

ABSTRACT

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OTHERNESS IN SUBTITLED
FRENCH FILMS

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Translation involves integration of a multitude of disciplines and perspectives from which to compare two or more cultures. When translation is extended to film dialogue, in subtitling, the target language viewer unfamiliar with the source language must rely upon the subtitles to access the film's dialogue provided within the space of the verbal exchange, and often the subtitles offer an altered version of the dialogue, particularly given the time and space constraints of the medium. Subtitling, a unique form of translation, not only involves interlingual transfer but also intersemiotic transfer from a spoken dialogue to a written text.

This work examines the linguistic treatment of three marginalized groups—homosexuals, women, and foreigners—as expressed in subtitles. In many instances, translation of certain elements in the films, such as forms of address and general referential language, change the meaning for the TL viewer. Cultural references present in the oral dialogue often get omitted or modified in the subtitles, altering the TL viewer's perception of the narrative and characters. These differently rendered translations have connotative qualities that are often differ significantly from the oral

dialogue. In many cases, epithets and grammatically gendered language in the SL dialogue get diluted or omitted in the TL subtitles; likewise, power relationships expressed through use of forms of address, such as titles or *tutoiement* and *vouvoiement*, cannot be adequately conveyed, and the TL viewer is excluded from this nuanced form of discourse. Cultural references providing supplemental information, including non-dialogic text, are not always rendered in the subtitles, depriving the TL viewer of additional layers of meaning. In dual-language films featuring foreigners, nuances expressed by code switching and code mixing cannot be completely represented in the subtitles.

Close analysis of subtitles within the framework of the sociolinguistic and cultural interpretations of the resultant TL dialogue reveals a great deal about the transmission and reception of cultural ideas and has not been addressed to this extent from this perspective. It is to be hoped that this study will inspire interest in further explorations of this nature and contribute to the ever-growing corpus of research in subtitling studies.

IN THE MARGINS: REPRESENTATIONS OF OTHERNESS
IN SUBTITLED FRENCH FILMS

By

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For My Parents

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Introduction

Common wisdom has it that, in this country, subtitles are a foreign film's worst enemy, the one thing sure to doom a movie to a tiny art house . . . Beyond the mechanical requirements, though, lies the real power of the subtitler, which is the ability *to arbitrarily alter the audience's perception of a scene or even an entire film* . . . The real damage comes when careless or misguided translating changes the meaning the director intended to convey. (my emphasis) (Judith Shulevitz, *New York Times*, June 7, 1992)

All of us have, at one time or another, left a movie theater wanting to kill the translator. Our motive: the movie's murder by "incompetent" subtitler. . . . Spectators often find cinema's powerful sense of mimesis muddled by subtitles, even by skillful ones. The original, foreign object—its sights and its sounds—is available to all, but it is easily obscured by the graphic text through which we necessarily approach it. Thus, the opacity or awkwardness of subtitles easily inspires rage. (Abé Nornes, "For an Abusive Subtitling")

As noted above, subtitled films often leave viewers with an impression of incompleteness and inadequacy, and these perceived connotative lacunae in transfer from the original dialogue to the subtitles are often attributed solely to the persons performing the subtitling. Though subtitlers' individual decisions play a significant role in the language transfer, shifts in meaning can also result from an ensemble of linguistic and social factors, often limiting a subtitler's scope of message transfer choices. Detailed analysis of the subtitles and comparison of the subtitles with the source language dialogue to determine what has been added, altered, or omitted during the subtitling process and what possible shifts in meaning have occurred as a result of these changes allows comparison of the characteristics of the source and target language and culture. When this analysis is applied to specific sociocultural contexts, such as references to identity—specifically marginalized identity—study of the subtitles allows a comparison of expression in the source and target languages through examination of the gaps, shifts, and additions found in the subtitles.

In *The Scandals of Translation*, Lawrence Venuti, though referring mainly to literary translation, mentions translation's power "to form cultural identities, to create representation of a foreign culture that simultaneously constructs a domestic subjectivity," and adds that within this power, translations may alternately reinforce or revise stereotypes and values (159). Venuti's interpretation applies no less to film translation and poses an interesting challenge for further study, particularly when applied to depictions of marginalized members of society. Indeed, the non-source language viewer is necessarily subject to the representation of the source language dialogue as provided in the subtitles; the degree to which these representations approximate the original dialogue can significantly influence the viewer's interpretation of the dialogues, narrative, and characters. Alterations of the original dialogue can also have an erroneous impact in situations where the language underscores a particular political or social agenda, reinforcing or revising existing stereotypes, or even creating new ones. Target language viewers of subtitled films who must rely on the subtitles to ascertain the meaning of the dialogue become essentially one step removed from the dialogue and thus are marginalized themselves to a certain extent. Without the aid of notes or a subtextual explanation (as can be provided in a literary translation), the target language viewer must access the spoken dialogue through the subtitles alone; these subtitles may fail to depict historically marginalized groups such as homosexuals, women, and foreigners in accordance with the representation in the source language.

Methodology and Corpus of Films

References in translation studies provided an initial basis for this study,¹ and while translation studies have traditionally focused on written transactions—literary texts, press articles, advertisements, and dialogue—subtitle studies is a hybrid field that focuses on the transformation of spoken dialogue into written dialogue. The French films examined in this work, all depicting characters marginalized to some degree, were selected to allow analysis of the ways cultural and linguistic disparities between spoken and written dialogue reveal themselves in the subtitles. The majority of the films selected date from the last 15 years—to provide an analysis and comparison of contemporary French and American culture with respect to language, cultural references, and the question of cultural diversity (marginalization, integration, and equality). In the last 15 years, the political and social evolution of both French and American contemporary societies has been marked by a greater acceptance of the various marginalized members of society discussed in this work in terms of increased awareness of homosexual rights, greater equality between men and women, and integration of immigration populations into French society. This study attempts to identify the underlying cultural attitudes conveyed in the original and determine to what degree the target language versions reflect these attitudes.

Although more films could have been added to this analysis to serve the objectives of this work, the sampling of films in this study represents an attempt to provide one avenue for future, more extensive examination of cultural implications of

¹ Works by translation scholars such as Susan Bassnett, Walter Benjamin, Hugo Friedrich, Roman Jakobson, Eugene Nida, Gideon Toury, Lawrence Venuti, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, and Benjamin Whorf helped establish a theoretical framework for comparison of subtitling with non-audiovisual translation.

subtitles. In this work all references to “English” subtitles denote American English language and American culture, as the films analyzed were obtained in the U.S. from American distributors, and thus an American spectator was envisioned as the target language audience; additionally, “French” language refers generally to hexagonal French (i.e. from France), except where otherwise stated.²

The films were examined in detail at the dialogue level, with particular attention paid to the types of lexical and cultural references used in the source language and their translation in the target language.³ Each chapter in this work begins with an overview of the state of both the source language and the target language regarding expression of attitudes about the particular “marginalized” group featured in the chapter as a way of providing a basis for a line-by-line comparison of the subtitles and the original text. This overview of sociolinguistic references to the marginalized group in question as well as theoretical approaches to the study of the particular group preceded the analysis of the subtitles within the context of the film. Though varying degrees of extralinguistic knowledge (such as familiarity with the setting, culture, or language) and perception of the visual cues (gestures and facial expressions, for example) will necessarily influence a viewer’s comprehension, this study assumes a target language viewer with no knowledge of the source language who would presumably rely solely on the subtitles to access the film’s dialogue. The transcription of subtitles alongside the original source language text permits a closer analysis according to the theoretical parameters and detailed observation

² For clarity and consistency with the subject of this work, where there is an English translation of the film title, that title is used instead of the original French title (given at the introduction to each film). The question of the particular translation of certain titles will be discussed in Chapter Four.

³ A brief synopsis of each film is provided in Appendix I at the end of this work.

of the language in use and possible differences or similarities in cultural interpretation. I would argue that certain trends exist in the source language for depictions of each of the three categories of characters—homosexuals, women, and foreigners—and an examination of the ways in which these trends are expressed in the target language through subtitles allows comparison of the two cultures regarding the transmission of cultural ideas, depending upon the particular lexical and cultural elements through language in an audiovisual medium, always subject to time and space constraints.

The information in Chapter One draws on studies in translation as well as an overview of subtitling in the film industry to examine the role of subtitling: how it began, where it is practiced, and how it is done. Despite the ubiquity of studies about audiovisual translation,⁴ there still exists a relative paucity of studies on the cultural implications of subtitling, particularly from a non-English source language into English. A leading subtitling expert, Yves Gambier, hosted scholars from all over the world at two international symposia dealing specifically with Audiovisual (Screen) Translation in Misano (1997) and Berlin (1998), and proceedings from these symposia reprinted in a special issue of *The Translator* provide a great deal of useful background information on audiovisual translation, mainly discussing translation of American films and programs into other languages. Elena Di Giovanni examines cultural otherness in Disney films representing non-U.S. countries translated into Italian and describes characteristics of the finished version, specifically enumerating linguistic strategies used in the original

⁴ Some examples include: José Lambert, “Le sous-titrage et la question des traductions. Rapport sur une enquête.” (*Übersetzungswissenschaft: Ergebnisse und Perspektiven*. Ed. Reinger Arntz and Gisela Thorme. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen, 1990 : 228-38); Lucien Marleau, “Les sous-titres . . . un mal nécessaire.” (*Meta* 27.3 (1982): 271-85); and Jorge Diaz-Cintas, “Striving for Quality in Subtitling: The Role of a Good Dialogue List.” (*(Multi)Media Translation. Concepts, Practices and Research*. Ed. Yves Gambier. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2001: 199-211).

American version to “define otherness and achieve familiarity,” such as the use of common elements used to refer to the source culture (in this case, the culture of the story’s setting, such as Arabia for *Aladdin*, China for *Mulan*, etc.), use of standard American exclamations, and expressions slightly modified to include source culture references, and use of familiar Western and American expressions throughout (213). Di Giovanni details the importance and difficulty of maintaining this level of familiarity in the Italian version. Lourdes Lorenzo examines the audiovisual translation of cultural references (especially humor) in Spanish-dubbed versions of *The Simpsons* and addresses the difficulties of finding equivalencies for certain American-centered references (269-92). Teresa Tomasziewicz’s article on transfer of cultural references in subtitles from Polish to French highlights the difficulty of this practice but adds that often the images will supplement the subtitles (237-47). Christopher Taylor’s article, the only treatment in the collection of subtitling into English, details the process of multimodal transcription—an analysis of semiotic modalities present in each individual frame, shot, or phase—and recommends its application to subtitling strategies (191-205).⁵ These studies support the original premise that cultural considerations play a paramount role in the subtitling process, particularly given the immediacy and scope of the medium in an increasingly global society; the fact that so little has been undertaken on subtitles into English also raised the question that the subtitles available to American English viewers may not adequately reflect many cultural aspects of the original dialogues.

⁵ Communications with Gambier and other theorists in the field (Jorge Diaz-Cintas and Dirk Delabatista) yielded information useful in determining whether work on this particular subject—the cultural implications of subtitling—had been specifically addressed. An American subtitler living in Paris, Pamela Grant, also lent her professional expertise to detail the production aspect of subtitling.

Before attempting analysis of the dialogues in question, it seemed useful to examine the technical and historical aspects of subtitling in an effort to determine similarities and differences between subtitling and literary translation to emphasize the factors characterizing subtitling translation as a hybrid field; thus, Chapter One begins with an overview of the practice and describes how subtitling differs from both literary translation and dubbing.⁶ The section devoted to the technical aspect defines and describes the constraints on the subtitler, imposed not just by the time and space limitations of the practice of subtitling but also by inherent differences between the two languages themselves and sociocultural contexts that dictate many choices he or she makes in implementing the subtitling. A detailed analysis of the subtitles reveals new information about these differences that clarify the implications of subtitling for the target language audience and address the idea behind the expression “lost in translation” (though “altered in translation” seems more appropriate to this discussion) in a more concrete sense.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four examine the application of translation and subtitling concepts to specific types of marginalized characters: homosexuals, women, and foreigners, respectively. As these members of society have typically been victims of discrimination or marginalization, these chapters examine the ways they are marginalized sociopolitically, linguistically, and cinematographically, and how this condition is

⁶ Antje Ascheid. “Speaking Tongues: Voice Dubbing in the Cinema as Cultural Ventriloquism.” *The Velvet Light Trap* 40 (Fall 1997): 32-41; Martine Danan. “Dubbing as an Expression of Nationalism.” *Meta* 36.4 (1991): 606-14; Cees Koolstra, Allerd L. Peeters, and Herman Spinhof. “The Pros and Cons of Dubbing and Subtitling.” *European Journal of Communication* 17.3 (2002): 325-54; Jean-Pierre Mailhac. “Subtitling and Dubbing, For Better or Worse? The English Video Versions of *Gazon Maudit*.” *On Translating French Literature and Film II*. Ed. Myriam Salama-Carr. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000. 129-54; Miguel Mera. “Read my Lips: Re-evaluating Subtitling and Dubbing in Europe.” *Links and Letters* 6 (1999): 73-85.

reflected in the subtitles. For Chapter Two, “*Pédés, Gouines, et Tapettes: Gender-Based Stereotypes of Homosexual Characters*,” films examined feature both male and female homosexual characters as well as one film, *My Life in Pink* (Alain Berliner, 1997), in which the issue was of gender identification, not necessarily sexual in nature, in order to explore whether there were significant differences in language used to talk about homosexual characters by both non-homosexual and homosexual characters. The three primary films—*The Closet* (Francis Veber 1993), *French Twist* (Josiane Balasko, 1995) and *My Life in Pink*—focus on gay, lesbian, or gender-identification issues respectively, and the supplementary films—*La Cage aux Folles* (Édouard Molinari, 1978),⁷ *Sitcom* (François Ozon, 1998), *The Spanish Apartment* (Cedric Klapisch, 2001) and *Wild Reeds* (André Téchiné, 1994)—contain either principals or peripheral characters who are homosexual. In all the films, the question of sexual identity supplied a framework for revelatory attitudes by the other characters concerning homosexuality.

In *My Life in Pink*, a young boy discovers his identity and sexual/gender orientation, whereas in *Wild Reeds*, three adolescents, faced with a lack of understanding from their family, social, and school environments, deal with the effects of the Franco-Algerian war on others in their social milieu. One character, François, struggles with issues of identity and shame regarding his homosexuality. In *Sitcom*, Nicolas’ coming out to his family provides a tableau for revelation of his family members’ and friends’ various attitudes towards homosexuals in exaggerated, ironic fashion. The characters in *The Spanish Apartment* grapple with these same questions of sexual and social identity from a more mature, independent perspective as they share the multicultural environment

⁷ Three of the 18 films in the corpus—*La Cage aux Folles*, *Belle de Jour*, and *Café au Lait*—contain French titles; however, as these films were released in the U.S. and were marketed and distributed with titles using American capitalization conventions, these conventions were retained in this work.

provided by the film's titled backdrop, the apartment in Barcelona. In *The Closet*, the story of François Pignon, who has allowed his employer and colleagues at the condom factory to believe he is homosexual in order to keep his job, provides a similar framework to highlight the other characters' attitudes, and François' perceived coming out becomes a metaphor for his personal development. Josiane Balasko's *French Twist* presents an unexpected perspective on gender roles as Loli, erstwhile docile, subservient wife and mother, discovers a heretofore unacknowledged desire to explore a liaison with another woman, and in adopting this new identity, like François in *The Closet*, experiences a newfound empowerment as her familial and social roles change and new boundaries are established within her marriage and household. *La Cage aux Folles* reveals many interesting linguistic accommodations to discuss homosexuals and for years enjoyed the status of the most popular foreign film in the U.S. and, as it can be considered a classic of French gay cinema in the U.S.⁸ as well as one of the first mainstream films to present homosexuals in a positive light (and it inspired a Hollywood remake, *The Birdcage*, in 1996), its inclusion, though the film dates from 1978, seemed appropriate for this chapter.⁹ The variety of foci—gay, lesbian, and gender identification—enabled a more in-depth analysis of the referential and lexical choices of both homosexual and non-homosexual characters. French as a grammatically gendered language affords its speakers a multitude of ways to express gender; the fact that English does not allow this denotation

⁸ Daniel Moore cites it as “in its time the highest-grossing foreign film ever” (“Overseas distributes warm to gay-themed films.” *Variety* (May 6-12, 1996), C5).

