paranoid transvestite by night. Jen: Oh, really? Dawson: He's like a female Jekyll and Hyde. He has a crush on a girl from here. Just so you know.	Substitution and mistranslation.

00:36:03	Dawson puts his right thumb and index finger in the shape of an L on his forehead, the 'loser' sign that would be later popularized by <i>Glee</i> .	Dawson: No, I pulled the pin, I tossed the grenade. I got a big old L right here.	Dawson: No, no, sono io che ho il cervello di una lumaca. Forse dovrebbero mettermi una L qui.	Dawson: No, no, it's that I have the brain of a snail. Maybe they should put me an L right here.	Substitution.
00:41:26	Joey tries to convince Dawson that adolescence is making their friendship awkward because it introduces topics about which they are unable to speak comfortably.	Joey: How often do you walk your dog? [...] Dawson: Usually in the morning, with Katie Couric!	Quante volte giochi con il tuo gioiellino? [...] Di solito la mattina con Sharon Stone!	Joey: How often do you play with your little jewel? [...] Dawson: Usually in the morning, with Sharon Stone!	Censorship and substitution.

Episode notes

Pan shot of the show's trademark pier at sunset. Zoom in on Dawson's house at night. Dawson and Joey are watching E.T. (first Spielberg reference).

Dawson is trying to film a horror movie starring Joey and Pacey. Jen arrives in a cab.

Dawson and Pacey work at the video rental store. Tamara (the new professor) enters the store tossing her blonde hair, making her light-colored sundress flow (same entrance as Jen). Appropriate / ironic sexy background music. She asks for *The Graduate* (foreshadowing her relationship with Pacey)

Typical getting-to-campus sequence: people playing baseball, then walking down corridors.

Dawson enters the room where film class is held. Prof. Gold is watching *Psycho*. A poster of Kevin Williamson's *I Know What You Did Last Summer* is shown on the back wall.

Dawson admits he masturbates while watching Katie Couric, which points to a sort of aedipal complex as he is also convinced that his journalist mother is having an affair with her co-anchor (which Joey actually witnesses right while Dawson shouts his confession).

Episode 1x02 – “Dance”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	1x02	Dance	Festa di ballo	January 28, 1998	13/01/2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:26	Joey jokes about Dawson's inability to hit on Jen (but uses heavy images because she is jealous).	Joey: I'm not suggesting leather straps and Crisco , just a kiss.	Joey: Io ho parlato di un bacio, non di cinghie di cuoio e vaselina .	Joey: I'm not suggesting leather straps and Vaseline , just a kiss.	Generalization. Joey's sexual joke is maintained for once.
00:15:45	Jen is helping Joey wipe away the fake blood from the movie.	Jen: You have nice breasts. I mean, don't get the wrong idea, I'm completely hetero .	Jen: Hai un bel seno. Ora non farti idee sbagliate, sono del tutto normale .	Jen: You have nice breasts. I mean, don't get the wrong idea, I'm completely normal .	Censorship. Homophobic choice even if lip synching would have been easiest with "etero".
00:20:36	Dawson is jealous of Cliff.	Dawson: I'm the one who should be kissing her, Joey, not some J. Crew ad.	Dawson: Devo baciarla io, Joey, non quella sottospecie di Rambo .	Dawson: I'm the one who should be kissing her, Joey, not that sort of Rambo .	Generalization. It works because Cliff is a quarterback, but loses the J Crew reference (J Crew provided most of the clothes for the cast)
00:26:27	Jen is dancing with Cliff and Dawson would like to cut in.	Cliff: Oh, yeah? You into movies? Dawson: I dab .	Cliff: Ah sì? Lavori nel cinema? Dawson: Faccio doppiaggio .	Cliff: Oh, yeah? You into movies? Dawson: I dub .	Meta-mistranslation.
00:36:15	Typical end-of-episode walk towards the pier.	Dawson: What have we learned from tonight's 90210 evening?	Dawson: Joey, facciamo il punto. Che cosa abbiamo imparato da una serata come questa?	Dawson: Joey, let's focus. What have we learned from an evening like this?	Omission of intertextual reference.

Episode notes

00:41 Dawson to Jen: Would you like to dance? (*Saved By the Bell* reference: asking the prettiest girl in school to dance on the night of the school ball, but not at the ball)

Relevant soundtrack: "I am just a friend, that's all I've ever been, 'cause you don't know me..." - sung by Jann Arden.

Episode 1x03 – “A Prelude to a Kiss”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	1x03	A Prelude to a Kiss	Momenti magici	February 3, 1998	January 20, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:24	Dawson tries to convince Joey to believe in movie magic by telling her she could be Deborah Kerr in <i>From Here to Eternity</i> .	Joey: Sand in my crotch . Heaven .	Joey: La sabbia tra le dita ... il cielo ...	Joey: Sand between my fingers ... The sky ...	Censorship.
00:02:45	Dawson is still trying to convince Joey to embrace movie magic.	Dawson: See, Joey, all you have to do is believe. Joey: Clap hard , Dawson, you might be Tinkerbell's last hope .	Dawson: Joey: Un applauso a Dawson , l'ultima speranza dell'Isola che non c'è .	Dawson: See, Joey, all you have to do is believe. Joey: An applause for Dawson , Neverland's last hope.	Intra-literary generalization. Keeps the Peter Pan reference, but takes it down a notch by omitting the specific reference to the ending, in which the audience revives Tinkerbell through clapping.
00:04:45	Film students are trying to come up with a good idea for their movie.	Dawson: What if we give the split end some kind of a problem? Like drugs, alcohol, his girlfriend got knocked up ?	Dawson: Ci serve qualcosa di forte per risolvere il problema, come droga, alcol, la ragazza che lo pianta in asso .	Dawson: We need something big to solve the problem, like drugs, alcohol, his girlfriend dumping him .	Tamed, possibly censored.
00:07:48	Dawson tells Pacey his film professor has allowed him to be on the set.	Dawson: I'm on the crew for 'Helmets of Glory.' I'll be P.A. for Nellie.	Dawson: Sono nel gruppo per "Caschi gloriosi". Farò il papà di Nellie.	Dawson: I'm on the crew for 'Helmets of Glory.' I'll be Nellie's dad .	Mistranslation, possibly for lip synching. Makes no sense as Nellie is older than Dawson and neither stars in the film.
00:09:37	Joey is mad at Pacey.	Joey: You butt plug!	Joey: Tappati la bocca!	Joey: Shut your mouth!	Joey's powerful remarks are often toned down.
00:10:28	Dawson finds Jen on the set of the movie for film class. She is wearing a cheerleader uniform.	Dawson: What are you doing here? Jen: Just living a fantasy . Dawson: No, seriously. Jen: Cliff gave me a part. Dawson: No couch was involved , right?	Dawson: Che ci fai qui? Jen: Sono venuta a fare le pulizie. Dawson: No, seriamente. Jen: Cliff mi ha dato una parte. Dawson: Hai dovuto corromperlo per averla?	Dawson: What are you doing here? Jen: I came to clean up . Dawson: No, seriously. Jen: Cliff gave me a part. Dawson: Did you have to bribe him to get it?	Toned down innuendo. Mistranslations.

00:13:01	Anderson is trying to get to know Joey.	Anderson: So do you come with a name or just an attitude?	Tu hai anche un nome o sei un'extraterrestre?	Anderson: So do you also have a name or are you an extraterrestrial?	Mistranslation.
00:14:28	Anderson is trying to get to know Joey.	Anderson: My parents. They're antique hounds . They're on the hunt for some chair. Apparently, Paul Revere once parked in it . Joey: Well, that explains your parents, but what about you? Anderson: I'm crew . Beats going to boarding school. You can only take that all-male environment for so long .	Anderson: Sono qui con I miei genitori, loro sono vecchi cani segugio, collezionano sedie antiche, probabilmente rimarremo qui per un po' . Joey: Ora che so tutto dei tuoi genitori parlami un po' di te. Anderson: Musicista , grande marinatore di scuole... mi propongo agli altri così come sono .	Anderson: I'm here with my parents. They're old hounds, they collect antique chairs. We'll probably stay here for a while . Joey: Now that I know all about your parents, tell me about yourself. Anderson: Musician , greats school skipper ... I show my real self to others .	Obliteration of the Paul Revere reference (probably a good choice). Possible censorship (all-male environment).
00:23:18	Anderson is trying to get to know Joey.	Joey: He's a CEO of a huge conglomerate. Anderson: Really? Which one? Joey: One of the nation's best-selling tampons .	Joey: Il mio è a capo di un grosso gruppo. Anderson: Davvero? E quale? Joey: Uno dei più grossi della nazione.	Joey: He's a CEO of a huge conglomerate. Anderson: Really? Which one? Joey: One of the nation's largest .	Obliteration of the tampon reference (combination of lip synching and censorship). Once again Joey sound much tamer in translation.
00:24:52	Nellie tries to ridicule Dawson on the movie set.	Nellie: We need more tape from the film lab. Go fetch, doggy Dawson.	Nellie: Ci serve altro nastro dal laboratorio cinematografico. Corri a prenderlo , Dawson.	Nellie: We need more tape from the film lab. Go get it , Dawson.	Toned down: Nellie sounds bossy but not sarcastic.

Episode notes

Opening scene: Dawson and Joey are watching "From here to eternity" on Dawson's bed.

Joey's witty, snide remarks are often toned down (possible censorship) so that she comes across as much less sarcastic than she actually is.

Pacey to Tamara: What were you in high school? A jock, a brain, a cheerleader? (reference to *The Breakfast Club*, to which the entire episode 1x07 offers a tribute).

Episode 1x07 – “Detention – *The Breakfast Club*”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	1x07	Detention - The Breakfast Club	Convivenza forzata	March 3, 1998	February 3, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:26	Joey and Dawson are watching a movie on Dawson's bed.	Joey: An alien who eats Reese's Pieces and flies around on a bicycle?	Joey: E non ti fa male la testa a vedere un bambino che va quasi sulla luna in bicicletta?	Joey: Don't you get a headache from seeing a kid who almost flies to the moon on a bicycle?	Omission.
00:01:37	Joey criticizes Dawson's idealism.	Joey: She might choose the guy with the faster car or the bigger bicep... Or the bigger joystick.	Joey: Non ammetti che possa preferire quello con la macchina più veloce, i bicipiti più forti o... il più grosso gioiellino.	Joey: She might choose the guy with the faster car or the bigger bicep... Or the bigger jewel.	Tamed.
00:09:10	Jen gets detention for foul language.	Teacher: You just bought yourself Saturday detention.	Principal: Si è appena guadagnata una sospensione di un giorno.	Principal: You just earned a one-day suspension.	Mistranslation.
00:14:09	Abby enters the detention room and sees Dawson, Jen, and Pacey.	Abby: Oh, great. It's Howdy Doody time.	Abby: Oh, che meraviglia. Sono in ottima compagnia.	Abby: Oh, great. I'm in wonderful company.	Omission.
00:21:37	Abby suggests a game to pass the day.	Abby: Truth or dare?	Abby: Vero o falso?	Abby: True or false?	Missed the official equivalent ("Obbligo o verità").
00:29:13	Dawson accepts Pacey's challenge to a basketball rematch.	He has sex once and he thinks he's Wilt Chamberlain.	Dawson: Ha fatto sesso solo una volta e si sente una star a luci rosse.	He has sex once and he thinks he's a porn star.	Generalization.
00:34:11	The librarian tries to act cool.	Mrs. Tingle: Are you hip to my lingo?	Mrs. Tingle: Devo dare ulteriori spiegazioni?	Mrs. Tingle: Do you need further explanations?	Higher register.

Episode notes

Dawson: This is so Breakfast Club. Jen: Breakfast Club? Dawson: The movie where the kids are stuck in detention all day. Joey: At first they hate each other, and then they become good friends.

Episode 1x10 – “The Scare”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	1x10	The Scare	Venerdì 13	May 5, 1998	February 17, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:30:00	Joey opposes Dawson's plans for a horror movie marathon on Friday the 13th.	Joey: I don't like watching horror movies that are loaded with Cheez Whiz . Dawson: Forgive me Roger Ebert . But I figured in honor of Friday the 13th tomorrow, a little horror marathon was mandatory. Joey: It's tired Dawson, just like these movies. I mean, you have this fascination with the dark side .	Joey: A me non piace guardare questi stupidi film horror pieni di sangue e di cadaveri sbudellati . Dawson: Scusa se ho urtato la tua sensibilità , ma in onore di venerdì 13 domani una breve maratona horror marathon è d'obbligo. Joey: E' scontato, Dawson, come questi film. Tu subisci il fascino delle tenebre .	Joey: I don't like watching horror movies that are loaded with blood and gutsed corpses . Dawson: Forgive me if I hurt your sensitivity . But I figured in honor of Friday the 13th tomorrow, a little horror marathon was mandatory. Joey: It's tired Dawson, just like these movies. I mean, you have this fascination with darkness .	Omission (also of the <i>Star Wars</i> reference)
00:55	Dawson explains his love for horror movies.	Dawson: I love the adrenaline rush. Besides, horror films provide positive examples of ordinary people overcoming their worst fears and conquering evil. Joey: Save it for film class , Dawson.	Dawson: E' una scarica d'adrenalina. E poi un film horror fornisce esempi lampanti di gente comune che supera le proprie paure e sconfigge il male. Joey: Studiati i film classici , Dawson.	Dawson: It's an adrenaline rush. Besides, horror films provide positive examples of ordinary people overcoming their worst fears and conquering evil. Joey: Study classic movies , Dawson.	Mistranslation.
03:25	Pacey wants to know about Dawson's plans for Friday the 13th.	Pacey: So what movie are you going as, huh? Michael Myers or Norman Bates' mom?	Pacey: A quale film ti ispirerai? A Shining o alla Notte dei Morti Viventi?	Pacey: So what movie will you use for inspiration? The Shining or Night of the Living Dead?	Substitution.

Episode notes

Dawson and Joey are watching *I know What You Did Last Summer* on Dawson's bed. Dawson wants to have a horror movie marathon on the eve of Friday 13th and defends the value of horror films, while Joey considers them unnecessarily violent and pointless to society and claims there is already enough evil in the world.

Episode 2x06 – “The Dance”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	2x06	The Dance	Il ballo	November 11, 1998	March 16, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:46	Joey, Dawson, Pacey, and Andie are watching Footloose.	Pacey: The homecoming dance? My God, we're hanging out with Marcia Brady.	Pacey: Il ballo degli ex-studenti? Mpf, il modo peggiore di passare una serata.	Pacey: The homecoming dance? Mmh, the worst way to spend an evening.	Omission.
00:01:27	Joey, Dawson, Pacey, and Andie are watching Footloose.	Pacey: Now, Dawson, would you turn the video back on? I wanna see who's responsible for Kevin Bacon's devil-may-care hairdo.	Pacey: Ora, Dawson, se non ti dispiace, potresti riaccendere il video, per favore? Sono curioso di vedere come va a finire questo splendido balletto.	Pacey: Now, Dawson, would you turn the video back on? I wanna see how this wonderful dance number is going to end.	Omission.
00:17:43	Dawson and Joey are slow-dancing at the Homecoming dance.	Dawson: So then my dad drove off and left my mother crying over the kitchen sink. God, what I wouldn't give now for them to go back to their coffee table sex antics.	Dawson: Quindi mio padre se n'è andato, lasciando mia madre in lacrime. Dio, quanto vorrei vederli di nuovo abbracciati nel loro salotto.	Dawson: So then my dad drove off and left my mother crying. God, what I wouldn't give now for them to go back to hugging in the living room.	Censorship.