⁹ In Lisa Daniel and Claire Jackson's *The Bent Lens: A World Guide to Gay and Lesbian Film* (91), the description of *La Cage aux Folles* as “a highly funny camp romp, but some subtle humour is lost due to the subtitling” inspired further investigation and seemed particularly pertinent to the chapter's focus.

at the lexical and grammatical level provides particular challenges for the subtitler and, by extension, the target language viewer.¹⁰

The critical apparatus used for Chapter Two relies on current queer theory, specifically within the realm of language use and labels, such as Anna Livia and Kira Hall's work on linguistic determinism (strongly influenced by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) and linguistic relativism,¹¹ Judith Butler's work on the performative nature of language,¹² as well as that of scholars such as Richard Dyer, Chris Holmlund, Chris Straayer, and Marie-Jo Bonnet on language and its role in defining and describing film characters.¹³ Research on current usage for naming homosexuals in each language/culture as well as studies on attitudes towards these labels by members within the homosexual community, such as the study by Arnold Zwicky,¹⁴ provided an initial basis for research.

Chapter Three, "Women, Girls, Hookers, and Whores" examines female protagonists in a variety of roles and professions. In certain films, female characters

¹⁰ Differences exist between the two cultures on the sociopolitical level as well with regards to homosexuals *vis-à-vis* the present status of homosexuals; for example, though civil unions between unmarried couples, heterosexual or homosexual, are legal and accepted in France, the question of gay marriage in the U.S. still provokes angry, divisive rhetoric.

¹¹ Anna Livia and Kira Hall. "It's a Girl!: Bringing Performativity Back to Linguistics." *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 3-18.

¹² Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1990).

¹³ Richard Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); Chris Holmlund. "Postfeminism from A to G." (*Cinema Journal* 44.2 (Winter 2005):116-21); Chris Straayer. *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies: Sexual Re-Orientation in Film and Video* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996); Marie-Jo Bonnet. "Sappho, or the Importance of Culture in the Language of Love: Tribade, Lesbienne, Homosexuelle." *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 147-66.

¹⁴ Zwicky, in his article "Two Lavender Issues for Linguists" (*Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, New York: Oxford UP, 1997, 21-34) insists that choice of a particular label is a "political and personal act," particularly when used self-referentially, and suggests that linguists should "approach the lexical domain of sexual orientation by means of systematic observation and directed interviewing" (24-25).

function in opposition to each other in terms of these roles or are otherwise marginalized by society for their refusal to adapt to expected social norms. For example, in Klapisch's *The Spanish Apartment*, the docility of the homemaker Anne-Sophie represents a sharp contrast to the independence of the lesbian character Isabelle (though the two women are practically contemporaries), and the language they use to communicate about themselves and to others yields information about their perceived societal role, and the extent to which these ideas translate to the subtitles is explored. The character of Marie in Claude Chabrol's *The Story of Women* (1988), who performs illegal abortions for wartime wives and prostitutes, provokes outrage by deviating from her expected role as homemaker. Catherine Deneuve's character in Luis Buñuel's *Belle de Jour* (1967) represents another wife who has lived outside her expected role by secretly working as a prostitute by day (though it is unclear whether the narrative represents reality or a fantasy world), and, as the lexical choices to describe her in the film are still prevalent today, this film, though dated, seemed germane to the chapter. André Téchiné's film *Thieves* (1996) presents two female roles seemingly in opposition: an academic, Marie, and Juliette, the young love interest caught in the triangle with Alex. In Agnès Varda's *Vagabond* (1985), linguistic treatment of the university professor, Madame Landier, differs drastically from that of the drifter Mona. Varda's film provides multiple examples of feminist use of language, particularly in the way the two principal female characters use language themselves, and the subtitles prove quite revelatory in the transmission or omission of these portrayals. The young protagonists in Erick Zonka's *The Dreamlife of Angels* (1998), Marie and Isa, struggling to find their identity and make their way in the world, encounter discrimination and scorn, and use language to describe themselves and others in ways that reveal their

own attitudes about themselves as women. Films selected for this chapter depict both independent and submissive women in a variety of professions and roles, such as homemaker (*The Story of Women*, *The Spanish Apartment*), prostitute (*Belle de Jour*), hitchhiker (*Vagabond*), blue-collar worker (*The Dreamlife of Angels*), and academic (*Thieves*, *Vagabond*).

As does the chapter on homosexuals, Chapter Three compares the subtitles with the original dialogue with regard to use of grammatically gendered language. Other attitudes revealed in the dialogues in the selected films in this chapter feature various aspects of power dynamics, such as form of address, faithful translation (or not) of expressions such as *filles* to “girl,” titles, and other markers of social status that may influence the target language viewer’s appreciation of cultural nuances regarding women in the selected films. A closer analysis reveals that the transmitted dialogue used by and in reference to these women does not always provide equivalencies for the target language viewer. These differences can shape the target language viewer’s understanding of the film to the extent that offensive or demeaning referents are omitted from the subtitled version, altering the depiction of the characters and their relationships and roles in the films and reflecting disparities between the two cultures *vis-à-vis* the representation and treatment of women. Feminist cinematic theory—for example, works by Laura Mulvey and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis on the male gaze and objectification of women in film,¹⁵ as well as feminist linguistic texts on sexist language, such as the work of Marina

¹⁵ Laura Mulvey. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (*Screen* 16:3 (1975) reprinted in Kaplan, E. Ann. *Feminism and Film*. Oxford UP, Oxford: 2000: 34-47); Sandy Flitterman-Lewis. *To Desire Differently: Feminism and the French Cinema* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

Yaguello, Deborah Cameron, and Dale Spender,¹⁶ in addition to general feminist theory on female speech and writing the body—served as a point of departure for investigations into the specific treatments of women in the films through the subtitles.

In Chapter Four, “Racial and National Identities Translated,” the selected films feature characters divided between two cultures either as first- or second-generation immigrants living in France (*Inch’Allah Sunday*, *Café au Lait*, *Games of Love and Chance*) or residents of countries still influenced by vestiges of French colonization (*Madame Brouette*, *Faat Kiné*, *Sugar Cane Alley*). The films explore relationships between native French and the Other. The directors’ perspectives—country of origin, ethnic identity, primary language—recommended the particular films for the study in this chapter.¹⁷ The chapter begins with a discussion of issues central to the cultural hybridity expressed in each film, including the role of code switching, definition and description of the primary language, power relationships conveyed through creative use of the language(s), and use of cultural references, and proceeds to an exploration of the extent to which these cultural aspects appear in the subtitles. Cultural references—a function of the representations and situations particular to each culture in the subtitles and that may reveal supplemental information about the plot or the characters—are often omitted or

¹⁶ Marina Yaguello. *Les mots et les femmes* (Paris: Payot, 1979); Deborah Cameron. *Contemporary Feminist Theories* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan P, 1985); Deborah Cameron. *The Feminist Critique of Language*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); Dale Spender. *Man Made Language*. 2nd ed. (London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).

¹⁷ All the directors present diverse aspects of the question of cultural hybridity: Mathieu Kassovitz (*Café au Lait*), a native-born Frenchman of a French mother and a Hungarian immigrant; Yamina Benguigi (*Inch’Allah Sunday*), French-born but a child of Algerian immigrants; Euzhan Palcy, a Martinican (*Sugar Cane Alley*); two directors from Senegal, Ousmane Sembène (*Faat Kiné*) and Moussa Sena Absa (*Madame Brouette*); and Abdel Kechiche (*Games of Love and Chance*), born in Tunisia in 1960, four years after Tunisian independence.

adapted somehow; examination of these omissions or adaptations can help determine ways in which Otherness reveals itself in the target language version.

The films set in formerly colonized nations—Ousmane Sembène’s *Faat Kiné* and Moussa Sena Absa’s *Madame Brouette*, both set in Senegal—contain vestiges of French culture that still exist in the country and to which source language viewers will relate. Code switching figures significantly in these two films and furnishes information about power, identity, and characters’ attitudes toward each other. Euzhan Palcy’s *Sugar Cane Alley* (based on Joseph Zobel’s book *La Rue Cases-nègres*), set in Martinique, also contains multiple examples of code switching between Creole and French. Code switching in the film lends insight into the powerful and often contradictory forces of the rural Creole life and the more formal French education system through the protagonist, José, who, after having been awarded a scholarship, leaves his small village and must adapt to the more formal milieu of the capital, finds himself at the crossroads of his identity as a Martinican consisting of, on the one hand, the rich Creole history represented by Médouze, the community griot, mentor and father figure to José, and, on the other, the broader world of opportunity afforded him through his scholarship.

Films set in mainland France but portraying the immigrant experience in multiple ways include Mathieu Kassovitz’s *Café au Lait*, Yamina Benguigi’s *Inch’Allah Sunday*, and Abdel Kechiche’s *Games of Love and Chance*. *Café au Lait* addresses the question of mixed identity and class systems in a modern world and confronts racism directly through the characters of Félix (a lower-class Jewish grandson of Eastern European immigrants), Lola (a bourgeois Martinican) and Jamal (a wealthy African immigrant). Félix and Jamal’s rivalry for Lola’s affections results in an antipathy towards each other

that reveals itself in their racist epithets toward and about each other. In *Inch'Allah Sunday*, Zouina arrives from Algeria with her children and mother-in-law to join her husband in France as part of the French government's family regroupment policy and struggles to reconcile her Algerian identity with the promise of greater freedom represented by her assimilation of French culture and ideas. Zouina's attempts to learn the French language and eagerness to absorb new ideas, embodied in her new French women friends Nicole and Madame Manant, conflict with her traditional roots, symbolized by her domineering husband Ahmed and her oppressive mother-in-law. *Games of Love and Chance* also represents a conflict between two opposing cultures—perhaps even to be considered “languages”—as *beur* adolescents living in the suburbs of Paris play out their teenage angst within the framework of the 18th-century Marivaux play. The language used in the Marivaux play will be familiar to source language viewers, but the language the teenagers use, a slang unique to their environment, bears a passing resemblance to standard French (even as to pose a difficulty for many source-language viewers) and underscores the mixed identity these adolescents possess. As this film presents a particular challenge for subtitlers, since the non-standard aspects of the source language may be somewhat unfamiliar to them as well, analysis of the resulting subtitles adds an important component to the present discussion.

Chapter Four also adds another dimension to a study of marginality and cultural identity, since both source and target language viewers in many instances occupy the foreigner space by not inhabiting the original linguistic and cultural milieu of the film. However, the target language viewer becomes removed two-fold from the original text where code switching occurs between French (which the source language viewer will

obviously comprehend) and another non-French, non-English language. The target language viewer cannot access additional non-dialogue text that provides supplemental information to the source language viewer, and in this way the foreign characters serve as a metaphor for the place occupied by the target language viewer. Research for this chapter begins with general postcolonial theory, from Edward Saïd's seminal work, *Orientalism*, to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity to Anne McClintock's definition of postcolonialism,¹⁸ discussing the situation of the foreigner in general terms, and references more specific groups or communities considered "foreign" by native French standards. *Négritude* studies by Léopold Senghor, Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and James Arnold,¹⁹ as well as Creole studies by Édouard Glissant, Daniel-Henri Pageaux, and Paul Bernabé²⁰, helped define particular linguistic features stemming from identity considerations. Studies of *beur* and Francophone cinema by Carrie Tarr, Will Higbee, and Dina Sherzer²¹ provided a framework for the social and political context of the films,

¹⁸ Edward Saïd, *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1984); Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism.'" (*Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 291-304).

¹⁹ Léopold Sedar Senghor. "Négritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century." (*Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 27-35); Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (Trans. Charles Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967); Aimé Césaire. "From *Discourse on Colonialism*." (*Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 172-180); A. James Arnold. "Translating/Editing 'Race' and 'Culture' from Caribbean French." (*Translation Perspectives: Selected Papers 6* (1991): 215-22).

²⁰ Édouard Glissant, ed. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. (Charlottesville and London: UP of Virginia, 1989); Daniel-Henri Pageaux. "La Créolité Antillaise Entre Postcolonialisme et Néo-Baroque." (*Littératures Postcoloniales et Francophonie: Conférences du Séminaire de Littérature Comparée de l'Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle*. Paris: H. Champion, 2001: 83-115); Jean Bernabé. "Contribution à une approche glottocritique de l'espace littéraire antillais." (*La Linguistique*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1982: 85-109).

²¹ Carrie Tarr. *Reframing Difference: Beur and Banlieue Filmmaking in France*. New York: Palgrave, 2005); Will Higbee. "The return of the political, or designer visions of exclusion? The case for Mathieu Kassovitz's *fracture sociale* trilogy." (*Studies in French Cinema* 5:2 (2005):123-35); Dina

and sociolinguistic works on code switching by Roman Jakobson, René Appel and Pieter Muysken, and John Gumperz²² allowed analysis of the power and identity dynamics expressed through code switching and code mixing in the films.

In Chapter Two, one film, *The Closet*, manifests clear evidence of the subtitle's self-censoring—apparently effected for reasons of political correctness—and, in several of the remaining films, the English subtitles provide far fewer varieties of denotations for homosexuals than exist in the French. However, in many instances, subtitles devised solutions to incorporate social and cultural references in rather creative ways. In Chapter Three, an analysis of the choices made in the subtitles referencing women reveals that the original French seems to contain a greater diversity of disparaging words to describe women than the English subtitles; research on the available lexical choices for woman-centered insults also shows a more varied and abundant selection of these types of labels in the French language than in English, suggesting the possibility of greater negativity towards women in French culture. While the subtitles could not adequately express hierarchical and power relationships defined by strategic use of familiar and formal forms of *you* in French, the subtitles seemed most faithful in the presence of a strong female character. The films in Chapter Four manifest expressions of cultural hybridity, anti-immigrant prejudice, and national identity communicated to varying degrees of effectiveness in the films. In addition to the necessary sacrifice of multiple cultural references, additional nuances provided by the presence of French and another language

Sherzer, ed. *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone Worlds*. (Austin: U of Texas P, 1996).

²² Roman Jakobson. "Linguistics and Poetics." (*Language in Literature*. Ed. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1987. 62-94); René Appel and Pieter Muysken. *Language Contact and Bilingualism*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1987); John J. Gumperz. *Discourse Strategies*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982).

that often went unsubtitled exclude the target language viewer from complete access to the film's dialogue. In *Inch'Allah Sunday*, for example, grammatical errors in French in the original were not rendered in the subtitles, preventing the target language viewer from witnessing the poignant portrayal of a character's gradual mastery of French, an important stage in the character's development. Code switching between French and another language, with all the power and cultural dynamics the practice reveals, could not always be completely communicated in the subtitles. In several instances as well, non-dialogic text—signs, songs, radio transmissions, characters' names—informs the source language viewers of the films examined in Chapter Four in significant ways but does not appear in subtitles, creating additional gaps in the target language version.

This particular question of dialogue, verbal language, and subtitling has not been addressed by scholars in film semiology (such as Christian Metz, Raymond Bellour, and Jean Oudart), in film history (Dudley Andrew, Douglas Gomery), or film reception (Steve Neale, Joan Copjec, Judith Mayne). This type of research demonstrates that the cinema is not merely a visual art, but a medium in which the verbal language is essential for understanding the narrative and its implications. As the critics mentioned above do not specialize in linguistics or translation studies, this type of analysis falls outside their field of expertise, but subtitling research provides a fresh approach for linguistics and translation theorists to examine film. Subtitling cannot and should not be reduced to a simple technical operation but rather is subject to many of the same concerns as any translation and can often express subtle distinctions in the original in a way that dubbing cannot. The research conducted thus combined many seemingly disparate fields of study—film studies, cultural studies, feminist studies, gender studies, postcolonial

studies, linguistics studies, and translation studies—in an effort to yield new perspectives and promote further study in the growing corpus of research on subtitling.

Chapter 1: History and Theories of Subtitling

1.1 Subtitling Versus Dubbing

Since the inception of cinema, the need has always existed for conveying spoken dialogue, particularly prior to the introduction of sound in films. A rudimentary form of subtitling first appeared in 1903 with the introduction of intertitles, consisting of “text, drawn or printed on paper or cardboard, filmed and inserted between sequences of the film” (Ivarsson and Carroll 9). Intertitles supplemented silent films and were used in both original language and foreign language presentations,²³ while subtitles for foreign-language viewers to aid in understanding foreign dialogue did not come into use until the late 1920s (Ivarsson and Carroll 10). With the advent of sound in film in 1929, France was the first country to use subtitles, followed by Denmark (in the same year), Norway, Sweden, and Hungary (Ivarsson and Carroll 11). In Europe, due partially to cost considerations, the northern, smaller countries tend to use subtitles much more frequently than larger, wealthier countries such as Germany, France, and Spain (Ivarsson and Carroll 11). In the EU, Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Spain are named “[t]ypical ‘dubbing countries’” whereas Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden prefer subtitling (Koolstra 326). The subtitling process can be achieved significantly more inexpensively than dubbing; subtitling costs average between 1/10 and 1/20 the cost of dubbing (Ivarsson and Carroll 1, Ivarsson 7).