Episode 2x07 – “The All-Nighter”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	2x07	The All-Nighter	Tutto in una notte	November 18, 1998	March 16, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:05:07	The teacher wants his students to attend his SAT study session.	Teacher: ...Unless, of course, your parents have dedicated at least a wing or two to an Ivy League institution.	Teacher: ... A meno che naturalmente i vostri genitori non abbiano donato un'ala o due a questo prezioso istituto.	Teacher: ...Unless, of course, your parents have dedicated at least a wing or two to this precious institution.	Mistranslation.
00:08:02	Chris welcomes Jen.	Chris: Jen-ally , delish.	Chris: Salve , dolcezza.	Chris: Howdy , sweetie.	Higher register.
00:11:13	Dawson can't believe Pacey is suggesting they go to a study group.	Dawson: Different study session? Is this Pacey Witter code for party? Brothel? Trip to Disneyland?	Dawson: Un gruppo di studio? È un nome in codice per un party, un after-hour , una gita a Disneyland?	Dawson: A study group? Is this code for party? After-hour? Trip to Disneyland?	Censorship.
00:14:01	Jen enjoys chatting with Chris.	Jen: I think we're getting to know each other minus sexual overtones.	Jen: Credo che questo sia uno dei modi migliori per conoscere una persona.	Jen: I think this is one of the best ways to get to know someone.	Censorship.
00:16:30	The friends are taking a purity test found in a magazine.	Pacey: Have you ever been intimately aroused by a relative? So it's a Southern test?	Pacey: Siete mai stati sorpresi in momenti intimi da un parente? Che razza di test è questo, eh?	Pacey: Have you ever been caughy in an intimate moment by a relative? What kind of a test is this, eh?	Censorship.
00:16:40	The friends are taking a purity test found in a magazine.	Jen: Number 13. Have you ever experimented with bondage?	Jen: Numero 13, rispondete. L'avete mai fatto con la servitù?	Jen: Number 13. Have you ever done it with a servant?	Censorship.

Episode 2x19 – “Rest in Peace”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	2x19	Rest in Peace	Riposa in pace Abby	May 5, 1999	April 25, 2000 (Tele+)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:10:21	Dawson tries to make sense of Abby's death.	Dawson: Everybody's playing the dutiful mourners, but underneath there's this odd sense they're all Munchkins freed from the Wicked Witch of the East.	Dawson: Sembriamo tutti schiacciati dal dolore, ma sotto sotto ognuno di noi ho idea che si senta finalmente libero dall'incantesimo della strega cattiva.	Dawson: We all seem crushed by grief, but I have this feeling that underneath everyone feels finally free from the spell of the wicked witch.	Generalization.

Episode notes

Soundtrack: Shooter, "Life's a bitch and then you die"

Episode 2x20 – “Reunited”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	2x20	Reunited	Riuniti	May 12, 1999	May 2, 2000

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:45	The group discusses friendship.	Pacey: We are this far away from the Peach Pit.	Pacey: Siamo a un passo così da Beautiful.	Pacey: We are this far away from The Bold and the Beautiful.	Substitution.

Episode 3x03 – “None of the Above”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	3x03	None of the above	Test psicoattitudinale	October 13, 1999	October 11, 2000 (Italia 1)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:34	Dawson watches <i>Felicity</i> with his new love interest Eve.	Dawson: Movies are an art form. This is just the pabulum between beer commercials. Eve: Don't be such a snob, Dawson. I mean, a TV show is just like a movie. Except shorter, with built-in bathroom breaks. And you get a new sequel every week. Dawson: Sequels I hate on principle. Eve: Suit yourself. I'm hooked. Dawson: All right, you know what? Take Felicity , for example. Come on, you've seen an hour of whiny teen angst, you've seen them all. Don't take me wrong, she's pretty but what kind of heroine is she? She's indecisive, she's basically paralysed by some romantic notions of the way things are supposed to be. If you ask me, she's kind of chatty. Eve: She's you! [...] Dawson: You	Dawson: I film sono una forma d'arte. Questa è solo robaccia tra una pubblicità e l'altra. Eve: Non essere così snob, Dawson. Un telefilm è esattamente come un film, solo più breve, con pause bagno incluse e una nuova puntata ogni settimana. Dawson: Io odio i telefilm a puntate. Eve: Peggio per te. Io li adoro. Dawson: Ecco. Ecco, vedi? Prendi questo qui , per esempio. Insomma, è solo un'ora di lamenti noiosissimi sui problemi degli adolescenti. E hai visto lei? Intendiamoci, è carina, ma che tipo di ragazza è? E' sempre indecisa, fossilizzata in una concezione romantica di come vorrebbe che fosse la realtà, in fondo è soltanto un'illus. Eve: Come te. [...] Dawson: Sai cos'altro odio	Dawson: Movies are an art form. This is just junk between commercials. Eve: Don't be such a snob, Dawson. I mean, a TV show is just like a movie. Except shorter, with built-in bathroom breaks. And you get a new episode every week. Dawson: I hate episode-based series. Eve: Suit yourself. I love them. Dawson: All right, you know what? Take this one , for example. Come on, it's only an hour of boring whining about teen issues. And did you see her? Don't take me wrong, she's pretty but what kind of girl is she? She's indecisive, she's basically fossilized in some romantic notion of the way she would want reality to be. If you ask me, she's delusional. Eve: Like you! [...]	Omission.

		know what else I hate about television? They cut to commercial at the best part. [commercial break]	della televisione? Mettono la pubblicità sempre sul più bello. [commercial break]	Dawson: You know what else I hate about television? They cut to commercial at the best part. [commercial break]	
00:10:46	Joey asks for Friday night off to study for her PSATs.	Rob: No sweat. I remember what it was like. Of course, I didn't take the PSATs. Joey: What, Daddy built the university? Rob: No, no, just endowed it. Actually, I hired a ringer.	Rob: Anch'io ci sono passato, è stato molto divertente fare quel test. Joey: E l'hai superato senza problemi? Rob: No, figuriamoci. Ho noleggiato un'altra persona. Un sosia.	Rob: I've been there, taking that test has been so much fun. Joey: And you passed without problem? Rob: No, of course not. I hired someone else. A lookalike.	Mistranslation and omission.
00:18:33	Joey fills a boat's tank and spills a little fuel.	Joey: So I spilled a little. It's not exactly the Exxon Valdez.	Joey: Stavo facendo il pieno e ne ho versata un po', non è esattamente la fine del mondo.	Joey: I was filling the tank and I spilled a little, it's not exactly the end of the world.	Omission.

Episode 3x14 – “Valentine’s Day Massacre”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Dawson's Creek</i>	3x14	Valentine's Day Massacre	Una serata particolare	February 2, 2000 (WB)	April 2, 2001 (Italia 1)

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:07	Joey is not going to the secret Valentine's Day party.	Joey: ...and make it a Blockbuster night.	Joey: Mi vedrò un film al cinema.	Joey: ...I'll go watch a movie at the cinema.	Generalization.
00:03:23	Dawson has second thoughts about the party.	Pacey: Is this doubt I'm hearing, young Skywalker? Dawson: I'm not exactly cut out for a career in hedonism. Pacey: Pick up the phone already. This is your call to action, okay? Your hero's journey begins now, my friend. Dawson: Pacey Witter, the poor man's Yoda. Pacey: I've actually always seen myself more as the Han Solo type. Roguish good looks. Devil-may-care attitude. Jack: Guys. Guys, wait up. Pacey: Hey, here comes my Chewbacca.	Pacey: Che fai adesso? Già ci ripensi? Dawson: Scusa, ma io non sono tagliato per la carriera edonistica. Pacey: Dawson, prendi il telefono e usalo, è ora di entrare in azione. Da oggi inizia una nuova vita per noi. Dawson: Pacey Witter, l'uomo che non schioda. Pacey: Eh già, io mi sono sempre visto come un ragazzo atipico, rude ma affascinante. Uno che ama il rischio e non ha paura. Jack: Ragazzi! Un attimo, aspettate. Pacey: Ecco la mia famosa spalla.	Pacey: What are you doing? Are you having second thoughts? Dawson: Sorry, I'm not exactly cut out for a career in hedonism. Pacey: Dawson, pick up the phone and use it, it's time for action. Our new life starts today. Dawson: Pacey Witter, the man who doesn't give up. Pacey: Oh yes, I've always seen myself as an atypical guy, rude but charming. One who loves danger and is never afraid. Jack: Guys! Wait up. Pacey: Here comes my famous sidekick.	Series of omissions.
00:12	Joey eventually joins her friends for the party.	Joey: Well, I came to make sure that I don't lose Dawson to the dark side.	Joey: Sono qui per assicurarmi che Dawson non si perda nell'oscurità.	Joey: I came to make sure that I Dawson doesn't get lost in the dark.	Omission.
00:13:43	Pacey tries to leave Dawson and Andie's friend Kate alone.	Joey: Well, that was about as subtle as an Oliver Stone film.	Joey: Scommetto che sei fiero della tua manovra ingegnosa.	Joey: I bet you're proud of your ingenious maneuver.	Omission.

APPENDIX D

GOSSIP GIRL – EPISODE ANALYSIS

Dubbing studio: SEDIF

Highlighted lines indicate the examples analyzed in chapter 7.

Episode 1x01 – “Pilot”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x01	Pilot	Buongiorno, Upper East Side	July 19, 2007	January 19, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:48	Gossip Girl talks about best friends Blair and Serena.	Gossip Girl: Sure, they're BFFs ...	Gossip Girl: Erano molto amiche ...	Gossip Girl: They were good friends ...	Loss of acronym.	Gossip Girl: Certo, loro sono 'Migliori Amiche Per Sempre' ...	Gossip Girl: Sure, they are 'Best Friends Forever' ...	Loss of acronym, but retention of part of the effect through capitalization and inverted commas.
00:05:48	Gossip Girl's trademark parting formula.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl	Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl! [fake American flavour]	"Americanization"	N/A	N/A	N/A

00:09:43	Chuck and Nate are walking to school and talking about Blair.	Chuck: You have been dating since kindergarten and you haven't sealed the deal.	Chuck: Voi due state insieme dall'asilo e non avete ancora sancito l'accordo.	Chuck: You have been dating since kindergarten and you haven't sanctioned the deal.	Higher register / semantic short-circuit.	Voi due vi frequentate dall'asilo, e tu non hai ancora concluso l'affare.	Chuck: You have been dating since kindergarten and you haven't sealed the deal.	Acceptable equivalent.
00:14:51	Chuck and Nate are walking to school and talking about Blair.	Chuck: Nathaniel, you're finally about to have sex with your girlfriend.	Chuck: Nate, stai finalmente per scopare con la tua ragazza.	Chuck: Nate, you're finally about to fuck your girlfriend.	Lower register, unnecessary vulgarity.	Chuck: Nathaniel, finalmente stai per fare sesso con la tua ragazza.	Chuck: Nathaniel, you're finally about to have sex with your girlfriend.	Correct rendition.

Episode 1x02 – “The Wild Brunch”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x02	The Wild Brunch	Il brunch selvaggio	July 26, 2007	January 24, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:16:25	Lily pretends to hate Brooklyn.	Lily: I'd like to get out of here before someone throws me down and tattoos me. Rufus: This is Brooklyn, Lil, not the Warped Tour.	Lily: Vorrei andarmene prima che qualcuno mi legghi per farmi un tatuaggio. Rufus: Siamo a Brooklyn, non in un film dell'orrore.	Lily: I'd like to get out of here before someone ties me and tattoos me. Rufus: This is Brooklyn, not a horror movie.	Substitution.	Lily: Vorrei uscire di qui prima che qualcuno mi butti a terra e mi tatui. Rufus: Questa e' Brooklyn, Lil, non il Warped Tour.	Lily: I'd like to get out of here before someone throws me down and tattoos me. Rufus: This is Brooklyn, Lil, not the Warped Tour.	Retention.
00:16:48	Rufus asks Lily whether she still wants an extra caffeine shot.	Rufus: Two Americanos. One with an extra shot?	Rufus: Due caffè americani. Lo prendi lungo , giusto?	Rufus: Two Americanos. You want yours tall , right?	Mistranslation.	Rufus: Due caffè americani... uno con l'aggiunta?	Rufus: Two Americanos. One with an extra?	Imprecise generalization.
00:24:22	Serena pretends to go to the restroom to pay the check.	Serena: I, uh... Need to use the ladies' room . You think you'll be okay by yourself for a while? Dan: Yeah, come on, me and some beluga caviar? Can't get enough of the stuff.	Serena: Ehm, io devo andare un attimo al bagno delle signore , posso lasciarti un momento da solo? Dan: Sì, me ne sto col... caviale belga, ne mangerei fino a scoppiare.	Serena: I, uh... need to use the ladies' restroom . You think you'll be okay by yourself for a while? Dan: Yeah, come on, me and some Belgian caviar? I'd eat it until I explode.	Mistranslation.	Serena: Devo usare il bagno. Credi che ce la fai a stare da solo per un po'? Dan: Ma certo. Come no, io e un po' di caviale Beluga? Non ne ho mai abbastanza.	Serena: I need to use the restroom. You think you'll be okay by yourself for a while? Dan: Yeah, come on, me and some beluga caviar? Can't get enough of it.	Correct equivalent.