Coupled with economic incentives to use subtitling over dubbing, the multilingual nature of the smaller northern European countries indicates an acceptance of and

²³ Intertitles not only served as a partial transcription of dialogue in part but announced events confirmed by the images, functioning at times like a Greek chorus, and were often considered redundant (Brant 12).

preference for subtitling (Piette 192). Alain Piette claims that where dubbing prevails it is attributable to the “cultural bias of countries like Great Britain and the United States, where subtitling is absolutely detested as it is made synonymous with a boring intellectual film” (192). However, while foreign films are generally dubbed in Britain (Danan, “Dubbing,” 606), foreign films in the U.S. are shown primarily with subtitles (Szarkowska, “Power,” par. 7). Perhaps Piette intends to highlight that “foreign films” are generally subtitled (and in that sense can be considered practically synonymous to subtitled films in the U.S.) but do not enjoy the popularity of domestic films in the U.S. or even of foreign films outside the U.S. Despite the relative unpopularity of foreign films in the U.S. compared to domestic films, however,²⁴ many American cinephiles enjoy watching foreign films with the aid of subtitles, a method preferred to dubbing in the U.S., presumably because dubbing into European languages is performed more thoroughly and effectively than into English (Szarkowska, “Power,” par. 7).²⁵

An aesthetic preference for dubbing, not based on economic factors, can also reflect a nationalistic bias and serve as a method of preserving the national language from the threat of outside linguistic interference, either as a form of propaganda or as a form of economic protectionism in response to America’s dominance of the film industry (Danan, “Dubbing,” 608). Governments in Fascist countries during World War II (Italy, Spain, and Germany) prohibited non-dubbed films from entering the country, and France had a similar policy in conjunction with its promotion of standardized French (Danan,

²⁴ In 2006, theater revenue from foreign film admissions in the U.S. accounted for 3 percent of total revenue for admissions (“Foreign Films,” par. 4), while foreign film rentals from Netflix represented 5.8 percent of total film rentals in 2005 (Kaufman, par. 18).

²⁵ Foreign films and, by extension, subtitled films, have encountered such resistance in the U.S. that in order to appeal to a young, mainstream audience, in 1985 Orion Pictures made a trailer for the Kurosawa film *Ran* omitting the Japanese language, “with the hope that it might be mistaken for an English-language picture” (Rich 158).

“Dubbing,” 611-12). Danan notes that in France, “[d]ubbed versions usually are intended for the mainstream public, while subtitled versions tend to be associated with art films and geared to spectators at a higher socioeducational level” (“Marketing,” 137).

Dubbing—a “target-oriented” translation, as opposed to subtitling, a “source-oriented” translation—conceals the foreign nature of a film, while subtitling recalls the source culture (Danan, “Dubbing,” 612-13). Gottlieb uses the terms “covert” and “overt” translation to describe dubbing and subtitling, respectively (102). Antje Ascheid sees this effacement of a film’s foreign origin achieved by dubbing in a positive light, as a form of “cultural ventriloquism,” providing the audience with a fresh, original production (39-40). Henri Béhar also uses the term “cultural ventriloquism,” but in reference to subtitling, and continues the metaphor to suggest that the puppet rather than the puppeteer should receive the audience’s attention (85). Perhaps the preference for subtitling in the U.S. can be explained by the fact that the pervasiveness of American culture and English language usage on a global scale mitigates American distributors’ need to preserve the American language and culture through dubbed versus subtitled films in the U.S. and other English-speaking countries. Despite a perceived cultural bias against subtitling in the larger, wealthier countries, subtitling is becoming more common in the traditionally dubbing countries mentioned above due to increased globalization and awareness of other cultures (Ivarsson and Carroll 2). The proliferation of subtitling worldwide remains, nonetheless, a gradual process.

1.2 Technical Aspects of Subtitling

The subtitling practice comprises several stages involving various agents, and this series of stages may vary from company to company or even from subtitler to subtitler.

However, according to Pamela Grant (a subtitler with over 15 years of experience in French-to-English and English-to-French subtitling), ideally the following sequence occurs. In the first stage the film company or production company works in tandem with the post-production subtitling company, such as Titra or LVT (Laser Video Titles). This company then assigns a staff member to do the *repérage*, or the spotting, a time-coded record of each dialogic utterance—i.e., the specific time notation marking the beginning and ending of each of these utterances—as well as a detailed description and definition of these utterances. Time codes indicate “hours: minutes: seconds. frames,” and frame number varies according to the medium: generally “24 frames a second for film, 25 frames a second for PAL or SECAM video and some films, and 30 frames a second for NTSC video” (Ivarsson and Carroll 141). PAL video format is used in Western Europe and Australia, SECAM is used in Eastern Europe and France, and the SECAM system is used in the U.S., Canada, Japan, Mexico and other countries (“PAL, NTSC and SECAM Comparisons”). The time codes used in this study will indicate hours, minutes, and seconds only.²⁶

For films translated from French into English, non-subtitling technicians watch the French movie with a French script and break it into titles based on the scene breaks. These technicians then provide either a simple dialogue list or a detailed spotting list. Dialogue lists, including every instance of spoken word (verbatim) or noise, with the speakers indicated, “should be provided by the film distributor or producer and should include metatext, visual cues, explanation of puns and colloquialisms” (Diaz-Cintas 200).

²⁶ Henri Béhar, who has subtitled American films such as *Brokeback Mountain*, *Boyz in the Hood* and *Good Will Hunting* into French (“Rethinking,” par. 4), describes the spotter as “a true artist: spotting requires a strong sense of language and extreme sensitivity to the rhythm and flow of a film. With bad spotting, the subtitler’s difficulty increases ten-fold—with a good spotting, it’s almost a breeze” (81).

Spotting lists, on the other hand, include “the exact timing of each individual subtitle as well as definitions, which are descriptions of words, slang, or phrases found in the film that need explanation in order to make a good translation” (Bathfield 34). Having a complete dialogue list is crucial, according to Diaz-Cintas (201-2). A good dialogue list should be prepared by someone who understands the problems of linguistic transfer and should be as detailed as possible (Diaz-Cintas 208).²⁷ If the dialogue list is detailed enough, Diaz-Cintas asserts, the subtitler need not even watch the film, since all the dialogue has been provided and the spotting list indicates the in and out times of dialogue, but ideally he or she should still have the opportunity to review the film after subtitling is completed to check timing, register, and appropriateness of the subtitles, though this final review process is not always possible given tight deadlines, production schedules, and profit-oriented distribution companies (Diaz-Cintas 201-2).²⁸ Ivarsson and Carroll add that film subtitling procedures are often strongly influenced by certain distributors’ policies and that subtitling may be performed under less-than-ideal conditions (99). Grant confirms Diaz-Cintas’ assertion of the importance of the final editing phase, noting that if the subtitler is permitted to be involved in the editing process, after the subtitles have been written, he or she goes into the studio to gauge the dialogue’s consistency with the film; if the subtitles are deemed satisfactory by the subtitler, the subtitles are then lasered onto the film (Grant 2004).

²⁷ Diaz-Cintas notes that good dialogue lists are often not provided, a situation which wastes the translators’ time and energy, especially when they are faced with tight deadlines and low wages. He adds that when dialogue lists are not provided or are not complete, translators ought to be able to retaliate by raising their fees (208).

²⁸ With regard to dialogue lists, Béhar asserts: “Perfecting the dialogue is the most labour-intensive stage of the process [involving a great deal of outside research] but also the most addictive and culturally enlightening” (83).

As Grant and Diaz-Cintas both maintain, the degree of the film director's involvement with the subtitling process varies greatly, from no involvement to a very hands-on approach. Diaz-Cintas gives the example of Woody Allen, who always provides subtitlers with thoroughly detailed dialogue and spotting lists and often includes informational comments on his dialogue lists (206).²⁹ While the director may have minimal or no involvement in the project, the distributor will usually send a representative to the studio who determines whether or not the subtitles need editing (Grant 2004).

Subtitles are almost always prepared at PC workstations, where subtitlers generally work from a copy of the dialogue and a VHS tape or DVD (Pollard 25). Extremely stringent and narrow time constraints make concise editing crucial. The average viewer cannot process more than two lines of text at a time, and, in film subtitling for video, each line may contain no more than 35-37 characters, including spaces, for maximum legibility, whereas 16mm and 35mm films may contain up to 40 characters per line; subtitling for television allows even fewer characters than video subtitles, as reader speed decreases with the screen size (Ivarsson and Carroll 100). The minimum time a subtitle must be displayed is 1.5 seconds, even for one-word subtitles (Wildblood 41), while the maximum display time is limited to three to five seconds for one-line subtitles and four to six seconds for two-line subtitles; subtitles never exceed two lines (Pollard 25). Format checkers ensure proper physical placement of the subtitles, preventing the subtitles' placement in a "restricted" area of the screen—that is, where

²⁹ Woody Allen's films are dubbed in France by the same husband-wife team, Anne and Georges Dutter, and since 1987 his films have been subtitled by the same subtitler, Jacqueline Cohen, which help maintain uniformity in the final product ("Rethinking"); Allen himself is also very involved in the subtitling process and connected to subtitlers of his films in other countries as well (Diaz-Cintas 206).

they either cannot be read or where they block important visual cues—as well as time-code conformity (Pollard 25).

A normal two-hour movie will contain between 600 and 1000 subtitles, approximately half of which will be two-line subtitles (Pollard 26). French films tend to have more subtitles than American ones, however: an American film averages 700 to 1000 titles, whereas a French film averages 1000 to 1500 titles (Grant 2004).

Henrik Gottlieb, who supports the argument that subtitling is a unique form of translation with quantitative and qualitative constraints not found in traditional non-audio-visual text translation (162), insists that the formal, or quantitative, constraints of time and space—the maximum of six seconds for two-line subtitles and the 35-character limit for each line—play an important role. Gottlieb’s qualitative, or textual, constraints play a critical role as well and include:

1. Positioning (in space) and cuing (in time). Subtitles must correspond with static and dynamic features of film.
2. The wording of subtitles must reflect tempo, syntax, and order (where possible) of key elements in dialogue. (165)

These physical limitations, designed to minimize the possibility of distracting the viewer from the film’s action, force the subtitler to make considerable reductions in the dialogue, often sacrificing important information in the process.

1.3 Subtitling in Practice

Detractors of subtitling claim that the constant effort to keep up with subtitles diverts attention from the speaker, that the two languages may prove a distraction to viewers, or that the titles are not aesthetically pleasing and occasionally block important visual cues (Mailhac 131). Jean-Pierre Mailhac claims that the more marked the language, the more

difficult comprehension will be because “subtitling leads to a linguistic levelling out of dialogues by neutralizing or eliminating marked features concerning a whole range of dimensions” such as syntax, register, social or geographical origin, and style (131).

Notwithstanding these valid claims describing the limitations of the practice, translation and cinematic theorists advocate more strongly for subtitling over dubbing, including in the U.S. In addition to the considerably lower costs, the presence of the source language (hereafter SL) helping “to preserve a degree of cultural coherence,” and supplementing the text for target language (hereafter TL) viewers who have any knowledge of the SL, subtitling best preserves the “original voices and the natural link between speech and body language” (Mailhac 130). Miguel Mera maintains that hearing characters’ original voices “not only increases meaning in terms of specific dialogue or plot structure, but gives vital clues as to status, class and relationship” (75). Lucien Marleau, on the other hand, asserts that despite the “visual shock” the spectator must endure by reading subtitles, and until a third option appears, such as a sound system permitting individual dialogues in various TLs, subtitles remain “a necessary evil” (276-77). Marleau claims that because the actors’ spoken words communicate not only meaning but also tonality, dubbing is a “monstrosity” that does no justice to the artistic work comprised by the particular way in which the actor pronounces the dialogue (278). Not only does subtitling preserve the actors’ nonlinguistic characteristics, it recalls the foreign nature of the film and keeps the TL spectator in a state of awareness of the nuances of the SL culture, removing the TL viewer from his or her accustomed cultural and linguistic milieu and broadening the scope of the cinematic experience. Beyond the

limits of an individual film, B. Ruby Rich views subtitling as key to a larger understanding of world cultures:

Subtitling allows us to hear other people's voices intact and gives us full access to their subjectivity. Subtitles acknowledge that our language, the language of this place in which we are watching this film, is only one of many languages in the world, and that at that very moment, elsewhere they are watching movies in which characters speak in English while other languages spell out their thoughts and emotions across the bottom of the frame for other audiences. It gives me hope . . . Subtitles, I'd like to think, are a token of peace. (168)

Whether viewed in its larger context as an instrument of global understanding or simply as a means of preserving for aesthetic purposes the original sound of the SL dialogue, subtitling still remains the preferred method for retaining the original character of foreign films in the U.S., despite the diminished dialogic output that necessarily accompanies any form of interlingual audiovisual transfer. These losses, not insignificant, occur both intralinguistically and extralinguistically in subtitling, where many aspects of a film dialogue are either untranslated, mistranslated, or overtranslated. Since subtitling represents a written form used to communicate an oral message, changes in register can occur. The written word, considered more formal and authoritative than its oral counterpart, often undergoes neutralization in the subtitling process; therefore, curse words and other epithets appear harsher and more derisive in written form than when they are uttered orally, and a subtitler's failure to account for this difference can change the dynamic of the film's discourse (Jäckel 229; Gambier 213). For accuracy, grammatical errors in the spoken dialogue should be subtitled, but a subtitler must determine to what degree he or she should represent this ungrammaticality lest the errors detract the TL viewer's attention from the message. The subtitler may decide, given the perceived formality and added harshness of the written word, to compensate for that severity by

minimizing the connotative effect of the words to achieve some sort of balanced result that more closely approximates the register of the spoken word, but this procedure results in a dilution of the original message.

These sorts of questions continue to challenge subtitlers, and in the present study, particular attention is devoted to examination of denotative and connotative language used to refer to members of marginalized groups—homosexuals, women, and foreigners—and its interpretation in the subtitles. In Chapter Two, “Pédés, Gouines et Tapettes: Gender-Based Stereotypes of Homosexual Characters,” analysis of the subtitles in the films *The Closet*, *My Life in Pink*, *French Twist*, *Wild Reeds*, *La Cage aux folles*, *The Spanish Apartment* and *Sitcom* shows how translation of SL derogatory labels used to refer to homosexuals, as well as feminizing language in the SL, can yield mostly diluted, inaccurate, or inadequate translations in the TL, leaving the TL viewer with a very different impression of the narrative and contextual dialogue than exists in the SL.

In Chapter Three, “Women, Girls, Hookers, and Whores,” aspects of language central to treatment and depiction of women inform analysis of the films *The Dreamlife of Angels*, *Belle de Jour*, *The Story of Women*, *Vagabond*, *The Spanish Apartment*, and *Thieves*. The ways in which SL use reflects attitudes towards women in the films through use of insulting labels (as in the chapter on homosexuals), belittling language behaviors such as use of terms “girl” or the use of a familiar form of address to express domination, specialized use of professional and personal monikers, and other aspects of sexist language behavior are examined and compared with the degree to which these linguistic behaviors have been conveyed in the subtitles.

Films in Chapter Four, “Racial and National Identities Translated,” the films examined—*Café au Lait*, *Inch’Allah Sunday*, *Games of Love and Chance*, *Faat Kiné*, *Madame Brouette*, and *Sugar Cane Alley*—characterize some aspect of the foreigner experience, be it through characters living in former French colonies or immigrants living in France, and the films’ dialogues usually contain French and some other language (such as Arabic or Wolof in *Inch’ Allah Sunday*, *Madame Brouette*, and *Faat Kiné*) or some variant of French (such as the slang of the teenagers in *Games of Love and Chance* or the Creole in *Sugar Cane Alley*). The degree to which cultural references become accessible to the TL audience is examined from a linguistic, cultural, and political perspective. Exposure to non-French languages in the films has the effect of “foreignizing” the French-speaking SL viewer, though the SL viewer still has partial access to the dialogue in the film as well as a sensitivity to occasions of code switching, something the TL cannot perceive while reading the subtitles. Code switching informs the narrative metalinguistically and quite significantly in certain films.

Some theorists have also raised the question of censorship practices among translators, particularly in audiovisual translation. Not only does censorship occur as dictated by outside factors such as political motivations, religious conventions, governmental regulations, and political correctness, but also in self-censoring by subtitlers themselves in an effort to either avoid shocking the spectators or to conform to some self-imposed linguistic, moral, or cultural standard (Gambier 204-11, 213-14; Scandura 125-27). Perhaps, too, the subtitler or distribution company may decide a “softening” of objectionable language might widen the commercial appeal of a film. Additionally, self-censorship may simply occur inadvertently due to the subtitler’s lack of

knowledge of certain idioms or cultural references (Scandura 127). Oftentimes, too, cultural and grammatical specificities render certain expressions untranslatable, an aspect explored in greater detail later in this work.