Episode 1x04 – “Bad News Blair”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x04	Bad News Blair	Che botte se incontri Blair	October 10, 2007	February 7, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:04:43	Chuck is not happy to see old acquaintance Carter Baizen crush his party.	Chuck: Who brought the Sasquatch ?	Chuck: E quel pezzente chi l'ha invitato?	Chuck: Who invited the beggar ?	Generalization.	Chi ha portato Bigfoot ?	Chuck: Who brought Bigfoot ?	Official equivalent.
00:05:13	Chuck is not happy to see old acquaintance Carter Baizen crash his party.	GG: Doesn't Chuck know a party isn't a party until someone crashes ?	GG: Ma Chuck non lo sa che una festa non è una festa finché qualcuno non la rovina ?	GG: Doesn't Chuck know a party isn't a party until someone ruins it ?	Mistranslation.	GG; Chuck non lo sa che una festa non è tale finché qualcuno non s'imbuca ?	GG: Doesn't Chuck know a party isn't a party until someone crashes ?	Correct translation.
00:13:10	Nate asks Carter to send him the address of the poker club via text message.	Nate: Hey, hey man. Is that card game tonight? Carter: Yeah. Nate: Text me the address later.	Nate: Ehi, aspetta. Stasera giochi a carte? Carter: Sì. Nate: Allora cerco di raggiungerci.	Nate: Hey, wait. Are you playing cards tonight? Carter: Yeah. Nate: I'll try to come meet you.	Omission of tech reference.	Nate: Ehi. Ehi, amico. Stasera c'e' quella partita di carte? Carter: Sì. Nate: Ehi, mandami l'indirizzo via SMS dopo.	Nate: Hey, hey man. Is that card game tonight? Carter: Yeah. Nate: Hey, text me the address later.	Retention.
00:39:31		GG: As much as a BFF can make you go WTF ...	GG: Anche se a volte capita che gli amici ci fanno saltare i nervi ...	GG: Even if sometimes it happens that friends irritate us...	Loss of acronyms.	GG: Per quanto un migliore amico possa farti arrabbiare...	GG: As much as a best friend can make you mad ...	Loss of acronyms.

Episode notes

Eleanor keeps failing to show maternal love.

Episode 1x05 – “Dare Devil”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x05	Dare Devil	Dare Devil	October 17, 2007	February 14, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:04:39	Blair mocks Serena for her former drunken antics.	Blair:...while you get drunk on Schnapps and moon the NYU dorms from the limo.	Blair: ...mentre tu ti ubriacherai di cocktail dentro una limousine.	Blair:...while you get drunk on cocktails in a limousine.	Omission / censorship.	Blair: ...mentre tu ti ubriacherai di liquori e mostrerai le chiappe ai dormitori dell'Università di New York dalla limousine.	Blair:...while you get drunk on liquor and show your bottom to the NYU dorms from the limo.	Retention.
00:12:36	Blair mocks Jenny for her Brooklyn origins.	Blair: It's a party, Jenny. Either you swallow that, or you swipe your MetroCard back home.	Blair: E' una festa, Jenny. O lo butti giù, oppure te ne torni a casa.	Blair: It's a party, Jenny. Either you swallow that, or go back home.	Omission.	Blair: E' una festa, Jenny. O lo butti giù o ti ributti in metropolitana.	Blair: It's a party, Jenny. Either you swallow that, or you get yourself on a subway train.	Generalization.
00:16:43	Jenny needs to take up Blair's challenges if she wants to be part of the in-crowd.	Gossip Girl: Will J take the bait and go from Brady to Britney or will her goody-two-shoes mindset turn into the night's biggest buzz kill?	Gossip Girl: J. abbraccherà all'amo e si trasformerà da Hello Kitty a Catwoman o la sua indole da brava ragazza prevarrà e rovinerà i piani criminali di Blair?	Gossip Girl: Will J take the bait and go from Hello Kitty to Catwoman or will her goody-two-shoes mindset prevail and ruin Blair's criminal plans?	Substitution.	Gossip Girl: J. abbraccherà' e si trasformerà da una Brady a una Britney? O il suo atteggiamento da brava ragazza sarà la massima rovina della serata?	Gossip Girl: Will J take the bait and go from Brady to Britney or will her goody-two-shoes mindset turn into the night's biggest buzz kill?	Retention.

Episode 1x06 – “The Handmaiden’s Tale”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x05	Dare Devil	Dare Devil	October 24, 2007	February 21, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:17:02	Vanessa is back in town and wants to go out with former boyfriend Dan.	Vanessa: Pirogis at Veselka?	Vanessa: Mi porti a cena fuori?	Vanessa: Will you take me out to dinner?	Generalization.	Vanessa: Pierogi da Veselka?	Vanessa: Pirogis at Veselka?	Retention.
00:16:43	Vanessa tries to get Jenny to realize that Blair is using her.	Vanessa: So this Blair girl used you as her slave. Jenny: No, I was her handmaiden . Vanessa: ‘Handmaiden’ is Jane Austen for slave.	Vanessa: E così Blair ti ha usato come schiava. Jenny: No, ero la sua ancella . Vanessa: ‘ Ancella ’ è un modo carino per dire ‘schiava’.	Vanessa: So Blair used you as her slave. Jenny: No, I was her handmaiden . Vanessa: ‘Handmaiden’ is a nice way to say ‘slave.’	Omission.	Vanessa: Quindi questa Blair ti ha usata come schiava? Jenny: No, ero la sua damigella . Vanessa: ‘Damigella’ e’ il corrispettivo di ‘schiava’ per Jane Austen.	Vanessa: So this Blair used you as her slave. Jenny: No, I was her handmaiden . Vanessa: ‘Handmaiden’ is equivalent to ‘slave’ for Jane Austen .	Retention.
00:21:02	Vanessa promises to ‘deprogram’ Jenny once she gets back from attending an Upper East Side party.	Vanessa: We’ll deprogram you later.	Vanessa: Più tardi ti farò il lavaggio del cervello .	Vanessa: I’ll brainwash you later.	Loss of tech slang.	Vanessa: Ti deprogrammeremo dopo.	Vanessa: We’ll deprogram you later.	Retention.

Episode 1x09 – “Blair Waldorf Must Pie!”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x09	Blair Waldorf Must Pie!	La morte ti fa bella	November 28, 2007	March 13, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:05:10	Serena (who has slept with Nate) finds out Blair has slept with Chuck, who is best friends with Blair's ex Nate.	Blair: Oh, so Nate gets the free pass and I'm the slut? Serena: Tell me you didn't sleep with Chuck for revenge? Blair: Well, it wasn't because I like his natural musk . And besides, nothing hurts more than sleeping with the best friend, right, S?	Blair: Quindi soltanto Nate avrebbe il diritto di spassarsela? Serena: E' terribile, sei andata a letto con Chuck soltanto per vendetta? Blair: Beh, ad attrarmi non è stato certo il suo profumo. Se lo merita, era il minimo da aspettarsi dopo quello che mi ha fatto.	Blair: So only Nate has a right to have fun? Serena: It's terrible, did you sleep with Chuck just for revenge? Blair: Well, it certainly wasn't his fragrance that attracted me. He deserves it, after what he did to me.	Censorship.	Oh, quindi Nate ha via libera, mentre io sono una troia? Dimmi che non sei andata a letto con Chuck per vendetta. Beh, non è stato perché mi piace il suo profumo di muschio , e tra l'altro, niente fa più male che andare a letto con il migliore amico, vero, S?	Blair: Oh, so Nate gets the free pass and I'm the slut? Serena: Tell me you didn't sleep with Chuck for revenge? Blair: Well, it wasn't because I like his natural musk fragrance . And besides, nothing hurts more than sleeping with the best friend, right, S?	Retention and mistranslation

00:12:00	Blair has found out that her mother has uninvited her former husband, who now lives in Paris with his male partner.	Blair: Where's Daddy's pie? I don't see his pumpkin pie? Eleanor: Well, there were so many delicious choices coming from the caterer, we just sent that one down to the doorman. Well, it is Thanksgiving after all, huh?	Blair: Dov'è la torta di zucca? Dov'è la torta di papà? Eleanor: Oh, beh, tesoro, il catering ha portato tante di quelle delizie che la tua torta l'abbiamo data al portiere. Se non altro avrai qualcuno che l'apprezza, no?	Blair: Where's the pumpkin pie? Where's Daddy's pie? Eleanor: Well, honey, the caterer brought so many delicious choices, we just sent your cake down to the doorman. At least you'll have someone who appreciates it, right?	Mistranslation.	Blair: Dov'è la torta di papà? Non vedo la sua torta di zucca. Eleanor: Beh, il catering ha portato così tante cose deliziose, che quella abbiamo deciso di mandarla giu' al portiere. Cos'è il Ringraziamento dopo tutto?	Blair: Where's Daddy's pie? I don't see his pumpkin pie? Eleanor: Well, the caterer brought so many delicious things, we just sent that one down to the doorman. What is Thanksgiving after all?	Retention.
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Episode notes

Episode title: "Blair Waldorf must pie!" (reference to the 2006 high school romance comedy *John Tucker Must Die!* (tagline: "Don't get mad. Get even.)

La torta ti fa bella - "*Death Becomes Her* (reference to the 1992 Meryl Streep dark comedy / fantasy movie; potion of eternal youth)

Episode 1x10 – “Hi, Society”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x10	Hi, Society	Amori in corso	December 5, 2007	March 20, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:47	Nate pretends not to be interested in his ex Blair.	Chuck: Don't F with an F-er!'	Chuck: Chi vuoi prendere in giro?	Chuck: Who do you think you're kidding?	Loss of acronym.	Chuck: Non cercare di fregare il maestro.	Chuck: Don't try to trick the master.	Loss of acronym, retention of Chuck's personality.

Episode 1x15 – “Desperately Seeking Serena”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x15	Desperately Seeking Serena	Cercasi Serena disperatamente	April 28, 2008	August 21, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:13:04	Blair needs her “minions” help to defeat her “enemy.”	Blair: So, what's it gonna be? Aromatherapy or annihilation?	Blair: Allora, che cosa scegliamo? Ci lasciamo battere o la distruggiamo?	Blair: So, what do we choose? Do we let her win or do we destroy her?	Generalization.	Blair: Quindi... che si fa? Aromaterapia o annientamento?	Blair: So... What are we doing? Aromatherapy or annihilation?	Retention.
00:18:35	Jenny is trying to get herself an upper-class boyfriend to climb the social ladder.	Jenny: What did I tell you about that dog walker? There are no kings on Craigslist.	Jenny: Te l'ho già detto che quello non va bene. I re non fanno i dogsitter.	Jenny: I already told you that guy doesn't work. Kings don't work as dogsitters.	Omission.	Jenny: Cosa ti ho detto di quel dog sitter? Non ci sono re sulla Craigslist.	Jenny: What did I tell you about that dog walker? There are no kings on Craigslist.	Retention.

Episode 1x17 – “All About My Brother”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x16	All About My Brother	Tutto su mio fratello	May 5, 2008	August 21, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:03:43	Vanessa welcomes Georgina, who pretends not to be from Manhattan.	Vanessa: Subway. Click those heels all you want, you're not in Portland anymore.	Vanessa: Metropolitana. Il metodo migliore per girare la città è questo.	Vanessa: Subway. This is the best way to move around town.	Omission.	Vanessa: Metropolitana. Batti quei tacchi quanto vuoi. Non sei più a Portland ormai.	Vanessa: Subway. Click those heels all you want, you're not in Portland anymore.	Retention.
00:14:27	Blair reveals Asher's plans to Dan.	Blair: Asher's just using your sister as a cover. It's your brotherly duty to save her from becoming the next Katie Holmes.	Blair: Asher sta usando tua sorella come copertura, è tuo dovere fraterno evitare che diventi una seconda Katie Holmes.	Blair: Asher's just using your sister as a cover. It's your brotherly duty to save her from becoming the next Katie Holmes.	Retention.	Blair: Asher sta solo usando tua sorella come copertura. E' il tuo dovere di fratello salvarla dal diventare la prossima Katie Holmes.	Blair: Asher's just using your sister as a cover. It's your brotherly duty to save her from becoming the next Katie Holmes.	Retention.
00:20:35	Jenny spreads the rumor that she has slept with Asher to cover up his homosexuality.	Gossip Girl: Asher Hornsby overheard bragging that Little J swiped her V card at his register.	Gossip Girl: Ho sentito Asher vantarsi di aver finalmente colto il fiore della piccola J.	Gossip Girl: I heard Asher bragging that he had finally picked Little J's flower.	Tamed (anachronistic metaphor).	Gossip Girl: Hanno sentito Asher Hornsby vantarsi del fatto che la piccola Jenny gli ha ceduto la sua verginità.	Gossip Girl: Asher Hornsby overheard bragging that Little J gave him her virginity.	Loss of acronym.
00:33:47	Blair establishes her return to power by organizing a multi-location night out.	Blair: I'll have Dorota BlackBerry everyone an itinerary.	Blair: Vi mando una mail con l'indirizzo.	Blair: I'll e-mail you the address.	Loss of tech slang and of Blair's power markers.	Blair: Vi farò spedire da Dorota l'itinerario sul BlackBerry.	Blair: I'll have Dorota send you the itinerary via BlackBerry.	Retention.

Episode 2x06 – “New Haven Can Wait”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	1x16	New Haven Can Wait	Il nuovo paradiso può attendere	October 13, 2008	September 15, 2009

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:41:50	Episode ending	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Baci e abbracci , Gossip Girl	Gossip Girl: Kisses and hugs , Gossip Girl	Explicitation (inconsistent with other renditions of the same acronym).	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl	Retention.

Episode 2x16 – “You’Ve Got Yale”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	2x16	You'Ve Got Yale!	L'ammissione a Yale	January 1, 2009	May 27, 2009

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:02	Blair is getting ready to go visit Yale.	Harold: Blair bear , you'll be late!	Harold: Blair, cara , farai tardi!	Harold: Blair, dear , you'll be late!	Generalization	Orsetto Blair , farai tardi!	Blair bear , you'll be late!	Slight calque effect
00:02:48	Serena and Dan are also getting ready to visit Yale.	Serena: What if I do and Blair doesn't? Dan: Fire and-- and brimstone and a lot of bitchy asides, death by Dorota.	Serena: Se vengo ammessa io e Blair no? Dan: Sarebbe una tragedia senza precedenti, non voglio neanche pensarci.	Serena: What if I get in and Blair doesn't? Dan: It would be an unprecedented tragedy, I don't even want to think about it.	Omission (sentence replacement).	Serena: Cosa succede se io vengo presa e Blair no? Dan: Fuoco e fiamme, un sacco di velenose ripicche, ti farà uccidere da Dorota.	Serena: What if I get in and Blair doesn't? Dan: Fire and flames, lots of poisonous revenge, she'll have Dorota kill you.	Form and meaning are both maintained.
00:13:58	Serena pretends to have been waitlisted at Yale in order not to hurt Blair's feelings.	Blair: Dan must be pissed. His hope of arriving on campus with cachet has been shot to hell. Now he'll just be lumped in with the rest of the financial aid-iots and poets.	Blair: Dan dev'essere arrabbiato. La sua speranza di arrivare al campus con prestigio è sfumata, adesso dovrà unirsi al resto degli studenti idioti e dei poeti.	Blair: Dan must be pissed. His hope of arriving on campus with prestige has been shot to hell. Now he'll have to join the rest of the idiot students and the poets.	Mistranslation.	Blair: Dan sarà infuriato. La sua speranza di arrivare al campus con un po' di prestigio è andata a farsi benedire. Ora gli toccherà far comunella con gli altri spiantati... e coi poeti.	Blair: Dan must be pissed. His hope of arriving on campus with some prestige has been shot to hell. Now he'll have to join the rest of the other penniless people... and the poets.	Loss of the pun, correct meaning.

00:19:45	Blair wants to take revenge on the new teacher from Iowa, who has given her a B, thus lowering her GPA.	Blair: I can't risk not getting into Yale, so it's open season on Miss Iowa. Time to shuck the corn.	Blair: Non posso non andare a Yale, e quindi è scattata la missione Miss Iowa. Capirà cosa deve fare.	Blair: I can't risk not getting into yale, so the Miss Iowa mission is on. She'll understand what she has to do.	Tamed.	Blair: Non posso rischiare la mia ammissione a Yale, quindi e' aperta la stagione di caccia a Miss Iowa. È il momento di battere il grano.	Blair: I can't risk not getting into yale, so it's open season on Miss Iowa. It's time to shuck the corn.	Retention.
00:20:51	Brooklynite Vanessa has bought opera tickets to try to keep up with Nate's expensive gifts.	Vanessa: Okay, ever since you got your money back, you've been taking me to do all these Archibald-y things, which I love. I just can't keep up.	Vanessa: Da quando hai riavuto il tuo denaro, mi hai fatto fare tutte cose impegnate , il che mi piace, ma mi sentivo un po' a disagio.	Vanessa: Ever since you got your money back, you've been taking me to do all these high-brow things, which I love, but I felt a bit uncomfortable.	Mistranslation.	Vanessa: Ok. Da quando hai riavuto i tuoi soldi mi hai portato a fare queste cose archibaldose , che adoro. Ma mi serve una pausa, quindi ho deciso di fare una cosa per noi.	Vanessa: Okay, ever since you got your money back, you've been taking me to do all these Archibald-y things, which I love. But I need a break, so I've decided to do something for us.	Retention.

Episode 2x25 – “The Goodbye Gossip Girl”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	2x25	The Goodbye Gossip Girl	Arrivederci Gossip Girl	May 18, 2009	July 29, 2009

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:30:08	Nate leaves Dan and Serena alone.	Nate: I'm gonna go close the tab .	Nate: Vado in bagno	Nate: I'm gonna go to the restroom .	Mistranslation.	Nate: Vado a saldare il conto .	Nate: I'm gonna go pay the check .	Slight calque effect
00:39:59	Standard closing formula.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: Kiss kiss , Gossip Girl.	Substitution (inconsistent with other renditions of the same acronym).	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Gossip Girl: XOXO , Gossip Girl.	Form and meaning are both maintained.

Episode 3x02 – “The Freshman”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Gossip Girl</i>	3x02	The Freshman	La matricola	September 21, 2009	February 10, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:06:31	Blair tries to convince her college classmates that going out on Saturday nights is not fashionable.	Blair: Wrong. You should never be seen at a club on a Saturday night. It's strictly bridge and tunnel on the weekends.	Blair: Sbagliato. Mai farsi vedere in un locale il sabato sera, il weekend è solo per i pendolari .	Blair: Wrong. You should never be seen at a club on a Saturday night. Weekends are strictly for commuters .	Explicitation.	Blair: Mai farsi vedere in un locale di sabato sera. Il weekend è per i pendolari .	Blair: You should never be seen at a club on a Saturday night. Weekends are strictly for commuters .	Explicitation.
00:17:15	Blair fails to convince her NYU classmates.	Gossip Girl: Spotted: Blair Waldorf going from VIP to VD .	Gossip Girl: Avvistata: Blair Waldorf spodestata da regina .	Gossip Girl: Spotted: Blair Waldorf dethroned from her queen role .	Explication / loss of acronyms.	Gossip Girl: Avvistata: Blair Waldorf che da VIP diventa MST .	Gossip Girl: Spotted: Blair Waldorf going from VIP to VD .	Form and meaning are both maintained.

APPENDIX E

GLEE – EPISODE ANALYSIS

Dubbing studio: E.T.S – European Television Service

Highlighted lines indicate the examples analyzed in chapter 7.

Episode 1x03 – “Acafellas”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x03	Acafellas	Acafellas	September 16, 2009	January 28, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:11:35	Dakota tries to intimidate the glee club.	Dakota: I learned a lot in special forces .	Dakota: Ho imparato un sacco di cose nei Berretti Verdi .	Dakota: I learned a lot in the Green Berets .	Official equivalent.	Dakota: Ho imparato un sacco di cose nei Corpi Speciali .	Dakota: I learned a lot in Special Corps .	Generalization.
00:32:33	Dakota challenges Rachel.	Dakota: Where's this going, Yentl?	Dakota: Cosa vuoi dire, Hello Dolly?	Dakota: What do you mean, Hello Dolly?	Substitution (yet with loss of Jewish reference).	Dakota: Cosa vuoi dire, Yentl?	Dakota: What do you mean, Yentl?	Retention.

Episode 1x06 – “Vitamin D”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x06	Vitamin D	Vitamina D	October 7, 2009	February 18, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:14	Emma suggests a sticker board to monitor achievements.	Emma: That’s how my parents got me to do chores.	Emma: I miei è così che mi facevano studiare nei cori.	Emma: That’s how my parents got me to study in choirs.	Mistranslation.	Emma: E' così che i miei genitori mi hanno convinta a fare le pulizie.	Emma: That’s how my parents got me to do chores.	Correct rendition.
00:11:15	Finn uses Biofreeze on his shins.	Finn: It smells pretty bad, but I mask it with Drakkar Noir.	Finn: Puzza un sacco, ma lo copro con il deodorante.	Finn: It smells a lot, but I mask it with deodorant.	Generalization.	Finn: Puzza un sacco, ma lo copro con Drakkar Noir.	Finn: It smells a lot, but I mask it with Drakkar Noir.	Retention.
00:13:50	Finn goes to sleep very late.	Finn: Usually, after Skinemax starts playing regular movies again.	Finn: Guardo la televisione fino a tardi per addormentarmi.	Finn: I watch TV until late to fall asleep.	Generalization / censorship.	Finn: Di solito dopo che Skinemax smette di trasmettere film per adulti.	Finn: Usually, after Skinemax stops playing adult movies.	Explicitation.
00:24:18	Finn explains why he would never take steroids.	Finn: I'd never take steroids. They make your junk fall off.	Finn: Non prenderei mai steroidi. Possono causare danni seri.	Finn: I'd never take steroids. They can cause serious damage.	Generalization / censorship.	Finn: Non prenderei mai steroidi. Ti rimpiccioliscono il pisello.	Finn: I'd never take steroids. They make your penis shrink.	Retention.

Episode 1x09 – “Wheels”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x09	Wheels	Musica su due ruote	November 11, 2009	March 11, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:31	Finn is looking for a job.	Finn: I almost got in at Olive Garden , but they said I was too tall to be a busboy .	Finn: Mi avrebbero preso al ristorante italiano , ma ero troppo alto per il loro magazzino .	Finn: I almost got in at the Italian restaurant , but they said I was too tall for their stock room .	Generalization and offensive substitution.	Finn: Mi avrebbero preso al ristorante italiano , ma ero troppo alto per fare il lavapiatti .	Finn: I almost got in at the Italian restaurant , but they said I was too tall to be a busboy .	Generalization and acceptable substitution.
00:03:56	Finn is looking for a job.	Quinn: What about Target ?	Quinn: Hai provato da Target ?	Quinn: Have you tried Target ?	Retention.	Quinn: Hai provato al centro commerciale ?	Quinn: Have you tried the mall ?	Generalization.
00:10:14	The glee club accepts Will's suggestion to hold a bake sale.	Will: What's all this? Rachel: Ingredients for cupcakes .	Will: Cos'è tutta questa roba? Rachel: Gli ingredienti per i tortini .	Will: What's all this? Rachel: Ingredients for tiny cakes .	Generalization.	Will: Cos'è tutta questa roba? Rachel: Gli ingredienti per i cupcake .	Will: What's all this? Rachel: Ingredients for cupcakes .	Retention.
00:13:31	Burt defends his son.	Burt: You can't discriminate against my kid because of his sex, religion, political affiliation or the fact that he's queer as a three dollar bill .	Burt: Non potete discriminare mio figlio a causa del suo sesso, o della sua religione, o appartenenza politica o per il fatto che sia falso come una banconota da tre dollari .	Burt: You can't discriminate against my kid because of his sex, religion, political affiliation or the fact that he's false as a three dollar bill .	Retention.	Burt: Non potete discriminare mio figlio a causa del suo sesso, o della sua religione, o appartenenza politica o per il fatto che sia reversibile come un trapano .	Burt: You can't discriminate against my kid because of his sex, religion, political affiliation or the fact that he's as reversible as a drill .	Unnecessary exasperation.

00:13:42	Burt defends his son.	Burt: You put on a blindfold and listen to my kid sing, And you will swear you're hearing Ronnie Spector .	Burt Hummel: [...] vi sembrerà di sentire Cyndi Lauper .	Burt Hummel: [...] you'll think you're hearing Cyndi Lauper .	Substitution.	Burt Hummel: [...] giurerete di aver sentito Ronnie Spector .	Burt Hummel: [...] you will swear you heard Ronnie Spector .	Retention.
00:24:42	Burt defends his family.	Burt: No one pushes the Hummels around .	Burt: Nessuno può mettere al muro gli Hummel.	Burt: No one can push the Hummels against the wall .	Correct rendition.	Burt: Nessuno mette gli Hummel in un angolo .	Burt: No one puts the Hummels in a corner .	Insertion of a reference to <i>Dirty Dancing</i> .

Episode 1x10 – “Ballads”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x10	Ballads	Canzoni d'amore	November 18, 2009	March 18, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:27:51	Finn compliments Quinn's mother's cooking.	Finn: Mmm, it's a lovely ham .	Finn: Ottimi i medaglioni .	Finn: Lovely meat medallions .	Substitution (inconsistent with the visuals).	Finn: Un prosciutto delizioso .	Finn: It's a lovely ham .	Retention.
00:28:21	Mrs. Fabray talks about her older daughter.	Mrs. Fabray: My first married a wonderful Christian man who owns his own chain of UPS stores .	Mrs. Fabray: La prima ha sposato un fantastico ragazzo cristiano, proprietario di una catena di centri di spedizioni .	Mrs. Fabray: My first married a wonderful Christian man who owns his own chain of shipping centers .	Generalization.	Mrs. Fabray: La prima ha sposato un fantastico ragazzo cristiano, proprietario di una catena di negozi UPS .	Mrs. Fabray: My first married a wonderful Christian man who owns his own chain of UPS stores .	Retention.

Episode 1x11 – “Hairography”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x11	Hairography	Capellografia	November 25, 2009	March 25, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:15:23	Dalton complains about limited funding.	Dalton: I run the glee club at a school for the deaf . You think I'm rolling around in deaf choir money?	Dalton: Gestisco un coro in una scuola per sordomuti . Pensa che mi rotoli nei soldi per un coro di sordi ?	Dalton: I run the glee club at a school for the deaf-mute . You think I'm rolling around in deaf choir money?	Mistranslation.	Dalton: Dirigo il Glee club in una scuola per sordi . Crede che mi riempiano di soldi per un coro di sordi ?	Dalton: I run the glee club at a school for the deaf . Do you think they fill me with money for a deaf choir?	Correct rendition.
00:24:16	Puck lies to Quinn (he's sending sexual text messages to Santana).	Puck: Uh, Mike Ching. He's got wind problems .	Puck: A Mike Ching. Ha un po' di casini .	Puck: Uh, Mike Ching. He's got a few problems .	Normalization.	Puck: A Mike Ching. Soffre di flatulenza .	Puck: Uh, Mike Ching. He's got flatulence problems .	Retention.

Episode 1x12 – “Mattress”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x12	Mattress	La televendita	December 2, 2009	April 1, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:26:03	Will is looking for his pocket square.	Terri: A pocket square's gonna make you look like Ted Knight .	Terri: Il fazzoletto ti fa sembrare antico .	Terri: The pocket square makes you look ancient .	Omission.	Terri: Il fazzoletto ti fa sembrare Ted Knight .	Terri: The pocket square makes you look like Ted Knight .	Retention.
00:34:54	Queen mentions the perks of being a cheerleader.	Quinn: [...] season tickets to Cedar Point .	Quinn: [...] abbonamenti stagionali al luna park .	Quinn: [...] season tickets to the amusement park .	Generalization.	Quinn: [...] season tickets to Cedar Point .	Quinn: [...] biglietti stagionali per il Cedar Point .	Retention.

Episode 1x14 – “Hell-O”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x14	Hell-O	Hell-O	April 13, 2010	September 15, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:55	Rachel makes plans for Finn and herself.	Rachel: On the 6 th we're going to see Phantom .	Rachel: C'è il Fantasma dell'Opera .	Rachel: The Phantom of the Opera is playing.	Explicitation.	Rachel: Il sei andremo a vedere Phantom .	Rachel: On the 6 th we're going to see Phantom .	Retention.

Episode 1x15 – “The Power of Madonna”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x15	The Power of Madonna	Come Madonna	April 20, 2010	September 15, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:12:55	Santana mocks Finn for his lack of sexual experience.	Santana: You're about as sexy as a Cabbage Patch Kid .	Santana: Gli Orsetti del Cuore fanno più sesso di te.	Santana: The Care Bears have more sex than you.	Substitution.	Santana: Sei sexy quanto una bambola Cabbage .	Santana: You're about as sexy as a Cabbage doll .	Retention.
00:18:32	Will gets back at Sue for her constant jokes on his hair.	Will: How's the Florence Henderson look working out for you?	Will: Ti hanno mai detto che assomigli alla signora Fletcher ?	Will: Has anyone ever told you you look like Mrs Fletcher ?	Substitution.	Will: Ti sta dando risultati il look alla Florence Henderson ?	Will: Is the Florence Henderson look working out for you?	Retention.

Episode 1x16 – “Home”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x16	Home	Casa	April 27, 2010	September 22, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:23:36	Burt tells Kurt he already knew he was gay.	Burt Hummel: Suddenly I'm not the guy who sat through Riverdance three years in a row?	Burt Hummel: E chi ti ha portato a vedere Billy Elliot per tre volte di fila?	Burt Hummel: And who took you to see Billy Elliot three times in a row?	Substitution.	Burt Hummel: Improvvisamente dimentichi chi ti ha portato a vedere la Riverdance per tre anni?	Burt Hummel: Suddenly you forget who took you to see Riverdance three years in a row?	Retention.
00:37:36	African-American journalist Tracy Pendergast resents Sue	Tracy Pendergast: You're bossy, insulting, and the fact that twice you called me Rerun makes me think you're a little racist.	Tracy Pendergast: E' prepotente, aggressiva e il fatto che mi abbia chiamato Arnold due volte mi fa pensare che sia un pochino razzista.	Tracy Pendergast: You're bossy, aggressive, and the fact that twice you called me Arnold makes me think you're a little racist.	Substitution.	Tracy Pendergast: E' prepotente, offensiva e il fatto che mi abbia chiamato due volte Rerun mi fa pensare che sia un pochino razzista.	Tracy Pendergast: You're bossy, insulting, and the fact that twice you called me Rerun makes me think you're a little racist.	Retention.