Given the abundance of factors threatening accurate transmission of ideas into the TL, some subtitlers have attempted to standardize desirable objectives and techniques in subtitling. Jan Ivarsson and Mary Carroll's manual *Subtitling*, widely recognized by many subtitling theorists (Gambier and Pollard, among others) as an industry standard, includes a "Code of Good Subtitling Practice" for subtitlers (157-8). The rather detailed list provides no less than 25 methods to achieve desirable objectives, but these objectives do not account for the considerable time restrictions placed on subtitlers in terms of production deadlines. In that sense, these standards may be difficult or even impossible to maintain; however, some items deserve particular mention and exploration.

1. Subtitlers must always work with a (video, DVD, etc.) copy of the production, a copy of the dialogue list, and a glossary of unusual words and specific references.
2. It is the subtitler's job to spot the production and translate and write the subtitles in the (foreign) language required.
3. Translation quality must be high with due consideration of all idiomatic and cultural nuances.
4. Straightforward semantic units must be used.
5. Where compression of dialogue is necessary, the results must be coherent.
6. Subtitle text must be distributed from line to line and page to page in sense blocks and/or grammatical units.
7. As far as possible, each subtitle should be syntactically self-contained.
8. The language register must be appropriate and correspond with the spoken word.
9. The language should be (grammatically) "correct," since subtitles serve as a model for literacy.
10. All important written information in the images (signs, notices, etc.) should be translated and incorporated wherever possible.

11. Given the fact that many TV viewers are hearing-impaired, “superfluous” information, such as names, interjections from the off [off-camera voices] etc., should also be subtitled.³⁰
12. Songs must be subtitled where relevant.
13. Obvious repetition of names and common comprehensible phrases need not always be subtitled.
14. The in- and out-times of subtitles must follow the speech rhythm of the film dialogue, taking cuts and sound bridges into consideration.
15. Language distribution within and over subtitles must consider cuts and sound bridges; the subtitles must underline surprise or suspense and in no way undermine it.
16. The duration of all subtitles within a production must adhere to a regular viewer reading rhythm.
17. Spotting must reflect the rhythm of the film.
18. No subtitle should appear for less than one second or, with the exception of songs, stay on the screen for longer than seven seconds.
19. The number of lines in any subtitle must be limited to two.
20. Wherever two lines of unequal length are used, the upper line should preferably be shorter to keep as much of the image free as possible and in left-justified subtitles in order to reduce unnecessary eye movement.
21. There must be a close correlation between film dialogue and subtitle content; source language and target language should be synchronised as far as possible.
22. There must be a close correlation between film dialogue and the presence of subtitles.
23. Each production should be edited by a reviser/editor.
24. The (main) subtitler should be acknowledged at the end of the film or, if the credits are at the beginning, then close to the credit for the script writer.
25. The year of subtitle production and the copyright for the version should be displayed at the end of the film. (Ivarsson 157-158)

Certain of these standards can be explored within the context of the films examined in this study. For example, item number 2 suggests that “[i]t is the subtitler’s job to perform spotting of the production and translate and write the subtitles in the (foreign) language required” (157). As mentioned previously, spotting refers to the process of defining the precise appearance and disappearance of individual subtitles by use of time codes

³⁰ Though subtitling is intended for films shown on the cinema screen, a significant amount of the revenue coming from television and copyright purchases justifies the consideration of viewers watching films on the small screen, either through network broadcast or personal copy.

(Ivarsson and Carroll 178) and includes “definitions, which are descriptions of words, slang, or phrases found in the film that need explanation in order to make a good translation” (Bathfield 34). In practice, however, spotting is not always performed by the subtitlers (Grant 2004). Even more challenging is item 3, the request for a high-quality translation with “due consideration of all idiomatic and cultural nuances” (Ivarsson and Carroll 157). This goal, one of the primary foci of this study, cannot always be achieved. Following the prescriptions of item 9 by insisting on grammatical correctness³¹ can lead to misunderstanding of cultural nuances, especially where the characters are in the process of learning the SL; for example, foreign characters in films cited in Chapter Four (such as *Inch’Allah Sunday* and *Faat Kiné*). Item number 10 requires that “[a]ll important written information in the images (signs, notices, etc.) should be translated and incorporated wherever possible” (157). In the films selected for this study, subtitling of non-dialogue text rarely occurs, suggesting that this particular objective may prove difficult if not impossible to achieve under ordinary circumstances. Extending the non-dialogic text transcription prescriptive in item 10, item 12 maintains the need for subtitling of songs “where relevant” (158), leaving the determination of relevancy to the individual subtitler’s discretion, since the director or screenwriter often does not have an opportunity to indicate the relevancy of a certain song passage or billboard announcement. Translation of non-dialogic text is explored further in Chapter Four (“Section 4.4, Non-Dialogic Text”).

³¹ The language should be (grammatically) “correct,” since subtitles serve as a model for literacy (Ivarsson and Carroll 157).

Representing a consistent and equivalent register as prescribed in item number 8 proves problematic as well. Many cultural references do not translate well and challenge even the most culturally astute subtitlers. For example, where there are geographical references possibly unfamiliar to foreign viewers, the representation of these references becomes problematic, as subtitlers must decide whether to insert similar references that apply to the viewer's frame of knowledge using Eugene Nida's theory of dynamic (or functional) equivalence;³² to attempt to provide explanations; or to simply keep the references in their original form in the hopes that the subtitler can compensate for them elsewhere in the subtitles, all while fulfilling the objective stated by Marleau (281) and others of giving the viewer the impression of understanding the dialogue without reading the subtitles. Zoë de Linde mentions the "impossible task of rendering the informational value of suprasegmental phonetic features, such as intonation, in writing" (12).

Representations of subtitled text "tend to be highly stereotypical and inconsistent," neutralizing the text to a certain extent (Mailhac 134), not just where epithets exist, but in a general sense. Prosodic features such as stress or tone present particular challenges, as do gestures, mimics, or postures (Gambier and Suomela-Salmi 372). Additionally, the subtitler must decide how to represent regional differences in the form of vocabulary or accents; for example, would a person with *l'accent du Midi*³³ be represented in the U.S.-distributed subtitled version of a film by an American from the South with phonetic renderings of a southern accent and its attendant vocabulary, or

³² Nida states: "[T]he relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (159). Nida's theory is examined in greater detail later in this chapter.

³³ The accent from the southern Midi region of France is characterized by inflectional and social differences from standard French pronunciation, marking the speaker stereotypically as provincial and less cosmopolitan than his or her Northern counterpart.

would such an attempt at compensation simply prove distracting and therefore not aid the TL viewer's comprehension of the dialogue? Yet if the subtitler resists the temptation and avoids representing a regional difference in a film, the TL viewer risks missing the cultural nuance entirely. In one of the films analyzed, *French Twist*, some characters have meridional accents (Antoine, for example, has a strong *accent du Midi*), and Loli is Spanish. As Mailhac explains, the subtitles cannot render these regional accents adequately, and the dubbed version provides context where the subtitles do not; in the dubbed version, Antoine is called Antonio and given an Italian accent, reinforcing the image of the Latin philanderer (135-36).

Differences in register beyond the lexical level also pose particular challenges for subtitlers into English, who struggle with ways of transcribing the *tu/vous* form of address in French (informal and formal “you,” respectively), an almost impossible illocutory distinction to convey in English. Many attempts at circumlocution exist, such as use of surnames, nicknames, and initials, but these renderings cannot adequately express the various nuances of inclusion, age, solidarity, authority, and emotional attachment as does the use of *tu* in French (Mailhac 134). Often the transition from *tu* to *vous* and back again will provide a clue to the attitudes and changing situation of the speakers, or a dominant member of a power relationship will address a marginalized character as *tu*; such usage of the familiar form to exert dominance is examined in Chapter Three. An abrupt change in register, too, can prove difficult for subtitlers to express and often goes undocumented in the English translation.³⁴

³⁴ André Lefevere warns that if the appropriate register is not rendered in the target language, the source text will lose its illocutionary power, resulting in a “cultural vacuum” (58). This distinction has particular significance in the presence of metalinguistic cues provided by a filmic medium.

Ideally, the subtitler would receive acknowledgement in the credits, as prescribed in item 24, but none of the films selected for this study provided an acknowledgement of the subtitler in the film credits. Research reveals that the distribution companies provided subtitling for the American releases,³⁵ but that information is not readily available to the home viewer who might search for the subtitler's name in the closing credits. Ivarsson and Carroll's list serves as a useful guide for subtitlers who might otherwise operate under conventions of literary translation.

Teresa Tomasziewicz also acknowledges that solutions in literary translation do not always enjoy the same degree of success or comprehensibility in audio-visual translation, since other elements such as image, sound, and music all convey relevant information as well, and the spectator from the target culture cannot always be expected to perceive them in the same way as a native speaker of the source culture (238). Within the limits of the medium, Tomasziewicz advises adapting Walter Benjamin's idea of *Intention* in literary translation to subtitling, adding that subtitling serves a particular intention and "the possibility exists of explaining to the foreign receptor the fragments of the original which are unfamiliar to him or her" (247), recalling Benjamin's metaphor of the broken vessel.³⁶

In her discussion of subtitling from English to French, Tomasziewicz offers several strategies to help subtitlers convey cultural references, such as omission of

³⁵ Information about commercial aspects of the films was obtained through a personal subscription to Imdb.pro, a firm providing supplemental details concerning companies in the film industry.

³⁶ "Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel" (Benjamin 79).

confusing terms or use of equivalent cultural references if such practices would facilitate comprehension, especially since the subtitler is not able to use footnotes to explain cultural references as in literary translation (239). As an example, she suggests substituting EDF (“Électricité de France”) for the local American electric company given in the English original, or another referent than given in the original, such as using *mon éditeur* (“my publisher”) where “Viking” is provided in the English (245).

Though not as detailed as Ivarsson and Carroll’s code of good subtitling techniques above, Tomaszkiwicz’s strategies also take into account cultural differences that must be considered and accounted for in subtitling whenever possible, always within the limitations of the medium.

1.4 Subtitling—Theories and Strategies

The limitations of the medium distinguish subtitling as a unique form of translation. The *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*’s definition of *subtitle* as “a caption at the bottom of a movie, etc., especially translating dialogue,”³⁷ describes a rather simple transfer of information from one language to another without taking into account any of the social, political, linguistic, and grammatical obstacles that pose challenges for subtitlers. Raphaël Nir addresses these challenges in his discussion of the particularities of film translation, echoing the claims of Benjamin Whorf (213) and others of the culture-bound character of language, maintaining that translating a film is much more difficult than translating an article, since subtitling comprises “the heavier influence of

³⁷ “subtitle.” *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

factors connected with the social ethos on the one hand and the situational factors on the other” (83).

Roman Jakobson cites three types of translation: 1) intralingual, involving rewording in the same language; 2) interlingual, or translation proper, a transfer from the SL to the TL; and 3) intersemiotic, or transmutation, the interpretation of verbal signs by non-verbal signs (145). Literary translation belongs to the second of these three categories; subtitling involves both the second and the third types of translation, since two languages are involved, but also the dialogue changes from a verbal to a non-verbal form. Susan Bassnett maintains that

untranslatability exists on the linguistic and cultural levels; on the linguistic level when there is no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for an SL term; and on the cultural level when there is an absence in the TL culture of a relevant situational feature for an SL text. (32)

Both types of translational challenges feature in subtitling as well as in literary translation, and this study will explore examples of these challenges in the selected subtitled films.

If the task of the translator, as explained by Walter Benjamin, “consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original” (77), how can an audiovisual translation account for all the extradiologic factors involved, especially when the visual cues may contradict the subtitled version? For example, *Gare de Lyon* may be translated as “Grand Central Station” in an English-subtitled French film to convey the idea of a very busy location (a solution Tomaszewicz would undoubtedly endorse), even though the scene takes place in Paris, but that rendition does not truly echo the original, and the subtitles may create confusion for the TL viewer. The subtitler must determine the greater benefit to the TL

viewer and sacrifice the less-meaningful element to ensure maximum comprehensibility. In literary translation, a translator inserts an explanatory footnote, but the subtitler is not afforded this opportunity, one of many differences between literary translation and subtitling.

In their *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet mention two kinds of translation, direct (literal) and oblique (where structural and lexical elements must be modified to accommodate the target culture), and propose seven methods for French-English and English-French translation, summarized below. Items 1, 2, and 3 are considered direct translation, while the others constitute an oblique type of translation:

1. Borrowing—using foreign terms to provide local color
2. Calque (direct)—literal translation of an SL term into the TL; often awkward and to be avoided where possible (e.g. “the man in the street” “l’homme dans la rue” instead of the “l’homme de la rue” or “le Français moyen”) (32-33)
3. Literal translation (direct, or word for word) is possible where “metalinguistic concepts also reveal physical coexistence” between the two languages—more common between languages of the same family, such as Romance languages—but is often possible between two non-related languages; for example: “Où êtes-vous?” easily translates to “Where are you?”
4. Transposition consists of “replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message.” An example: “Dès son lever” “as soon as he gets up/got up.”
5. Modulation involves a “variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view”; for example: “Le moment où” “the time when...”
6. Equivalence is used frequently for idiomatic expressions, such as “Il pleut des cordes,” rendered as “It’s raining cats and dogs,” or onomatopoeia, such as “Aïe!” translated as “Ouch” in English.
7. Adaptation, an “extreme limit of translation,” is used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture. In this instance, translators need to create an equivalent situation. Vinay and Darbelnet give the example of an English to French translation of “He lives on the wrong side of the track” as “Il n’est pas de notre milieu.” (31-40)

All of the above-mentioned methods can play a role in film translation as well. For example, the strategy listed as item 1), word borrowing, occurs in many of the films, particularly the films cited in the chapter on Foreigners, either as an example of code mixing or in attempts to retain a certain alliterative quality (“Pignon is mignon” in *The Closet*, for example). As the subtitles attempt a natural, if abridged, rendering of the dialogue, calques (item 2), do not often occur, and none were noted in the films in this corpus. Methods listed in items 3, 4, and 5 (literal translation, transposition, and modulation) also occur, simply as a function of the different ways to render naturalness in the TL. The methods in items 6 and 7, equivalence and adaptation, apply particularly to strategies for subtitlers, since the visual and other metalinguistic cues provided in the film supply more information of this sort than can a work of literature. The subtitler must allow for the spectator’s processing of this supplemental information when making translation decisions in films.

Though many techniques and theories applicable to translation in general—“a written or spoken expression of the meaning of a word, speech, book, etc., in another language”³⁸—have a place in audiovisual translation, subtitling represents a hybrid form of translation and occupies a unique space in the field, as many options available to literary translators cannot and do not exist under the constraints of screen translation. The time and space constraints imposed on subtitlers as well as the audiovisual medium provides visual cues that give supplemental information to compensate for intralinguistic and extralinguistic limitations and must always be considered in effecting audiovisual translations.

³⁸ “translation.” *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

Subtitlers share with literary translators a difficult history, and the generally dubious reputation of translators dates to the classical era, when ancient Romans translated Greek texts into Latin (Friedrich 12). Most early translation efforts surrounded the attempts to render the Bible into Latin and later into the vernacular, beginning with St. Jerome (Friedrich 12). The cultural significance of a text such as the Bible made its translation a source of fierce contention. Étienne Dolet and William Tyndale, among others, were even burned at the stake for what was considered their blasphemous misappropriation of sacred words (Gross, “Major Dates”). This potential for public outcry about mistranslation (not to mention the importance of a cohesive and positive reception, particularly for subtitled films, where commercial considerations determine a film’s success) and the veritable minefield of prospective difficulties has inspired such books as Lawrence Venuti’s *The Scandals of Translation* and articles such as Babak Fozooni’s “All Translators are Bastards.”³⁹ The subject of translation inspires a great deal of controversy due to the great possibility for error that lies at the nature of the medium.