Episode 1x17 – “Bad Reputation”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x17	Bad Reputation	Cattiva reputazione	May 4, 2010	September 22, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:09:35	Kurt talks about reputation and fame.	Kurt: What does a C-lister do when their tiny star is about to fall off Perez Hilton's radar screen ?	Kurt: Che cosa fa una celebrità di serie C quando la sua minuscola stella rischia di diventare invisibile ?	Kurt: What do C-list celebrities do when their minuscule star is about to become invisible ?	Omission.	Kurt: Cosa fanno gli pseudo-famosi quando la loro stella sta per uscir fuori dallo schermo radar di Perez Hilton ?	Kurt: What do pseudo-famous people do when their tiny star is about to fall off Perez Hilton's radar screen ?	Retention.

Episode 1x21 – “Funk”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	1x21	Funk	Anima e rabbia	June 1, 2010	October 13, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:21:21	Finn tries to compliment Mrs. Schuester	Finn: And you'd be a total MILF if it weren't for the whole faking-the-mother thing.	Finn: E sarebbe perfetta se non fosse per la storia della finta gravidanza.	Finn: And you'd be perfect if it weren't for the fake pregnancy thing.	Omission.	Finn: E sarebbe una MILF assurda se non fosse per la storia della finta gravidanza	Finn: And you'd be an absurd MILF if it weren't for the fake pregnancy thing.	Retention.

Episode 2x05 – “The Rocky Horror Glee Show”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	2x05	The Rocky Horror Glee Show	The Rocky Horror Glee Show	October 26, 2010	December 23, 2010

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:06:48	Rachel tells Finn what happens on the <i>Rocky Horror Picture Show</i> .	Finn: I have no idea what's going on in this script, and it's not in a cool Inception kind of way.	Finn: Non ci ho capito niente di questa storia, e non è in senso buono, come quando ho visto Inception .	Finn: I don't understand anything in this script, and not in a good way, as happened when I saw Inception .	Retention.	Finn: Non sto capendo un bel niente della storia. E non nel senso figo, come in Inception .	Finn: I don't understand anything in this script, and not in a cool way, as in Inception .	Retention.
00:11:43	Sam jokes about his shirtless performance.	Sam: It's gonna be ab-ulous .	Sam: Sarò addominabile .	Sam: I'm gonna be ab-orable .	Form and meaning are maintained.	Sam: Sarò addominaloso .	Sam: I'm gonna be abdominalous .	Slightly less effective rendition.
00:15:16	Sam is worried about his appearance.	Sam: You get up on that stage and look like the Pillsbury doughboy , no way you're staying popular.	Sam: Se vado in scena e sembri l'omino Michelin , addio popolarità.	Sam: If I get up on that stage and look like the Michelin mascot , goodbye popularity.	Correct substitution.	Sam: Se vai sul palco e sembri l'omino della Michelin , non resterai popolare.	Sam: If you get up on that stage and look like the Michelin mascot , you won't stay popular.	Correct substitution.

Episode 2x06 – “Never Been Kissed”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	2x06	Never been kissed	Il primo bacio	November 9, 2010	January 6, 2011

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:05:42	Will discusses strategies for the glee club's next competition.	Will: Look, I'm not tossing the baby out with the bathwater here. Brittany: I've totally done that.	Will: Non voglio stroncare niente sul nascere. Brittany: Io l'ho fatto tante volte.	Will: I don't want to break off anything that's starting. Brittany: I've done that so many times.	Idiom replaced with understandable innuendo.	Will: Sentite, non voglio buttare via il bambino con l'acqua sporca. Brittany: Io una volta l'ho fatto.	Will: Listen, I don't want to toss the baby out with the bathwater. Brittany: I've done it once.	Literal rendition (not an idiom in Italian).
00:08:14	Sue prompts Quinn to spread rumors about Coach Beiste.	Sue: Make Beiste into the next Mary Kay Letourneau.	Sue: Trasforma la Beiste in una seduttrice di minorenni.	Sue: Make Beiste into a seductress of underage kids.	Generalization.	Sue: ... trasformare Beiste nella nuova Mary Kay Letourneau.	Sue: ...transform Beiste into the new Mary Kay Letourneau.	Retention.
00:08:46	Puck shows Artie how to make money by singing.	Puck: Watch and learn, young Jedi in a wheelchair.	Puck: Guarda e impara, piccolo Jedi in carrozzella.	Puck: Watch and learn, young Jedi in a wheelchair.	Retention.	Puck: Guarda e impara, giovane Jedi in sedia a rotelle.	Puck: Watch and learn, young Jedi in a wheelchair.	Retention.

Episode 2x10 – “A Very *Glee* Christmas”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	2x10	A Very <i>Glee</i> Christmas	Buon Natale	December 7, 2010	February 3, 2011

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:33:18	Coach Beiste tells Brittany the story of an overweight woman who put her body type to good use.	Brittany: Was her name Ricki Lake ?	Brittany: Era l' attrice di Hairspray ?	Brittany: Was she the <i>Hairspray</i> actress ?	Explicitation.	Brittany: Si chiamava Ricki Lake ?	Brittany: Was her name Ricki Lake ?	Retention.

Episode 3x05 – “The First Time”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>Glee</i>	3x05	The First Time	La prima volta	November 8, 2011	November 16, 2011

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:13:37	Kurt shows Blaine his bucket list.	Kurt: Okay, number five. All right, this one's really embarrassing. I wrote this before I met you. Have relations on a dewy meadow of lilac with Taylor Lautner before he gets fat.	Kurt: Saliamo al numero cinque. È imbarazzante, l'ho scritto prima di conoscerti. Intrattenermi su un prato di lillà con Taylor Lautner prima che ingrassi	Kurt: Up to number five. It's embarrassing. I wrote this before I met you. Have relations on a meadow of lilac with Taylor Lautner before he gets fat.	Retention.	Kurt: Ok, numero 5... ok, questa è imbarazzante, l'ho scritta prima di conoscerti. Avere rapporti su un prato di lillà bagnati dalla rugiada... con Taylor Lautner , prima che diventi grasso.	Kurt: Okay, number five. All right, this one's really embarrassing. I wrote this before I met you. Have relations on a dewy meadow of lilac with Taylor Lautner before he gets fat.	Retention.
00:15:03	Sebastian tries to impress Blaine with his worldly savoir-faire.	Blaine: I can't believe you asked for a shot of Courvoisier in your coffee. Sebastian: I forget how lame this town is. When I lived in Paris, I drank it like it was mother's milk.	Blaine: Non ci posso credere che hai chiesto di farti correggere col cognac il caffè. Sebastian: Questa città è una palla. Quando abitavo a Parigi bevevo Corvoisier al posto del latte.	Blaine: I can't believe you asked for a shot of cognac in your coffee. Sebastian: This town is lame. When I lived in Paris, I drank Corvoisier instead of milk.	Explicitation and compensation.	Blaine: Non posso credere che tu abbia chiesto un goccio di Courvoisier nel caffè. Sebastian: Dimenticavo quanto fa pena questa città. Quando vivevo a Parigi, lo bevevo come il latte materno.	Blaine: I can't believe you asked for a shot of Courvoisier in your coffee. Sebastian: I forget how lame this town is. When I lived in Paris, I drank it like it was mother's milk.	Retention.

APPENDIX F

THE BIG BANG THEORY – EPISODE ANALYSIS

Dubbing studio: Post In Europe

Highlighted lines indicate the examples analyzed in chapter 7.

Episode 1x01 – “Pilot”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x01	Pilot	Pilot	September 24, 2007	January 19, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:25	Sheldon has second thoughts at the IQ sperm bank.	Sheldon: We are committing genetic fraud. There's no guarantee that our sperm's going to generate high-IQ offspring, think about that. I have a sister with the same basic DNA mix that hosts at Fuddruckers. [...] Leonard: Well, what do you wanna do? Sheldon: I want to leave. What's the protocol for leaving? Leonard: I don't know, I've never reneged on a proffer of sperm before.	Sheldon: Questa è frode genetica vera e propria. Che garanzia c'è che dal nostro seme venga generata prole superintelligente. Mia sorella disse le prime parole a sei anni e fece la stessa classe cinque volte. [...] Leonard: Allora? Cosa vuoi fare? Sheldon: Tutto tranne quello. Come ci si ritira? Leonard: Non lo so, è la prima volta che il mio seme non finisce sul copri letto.	Sheldon: This a veritable genetic fraud. What guarantee is there that our sperm is going to generate superintelligent offspring? My sister said her first words when she was six and repeated the same class five times. Leonard: So, what do you wanna do? Sheldon: Anything but that. How do we step back? Leonard: I don't know, It's the first time my sperm doesn't end up on the bedspread.	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Stiamo commettendo una frode genetica. Non c'e' alcuna garanzia che il nostro sperma generera' una prole ad alto quoziente intellettivo. Pensaci un attimo. Ho una sorella con il mio stesso corredo genetico di base che fa la cameriera da Fuddrucker. [...] Leonard: Beh, cosa vuoi fare? Sheldon: Voglio andarmene. Qual e' il protocollo per andarsene? Leonard: Non lo so... Non ho mai ritrattato una donazione di sperma prima d'ora.	Sheldon: We are committing genetic fraud. There's no guarantee that our sperm's going to generate high-IQ offspring, think about that. I have a sister with the same basic DNA mix that hosts at Fuddruckers. [...] Leonard: Well, what do you wanna do? Sheldon: I want to leave. What's the protocol for leaving? Leonard: I don't know, I've never reneged on a proffer of sperm before.	Correct rendition.

00:03:11	Leonard and Sheldon notice Penny moving in across the floor from them.	Leonard: New neighbor? Sheldon: Evidently. Leonard: Significant improvement over the old neighbor. Sheldon: 200-pound transvestite with a skin condition? Yes, she is.	Leonard: Prima non c'era. Sheldon: No, mai vista. Leonard: La vicina che c'era prima l'hanno rottamata? Sheldon: Se accettano trans di 100 kili con la cellulite sulle guance.	Leonard: She wasn't there earlier. Sheldon: No, never seen her. Leonard: Did they demolish the old neighbor. Sheldon: If they accept 200-pound transvestites with cheek cellulite.	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Nuova vicina? Sheldon: Evidentemente. Leonard: Miglioramento significativo rispetto alla vecchia vicina. Sheldon: Un travestito di 90 Kg con una malattia della pelle? Sì, lo è.	Leonard: New neighbor? Sheldon: Evidently. Leonard: Significant improvement over the old neighbor. Sheldon: 90-kilo transvestite with a skin condition? Yes, she is.	Correct rendition.
00:04:24	Leonard immediately falls for Penny and decides to invite her over for lunch, but Sheldon does not see the point of real-life interactions.	Sheldon: We never invited Louie-slash-Louise over. Leonard: And that was wrong of us. We need to widen our circle. Sheldon: I have a very wide circle. I have 212 friends on MySpace. Leonard: Yes, and you've never met one of them. Sheldon: That's the beauty of it. Leonard: I'm gonna invite her over. We'll have a nice meal and... chat. Sheldon: Chat? We don't chat. At least not	Sheldon: Non invitavamo mai il pachiderma che abitava lì prima. Leonard: Infatti è stato un grosso errore. Dobbiamo fare delle nuove amicizie. Sheldon: Ti pregherei di guardare più in là del tuo pianerottolo. Io ho già 210 amici nel mio sito. Leonard: Peccato tu non ne abbia mai incontrato uno. Sheldon: Io direi che questa è la parte migliore. Leonard: Beh, io	Sheldon: We never invited over the pachyderm who used to live there. Leonard: And that was a big mistake. We need to make more friends. Sheldon: Please look further than your landing. I have 210 friends on my website. Leonard: Too bad you've never met one of them. Sheldon: I'd say that's the best part. Leonard: Well, I want to invite	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Non abbiamo mai invitato qui Louis/Louise. Leonard: Ed è stato sbagliato da parte nostra. Dobbiamo allargare la nostra cerchia. Sheldon: Io ho una cerchia vastissima. Ho 212 amici su MySpace. Leonard: Sì, e non ne hai mai incontrato uno. Sheldon: E' questo il bello. Leonard: La inviterò qui. Faremo una bella mangiata e una bella chiacchierata. Sheldon: Chiacchierata? Noi non chiacchieriamo, almeno non offline.	Sheldon: We never invited Louie-slash-Louise over. Leonard: And that was wrong of us. We need to widen our circle. Sheldon: I have a very wide circle. I have 212 friends on MySpace. Leonard: Yes, and you've never met one of them. Sheldon: That's the beauty of it. Leonard: I'm gonna invite her over. We'll have a nice meal and... chat. Sheldon: Chat? We don't chat. At least not	Correct rendition.

		<p>offline. Leonard: It's not difficult. You just listen to what she says and then you say something appropriate in response. Sheldon: To what end?</p>	<p>invece la voglio invitare. Per mangiare e anche... per parlare. Sheldon: Per parlare? E dire "Ciao, come va, bene, ciao"? Leonard: Non arrenderti alle prime difficoltà, in fondo per lei siamo due sconosciuti che hanno l'arduo compito di metterla a suo agio. Sheldon: Fino a che punto?</p>	<p>her over. To eat and... to chat. Sheldon: Chat? And say "Hi, how are you, fine, bye"? Leonard: Don't give up at the first difficulty, after all for her we are just two strangers who have the hard task to make her feel comfortable. Sheldon: To what extent?</p>		<p>Leonard: Non è difficile, devi solo ascoltare cosa dice, e poi rispondi qualcosa di appropriato. Sheldon: A quale fine?</p>	<p>offline. Leonard: It's not difficult. You just listen to what she says and then you say something appropriate in response. Sheldon: To what end?</p>	
00:08:47	Sheldon describes their pastimes.	<p>Sheldon: Tuesday night, we played Klingon Boggle till 1:00 a.m. Leonard: Yeah, I remember.</p>	<p>Sheldon: L'altro ieri a Risiko non hai vinto una partita fino alle tre di mattina. Leonard: Colpa di Messico e Cuba.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Two days ago you didn't win a Risk game till 3:00 a.m. Leonard: Blame Mexico and Cuba.</p>	Mistranslation.	<p>Sheldon: Martedì notte, abbiamo giocato a Klingon boggle fino all'una. Leonard: Già, ricordo.</p>	<p>Sheldon: Tuesday night, we played Klingon Boggle till 1:00 a.m. Leonard: Yeah, I remember.</p>	Retention.
00:08:57	Leonard tries to explain Klingon Boggle.	<p>Penny: So... Klingon Boggle? Leonard: Yeah. It's like regular Boggle, but... In Klingon.</p>	<p>Penny: Voi giocate anche a Scarabeo? Leonard: Ah, certo, ma non siamo mai più di... 450.</p>	<p>Penny: Do you play Scrabble too? Leonard: Yes, but we're never more than... 450.</p>	Mistranslation.	<p>Penny: Quindi... Klingon Boggle? Leonard: Sì, è come il normale Boggle, ma in Klingon.</p>	<p>Penny: So... Klingon Boggle? Leonard: Yeah. It's like regular Boggle, but... In Klingon.</p>	Retention.

00:09:39	Penny tells the boys about herself.	Penny: Okay, let's see, what else. I'm a vegetarian. Except for fish. And the occasional steak. I love steak!	Penny: Che altro posso dirvi di me... Ah, sono del sagittario, ma questo ve l'ho già detto, ma non vi ho detto che adoro le bistecche! Buone!	Penny: What else can I tell you about me... I'm a Sagittarius, but I've already told you. But I haven't told you I adore steaks. Tasty!	Mistranslation.	Penny: Ok, vediamo, che altro... Sono vegetariana. No, tranne che per il pesce. E una bistecca occasionale. Adoro le bistecche!	Penny: Okay, let's see, what else. I'm a vegetarian. Except for fish. And the occasional steak. I love steak!	Correct rendition.
00:09:55	Leonard tries to impress Penny.	Leonard: Well... do you have some sort of a job? Penny: I'm a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Leonard: I love cheesecake. Sheldon: You're lactose intolerant! Leonard: I don't eat it... I just think it's a good idea.	Leonard: Ti mantieni agli studi facendo la badante? Penny: No, faccio la cameriera alla Fabbrica del Cheesecake. Leonard: Adoro il cheesecake. Sheldon: Ma se sei intollerante al lattosio! Leonard: Se vuoi parlarle anche della mia stipsi...	Leonard: Do you pay for your education by working as a caretaker? Penny: No, I'm a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Leonard: I love cheesecake. Sheldon: You're lactose intolerant! Leonard: If you want to tell her about my constipation too...	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Lavori da qualche parte? Penny: Sono cameriera alla "fabbrica del Cheesecake". Leonard: Adoro il cheesecake. Sheldon: Sei intollerante al lattosio. Leonard: Non lo mangio. Penso solo che sia una buona idea.	Leonard: Well... do you have some sort of a job? Penny: I'm a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Leonard: I love cheesecake. Sheldon: You're lactose intolerant! Leonard: I don't eat it... I just think it's a good idea.	Correct rendition.
00:10:25	Leonard tries to impress Penny.	Leonard: If that was a movie, I would go see it.	Leonard: Se era un film, sarei già andato a vederlo.	Leonard: If that be a movie, I would go see it.	Insertion of a grammatical mistake.	Leonard: Beh, se fosse un film, io lo andrei a vedere.	Leonard: If that was a movie, I would go see it.	Correct rendition.

00:10:52	Penny complains about her ex boyfriend.	Penny: God, you know, four years I lived with him. Four years... that's like as long as high school. Sheldon: It took you four years to get through high school?	Penny: Se solo penso che ho vissuto con lui per quattro anni. Quattro anni, il tempo dell'ultimo anno di scuola! Sheldon: Hai ripetuto quattro volte l'ultimo anno di scuola?	Penny: If I think I lived with him for four years. Four years... that's like as long as the last year of high school! Sheldon: You repeated the last year four times?	Mistranslation.	Penny: Dio! Sapete, ho vissuto con lui per 4 anni. 4 anni! Più o meno quanto è durato il liceo! Sheldon: Ci hai messo quattro anni per finire il liceo?	Penny: God, you know, I lived with him 4 years. 4 years... that's like as long as high school. Sheldon: It took you 4 years to get through high school?	Correct rendition.
00:11:56	Penny uses the boys' shower because hers is broken.	Penny: On top of everything else, I'm all gross from moving and my stupid shower doesn't even work.	Penny: Inoltre ho appena traslocato, puzzo come un cinghiale e la mia doccia si è rotta.	Penny: Moreover I just moved in, I smell like a boar and my shower is broken.	Mistranslation.	Penny: Innanzi tutto, sono tutta sporca a causa del trasloco e quella cavolo di doccia nemmeno funziona.	Penny: On top of everything else, I'm all dirty from moving and my stupid shower doesn't even work.	Correct rendition.
00:13:26	Penny uses the boys' shower because hers is broken.	Sheldon: Do you think this possibility will be helped or hindered when she discovers your Luke Skywalker No More Tears shampoo? Leonard: It's Darth Vader shampoo. Luke Skywalker's the conditioner.	Sheldon: E credi che questa ipotesi andrà in meta quando lei scoprirà che Gocce di Seta e Miele è il nome del tuo shampoo? Leonard: Fusa e coccole è lo shampoo. Seta e miele è il balsamo.	Do you think this possibility will score a try when she discovers your Silk & Honey Drops shampoo? Leonard: It's Purring & Cuddling shampoo. Silk & Honey is the conditioner.	Omission.	Sheldon: E credi che questa possibilità sarà aiutata o ostacolata quando scoprirà il tuo shampoo Luke Skywalker Niente Più Lacrime? Leonard: È lo shampoo di Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker è l'emolliente.	Sheldon: Do you think this possibility will be helped or hindered when she discovers your Luke Skywalker No More Tears shampoo? Leonard: It's Darth Vader shampoo. Luke Skywalker's the conditioner.	Retention.

00:16:29	Sheldon and Leonard visit Penny's ex boyfriend to retrieve her TV set.	Sheldon: Right, I could have stayed behind and watch Wolowitz try to hit on Penny in Russian, Arabic and Farsi.	Sheldon: Oh, certo, così a casa avrei visto Wolowitz dare la caccia a Penny in russo, arabo e maialese.	Sheldon: Right, I could have stayed home to watch Wolowitz hunt for Penny in Russian, Arabic and piggish.	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Oh, giusto, sì, potevo rimanere a casa e guardare Wolowitz che cerca di rimorchiare Penny in Russo, Arabo e Persiano.	Sheldon: Right, I could have stayed behind and watch Wolowitz try to hit on Penny in Russian, Arabic and Farsi.	Retention.
00:17:22	Raj cannot speak to women when sober. Howard flirts with Penny.	Penny (to Raj): I'm sorry, do you speak English? Howard: He speaks English. He just can't speak to women. Penny: Really? Why? Howard: He's kind of a nerd. Juice box?	Penny (a Raj): Scusa, parli la mia lingua? Howard: Oh, sì che la parla, solo che non parla con le donne. Penny: Davvero? Come mai? Howard: Lo distrarrebbero dallo studio. Papaya?	Penny (to Raj): I'm sorry, do you speak English? Howard: He speaks English. He just can't speak to women. Penny: Really? Why? Howard: They'd distract him from his studies. Papaya?	Mistranslation.	Penny: (to Raj) Oh scusa, parli inglese? Howard: Sa parlare inglese e solo che non riesce a parlare con le donne. Penny: Davvero? E perche'? Howard: È una specie di sfigato. Succo di frutta?	Penny (to Raj): I'm sorry, do you speak English? Howard: He speaks English. He just can't speak to women. Penny: Really? Why? Howard: He's kind of a loser. Fruit juice?	Correct rendition.
00:18:00	Sheldon and Leonard visit Penny's ex boyfriend to retrieve her TV set.	Leonard: Excuse me. If I were to give up on the first little hitch, I never would have identified the fingerprints of string theory in the aftermath of the Big Bang?	Leonard: Rifletti un istante. Se fossi stato uno che molla alla prima difficoltà, come pensi che avrei mai identificato segnali della teoria delle fibre dopo il Big Bang?	Leonard: Excuse me. If I were to give up on the first little hitch, how do you think I would ever have identified the signals of fiber theory in the aftermath of the Big Bang?	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Scusa? Se rinunciassi dopo il primo piccolo ostacolo non sarei mai stato in grado di identificare l'impronta della teoria delle stringhe nel periodo immediatamente successivo al Big Bang?	Leonard: Excuse me. If I were to give up on the first little hitch, I never would have identified the fingerprints of string theory in the aftermath of the Big Bang?	Correct rendition.
00:21:14	Penny wants to make up for the way in which her ex treated Leonard and Sheldon.	Penny: I'll get my purse, and dinner is on me , okay?	Penny: Si cena da me stasera, d'accordo?	Penny: Dinner at my place tonight , okay?	Mistranslation.	Penny: Prendo la mia borsa e vi offro la cena , ok?	Penny: I'll get my purse, and dinner is on me , okay?	Correct rendition.

00:21:46	The group is driving to a restaurant.	Sheldon: We can't have Thai food, we had Indian for lunch. Penny: So? Sheldon: They're both curry-based cuisines. Penny: So? Sheldon: It would be gastronomically redundant. I can see we're going to have to spell out everything for this girl.	Sheldon: Niente thai, abbiamo mangiato indiano a pranzo. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Il curry impazza da quelle parti. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Troppo fa venire la curryte. Se la bimba non capisce, sfodera il rotolo per l'uso.	Sheldon: No Thai food, we had Indian for lunch. Penny: So? Sheldon: Curry is all the rage down there. Penny: So? Sheldon: Too much curry causes currytis. If the chick doesn't understand, get the [toilet paper] roll out.	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Non possiamo mangiare thailandese, abbiamo mangiato indiano per pranzo. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Sono entrambe cucine a base di curry. Penny: E allora? Sheldon: Sarebbe gastronomicamente ridondante. So già che dovremo spiegare chiaramente ogni cosa a questa ragazza.	Sheldon: We can't have Thai food, we had Indian for lunch. Penny: So? Sheldon: They're both curry-based cuisines. Penny: So? Sheldon: It would be gastronomically redundant. I can see we're going to have to spell out everything for this girl.	Retention.
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Episode 1x02 – “The Big Bran Hypothesis”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x02	The Big Bran Hypothesis	Il cervellone	September 24, 2007	January 19, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:09	The boys invite Penny to join them for their <i>Superman</i> movie marathon.	Penny: A marathon? How many <i>Superman</i> movies are there? Sheldon: You're kidding, right?	Penny: Una maratona? Wow me li vedo tutti molto volentieri! Sheldon: Stai scherzando, vero?	Penny: A marathon? Wow, I'd love to see them all! Sheldon: You're kidding, right?	Mistranslation.	Penny: Una maratona? Quanti film di <i>Superman</i> avete? Sheldon: Stai scherzando, vero?	Penny: A marathon? How many <i>Superman</i> movies do you have? Sheldon: You're kidding, right?	Correct rendition.
00:05:47	Leonard and Sheldon try to take Penny's furniture up the stairs.	Sheldon: Ah, gravity, thou art a heartless bitch.	Sheldon: Oh, gravità, che tu possa sfracellarti a terra!	Sheldon: Ah, gravity, may you crash down on the ground.	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Ah, gravità, sei una puttana senza cuore.	Sheldon: Ah, gravity, you are a heartless whore.	Correct rendition.
00:07:17	Sheldon compulsively cleans Penny's apartment in the middle of the night.	Leonard: What are you doing? Sheldon: I'm straightening up.	Leonard: Cosa fai? Sheldon: Mi protraggo un po'.	Leonard: What are you doing? Sheldon: I'm staying a bit longer.	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Che stai facendo? Sheldon: Sto mettendo a posto.	Leonard: What are you doing? Sheldon: I'm straightening up.	Correct rendition.

00:08:22	Sheldon compulsively cleans Penny's apartment in the middle of the night. Leonard tries to cover up his behavior.	Sheldon: I just want you to know that you don't have to live like this. I'm here for you. Penny: What's he talking about? Leonard: It's a joke. Penny: I don't get it. Leonard: Yeah, he didn't tell it right.	Sheldon: Dove tutto è accatastato il disordine è conclamato. Urge cura all'ammalato. Penny: Parla a me o a te? Leonard: C'è un casino orribile. Penny: Cosa?! Leonard: Il tuo visino è adorabile.	Sheldon: Where all is a mess, confusion is manifest. The patient needs some rest. Penny: Is he speaking to me or to you? Leonard: There's a horrible chaos. Penny: Cosa?! Leonard: You've got a lovely face.	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Volevo solo che sapessi che non devi vivere così. Sono qui per te. Penny: Di che sta parlando? Leonard: E' una battuta. Penny: Non l'ho capita. Leonard: Già, gli è uscita male.	Sheldon: I just want you to know that you don't have to live like this. I'm here for you. Penny: What's he talking about? Leonard: It's a joke. Penny: I don't get it. Leonard: Yeah, he didn't tell it right.	Correct rendition.
00:11:21	Leonard and Sheldon discuss Sheldon's OCD behavior.	Leonard: Maybe tonight we should sneak in and shampoo her carpet. Sheldon: You don't think that crosses a line? Leonard: Yes. For God's sake, do I have to hold up a sarcasm sign every time I open my mouth? Sheldon: You have a sarcasm sign?	Leonard: Non vedo l'ora che arrivi la notte per intrufolarci da lei e pulirle il tappeto. Sheldon: Mi schianto dalle risate. Leonard: Ascolta, non è detto che tutte le volte che apro bocca debba essere per forza sarcastico. Sheldon: Ma segni di sarcasmo c'erano?	Leonard: I can't wait for the night to come so that we can sneak in and clean her rug. Sheldon: I'm laughing so hard it hurts. Leonard: Listen, I'm not necessarily sarcastic every time I open my mouth. Sheldon: But were there sarcasm signs?	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Forse dovremmo intrufolarci stanotte e lavarle il tappeto. Sheldon: Non credi che passeremmo il limite? Leonard: Sì. Per l'amor di Dio, Sheldon, devo scriverti un cartello con "Sarcasmo" ogni volta che apro bocca? Sheldon: Hai un cartello con scritto "Sarcasmo"?	Leonard: Maybe tonight we should sneak in and wash her rug. Sheldon: You don't think that crosses a line? Leonard: Yes. For God's sake, do I have to hold up a sarcasm sign every time I open my mouth? Sheldon: You have a sarcasm sign?	Mistranslation + correct rendition.

00:16:24	The boys are playing <i>Just Dance</i> .	Howard: Grab a napkin, homie. You just got served.	Howard: Corvo rosso, non avrai il mio scalp. Ti ho stracciato.	Howard: Red Crow, you won't have my scalp. I crushed you.	Substitution. (Reference to the Italian title of <i>Jeremiah Johnson</i>)	Howard: Prendi un tovagliolo, vecchio mio. Sei appena stato servito.	Grab a napkin, old buddy. You just got served.	Retention.
00:17:18	Penny has hugged Raj.	Howard: Is that her perfume I smell? Raj: Intoxicating, isn't it?	Howard: è il suo profumo questo? Raj: Sa di Gange al mattino presto.	Howard: Is this her perfume? Raj: It smells like the Ganges early in the morning.	Unnecessary racist addition.	Howard: E' il suo profumo quello che sento? Raj: Intossicante, vero?	Howard: Is that her perfume I smell? Raj: Intoxicating, isn't it?	Retention.

Episode notes

The title is a mistranslation ("cervellone" = "big brain," not "big bran").