Eugene Nida’s theory of dynamic equivalence, which states that the language must undergo an adjustment process and transformation of a grammatical, structural, and semantic nature combining the four components of message transfer (analysis, decoding, re-encoding, and transfer) from the SL to the TL (159), has been examined by Nir and applied to audiovisual translation. Following these prescriptions ranges from difficult to impossible when translating in an audio-visual medium, particularly when translating a colloquial mimetic, Nir maintains,

³⁹ Fozooni describes the modern-day translator as a “transcultural hermaphrodite . . . born into a ‘native’ culture [who] becomes immersed in a ‘foreign’ culture and as a result of the constant juxtaposition of one against the other manages to supersede all cultures” (283). This interesting concept merits further exploration but lies outside the scope of the present work.

because it is highly context-bound In order to adapt the dialogue to the needs of the [target] audience the translator is sometimes faced with an almost impossible mission: he or she must convey sociolectal features which are intended to ‘mark’ the speakers as regards their socioeconomic status. (86)

In order to convey the character of the dialogue where no corresponding sociolect exists in the TL (Nir gives the example of attempting to render Black English from a film into a TL of Hebrew), the translator will therefore adopt a neutral unmarked style, resulting in a more homogeneous speech (Nir 87). The neutralization, however, creates yet another loss of meaning for the TL viewer on the sociolinguistic level.

Subtitles also share conventions of dialogue with other dramatic works, such as plays and operas, in that the original written text must be conveyed verbally. Susan Bassnett distinguishes between literary translation and theatrical translation and insists that different principles and strategies come into view when attempting a dramatic or theatrical translation (120). For one, the text is meant to be performed, and one cannot separate the text from the performance:

[A] theater text, written with a view to its performance, contains distinguishable structural features that make it performable, beyond the stage directions themselves. Consequently, the task of the translator must be to determine what those structures are and to translate them to the TL, even though this may lead to major shifts on the linguistic and stylistic planes. (Bassnett 122)

As theatrical text operates not only on a linguistic plane but contains many paralinguistic elements such as intonation, pitch, speed, and accent, it shares these qualities with film, which also constitutes a public performance, unlike the private relationship a reader shares with a literary text (132). Additionally, Peter Newmark notes that the translator of drama works under constraints not present for the literary translator; the translator of drama “cannot gloss over cultural ambiguities or cultural references, nor transcribe words

for the sake of local color: his text is dramatic, with emphasis on verbs, rather than descriptive or explanatory” and adds that a translation of a play is “no longer a translation, but an adaptation” (172-73). From a practical standpoint, however, a theatrical performance differs from a film in that where a theatrical performance relies on surtitles, the speed of the titles must be even slower than for subtitles, since the spectators must move their gaze from the actors to a display immediately above the stage; subtitles are not an option due to the presence of footlights, which would impair their legibility (Ivarsson and Carroll 20). As with other types of dramatic presentations, the film’s distinguishing feature is performance; the filmic medium, however, does not constitute a live performance and can provide additional cultural and contextual shading (soundtrack, computer-generated effects, flashback, varying camera angles and techniques, to cite just a few examples) in ways a theatrical performance cannot.

One of the most problematic aspects of subtitling is the tendency for subtitlers to approach the process as if it were a literary translation, especially given that most subtitles are for fictional programs, and translators are often influenced by conventions of literary translation; that is, sentences are concise in a very standardized order (subject, verb, object), dialects are generally avoided, and, in cases where the standard language is thought to be in jeopardy, the “correct” language is used (Lambert 233). Since it is a written text, the subtitles are expected to conform to a country’s cultural, moral, and didactic needs (Lambert 233; *cf* also Gambier and Scandura, cited at 31). Here again, the transformative nature of subtitling makes the potential for censorship great, particularly in the case of subtitles for target countries with cultural norms vastly divergent from the

country of origin. In such instances, subtitling shares with literary translation the risk of censorship.

However, a subtitler experienced in literary translation cannot approach a filmic text in the same fashion as he or she would approach a literary text, given that the subtitles cannot supply extratextual information as for a written text. Often aspects like grammaticality, regional dialect, and register play an essential role in the accurate portrayal of a character, and the medium does not allow for additional explanation or clarification. Additionally, Gottlieb lists five other features that distinguish subtitling from non-audiovisual text translation:

1. Subtitling is a written translation;
2. It is an additive translation—verbal material is added to the original;
3. Subtitling is immediate—in filmic media all discourse is presented in a flowing manner beyond the control of the listener-viewer-reader;
4. Subtitling is synchronous—the original film and the translated part are presented simultaneously;
5. Subtitling is polymedial—at least two parallel channels are used to convey the total message of the original. (162)

Gottlieb proffers an accurate description of the immediacy and synchronicity that characterize subtitling, except perhaps in item 2, since what is added in subtitling is non-verbal, and often the subtitled version represents a mere fraction of the original dialogue. The numerous cultural elements conveyed through non-dialogic elements lend credence to the argument that subtitles convey cultural information that must be rendered whenever possible.

1.5 Translation and Cultural Studies

Dirk Delabattista makes the quite pertinent argument that the research into the link between cultural studies and translation needs to be developed, particularly in audiovisual translation, and instead of using the terms TL (target language) and SL (source language), he proposes using target *culture* and source *culture* (“Translation and Mass-Communication,” 194). Gideon Toury likewise argues that translations are “cultural facts” and reflect the target culture (24). Indeed, the present study focuses on the symbiotic, indissociable relationship between language and culture; however, as the text of the subtitles will be examined to determine to what degree these cultural aspects have been rendered, the terms source language (SL) and target language (TL) will be used in this work. Industry standards for stylistic and formatting conventions unique to representation of a spoken dialogue in written text (such as those enumerated by Ivarsson and Carroll, Gottlieb, and Tomaskiewicz above) may influence subtitlers’ decisions, but the purpose of the present work is to examine what has already been undertaken and the resultant connotative and denotative shifts observed in the subtitles in relatively recent films distributed in the U.S. Subtitles analysis involves interlingual as well as intersemiotic transfer, differentiating it from literary translation, and though the aforementioned time and space constraints limit the degree to which the spoken dialogue can be rendered, the subtitler must also be aware of the film’s non-textual cues available to the TL viewer—the *mise-en-scène*, soundtrack, facial expressions, and prosody of the spoken language, for example—which may inform and influence subtitling decisions. The chapters to follow illustrate some of the ways shifts in meaning occur during transfer from the French dialogue to English subtitles, in particular when this dialogic transfer

involves reference to various marginalized members of society. Language can function as a divisive force, as non-dominant groups seen from the perspective of the dominant culture often become further marginalized by cultural references expressed through language. The following chapters demonstrate the shifts in meaning that occur in reference to three non-dominant groups represented in the selected films—homosexuals, women, and foreigners—and describe the sociocultural references expressed in the subtitles after the spoken dialogue has passed through the prism of audiovisual translation.

Chapter 2: *Pédés, Gouines, et Tapettes*:

Gender-Based Stereotypes of Homosexual Characters

The power of language to reinforce prevailing societal attitudes shows itself strongly when it comes to gender and sexual stereotypes. Filtered through another society's language, cultural prejudices often change in intensity, and sometimes a set of negative attitudes in one culture can be portrayed as neutral in another (all relative to the resources available in the given language as well as the contextual social environment), or vice versa. For example, a word with a pejorative connotation in French may be subtitled as a neutral expression in English. Even within a particular language the signified can be perceived differently depending upon the arbitrary signifier used, and this phenomenon is particularly salient in interlingual discourse.

When applied to marginalized groups, language becomes particularly charged, and subtitling can alter the message of the original dialogue. The original text often contains variants of different words even within the SL and the subtitled text necessarily undergoes shifts in meaning that often render the text inaccessible to the TL audience on certain levels. Words known to have a particular semantic impact in the SL, such as insults, can lose their negative connotation in the TL, either due to a conscious choice on the subtitler's part, the unavailability of a direct equivalent in the TL, or the time and space constraints discussed in Chapter One.

In the films selected for this chapter, the characters describe and address male and female homosexuals as well as a character with cross-gender identification. The following examination is not a complete discussion on queer studies, although certain aspects of queer theory come into play when labels are involved, and there is still a lot of

research to be done in the field of queer theory in the area of French cultural studies, as Heathcote suggests (8). My work will, however, address a set of specific issues related to the linguistic treatment of homosexual characters in subtitles. For example, in what ways does the translation of certain elements in the films—forms of address and general terminology used to refer to homosexuals in French and their English denotations and connotations—change the meaning for the TL viewer? Further, what are the implications of these differently rendered translations and how do those renderings affect cross-cultural perceptions?

2.1 What Do You Call It? *Pédé*, *Tapette*, and Other Terms

Before launching any discussion of gay terminology as it applies to translation of film dialogue, it is important to define some of the expressions most frequently used to denote members of the homosexual community in the films selected. What do these names mean to the persons using them and what is the effect on the person or persons hearing them? These affect-laden terms have psychological, social, and sociolinguistic connotations which convey in varying degrees in the subtitles.

In the American idiom, many words exist to describe homosexuals, with varying degrees of neutrality and negative contexts. The extremely charged nature of certain negative contexts prompted the inclusion of special usage notes following the definitions in the *American Heritage Dictionary*, Fourth Edition (2000) entries for both *gay* and *homosexual*, clearly expressing a preference for *gay* and *homosexual* as the most neutral or unmarked ways of referring to members of this community:

The word *gay* is now standard in its use to refer to homosexuals, in large part because it is the term that most gay people prefer in referring to themselves. *Gay* is distinguished from *homosexual* primarily by the emphasis it places on the cultural and social aspects of homosexuality as opposed to sexual practice. Many writers reserve *gay* for males, but the word is also used to refer to both sexes; when the intended meaning is not clear in the context, the phrase *gay and lesbian* may be used. Like the other names of social groups derived from adjectives (for example, *Black*), *gay* may be regarded as offensive when used as a noun to refer to particular individuals, as in *There were two gays on the panel*; here phrasing such as *gay members* should be used instead. But there is no objection to the use of the noun in the plural to refer collectively either to gay men or to gay men and lesbians, so long as it is clear whether men alone or both men and women are being discussed. (729)

The usage note for *homosexual* contains similar language:

Many people now avoid using *homosexual* because of the emphasis this term places on sexuality. Indeed, the words *gay* and *lesbian*, which stress cultural and social matters over sex, are frequently better choices. *Homosexual* is most objectionable when used as a noun; here *gay man* and *gay woman* or *lesbian* and their plural forms are called for. It is generally unobjectionable when used adjectivally, as in *a homosexual relationship*, although *gay*, *lesbian*, or *same-sex* are also available for adjectival use. See Usage Note at *gay*. (842)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition remains noncommittal. Used as an adjective, *homosexual* is defined as: “Involving, related to, or characterized by a sexual propensity for one's own sex; of or involving sexual activity with a member of one's own sex, or between individuals of the same sex.” The entry for the nominal form is similarly neutral: “A person who has a sexual propensity for his or her own sex; *esp.* one whose sexual desires are directed wholly or largely towards people of the same sex” (“homosexual”). Similarly, the *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* describes *homosexual* as “1. involving sexual attraction to persons of the same sex. 2. concerning homosexual relations or people,” with the nominal form simply stating, “a homosexual person.” The

American dictionary contains less detail in terms of description of sexual preference than the British version.

The French language also contains the terms *gay* and *homosexuel* (or *homo*), functionally equivalent to the English expressions in their neutrality. The *Robert Dictionnaire d'aujourd'hui* (hereafter the *Robert*) cross-references the second definition of the word *gai* (460, 466), giving the adjectival form as an Anglicism, “relating to male homosexuals,” and the nominal form in an example: “The gays” (my translation).⁴⁰ *Homosexuel, lle* (504; the feminine form is also provided) appears as “a person who feels a sexual attraction for individuals of his or her own sex” (“*Personne qui éprouve une attirance sexuelle pour les individus de son propre sexe*”) (my translation).

Certainly, many other, many more derogatory expressions exist in French as well (such as *pédé*, *tapette*, *gonzesse*, and *tante*, among others), but this study will focus on where the two languages intersect and where there is divergence between the *signifié* and the *signifiant* when these words appear in various contexts. In their discussion of the historical background of homosexuality in France, Heathcote et al. mention that the French chapter of Act Up “encourages the homosexual to assume a homosexual identity . . . yet it also seeks to go beyond identity politics by replacing the term ‘gay’ with the more fluid and provocative ‘pédé’ or ‘homo’” (11). So, given the wide spectrum of meanings for the term, what is the effect of *pédé* as it is used in these films, and how well do English translations reflect the various connotations based on situational usage?

⁴⁰ “gai, gay.” 2. *Anglic. Relatif aux homosexuels masculins. n. Les gays.*

Another term frequently used in the films is *tapette*, defined quite differently in various French dictionaries.⁴¹ The *Robert* gives a standard definition for the expression, with no reference to sexual connotation: “Racket made of reeds to beat rugs or for killing flies” (my translation).⁴² *Larousse*, on the other hand, mentions under its fourth entry for *tapette* “*homosexuel*,” indicating, however, that this is a familiar or nonformal usage of the term (1537). The online dictionary *Le Dictionnaire de la zone* gives the idiomatic meaning for *tapette* as well—as a derogatory term for homosexual—and even provides synonyms: “Feminine noun. 1. Effeminate man. 2. Passive homosexual. 3. Cowardly man. (my translation).⁴³ Certainly, the terms *tapette*, *folle*, *tante*, and *pédé* are well-known and considered as pejorative, insulting terms by SL audiences. The *Dictionnaire des cultures gays et lesbiennes* discusses how Raymond Queneau, in his 1959 work *Zazie dans le Métro*, attempts to use the phenomenon of the double meaning of these types of words for comic effect:

‘So what exactly is a *tante*?’ Zazie asked him casually, as if she were an old friend. ‘A fairy? A queer? A fag? A homosexual? Are there nuances?’ Queneau, who thought this so funny, also had Zazie say, ‘No, my uncle is not a queer,’ while said uncle performed a transvestite dance. Should *Zazie in the métro* be classified as a work containing provocations to discrimination?’ (my translation). (459)⁴⁴

⁴¹ The following French dictionaries have been used for the terms that follow: *Le Robert: Dictionnaire d’aujourd’hui* (1991); *Dictionnaire Larousse pour la maîtrise de la langue française, la culture classique et contemporaine* (1993); *Le Dictionnaire de la zone* (2006) (particularly for vulgar terms not found in standard references); *Dictionnaire des cultures gays et lesbiennes* (2003). The following English dictionaries inform the discussion of similar terms: *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* (1999); *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1989); *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000). Full bibliographic information appears in the Works Cited section at the end of this work.

⁴² “Raquette d’osier pour battre les tapis; pour tuer les mouches” (993).

⁴³ “Tapette. nom féminin. 1. Homme efféminé. - 2. Homosexuel passif. Syn. tafiole, tarlouze. - 3. Homme lâche, peureux. Syn. gonzesse, lopette, tafiole.”

⁴⁴ “‘Qu’est-ce que c’est au juste qu’une tante? lui demanda familièrement Zazie en vieille copine. Une pédale? Une lope? Un pédé? Un homosessuel? Y a des nuances?’ Queneau, qui s’en amusait tant, a

The editors of the *Dictionnaire des cultures gays et lesbiennes* clearly question Queneau's motivation for using these offensive words. Queneau, known for his propensity for playing with the language, most certainly enjoyed the opposition between *oncle* (uncle) and *tante* (aunt), an opposition that does not translate into English in the same way. This wordplay interested Queneau more than any desire to provoke discrimination, and his ironic use of derogatory gender labels deliberately provokes and offends, satirizing conventional linguistic discriminatory labels for homosexuals.

The labels used to reference members of the homosexual community often reveal underlying attitudes by the persons using these denotations about these marginalized persons. Two of the main tenets of queer theory cited by Anna Livia and Kira Hall with regard to gender labels are *linguistic determinism*, based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which states that "the language one uses determines one's perception of reality" and *linguistic relativism*, where "one's native language exerts a strong influence over one's perception of reality" (Livia and Hall 8). Livia and Hall contend that "[f]or many queer theorists, linguistic determinism still appears to be a highly influential concept" (9).

In attempting to make connections between linguistic determinism and gender linguistics, Livia and Hall mention Benjamin Whorf's Eskimo snow hoax, in which he claimed there were hundreds of words for snow, showing the importance of the word to the culture (10). Conversely, Livia and Hall argue that

the absence of discrete lexical items is understood to indicate that the concept itself is lacking from the culture under investigation, as we saw earlier in reference to the term *homosexuality*, which, as Foucault pointed out, was not coined until the late nineteenth century. (10)

également placé dans la bouche de Zazie: 'Non, mon oncle n'est pas une tante,' le dit oncle présentant un numéro de danse travesti. Faudra-t-il classer *Zazie dans le métro* comme œuvre comportant 'des provocations à la discrimination'?"

While for Foucault the act of naming homosexuality brings it into existence (43), the dearth of terms for homosexuality, especially relatively late in the development of the language, suggests the minority status of homosexuality in the culture as well as the refusal to recognize homosexuality by naming it. In English, the term *homosexual* was only first documented in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1892 as an adjective and in 1912 as a noun.⁴⁵

Similarly, the word *lesbienne* in French did not come into use until the nineteenth century (and *homosexuelle* did not appear in the *Nouveau Larousse illustré* until 1904); until then, the word *tribade*—of Greek origin, coined by Henri Estienne (who was inspired by the Latin poet Martial’s use of *tribas* in the first century A.D., the Latin term coming from Greek *tribein* meaning “to rub”) and meaning “she who couples with a person of her own sex and simulates the man” (Bonnet 150)—was used to refer to female homosexuals (Bonnet 147, 149). The word *lesbian* was first cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1890 as an adjective and in 1925 as a noun (“lesbian”).⁴⁶

Linguistic relativism certainly affects members inside and outside the gay community, and, clearly, the English and French languages both contain pejorative terms to describe homosexuals. Members of the gay community (or members of any marginalized community) become familiar with such labels early on. They, along with

⁴⁵ “1892 C. G. CHADDOCK tr. *Krafft-Ebing's Psychopathia Sexualis* III. 255 He had been free from homo-sexual inclinations. *Ibid.* 256 The homo-sexual woman offers the same manifestations, *mutatis mutandis* . . . 1912 E. PAUL tr. *A. Moll's Sexual Life of Child* v. 127. An adult homosexual who as a child once did some needlework for a joke . . .”

⁴⁶ “Lesbian” appears in the *OED* as both an adjective: “Of a woman: homosexual, characterized by a sexual interest in other women. Also, of or pertaining to homosexual relations between women,” and as a noun: “A female homosexual.” Similarly, the term is listed as “a homosexual woman” (nominal form) and “of or pertaining to homosexuality in women” (adjectival form) in the *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*.

the other members of the language community, learn many of these words even before they have established a sexual identity, and the effect is that by the time they reach puberty, they are already self-conscious and know they are targeted by these harmful expressions.⁴⁷ Despite an increased awareness of and sensitivity to gay rights over the years, anti-gay sentiment still exists in France as in the U.S. In their introduction to *Gay Signatures: Gay and Lesbian Theory, Fiction and Film in France, 1945-1995*, Heathcote et al. remark that homophobia is still a strong force in France, and this homophobia is reinforced by language, as evidenced by politician Jean-Marie Le Pen's success with the ultra-right-wing Front National (3). Le Pen has been criticized for using the injurious term *sidaïques* to refer to HIV-infected gay men instead of the more objective *sidéens* (Heathcote 3).⁴⁸ Is the situation any different in the U.S.? In recent American history, the issue of same-sex marriage has provoked many anti-gay diatribes, threatening a trend toward acceptance. The anti-gay contingent, through repetition of derogatory expressions in their discourse, further marginalizes the gay community.

Judith Butler has discussed the performative nature of speech with regard to gender identity, maintaining that it is through repetition of certain rule-governed discourses that identity is invoked:

the injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes: to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once. (185)

⁴⁷ *Dictionnaire des cultures gays et lesbiennes* 265.

⁴⁸ According to the French website *Act Up Paris*, the term, coined by Jean-Marie Le Pen, is particularly offensive since it rhymes with "judaiques" (Jews), "people that [Le Pen] dreams of locking up in camps . . . for many, this term is neutral, and that is already a victory for Le Pen. We must remind you here, the term *sidaïque* is injurious, insulting and dangerous" (my translation). ("Ce mot, pourtant, a été forgé de toutes pièces par Le Pen, qui fait rimer "*sidaïques*" avec "*judaiques*" - toutes personnes qu'il rêve d'enfermer dans des camps. "*Sidaïques*" : pour beaucoup, ce terme est neutre - et ça, c'est déjà une victoire de Le Pen. Il faut donc le rappeler ici, le terme de sidaïque est blessant, insultant et dangereux").

Livia and Hall elaborate on this theory, expanding it beyond the discursive act:

[g]ender is performative because, as with the classic utterance, “It’s a girl,” statements of gender are never merely descriptive but prescriptive, requiring the referent to act in accordance with gender norms and, moreover, to create the appropriate gender in every culturally readable act she performs, from the way she combs her hair to the way she walks, talks, or smiles. (12)

Since the pejorative names necessarily predate their cultural use, “[n]o movement for the reclamation of pejorative epithets such as *dyke*, *faggot* and *queer* ever succeeds in eradicating their pejorative force entirely; indeed, it is in part due to their emotive charge that we are moved to reclaim them in the first place” (Livia and Hall 12).

Arnold Zwicky echoes this sentiment somewhat in his discussion on the lexical items available for referencing sexual orientations and people of differing orientations (22). Like Livia and Hall, he specifically mentions several “reclaimed epithets,” such as *dyke*, *faggot*, and *queer*. Though the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists *dyke* simply as a “female homosexual” or “a masculine woman,” without assigning any connotative qualities to the term,⁴⁹ Zwicky distinguishes the word *dyke* from the more neutral *lesbian* by virtue of its “‘in your face’ stance or degree of ‘butchness’” (22). Although *dyke* has been reclaimed, as has *faggot*, it has only lost its meaning as an epithet for certain persons, primarily those within the lesbian community. In heterosexual discourse, the term largely retains its disparaging association. *Faggot* and *queer*, similarly, have only been reclaimed by certain members of the culture. In fact, the word *queer* represents a

⁴⁹ dike, dyke, *n.*³ *slang*. [Of obscure origin.] A lesbian; a masculine woman. Also *attrib.* 1942 BERREY & VAN DEN BARK *Amer. Thes. Slang* §405/3 Masculine woman, *dike*, *dyke*. 1959 F. NORMAN *Stand on Me* iii. 37 Nearly everyone is kinkey on dykes for some reason. 1964 E. AMBLER *Kind of Anger* ii. 54 You know about that dike partner of hers? 1965 ‘E. MCBAIN’ *Doll* (1966) vii. 92 ‘Was your wife a dyke?’ ‘No.’ ‘Are you a homosexual?’ ‘No.’ The *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* simply provides “a lesbian” for the term.

“generational clash with many older speakers finding it irredeemable and many young speakers preferring it to *gay*. In addition, some have seized on *queer* as an umbrella label for the the ‘sexual minorities’ [i.e. homosexual, bisexual, transgender, and transsexual people, transvestites, BDSM, etc.]” (Zwicky 23). This type of reappropriation has been tried with the French language as well. In France, lesbians in the Mouvement pour la Libération des Femmes (MLF), including Monique Wittig and Christine Delphy, attempted to reappropriate the word *gouine* by adding *rouge* to the title, but this was quickly abandoned, as it “did not create a social identity that could be readily assumed” (Bonnet 162).

These terms and other ways of referring to homosexuals and homosexuality will be examined through intertextual analysis of subtitles in the three primary films *My Life in Pink*, *The Closet*, and *French Twist*. Each film treats a different aspect of homosexuality: *My Life in Pink* depicts a young boy’s desire to be a girl; *The Closet* relates the story of a heterosexual man pretending to be homosexual to keep his job; and *French Twist* deals with a *ménage à trois* between a married couple and a lesbian.⁵⁰ Additionally, examining the subtitles in *The Spanish Apartment*, *Wild Reeds*, and *Sitcom* will provide further insight into the nature of gender-based referential language as it translates into the English idiom, since these films all feature secondary characters identified as homosexual. *La Cage aux Folles*, though chronologically outside the scope of this study, deserves mention as well, since it is the first French film to feature homosexuals in a positive light.

⁵⁰ A more detailed synopsis of all the films can be found in Appendix A at the end of this work.

In *My Life in Pink*, given that the central issue is not really of sexuality but simply gender identity (the prepubescent protagonist, Ludovic, is only seven years old and presumably has not extended his identification beyond his outside appearance and place in society), there are very few overt references to homosexuals. Effeminizing expressions such as *tapette*, however, do occur in the dialogue in reference to Ludovic. *The Closet*, on the other hand, treats gender identification of a different sort, as the protagonist is not gay but presumed to be, and all the characters discuss François' newly discovered homosexual identity, naming it in various ways, using terms such as *folle*, *pédé*, *fiotte*, and *tante*. The characters in the third film, *French Twist*, make mainly deprecatory references to lesbians, using expressions such as *gouine* and *brouteuse*, although the lesbian character Marijo, as a member of the in-group, generally refrains from making derogatory references. Naming in all the films is a prerogative associated with three categories of characters: those considered tolerant towards homosexuals, those who have an unfavorable attitude towards homosexuals, and self-identified or perceived homosexuals.

In each film, the French dialogue contains commonly used expressions to refer to homosexuality and homosexuals. In most instances these expressions are subtitled into less-than-equivalent (sometimes neutral or pejorative where the original SL does not convey this) terms in English. For example, *pédé*, which conveys the sense of *faggot* in the SL but which is subtitled as *homosexual*, will necessarily leave the TL viewer with a far different impression of the dialogue than the one given in the original dialogue, as *faggot* carries a much more aggressively hostile connotation than the neutral *homosexual*. In this case the subtitle substitution is particularly curious, since *faggot* in English carries

nearly equivalent cultural and linguistic significance as *pédé*. The terms can be examined from various perspectives: who is using it, whether the user is a member of the in-group in question, and the character's attitude towards homosexuality in general within the framework of the narrative. Sometimes an equivalent translation is either not possible or is not used for technical reasons; other times the translation results in a diluted version of the original text, lacking nuance in some discernible way. Still, it is often the case that the subtitler finds a workable solution to the translation dilemma by finding a reasonable cultural or linguistic equivalent in keeping with Nida's theory of equivalence or by making up the difference somewhere else in the text, since translation (and screen translation) is not simply a paradigmatic operation performed by merely inserting an equivalent TL word for each SL word but is also a syntagmatic operation carried out by consideration of the sense rendered by the combined words. Yet another problematic area for subtitlers working in French to English translation is the use of feminizing terms in the SL, especially with regard to the use of gendered language to talk about members of the homosexual community.

2.2 Omissions

As mentioned above, usually the subtitles reflect an attempt to convey the text in the source language, whether it be through equivalencies, exact translations or a minimized form of the source text; however, sometimes either the nature of the differences between French and English renders some expressions untranslatable or the subtitler has simply chosen not to translate them, even where it would appear there were no time or space constraints.

In the following example, a three-word difference would have better nuanced the interpretation. In *My Life in Pink*, when Hanna and Pierre, Ludo's parents, take him to a psychiatrist, Hanna tells the psychiatrist, "On voudrait qu'il soit bien dans sa peau" (32:11), or literally, "We want him to feel good in his skin," a commonly used expression in French. Hanna's remark correlates with Ludo's feeling that his body has betrayed him by not being that of a girl, thus causing him problems in school and with his parents. The English subtitle is, "We want him to be happy," although "He should feel good in his skin" would have better maintained the implication that Ludo feels he does not belong in his body. Arguably, the expression is not as commonly used in English as in French, but it is clear enough to be understood by an English-speaking audience, and omitting it causes a reduction in meaning and a loss for the TL audience. Since the subtitler for the film was not credited—the distributor, Sony Pictures Classics, provided the subtitling—the subtitler's linguistic perspective cannot be considered in the analysis of this film.

Sometimes opportunities for equivalency are simply lost, even where an idiom exists in both languages. Again in *My Life in Pink*, when Granny discusses a friend's son who wore a dress for a week but then lost interest, saying, "Au bout d'une semaine, c'était fini, la jupe est restée dans le placard" (37:31) (literally, "Within a week it was all over, finished; the skirt stayed in the closet"), the English subtitle, "Within a week it was all over," seems insufficient and unfortunate, since the metaphor of the closet exists in English as well. In this instance, however, the subtitler chose to abandon the closet metaphor in order to include the more important information about the impermanence of the friend's son's fixation with wearing a dress.

Other omissions can more significantly affect the dialogue by the lack they create.

In *The Closet*, when Kopel (the boss) calls a business meeting to discuss the matter of Pignon's newly-discovered homosexuality, he addresses the potential problems.

Si on le vire, ce type, maintenant, on va avoir le mouvement gay et lesbien sur le dos, et ça, il n'en est pas question! (17:40)	If we fire him, we'll have every gay movement on our backs!
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In English, "lesbian" likely was omitted for space considerations; perhaps "every gay movement" represents an attempt to compensate for this omission, but the subtitle effectively categorizes homosexual men and women together as "the Other" in the English. While Kopel carefully made the distinction between men and women in the French, this omission removes yet another layer of meaning to the subtitled version, especially since gays and lesbians have long since been considered distinct groups in England and America.

Another omission occurs in *The Closet* when Belone, the neighbor, utters the word *pédé*, yet the expression is omitted in the subtitles.

Belone to François (14:29)	Vous avez parfaitement raison; si vous essayez de jouer les pédés, vous allez vous planter lamentablement.	You're right. If you camp it up, you'll be a flop.
----------------------------------	---	--

Belone's status as a gay man may give him an insider's permission to use the term, whereas its use by members outside the community might be considered bigoted.

However, the term is avoided in the English text and simply subtitled as "camp it up."

This particular rendering may reflect Vinay and Darbelnet's theory of transposition,

"replacing one class of words by another without changing the meaning of the message"

(94), stating that while French tends to be expressed in nominal expressions (as in the use

of *pédé* above), English shows a preference for verbal expressions (100). So, from the context, there is no way to determine whether *pédé* is linguistically neutral in this instance. Because it is Belone who uses the word, it may assume neutrality, which may account for its being untranslated in this case. Further, denying Belone the use of the word in the subtitles undermines his appropriation of the term as an insider, which then alters TL viewer perception of him as an agent of the gay community embracing derogatory terminology in order to render it neutral.⁵¹

Comments by characters definitively portrayed as anti-homosexual, however, are not completely deprived of their derogatory impact, though certain imagery has been abandoned. Félix Santini, the macho rugby coach, represents homophobia in its most exaggerated form by his grossly caricatured persona, supplemented by his language, which establishes his point of view almost immediately. His comments in the office instantly compromise the professional mood (17:41):

Les pédés, il vaut mieux les avoir sur le dos que dans le...	Better to have them on your back than up your...
---	---

This pejorative use of *pédé* injected by Félix in the French becomes subtitled simply as “them,” leaving only the context to imply the derogatory connotation. However, in subtitling “them” in the English, Félix’ method of distancing himself in the SL is retained quite effectively in the subtitles, even though space would have allowed “fags” or “queers” instead of “them.”

Most of the dialogue in *French Twist*, on the other hand, is translated, but there are some interesting omissions, starting with the title, *Gazon maudit* in French, which in addition to being a “sporting term used in football to signal a jinxed pitch” (Hayward

⁵¹ The concept of in-group usage of derogatory terminology is discussed in greater detail on page 74.

133) is also a nineteenth-century expression, attributed to Baudelaire, that means “cursed lawn,” or “cursed pubic hair,” since this area of a lesbian is inaccessible to heterosexual men (Cairns 233; Waldron 78). *French Twist*, on the other hand, has no underlying significance as a title initially, but simply seems to indicate the film’s comedic nature. However, after watching the film, the TL viewer might have a tendency to perceive the title as a negative statement about “twisted sexuality,” with even more offensive overtones than the expression *gazon maudit*, as well as perpetuating stereotypes about the “racy” French. When Laurent reveals to his friend Antoine that Loli is sleeping with Marijo, Antoine confesses he feels intimidated by lesbians. Though Antoine uses opprobrious expressions in 1) below, he is nevertheless portrayed as a sympathetic character who uses the terminology more unconsciously than maliciously, and yet *gouine* approaches the vulgarity and insulting nature of *pédé*, whereas *dyke* in English, while pejorative, does not carry the same deprecatory significance:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1) | Antoine to
Laurent
(23:48) | Et moi, une fois je suis allé
dans une boîte de gouines
et je me sentais déjà
efféminé sur le champ. | I went to a dyke
bar and I ended up
feeling effeminate. |
| 2) | Laurent to
Antoine
(24:03) | Je comprends qu’elle soit
de la pelouse ; elle est
dégueulasse et n’a pas le
choix. | I know why she’s a
dyke . She has no
choice. |

In 2), Laurent uses *de la pelouse*, a colorful metaphor lost in the English translation. This injurious expression, literally translated as “one who likes the lawn,” meaning female pubic hair—i.e., genitalia—reduces the woman to a body part, further demonstrating Laurent’s vulgarity and misogyny and recalling the film’s French title (*pelouse*, lawn, is a synonym for *gazon*). Though similar euphemisms exist in English (“carpet muncher” equals the French expression in crudeness and sexist imagery), the

vulgarity of the expression, including *dégueulasse*, meaning “disgusting,” and by extension, the vulgarity of Laurent, have not been fully rendered in the TL. The double entendre in French provides a layer of meaning that the SL viewer will only fully appreciate after this comment by Laurent, and one not available to the TL viewer.