Episode 1x03 – “The Fuzzy Boots Corollary”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x03	The Fuzzy Boots Corollary	Il corollario del gatto	October 8, 2007	January 19, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:18	Sex noises come from Penny's apartment.	Howard: Sounds like your neighbor's home.	Howard: è una timbrica biondina, questa.	Howard: She's a high-pitched blondie, that one.	Mistranslation and insertion of a pseudo-poetic tone.	Howard: Sembra che venga da casa della vostra vicina.	Howard: It seems to be coming from your neighbor's.	Correct rendition.
00:04:34	Leonard considers pursuing someone other than Penny.	Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the limp and the lazy eye?	Sheldon: La dietologa della mensa che ha l'occhio pigro e sbilenca ha un'anca?	Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the lazy eye and a hip that's flipped?	Insertion of a pseudo-poetic tone.	Sheldon: La dietista della caffetteria zoppa e con l'occhio pigro?	Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the limp and the lazy eye?	Correct rendition.

Episode 1x04 – “The Luminous Fish Effect”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x04	The Luminous Fish Effect	L'effetto del pesce fluorescente	October 8, 2007	January 19, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:50	Sheldon complains that he does not want to talk to their new, a speleologist.	Sheldon: You know what's interesting about caves? Leonard: What? Sheldon: Nothing.	Sheldon: Sai cosa c'è di interessante nelle grotte? Leonard: Cosa? Sheldon: Le grotte!	Sheldon: You know what's interesting about caves? Leonard: What? Sheldon: The caves!	Mistranslation.	Sai qual e' la cosa interessante delle caverne, Leonard? Leonard: Cosa? Sheldon: Niente.	Sheldon: You know what's interesting about caves? Leonard: What? Sheldon: Nothing.	Correct rendition.
00:01:20	Sheldon plans his lines.	Sheldon: [...] Mahalo. Leonard: Mahalo's a nice touch.	Sheldon: [...] Mahalo. Leonard: "Grazie" in hawaiano è un tocco di classe.	Sheldon: [...] Mahalo. Leonard: "Thank you" in Hawaiian is a touch of class.	Explicitation.	Sheldon: [...] Mahalo! Leonard: "Mahalo" è un bel tocco finale.	Sheldon: [...] Mahalo. Leonard: "Mahalo" is a nice final touch.	Retention.
00:01:39	Raj enjoys the buffet.	Leonard: You don't have buffets in India? Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. You can't find a bagel in Mumbai to save your life.	Leonard: Non li avete i buffet in India? Raj: Certo, ma c'è solo cibo indiano. A Bombay di rustico c'è solo mio cognato.	Leonard: You don't have buffets in India? Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. The only rustic thing in Mumbai is my brother-in-law.	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Non avete buffet in India? Raj: Ovvio, ma c'è solo cibo indiano. A Bombay non trovi un bagel manco morto.	Leonard: You don't have buffets in India? Raj: Of course, but it's all Indian food. You can't find a bagel in Mumbai to save your life.	Retention.

Episode 1x05 – “The Hamburger Postulate”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x05	The Hamburger Postulate	Il postulato dell'hamburger	October 22, 2007	August 22, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:54	Leonard introduces Penny to Leslie at the Cheesecake Factory.	Leonard: Leslie, this is Penny. She lives across the hall from Sheldon and me. Howard: And walks in quiet beauty like the night. Penny: Howard, I've asked you not to do that.	Leonard: Leslie, questa è Penny. Abita proprio di fronte a Sheldon e me. Howard: E procede in silenziosa bellezza come la notte. Penny: Io russo la notte.	Leonard: Leslie, this is Penny. She lives right across the hall from Sheldon and me. Howard: And walks in quiet beauty like the night. Penny: I snore at night.	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Leslie, lei è Penny. Vive dall'altro lato del nostro pianerottolo. Howard: E cammina, bella e silenziosa, come la notte. Penny: Howard, ti ho chiesto di non farlo.	Leonard: Leslie, this is Penny. She lives across the hall from Sheldon and me. Howard: And walks in quiet beauty like the night. Penny: Howard, I've asked you not to do that.	Correct rendition.
00:02:36	Penny finds out Leonard plays the cello.	Penny: I didn't know you played the cello. Leonard: Yeah, my parents felt that naming me Leonard and putting me in Advanced Placement classes wasn't getting me beaten up enough.	Penny: Leonard, non sapevo che suonassi il violoncello. Leonard: Già, per i miei genitori chiamarmi Leonard, mettermi in classi di livello avanzato e non somigliare a Brad Pitt non era una punizione sufficiente.	Penny: Leonard, I didn't know you played the cello. Leonard: Yeah, my parents felt that naming me Leonard and putting me in advanced classes and not looking like Brad Pitt wasn't enough of a punishment.	Mistranslation.	Penny: Leonard, non sapevo suonassi il violoncello. Leonard: Già, i miei genitori ritenevano che chiamarmi Leonard ed iscrivermi ai corsi avanzati di preparazione all'universita' non fosse una punizione sufficiente.	Penny: I didn't know you played the cello. Leonard: Yeah, my parents felt that naming me Leonard and putting me in Advanced Placement classes wasn't enough of a punishment.	Correct rendition.

00:03:19	Raj cannot utter his order in Penny's presence.	Raj: Oh, dear. Howard: What's the matter? Raj: She didn't take my order. Howard: How can she take your order when you're too neurotic to talk to her? Raj: Nevertheless, this will be reflected in her tip.	Raj: Oh, per Shiva. Howard: Che succede? Raj: Non ha preso la mia ordinazione. Howard: Ma come si fa a prendere un'ordinazione da un muto? Raj: Ma era ovvio che volevo un hamburger al bacon.	Raj: Oh, dear Shiva. Howard: What's the matter? Raj: She didn't take my order. Howard: How can one take an order from a mute person? Raj: It was obvious I wanted a bacon hamburger.	Mistranslation.	Raj: Oh, cavoli. Howard: Che succede? Raj: Non ha preso la mia ordinazione. Howard: Come fa a prendere la tua ordinazione se sei troppo nevrotico per parlarle? Raj: Tuttavia, la cosa si ripercuoterà sulla sua mancia.	Raj: Oh, dear. Howard: What's the matter? Raj: She didn't take my order. Howard: How can she take your order when you're too neurotic to talk to her? Raj: Nevertheless, this will be reflected in her tip.	Correct rendition.
00:09:19	Sheldon notices Leslie's violin case.	Penny: So, do you know who's in there? Leonard: Well, there's Leonard. And he's either with Leslie Winkle or a 1930s gangster.	Penny: Tu sai chi c'è là dentro? Sheldon: Sì, c'è anche Leslie Winkle forse lo trattiene contro la sua volontà.	Penny: So, do you know who's in there? Leonard: Yes, there's Leonard. And if Leslie Winkle is in there too, she might be keeping him there against his will.	Mistranslation.	Penny: Allora, sai chi c'e' li' dentro? Sheldon: Beh, c'è Leonard. Ed è con Leslie Winkle, oppure con un gangster anni 30.	Penny: So, do you know who's in there? Leonard: Well, there's Leonard. And he's either with Leslie Winkle or a 1930s gangster.	Correct rendition.
00:10:40	Sheldon phones Leonard from the living room to let him know he understood the sock-on-the-knob code.	Sheldon: You're welcome. You carry on.	Sheldon: Dacci dentro, amico. Fatti valere!	Sheldon: Go for it, buddy! Prove your worth!	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Prego. Continua pure.	Sheldon: You're welcome. You carry on.	Correct rendition.

00:17:22	Howard mocks Leonard for his relationship with Leslie Winkle.	Howard: Look. It's Dr. Stud! Leonard: Dr. What? Howard: The blogosphere is a-buzzin' with news of you and Leslie Winkle making eine kleine Bang-Bang Musik.	Howard: Ehi, salve, Dottor Spruzzo! Leonard: Dr. cosa? Howard: La blogosfera è tutta un chiacchiericcio di te e Leslie Winkle che dal violoncello passa al clarinetto mentre tu la tromba.	Howard: Look. It's Dr. Splash! Leonard: Dr. What? Howard: The blogosphere is buzzing with news of Leslie Winkle moving from the cello to the clarinet while you "trumpet" her.	Mistranslation. Added vulgarity.	Howard: Ehi, guarda... c'è dottor Fusto! Leonard: Dottor che? Howard: La blogosfera e' in fermento alla notizia che tu e Leslie Winkle avete fatto un po' di "Fa Mi, La Do".	Howard: Look. It's Dr. Stud! Leonard: Dr. What? Howard: The blogosphere is a-buzzin' with news of you and Leslie Winkle doing a bit of "major lift, B sharp."	Correct rendition.
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Episode 1x06 – “The Middle-Earth Paradigm”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x06	The Middle-Earth Paradigm	Il paradigma della Terra di Mezzo	October 29, 2007	August 22, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:00:17	The boys lost a Paintball match against a team of 11-year-olds.	Howard (who is Jewish): Yes, but but you don't have to lose to Kyle Burnsteen's Bar Mitzvah party . Leonard: I think we have to acknowledge, those was some fairly savage preadolescent jews . [...] Sheldon: I was giving clear, concise orders. Leonard: You hid behind a tree yelling, "Get the kid in the yarmulke! "	Howard: Oh, sì certo, ma non quando il più grande della squadra avversaria ha undici anni e mezzo . Leonard: Ma per annientare quei preadolescenti così selvaggi saremmo dovuti entrare il bazooka . [...] Sheldon: Stavo dando direttive chiare e precise. Leonard: Sì, da dietro un albero strillavi "Annientiamo quello coi capelli rossi, annientiamolo! ".	Howard: Yes, of course, but not when the oldest of your opponents is eleven and a half . Leonard: But to annihilate those savage preadolescents, we should have gone in with a bazooka . [...] Sheldon: I was giving clear, concise orders. Leonard: You hid behind a tree yelling, "Let's annihilate the red-haired kid , let's get him!"	Explicitation and mistranslation.	Howard: Sì', ma non devi perdere alla festa del Bar-mitzvah di Kyle Burnsteen. Leonard: Credo che dovremmo ammettere che quelli erano degli Ebrei davvero selvaggi. Sheldon: Stavo dando degli ordini chiari e concisi. Leonard: Ti sei nascosto dietro a un albero urlando: "Colpite il bambino allo yarmulke! "	Howard: Yes, but but you don't have to lose at Kyle Burnsteen's Bar Mitzvah party . Leonard: I think we have to acknowledge, those were really savage preadolescent jews . [...] Sheldon: I was giving clear, concise orders. Leonard: You hid behind a tree yelling, "Get the kid in the yarmulke! "	Retention (yet “yarmulke” is obscure).

00:01:55	Sheldon only accepts to go to Penny's Halloween party when he learns that it is a costume party, but it soon becomes clear that Penny and the boys attribute a different importance to the costume component.	Leonard: He's asking if we can come as anyone from science fiction, fantasy... Penny: Sure. Sheldon: What about comic books? Penny: Fine. Sheldon: Anime? Penny: Of course. Sheldon: TV, film, D- and-D, manga, Greek gods, Roman gods, Norse gods...	Leonard: Ti sta chiedendo se il costume lo possiamo scegliere noi ispirandoci a ciò che più ci piace. Penny: Certo. Sheldon: Compresi i fumetti? Penny: Perfetto. Sheldon: E i Pokémon? Penny: Ottimo. Sheldon: Possiamo ispirarci a film e divinità greche o romane o travestirci da maghi?	Leonard: He's asking if we can pick our costumes based on what we like most. Penny: Sure. Sheldon: Including comic books? Penny: Perfect. Sheldon: And Pokémon? Penny: Of course. Sheldon: Can we get our inspiration from movies and Greek or Roman gods or come as wizards?	Hyponymy and omission.	Leonard: Sta chiedendo se possiamo venire travestiti da qualche personaggio di fantascienza, fantasy... Penny: Certo. Sheldon: Fumetti? Penny: Va bene. Sheldon: Anime? Penny: Certamente. Sheldon: TV, film, Dungeons and Dragons, manga, dei greci, dei romani, dei scandinavi...	Leonard: He's asking if we can come as a character from science fiction, fantasy... Penny: Sure. Sheldon: Comic books? Penny: Fine. Sheldon: Anime? Penny: Of course. Sheldon: TV, film, Dungeons and Dragons, manga, Greek gods, Roman gods, Norse gods...	Retention.
00:09:24	Howard flirts with a girl in a nurse costume.	Howard: If that's a working stethoscope, maybe you'd like to hear my heart skip a beat? Girl in a nurse costume: No, thanks. Howard: No, seriously, you can. I have transient idiopathic arhythmia.	Howard: Ho notato che hai uno stetoscopio, auscolteresti il mio cuore che salta un battito? Girl in a nurse costume: No, grazie. Howard: Se non vuoi, io auscolterò il tuo canyon, non è un problema per me.	Howard: I see you have a stethoscope, maybe you'd like to hear my heart skip a beat? Girl in a nurse costume: No, thanks. Howard: If you don't want to, I'll listen to your canyon, it's no problem for me.	Mistranslation. Added vulgarity.	Howard: Se quello stetoscopio funziona , potresti voler sentire il mio cuore che perde un colpo? Girl in a nurse costume: No, grazie. Howard: No, sul serio, puoi farlo. Ho un'aritmia idiopatica transitoria.	Howard: If that's a working stethoscope, maybe you'd like to hear my heart skip a beat? Girl in a nurse costume: No, thanks. Howard: No, seriously, you can. I have transient idiopathic arhythmia.	Retention.

00:10:24	Leonard is planning is strategy to beat Penny's ex boyfriend.	Leonard: I need a wing man . Sheldon: All right, but if we're going to use flight metaphors, I'm much more suited to being the guy from the FAA analyzing wreckage.	Leonard: Ho bisogno di una spalla . Sheldon: Ti pregherei di considerarmi un secondo pilota e non certo un'anonima e insulsa spalla da bagnare con le lacrime di coccodrillo.	Leonard: I need an aide . Sheldon: Please consider me as a wing man, certainly not as an anonymous and stupid aide to inundate with crocodile tears.	Mistranslation.	Leonard: Si', ma ho bisogno di un co-pilota. Sheldon: Va bene, ma se useremo metafore sul volo, sono molto piu' adatto a fare il tizio dell'aviazione che analizza i rottami.	Leonard: I need a wing man . Sheldon: All right, but if we're going to use flight metaphors, I'm much more suited to being the guy from the FAA analyzing wreckage.	Correct rendition.
00:11:12	No one gets Sheldon's costume.	Sheldon: I'm the Doppler effect. Girl: Okay, if that's some sort of learning disability, I think it's very insensitive.	Sheldon: Sono vestito da effetto Doppler. Girl: Senti, di' al signor Doppler che ti ha ridotto una vera schifezza.	Sheldon: I'm dressed as the Doppler effect. Girl: Well, tell Mr. Doppler he got you in a really bad shape.	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Sono l' Effetto Doppler. Girl: Se è una qualche specie di difficoltà d'apprendimento, lo trovo davvero insensibile.	Sheldon: I'm the Doppler effect. Girl: Okay, if that's some sort of learning disability, I think it's very insensitive.	Correct rendition.
00:17:24	A drunken Penny seeks refuge at Leonard's.	Penny: And I can't go back to my party because he's there. And I know you don't want to hear this...	Penny: E ora io non posso tornare di là perché lo conosco e so che mi spappolerebbe i cosiddetti...	Penny: And I can't go back there because I know him and I know he'd smash my so-called...	Mistranslation. Added vulgarity.	Penny: Non posso tornare alla mia festa perché lui è lì. E tu questo non vuoi sentirlo...	Penny: And I can't go back to my party because he's there. And I know you don't want to hear this...	Correct rendition.