Another example of wordplay omitted from the translation, this time due to its lack of corresponding alliterative form in the TL, occurs when Laurent says, “Il devrait y avoir des boîtes de gouines en Guyane,” translated as “There must be dyke bars in Guyana,” a literal translation, but one that seems hopelessly inadequate. An additional layer of meaning is forfeited because the SL viewer will recognize the historical allusion to the French penal colony in Guyana, so Antoine’s antipathy towards Marijo is expressed twofold in the SL dialogue with this idea of banishment. Though the criminal connotation of Guyana cannot be adequately rendered in the TL dialogue, a possible way to move closer to the original dialogue would have been to name a far-off city alliteratively compatible with “dyke” (such as Dakar, perhaps), as was done with the “gay Parea” reference in *Le Placard*, which will be examined later (*cf* 97).

2.3 Nuances

Often, however, dialogue does get translated, but with subtle losses of meaning compared to the original. Several of the films studied offer clear examples of situations in which the force of the original spoken language gets diluted in the translation. While the subtitle conveys a reasonable linguistic facsimile, certain nuances are missing.

In *My Life in Pink*, for example, the SL audience shares the confusion of the protagonist, Ludo, since he feels that he has not only been betrayed by nature but also by

the very language he uses every day. The unsympathetic characters in this film use anti-homosexual language surreptitiously; nowhere in the spoken dialogue do the neutral expressions *gay* or *homosexuel* appear, though neither do expressions like *faggot* or *queer* in the subtitles. Naming occurs much more subtly so that even the object of the epithets is not aware he or she is being insulted. For example, in *My Life in Pink*, when Ludo is referred to as a *tapette*, he does not understand the insult, but only recognizes the expression in its primary, more innocuous usage, meaning a flyswatter. SL audiences will recognize that certain codes in the language remain unknown to Ludo because of his young age, such as the double meaning of *tapette*, but his linguistic confusion does not get translated to full effect in the English subtitles.

The first overt reference to homosexuality in the film occurs during an exchange between Ludo's father's boss (Albert) and another neighbor (Thierry). The two men, obviously homophobic and threatened by Ludo's gender identification, treat Ludo's "condition" as dangerous and possibly contagious:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Albert to
Thierry (34:15) | Tu sais que ta fille a
traité mon fils de
"tapette?" | You know your
girl called my son
a "bent boy?" |
| 2) | Albert to Thierry
(34:49) | Retiens bien ça,
Thierry: Chez nous,
on n'a pas de tapette!
Compris? | Get this, Thierry.
Nobody in my
house is bent! |

Ludo overhears this exchange and immediately goes to his father for explanation, not knowing that his questions will start an inflammatory reaction:

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) | Ludo to father
(35:07) | C'est quoi, une
tapette? | What's "bent"? |
| 2) | Father to Ludo (with
flyswatter) (35:50) | Ça, c'est une
tapette! | That's a bent boy! |

In English, though the term “bent” is common, TL viewers will have to understand the usage in context. Again, a loss results from the fact that no play on words exists in English between *bent* and *flyswatter* (the latter being the first and most common definition of *tapette*). An English-speaking boy would surely know the meaning of *bent*, a common word, but at seven years old would not apply it in a sexual context. Moreover, *bent* in English has negative connotations (not upright, *détourné* somehow), whereas *flyswatter* serves to name an object, not describe it. Of course, all this is lost on Ludo, who is both sexually and linguistically naïve. Moreover, the TL spectator may also miss this connection, affecting his or her understanding of the character of Ludo’s father as a result, even though the character development of the parents Pierre and Hanna, through the changes they undergo revealed by their linguistic choices, plays an important role in the development of the narrative.

Hanna, an erstwhile defender of Ludo, finally yields to societal pressure by adopting a negative view of homosexuality (or actually, in this case, female gender identification) when Ludo is expelled from the school after assuming the role of Snow White in the school play. Ludo finally learns the double meaning of *tapette* when vandals spray-paint “*Dehors tapettes*” (“Bent boys [or “flyswatters”] out”) on the family’s garage door (1:07:59).⁵² He asks his mother, “Pourquoi il faut mettre le machin pour chasser les mouches dehors?” (Literally, “Why do we have to put the thing to swat flies out?” subtitled as “Why do bent things have to go out?”). She responds, “Une tapette c’est aussi un garçon qui aime les garçons, comme toi,” or, in English, “‘Bent’ means a boy who likes boys, like you do.” (1:08:37) From a translation perspective, the fact that

⁵² In her article, Lucille Cairns translates this expression as “Poofs out,” but does not make clear whether this is her interpretation or a British version of the subtitles (125).

there is no direct correlation at the word level for the injurious *tapette* in English proves problematic. Plenty of words exist to describe a homosexual, certainly, but in this context, it would be difficult to find a more workable equivalent than “bent.” Moreover, the phonetic resonance of the feminine term *tapette* cannot be rendered in English.

Another word, non-offensive in its primary meaning but derogatory when applied to a male, is the word *gonzesse*. When Ludo’s sister Zoë starts her period, Hanna tells her, “C’est la preuve que tu es une vraie petite gonzesse maintenant” (45:02) (“You’re a real little lady now”), and Ludo overhears this exchange. Hanna intentionally uses *gonzesse* playfully, in its primary denotation, a slang expression meaning “chick.” However, *gonzesse* also has a double meaning for which the TL translation cannot compensate, and can mean *homosexual* when used to address a male, an example of feminizing discourse (like *fille* or *tante*) when applied to a male. So when Ludo asks, “C’est quoi la preuve que tu es une vraie gonzesse?” (45:33) (“Why are you a real lady?”), the SL audience can appreciate the play on words and anticipate Ludo’s disconnectedness with the mature sophistication of the double entendre. Ludo’s unfamiliarity with nuance underscores his innocence and adds a poignant dimension to his character that TL audiences will necessarily miss.⁵³

⁵³ Zoë’s response, “C’est que j’ai mal au ventre” (45:30) (“Stomach pains”), as well as her insistence that it’s not diarrhea, but “les règles” (45:40) (“No, my period”) confuse poor Ludo even more. “Pour mesurer?” Ludo wants to know (“Like a free period?”). The translation approaches equivalence, since “period” has multiple meanings in English, too. *Règle* (also “ruler” in French) and “period” (“free period”) can both correspond to classroom vocabulary with which the literal, naïve Ludo ought to be quite familiar. “Non, les règles, c’est les règles” (45:42), Zoë continues. (“Period, period.”) Here the sense of “period” (“that’s all”) effectively adds a third layer to the word not present in the French dialogue, texturing the meaning in a way consistent with the literal versus figurative play on words throughout the film, giving the TL audience access to a double entendre, which often they would not have, as with *tapette* (see 62-63). Even so, the subtitles do not provide an alternate meaning of *règle* for the non-French-speaking audience. A bit later on, Ludo excitedly announces: “Maman! J’ai mal au ventre! C’est les règles!” (1:08:19) (“My tummy aches! It’s my period!”), using the word but not really knowing its meaning. He only knows that using the word *règles* (or “period” in English) in this way somehow confers upon him access to the female community.

The difficulty of rendering wordplay creates another translation dilemma in *The Closet* during a conversation between Félix and François when they go to lunch. Félix suggests a drink, which François refuses. Félix answers, “Moi, je vais boire. Ça me rend gai. Enfin, je veux dire pas au sens . . .” (27:30) (“I’ll drink. Makes me gay. I didn’t mean it that way . . .”) Frustrated at his own awkwardness, Félix gives up. This translation is comprehensible in English, and the joke is not lost, but the virtual disappearance of the original meaning of “gay” in the English language has rendered this joke much more forced in English than in French, since *gai* still commonly means “happy” in French (the primary definition of the term), and belongs to an everyday lexicon; this may perhaps lend credence to the idea that *gay* in French is less neutral than in English due to the double identity of the term.⁵⁴

In addition to missed opportunities to render wordplay, *The Closet* also contains many examples of diluted translations in which the word *pédé* has been translated inconsistently, often diluted of its full connotative impact when used by what are perceived to be sympathetic characters. There are many possible reasons for this

⁵⁴ An interesting translation situation, though not directly related to terms discussing homosexuality, occurs in the film’s final scene as François summarizes the situation (01:17:16):

Toute ma vie, on m’a reproché d’être chiant, Monsieur le Président. Aujourd’hui, on m’a traité de chieur; je considère ça une promotion.	My whole life I’ve been called a drag. You called me a pain—that’s a step up the ladder.
---	--

Regrettably, the wordplay between *chiant* and *chieur* is lost here. Both on the semantic and alliterative level, the TL does not provide an opportunity to end the film on a clever note, foregrounding the difference an alternate form of a word can make. Still, a bit of wordplay exists in the English if one considers the performative notion of “drag” relevant to François’ ruse, which, unlike the SL dialogue, obliquely refers to homosexuality. This late commentary by François may provide the film’s moral—what counts most is a person’s personality, not his or her sexuality. If the TL viewer interprets the word “drag” to include a reference to homosexuality, this moral is diluted somewhat.

inconsistency. Heathcote et al. make the following observations with regards to the term *pédé*:

the gap between the old homophobic, passive term '*pédé*' and the more active, homophilic term '*gai*' (and '*gay*', naturalized French during the 1970s) is still being negotiated[.] (6)

Definitions of *pédé* in leading French dictionaries vary from source to source,⁵⁵ but generally the term is considered an abbreviation of *pédéraste*, recalling the etymological origin of the term referenced in *Le Robert* rather than simply describing an attraction to members of one's own sex. Even within the gay community, its use among members provokes great controversy, despite efforts to reappropriate the expression and endow it with a positive connotation.⁵⁶ As noted by members of the English-speaking gay

⁵⁵ *Le Robert* (734) gives the following definition for *pédéraste*, for which *pédé* is considered to be an abbreviation: "1. One who practices pederasty. 2. Homosexual. Pederasty being defined as: 1. Homosexual practice between a man and a young boy or an adolescent." (1. Qui s'adonne à la pédérastie. 2. Homosexuel.—Cour. et péj. *pédé* (souvent injurieux). « pédérastie, n.f. 1. Pratique homosexuelle entre un homme et un jeune garçon ou un adolescent. 2. Abusiv. Homosexualité masculine.) (my translation)

Larousse, on the other hand, gives a more neutral definition (1171), but only provides the term as it applies to the concept, not to the individual. Nowhere is the term flagged as pejorative or injurious: "pédérastie, n.f. Attirance sexuelle d'un homme pour les jeunes garçons. 2. Homosexualité masculine."

Online dictionaries are equally inconsistent. *Le Dictionnaire de la zone* attributes to the term a pejorative aspect: "1. Homosexual, pederast. 2. Injurious term: 'Get lost, dirty faggot!' Used to describe something unfitting for a man or not having a virile character." (1. Homosexuel, pédéraste. 2. Terme d'injure: 'Dégage, sale pédé!' ■ de *pédé* expression. Se dit d'une chose indigne d'un homme ou n'ayant pas un caractère viril.) (my translation).

⁵⁶ In the online forum *monchoix.net* (**Figure 1** below), 41 subscribers identifying themselves as homosexual addressed the question: "When you talk about yourself, do you say you are: *gay/lesbienne* [gay/lesbian]; *pédé (PD)/gouine* [fag/dyke]; *homosexuel(le)* [homosexual]; *autre* [other]; *j'évite de le qualifier* [I avoid naming it].

Figure 1.		
Quand vous parlez de vous, dites-vous que vous êtes:		
Gay / Lesbienne	41%	[17]
PD / Gouine	19%	[8]
Homosexuel(le)	26%	[11]
Autre	4%	[2]
J'évite de le qualifier	7%	[3]
Total des votes: 41 (http://forums-archive.monchoix.net/ftopic2309.html)		

community for the counterpart “homosexual,”⁵⁷ *homosexuel* was deemed too clinical and too referential of the sexual aspect of gay identity only—*gay* and *lesbienne* were preferred.⁵⁸ Others would use *pédé* and *gouine* among friends, but never among family members. The general consensus, however, was that *pédé* and *gouine* were offensive. While the study is far from scientific (not controlling for factors such as the respondent’s age or that only certain individuals are likely to answer an online survey), it does reveal general tendencies. This study indicates that even within the in-group these terms are often not acceptable, yet most of the characters in *The Closet* use these terms, including characters thought to be sympathetic. Further, the selective translation evidenced in the subtitles undermines the cultural significance of the characters’ lexicon in the SL. Though *The Closet* provides a wide variety of terms to denote homosexual,⁵⁹ the film contains twenty-six usages of the word *pédé*, as outlined in **Figure 2** below:

⁵⁷ LGBT Resources and Information (Case Western Reserve University) states: “[t]he word Homosexual is a clinical term used to refer to people who are sexually attracted to members of their own sex.” <<http://www.case.edu/provost/lgbt/lgbtqia.html>>

⁵⁸ The GLAAD (The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) website advises: “Please use ‘lesbian’ or ‘gay man’ to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. Because of the clinical history of the word ‘homosexual,’ it has been adopted by anti-gay extremists to suggest that lesbians and gay men are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered—notions discredited by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using ‘homosexual’ except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using ‘homosexual’ as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word ‘gay.’”

⁵⁹ In French: *pédé, fiotte, folle, tante, salope*. In English: faggot, fag, fruitcake, fairy, sissy, fruit, flamer, and queen.

Figure 2. Translations of *pédé* in the film *Le Placard*.

Character	Neutral (“gay”)	Negative (“faggot” or “fag”)	Avoided
Guillaume	3	2*	0
Mlle Bertrand	3	1	0
François	2	1	0
Belone	2	1 (“queer”)	1
Kopel	1	1	0
Franck	1	0	0
Ariane	0	1	0
Agnès	0	1	0
Félix	0	1	1
Christine	0	1	0

*One of these is in response to Félix’ use of the word; in fact, he calls attention to the word as an insult: “Arrête de le traiter de pédé!”

In fourteen of these instances, the term is interpreted neutrally in English (as “gay” or “homosexual”); in ten instances, it is used in a pejorative sense (“faggot,” “fag” or “queer”) and in two cases, it is avoided entirely in English. Where *pédé* is subtitled as *gay*, only the characters depicted as sympathetic use the term in this way.

It would seem that context (the circumstances, the individual speaker, and his or her motivation) strongly influences the interpretation of the term in the subtitles.

Homosexuel, like its English equivalent *homosexual*, comes across as neutral throughout the film. The term *pédé*, however, does not enjoy a consistent interpretation.

Belone, the gay neighbor, consistently uses *pédé* in the way that English speakers would use *gay*—as an unmarked synonym for *homosexual*: “Si tout le monde suit votre exemple, il y aura trois millions de chômeurs en moins et trois millions de pédés en plus dans l’entreprise” (23:03), rendered as “Three million less unemployed, three million more gays with jobs.” Belone’s usage of *pédé* confirms the idea mentioned in **Figure 1** above that many homosexuals have reappropriated the expression, though primarily among other members of the gay community.

Belone also seems to grant François permission to use *pédé*—a sort of linguistic entrée into the community—as they discuss Mlle Bertrand’s alleged sexual aggression following her abortive attempt to discover François’ true identity during an after-hours work meeting:

Belone to François (38:46)	Elle vous croit pédé— évidemment elle veut vous ramener dans le droit chemin—il y a des femmes que ça excite, ce genre de truc.	Reclaiming a gay man turns some women on.
François to Belone (41:10)	Qu’est-ce que ça peut lui faire que je sois pédé ou pas?	[What] Does she care if I’m gay?

François does not use the term consistently; in most cases he continues to use the more politically correct *homosexuel*, but *pédé* is always subtitled as *gay*; his linguistic sensitivity and respectful language reflect his general sensibilities as a person marginalized by his coworkers, his ex-wife, and his son.

Since *pédé* has been introduced by Félix, Kopel feels free to use it in his retort to Félix, though, again, *pédé* is rendered as *gay* (17:52):

Qu’est-ce que vous faites le samedi soir, Santini? Vous allez casser des pédés, je suppose? Et vous faites ça où? Au Bois de Boulogne? la chasse aux travelos?	What do you do on Saturday nights, Santini? Gay bashing? Where do you go? The park, to hunt drag queens?
--	---

Immediately following the meeting, Guillaume admonishes Félix for his insensitive comments (19:04):

Tu passes pour un grand macho qui casse des pédés.	You’re known as a macho gay- basher.
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These translations seem appropriate in that the collocation *casser des pédés* roughly approximates *gay-bashing* in English.