Episode 1x07 – “The Dumpling Paradox”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x07	The Dumpling Paradox	Il paradosso del raviolo a vapore	November 05, 2007	August 25, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:10:03	Sheldon cannot proceed with his Saturday morning routing because Penny is sleeping on the couch.	Sheldon: Every Saturday since we've lived in this apartment I have awakened at 6:15 , poured myself a bowl of cereal, added a quarter cup of two percent milk, sat on this end of this couch, turned on BBC America , and watched <i>Doctor Who</i> .	Sheldon: Ogni sabato mi sveglio alle sei in punto, metto la vestaglia , mi preparo una ciotola di cereali, aggiungo latte al 2% di grassi, mi siedo a quell'estremità del divano, accendo la televisione e guardo <i>Fisici si nasce</i> .	Sheldon: Every Saturday I wake up at 6 o'clock sharp, put on my robe , pour myself a bowl of cereal, add two percent milk, sit on that end of the couch , turn on the TV , and watch <i>Physicists are born this way</i> .	Substitution.	Ogni sabato, da quando viviamo in questo appartamento mi sveglio alle 6:15 , mi verso una tazza di cereali, aggiungo un quarto di latte scremato , mi siedo a quell'estremità di quel divano, giro sulla BBC America , e guardo <i>Doctor Who</i> .	Sheldon: Every Saturday since we've lived in this apartment I have awakened at 6:15 , poured myself a bowl of cereal, added a quarter liter of reduced-fat milk, sat on that end of that couch, turned on BBC America , and watched <i>Doctor Who</i> .	Retention.
00:10:51	Howard enters the room.	Howard: Hola, nerd-migos .	Howard: Hola, cervelones .	Howard: Hola, brainones .	Transcreation.	Hola, nerd-migos .	Howard: Hola, nerd-migos .	Retention.
00:12:33	Sheldon cannot proceed with his Saturday morning routing because Penny is sleeping on the couch.	Sheldon: I'll watch the last 24 minutes of <i>Doctor Who</i> . Although at this point, it's more like Doctor Why Bother?	Sheldon: E io mi guarderò gli ultimi 24 minuti di <i>Fisici si nasce</i> e giuro che il primo che parla è in pericolo di vita .	Sheldon: And I'll watch the last 24 minutes of <i>Physicists are born this way</i> , and I swear the first person who speaks is dead .	Substitution.	E io mi guarderò gli ultimi 24 minuti del <i>Doctor Who</i> . Anche se, a questo punto, è più tipo “Doctor chi me lo fa fare”?	Sheldon: I'll watch the last 24 minutes of <i>Doctor Who</i> . Although at this point, it's more like Doctor Why Bother?	Retention.

00:15:22	Sheldon complains about Penny's way of eating Chinese food.	Sheldon: Have you seen Penny eat Chinese food? She uses a fork and she double-dips her egg rolls.	Sheldon: Hai visto come Penny mangia il cibo cinese? Usa la forchetta e nella zuppa riso e mais toglie il riso!	Sheldon: Have you seen Penny eat Chinese food? She uses a fork and she removes the rice from the corn and rice soup!	Mistranslation.	Sheldon: Hai mai visto Penny mangiare cibo cinese? Usa la forchetta e inzuppa due volte i suoi involtini primavera.	Sheldon: Have you ever seen Penny eat Chinese food? She uses a fork and she double-dips her spring rolls.	Retention.
00:16:02	Sheldon's OCD causes problems at the Chinese restaurant.	Raj: How about soup? Leonard: Yeah, we can always divide soup. Sheldon: What about the wontons?	Raj: Vi va una zuppa? Leonard: Sì, si può dividere la zuppa. Sheldon: Io prendo dei wonton.	Raj: How about soup? Leonard: Yeah, soup can always be divided. Sheldon: I'll have wontons.	Mistranslation.	Raj: Che mi dite della zuppa? Leonard: Già, possiamo sempre dividere la zuppa. Sheldon: E che mi dite dei wonton?	Raj: How about soup? Leonard: Yeah, we can always divide soup. Sheldon: What about the wontons?	Retention.
00:18:12	Howard is so thrilled to have finally hooked up with a hot girl that he secretly records a new message for his voice mail.	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Hi, this is Howard Wolowitz. And this is Christy Vanderbilt. We can't get to the phone right now because we're having sex!	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Sono Howard Wolowitz. E io sono Christy Vanderbilt. Non possiamo venire al telefono perché siamo già venuti!	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Hi, this is Howard Wolowitz. And this is Christy Vanderbilt. We can't come to the phone because we already came!	Added vulgarity.	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Salve, sono Howard Wolowitz. E io sono Christy Vanderbilt. Non possiamo rispondere al telefono perche' stiamo facendo sesso!	Howard and Christy's answering machine: Hi, this is Howard Wolowitz. And this is Christy Vanderbilt. We can't answer the phone right now because we're having sex!	Retention.

Episode 1x08 – “The Grasshopper Experiment”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	1x08	The Grasshopper Experiment	L'esperimento del cocktail	November 12, 2007	August 25, 2008

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:02:03	Mr. and Mrs. Koothrappali video-chat with Raj over Skype.	Mrs. Koothrappali: Do you remember Lalita Gupta? Raj: The little fat girl that used to kick me in the samosas and call me untouchable?	Mrs. Koothrappali: Raji, te la ricordi Lalita Gupta? Raj: La ragazzina grassa che mi dava calci ovunque e mi chiamava intoccabile?	Mrs. Koothrappali: Raj, do you remember Lalita Gupta? Raj: The little fat girl that used to kick me everywhere and call me untouchable?	Generalization.	Mrs. Koothrappali: Ti ricordi di Lalita Gupta? Raj: La ragazzina grassa che mi prendeva a calci nelle samosa e mi chiamava intoccabile?	Mrs. Koothrappali: Do you remember Lalita Gupta? Raj: The little fat girl that used to kick me in the samosas and call me untouchable?	Retention.
00:02:48	Mrs. Koothrappali closes the Skype conversation.	Mrs. Koothrappali: I'm sorry, darling. We have to go. Doogie Howser is on.	Mrs. Koothrappali: Tesoro, dobbiamo andare, c'è Il Dottor Kildare in TV.	Mrs. Koothrappali: I'm sorry, darling. We have to go. Doctor Kildare is on.	Substitution.	Mrs. Koothrappali: Mi spiace caro. Dobbiamo andare. C'e' Doogie Howser .	Mrs. Koothrappali: I'm sorry, darling. We have to go. Doogie Howser is on.	Retention.
00:06:26	Howard calls Lalita pretending to be Raj.	Howard: You may now thank me. Raj: For what? Making me sound like a Simpsons character ?	Howard: Ora puoi ringraziarmi. Raj: Io non parlo come Peter Sellers in Hollywood Party!	Howard: You may now thank me. Raj: I don't speak like Peter Sellers in The Party!	Substitution.	Howard: Ora puoi ringraziarmi. Raj: Per cosa? Per avermi fatto sembrare un personaggio dei Simpson?	Howard: You may now thank me. Raj: For what? Making me sound like a Simpsons character ?	Retention.

00:13:58	Lalita looks like the heroine from one of Sheldon's childhood books.	Sheldon: That woman looks exactly like the pictures of Princess Panchali in the book. How often does one see a beloved fictional character come to life? Howard: Every year at Comic-Con. Every day at Disneyland.	Sheldon: Il fatto è che quella donna è la riproduzione esatta della principessa Panchali del mio libro. Quando mai ti capita di vedere un personaggio di fantasia prediletto prendere vita? Howard: Ogni anno alla fiera del fumetto.	Sheldon: The thing is that that woman is the exact reproduction of Princess Panchali in my book. How often does it happen that you see a beloved fictional character come to life? Howard: Every year at the comic expo.	Generalization and omission.	Sheldon: Quella donna è identica alla foto della Principessa Panchali nel libro. Quanto spesso succede che uno veda un personaggio di fantasia che ha amato molto prendere vita? Howard: Ogni anno al Comic-Con. Ogni giorno a Disneyland.	Sheldon: That woman is identical to the picture of Princess Pachali in the book. How often does it happen that one sees a deeply beloved fictional character come to life? Howard: Every year at Comic-Con. Every day at Disneyland.	Retention.
00:17:15	Mr. and Mrs. Koothrappali video-chat with Raj over Skype.	Mrs. Koothrappali: You are wearing the boxers that we sent you, aren't you? Raj: Yes, Mumi. Mrs. Koothrappali: Because you know what happens to the samosas when you wear tighty-whities.	Mrs. Koothrappali: Hai addosso boxer che ti abbiamo mandato, vero Raji? Raj: Sì, mamma. Mrs. Koothrappali: Boxer non costringono parti basse, pitone respira, che è bello.	Mrs. Koothrappali: You are wearing boxers that we sent you, right Raj? Raj: Yes, mom. Mrs. Koothrappali: Boxers not constrict lower body parts, python breathes, which is beautiful.	Added vulgarity / insertion of grammatical mistakes.	Mrs. Koothrappali: Stai indossando i boxer che ti abbiamo inviato, vero Raj? Raj: Sì, mamma. Mrs. Koothrappali: Perché sai cosa succede alle tue samosa quando indossi gli slippini.	Mrs. Koothrappali: You are wearing the boxers that we sent you, aren't you? Raj: Yes, mom. Mrs. Koothrappali: Because you know what happens to the samosas when you wear tighty-whities.	Retention.

Episode 2x03 – “The Barbarian Sublimation”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	2x03	The Barbarian Sublimation	La sublimazione barbarica	October 26, 2008	June 15, 2009

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:01:52	Penny drops her groceries.	Penny: Oh, son of a bitch!	Penny: Oh, mannaggia ai pescetti.	Penny: Oh, darn! [lit. “darn the small fish!”, regional Italian phrase]	Tamed.	Penny: Ma porca puttana!	Penny: Oh, son of a bitch!	Retention.

Episode 2x08 – “The Lizard-Spock Expansion”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	2x08	The Lizard-Spock Expansion	L'espansione di Lizard e Spock	November 17, 2008	June 18, 2009

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:19:33	Howard has trouble with the Mars Rover.	Howard: Son of a bitch!	Howard: Porca paletta!	Howard: Oh, bloody hell! [lit. damn the small spade]	Tamed.	Howard: Porca puttana!	Howard: Son of a bitch!	Retention.

Episode 2x15 – “The Maternal Capacitance ”

Show	Episode	Original title	Italian title	US broadcast	IT broadcast
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i>	2x15	The Maternal Capacitance	La capacità materna	February 2, 2009	June 23, 2009

Time code	Context	Original text	Italian dubbing	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect	ItaSA fansubs	Back translation	Translation strategy and effect
00:09:06	Raj and Howard find out that Leonard is the least successful person in his family.	Raj: You're like the Jar Jar Binks of the Hofstadter family. Howard: Oh, mesa think yousa lookin' so so sad.	Raj: Sei il Jar Jar Binks della famiglia Hofstadter. Howard: Oh, mi pensa che tu es maxi maxi triste.	Raj: You're like the Jar Jar Binks of the Hofstadter family. Howard: Oh, mesa think yousa lookin' so so sad.	Correct rendition.	Raj: Sì, sei come il Jar-Jar Binks della famiglia Hofstadter. Howard: Oh, mi pensa que tu es maxi maxi triste.	Raj: You're like the Jar Jar Binks of the Hofstadter family. Howard: Oh, mesa think yousa lookin' so so sad.	Correct rendition.

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Acknowledgments – “Once More with Feeling”

Bottom line is, even if you see ‘em coming, you're not ready for the big moments. No one asks for their life to change, not really. But it does. So what are we, helpless? Puppets? No. The big moments are gonna come. You can't help that. It's what you do afterwards that counts. That's when you find out who you are.

Whistler, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, episode 2x21, “Becoming - Part 1”

My deepest gratitude goes to all the people who walked by my side from the big moment in which I first stepped on my path as a researcher to the one that ends this vibrant, kaleidoscopic leg of my journey. I would not even have made it past square one without your support: thank you for keeping me afloat, for sharing your expertise and skills with me, and for throwing me Mr. Pointy when I most needed it.

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Willow: Is there anything you don't know everything about?

Rupert Giles: Synchronized swimming. Complete mystery to me.

Episode 7x01, “Lessons”

To **Thomas**, my all, who deserves a quote that comes straight from my (unstaked) heart:

“My whole life, I've never loved anything else.”

Oz, episode 4x06, “Wild at Heart”

To my parents **Lisa** and **Franco** and my grandfather **Lino**, even though words cannot express my gratitude for their perpetual support and unwavering faith in my choices.

“You did... what was necessary. What I've always admired. [...] Being able to place your heart above all else.”

Rupert Giles, episode 5x20, “Spiral”

To **Chiara A.**, my guardian angel since when we fell within the actual target age of adolescent fiction. Not that we will ever outgrow teen shows, or stop ‘shipping’ on-screen couples.

“She saved [my] world. A lot.”

Episode 5x22, “The Gift”

To **Lucia**, the best Slayerette I could hope for, who dried my tears when I broke my yellow crayon.

Xander: “I don't know what I'd do without you...”

Buffy: “Let's not find out.”

Episode 6x19, “Seeing red”

To **Irene**, who is endowed with a rare set of powers: she listens, she knows, she cares. And she works magic with printers.

Xander: “All we need is combo-Buffy. Her with Slayer strength, Giles' multi-lingual know-how and Willow's witchy power.”

Episode 4x21, “Primeval”

To **Stefano B.**, who is as “fond of cross-referencing” as Giles and myself, and will always be my favorite TV-show nitpicker (not to mention an amazing friend).

Rupert Giles, episode 1x18, “Halloween”

To **Marco**, for his inspiring ability to stay true to his ideals while exploring different paths in life.

And for lending me his precious Buffy box set.

And what is a journey? Is it just... distance travelled? Time spent? No. It's what happens on the way, it's the things that shape you. At the end of the journey you're not the same. [...] You ascend... to a higher level.

Mayor Wilkins, Episode 3x22, "Graduation Day - Part 2"

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"My buds are here! I love my buds!"

Spellbound Buffy, episode 1x03, "Witch"

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Willow, episode 1x01, "Welcome to the Hellmouth"