Though “gay-bashing” functions as an equivalent to *casser des pédés* in the two examples above, other nuances do not get translated to full derogatory effect in the subtitles. In an attempt to “cure” Félix of his homophobia, or at the very least make him aware of his bigotry and more mindful of his language, Guillaume suggests Félix take François to lunch, to which Félix responds predictably, according to the norms of his established persona as a homophobe:

Je ne vais pas déjeuner avec cet enfoiré. (19:12)	I won't have lunch with that fruit!
--	--

Félix' reply, using the vulgar *enfoiré* (“fuckhead” in English), shows his hostility. The English translation of “fruit” is much less injurious than the French term. The subtitles that follow reflect an attempt to compensate for this diluted translation. Guillaume, discussing François' victimization by the office thugs, refers to it as “Leur façon de dire qu'ils n'aimaient pas les pédés, je suppose” (“A way to say they hate gays”) (49:32). François uses the term *pédé* a second time, again not in a malicious sense, but almost as if mocking the judgmental Christine by appropriating her vocabulary, and, in keeping with the sympathetic nature of François' character, the word has again been rendered as the neutral “gay”:

François to Christine (1:14:39)	Il a besoin d'un père, pédé ou pas.	He needs a father, gay or straight.
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As filmic dialogue often functions as a device to signal unsympathetic characters, the subtitles underscore this tendency to typify characters by their choice of language. Generally (except in moments of extreme emotion as described above), the more sympathetic characters (Mlle Bertrand, Guillaume, Kopel, François) tend to use words like *homosexuel* or *pédé* in a neutral sense (or at least they are subtitled as such), whereas

the less understanding characters (Ariane, Ponce, Alba) pepper their discourse with negative epithets. For example, Ariane immediately reveals herself as an unsympathetic character by dint of her particular lexicon, reflected in the subtitles, when referencing François:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1) | Mlle Bertrand to Ariane (33:09) | Plus un pédé ne s'habille comme ça depuis notre époque...elles ont 20 ans ces photos! | No gay wears lederhosen now! These photos are 20 years old! |
| 2) | Ariane to Mlle Bertrand (33:37) | Qui a intérêt à le faire passer pour un pédé ? | Why make him look like a faggot ? |

The two statements above (one immediately following the other) both contain the word *pédé*, but the English interpretation differs with the speaker. Mlle Bertrand's use of *pédé* in 1) is unmarked, as evidenced by the translation "gay" (as opposed to "fag" or "queer," for example). But when Ariane uses *pédé*, subtitled as "faggot" in 2), it follows in sharp contrast to Mlle Bertrand's more measured, neutral description of François.

Mlle Bertrand, a sympathetic character, has almost consistently been subtitled as using "gay," and she liberally uses *pédé* in the original. When she first considers Ariane's comparison of François to a pigeon, she jokes, "*Ils sont pédés, les pigeons?*" (20:10) ("Are pigeons gay?"), with no trace of hostility. Even when she later confesses to François that she had been aware of his ruse all along, Mlle Bertrand uses *pédé*, rendered once again as "gay."

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Mlle Bertrand to François (1:08:30) | Puis un jour, ce bonhomme est apparu sur une photo en pantalon cuir, les fesses nues, et dans les bras d'un pédé. | One day, I saw a photo of you, bare-assed, being felt up by a gay. |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|

When Franck sees his father François in a Gay Pride parade on television, he immediately contacts him, clearly pleased that his erstwhile drudge of a father apparently leads an unconventional, secret life. Franck uses the term *pédé* immediately and in a definitively neutral sense after showing his mother the tape of François in the parade (1:02:57):

C'est parce qu'il est **pédé** que tu l'as quitté? Did you leave him 'cause he's **gay**?

François maintains a professional register when he explains to Mlle Bertrand why his wife agreed to see him:

Et là elle a accepté parce qu'elle est intriguée par cette histoire d'**homosexualité**. (1:09:09) Now she's agreed, intrigued by this **gay** thing.

The translation in *The Closet* contains nuances sometimes not even present in the SL version, such as the consistent use of neutral and offensive terms by sympathetic and unsympathetic characters for the majority of the film (except in the examples cited later in this chapter, where emotional outbursts trigger a loss of linguistic composure). In the following films, however, those sorts of nuances do not appear. For example, in *Sitcom*, when the father uses the term *pédérastie*, rendered in English as the less historically and contextually charged term “homosexuality,” an unfortunate loss of meaning results, since the TL viewer will not connect the negative connotations of *pédérastie* (a root of *pédé*) with the general term used in English,⁶⁰ and so may miss the incestuous desire hinted at on the father's part:

⁶⁰ See note 49.

Father, talking about Greeks (15:36)	La pédérasie, c'était une véritable institution dénuée de sa culpabilité.	Homosexuality was an institution free of guilt.
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Despite the fact that certain concepts cannot be fully conveyed, often either direct translations are possible or the subtitler finds a workable solution that provides a degree of equivalency. If the literal translation is not possible, the subtitler often attempts to compensate for the loss elsewhere in the text. This type of adaptation takes into account Vinay and Darbelnet's theory of equivalence:

[A] translation process that takes into account the same situation as in the original by resorting to an entirely different rendering of the text.
Example: 'the story so far: résumé des chapitres précédents.' (my translation) (8-9)⁶¹

This translation strategy appears in *The Closet*, in the examples below, where Félix' use of *les types qui abandonnent le pantalon* (literally, "guys who give up pants") seems consistent with his macho persona:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1) Félix to
Guillaume
(16:05) | Mais ça ne m'étonne pas. Je l'ai essayé dans l'équipe une fois, et, croyez-moi, on voit tout de suite les types qui abandonnent le pantalon. | Not [surprising] to me. I tried him out at rugby. You can spot them at once! |
| 2) Félix to
Guillaume
(16:13) | Il s'est péte la clavicule. Ça a dû le gêner pour mettre ses bas. | Broke his collarbone! Had to give up pantyhose! |

The English translation presents the dialogue as more neutral: "them" in 1) refers to gays, but not in such homophobic terms as expressed in French. Possibly, the next translation of Félix' diatribe with his reference to "pantyhose" at 2) above represents an attempt to reinvolve the *pantalon* comment.

⁶¹ "Procédé de traduction qui rend compte de la même situation que dans l'original, en ayant recours à une rédaction entièrement différente.) Exemple: 'the story so far: résumé des chapitres précédents.'"

In *My Life in Pink*, an attempt to compensate for the loss of “good in his skin” (cf 59) appears in the dialogue between Pierre and Albert: “depuis qu’il va chez la psychologue, c’est vraiment du passé” (38:55) (literally: “since he has been going to the psychologist, it’s really in the past”). The English version, “The therapist has set him *straight*,” has the effect of imparting additional meaning to the phrase which can only come from the English association of “straight” with “heterosexual.” To be set “straight,” one has to be off of the regular path somehow, so here the term has prescriptive connotations, providing additional nuance to Pierre’s statement in the English that the French does not provide.

In yet another example of equivalency and a creative shifting of words to create a more precise, if not exact, translation, Ludo’s reference to himself as a “*garçon-fille*” (43:47) is rendered in English as “girlboy” (rather than boy-girl), the reversal possibly to avoid confusion with the English counting collocation “boy-girl, boy-girl,” used when making seating charts at a dinner table, for example. The above samples illustrate the importance of considering a multitude of factors influencing the choice of terms in the subtitled version, from the narration and role of the characters to the specific lexical usage in each culture. Additionally, the subtitler must consider other factors when translating the SL dialogue, such as the role of the character’s relationship to the group in question.

2.4 In-Group and Out-Group Usage

2.4.1 In-Group Usage—Neutralization, Reclamation, and Reappropriation

As with many terms for members of a certain group (and as mentioned above), insiders often use derogatory expressions in a way that neutralizes the injurious effect normally associated with these terms if an outsider uses them. Belone and Pignon, both insiders, each use *pédé* and *homosexuel* to this effect at different moments:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) | François to
Belone
(12:20) | Mais je ne suis pas
homosexuel du tout! Je ne
pourrais jamais jouer aux
homosexuels. | But I'm not at all
gay! I can't fake
being gay. |
| 2) | Belone to
François
(14:31) | C'est beaucoup plus
difficile qu'on imagine,
surtout les folles. | It's hard,
especially
playing a flamer. |

In 2), at 14:31, Belone distinguishes between *pédé* and *folle*, in a lexical sense, simply to denote a flamboyant homosexual. “Flamer” has the same meaning in English.

Belone even uses the expression *pédé* to refer to himself in an ironic sense (51:26):

- | | |
|--|---|
| Entends, Pomponette? Si tu
n'avais pas déclenché le vieux
pédé d'à côté, il vivrait tranquille,
le pauvre Pignon. | Hear that, puss? You seduced
an old queer, wrecked his
neighbor's life. |
|--|---|

Still, regardless of François' perceived insider status, as the unpleasant thought of coming out, not just within his work environment, but to the public, cements itself in his consciousness, François' language changes. In the dialogue below, he seems to be distancing himself from the in-group, both by his use of *folles* (“flamers,” in 1)) and *pédés* (“fags,” in 2)). This is the only occasion in which François' use of the term *pédés* is subtitled as “fags.” François does not use the term consistently in the SL; in most cases

he continues to use the more politically correct and generally innocuous *homosexuel*, and the subtitles reflect these distinctions most accurately:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | François to
Belone (58:39) | C'est parce que je le
deviens mais ça me gêne de
défiler avec des folles. | In a parade of
flamers. |
| 2) | François to
Belone (59:26) | Je vais défiler samedi avec
des lesbiennes et des pédés. | Next, I parade with
fags and dykes. |

Similarly, in *French Twist*, Marijo, a member of the lesbian community, avoids the use of *gouine* and instead uses slang expressions that are more descriptive than connotative. During her conversation with Loli (at 14:10), describing a bar where she used to work (and to “come out” to Loli), she uses the expression “bar à touffe,” both *touffe* and *muff* slang (and considered vulgar) terms for the vulva:

C'est un bar à touffe.	It's a muff bar.
------------------------	------------------

The expression *bar à touffe* recalls *être de la pelouse* used by Laurent earlier (cf 62-63), but in this instance the subtitle conveys the vulgarity of the term in an equivalent corresponding expression; unlike Laurent, Marijo uses this expression as a way of reclaiming it, once again as an insider of the lesbian community. Although Marijo avoids using deleterious language when referring to lesbians, she does not hesitate to engage in other types of name-calling when provoked. As the two women compare stories of their partners' infidelities, she uses vulgarity, underscoring her anger and sense of betrayal. The hitherto very proper Loli does the same. In both cases, this usage seems appropriate and deliberate and is rendered in the English subtitles:

1)	Marijo to Loli (14:56)	La connasse que j'ai trouvée au lit avec Fabienne, c'était une Québécoise.	The bitch I found in bed with her was from Quebec.
2)	Loli to Marijo (15:05)	Moi aussi, ça m'est arrivé. Pareil. À la maison avec une pouffiasse.	It happened to me too. I found a slut in my home.

In the subtitles, *bitch* and *slut* seem equivalent to *connasse* and *pouffiasse* in both connotation and intensity. Marijo uses these female-centered epithets without making reference to the women's sexual orientation as lesbians, but simply from her perspective as a partner scorned, directly followed by the comments of Loli, similar in their connotative intensity. When talking about or to Marijo, Loli avoids derogatory name-calling, for Marijo is simply Marijo to her, and Loli feels no need to label or categorize her. Similarly, Marijo calls her other lesbian friends and the other characters by their first names.

2.4.2 Out-Group Usage—Selective Translation Expressing Emotion

Characters definitively belonging outside the community use the same language to both neutral and pejorative effect, and when the characters feel in command of their emotions, they tend to speak correctly and respectfully when referencing the gay characters, but not so in moments of anxiety or anger. In *The Closet*, the subtitles do not completely reflect abrupt shifts in register resulting from changes in the speakers' attitudes brought on by emotional distress. For example, the boss, Kopel, attempts to convey sympathy and neutrality, but occasionally his linguistic choices betray his emotions. After he has seen the incriminating photographs of François, Kopel's ambiguity about the situation reveals itself in his use of both unmarked and marked labels.

1)	Guillaume to Kopel (16:02)	Si seulement il y avait une lettre anonyme, je ne sais pas moi . . . dans le style de “Licenciez Pignon et demain toute la presse saura comment vous traitez les homosexuels dans votre boîte.”	If only there was [sic] an anonymous letter—“Don’t fire Pignon! We’ll tell the media you hate gays.”
2)	Kopel to Guillaume (16:10)	C’est pas parce qu’il est homosexuel qu’on le vire! J’ai rien contre les homosexuels!	We’re not firing him because he’s gay! I’ve got nothing against gays!
3)	Kopel to Guillaume (16:21)	Il fait chier, ce pédé!	Damn that faggot!

In 1) and 2), Guillaume and Kopel use *homosexuel* in a nonjudgmental, neutral way to refer to gay individuals, especially in a professional setting. However, once Kopel reflects further on the situation, he unleashes his frustration, changing in 3) from *homosexuel* to *pédé* (used here as an insult, and for which *faggot* functions as a reasonable equivalent). His abrupt change in mood and loss of composure is signaled by his change in register from the formal parlance in 1) and 2) to his use of the extremely familiar and vulgar expression “Il fait chier” (*chier* meaning to defecate; *faire chier* meaning to piss someone off) that has a much stronger effect than *damn*—*faggot*, however, partially reveals the register change, but to a lesser degree.

To help “cure” Félix of his homophobia (but also to involve Félix in a scheme that Guillaume and his cronies feel will teach him a lesson), Guillaume suggests Félix take François to lunch. Félix responds predictably to this idea, according to the norms of his established persona as a homophobe, linguistically underscoring the conditions

inspiring Guillaume and his colleagues to educate him on political correctness in the workplace:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1) | Guillaume to Félix (18:02) | Tu passes pour un grand macho qui casse des pédés. | You're known as a macho gay-basher. |
| 2) | Félix (18:19) | On vire les gens normaux et on garde... | They fire straights and keep on every stinking... |

In 1), Guillaume's use of *pédé* is translated neutrally in English as gay (again, Guillaume as a sympathetic character has not been portrayed in the subtitles as one who would use a word such as "faggot"). In 2), the addition of the word "stinking" in the subtitles represents an attempt to reflect Félix' resentment towards gays (seeing them as an aberration) when he uses *les gens normaux*, since the literal translation yields "They fire **normal people** and keep . . .," a sentiment not rendered in the neutral term (in this instance, simply meaning non-homosexual) "straights," although the English subtitles appear rather aggressive compared to the original French text. One could argue, however, that placing homosexuals outside the "normal" category represents a linguistically passive-aggressive act in the French, and the English subtitles appear to approach equivalency. In other contexts, the term "straight" can have a prescriptive meaning, as seen in *My Life in Pink* (cf 77), where Pierre says, "The therapist has set him straight."

As Guillaume and Félix continue to discuss the prospective lunch with François, their rather strong language is translated faithfully, or clever equivalents are provided:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Félix to
Guillaume
(24:06) | Je sais pas quoi lui
dire! Je me trouve au
restaurant avec ce pédé
. . . je sais pas quoi lui
dire. | What'll I say to him?
Eating alone with that
faggot! |
| 2) | Guillaume to
Félix (24:11) | Arrête de le traiter de
pédé! | Stop saying “faggot”! |
| 3) | Félix to
Guillaume
(24:27) | De quoi est-ce qu'on
peut parler, bordel? On
n'a rien en commun
avec cette petite fiotte! | What can I talk about
with that sissy? |
| 4) | Guillaume to
Félix (25:06) | Faut casser ton image
de casseur de pédé, tu
comprends ça? Bordel! | Get rid of your fag-
bashing image, damn
it! |

In 1), the meaning of *pédé* is intensified by the use of *faggot* in English, establishing *pédé* in this instance as an insulting term (*faggot* is unambiguously so). Guillaume takes it that way and reacts accordingly in 2). *Sissy* in 3) works as a reasonable, if slightly tempered, translation of *fiotte*, a diminutive of *fille* (“girl”). In 4), *pédé* retains its negative incarnation according to the context, and this negative connotation is shown through its translation as *fag* in English. *Bordel*, a mild expletive, also colors the dialogue, signaling their frustration with each other, represented by the equally mild *damn it* in 4), once again revealing the subtlety of the subtitles in *The Closet*.

After the disastrous lunch, Guillaume feels he must put even more pressure on Félix to be kind to François:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1) | Guillaume to Félix (31:44) | On dit que tu dois être homosexuel pour t’entêter à les détester comme ça. | You hate gays because you’re a latent one. |
| 2) | Guillaume to Félix (31:53) | On pense que tu es homosexuel à cause de ta haine des homosexuels— en t’affichant avec un homosexuel, tu démontres que tu n’es pas homosexuel. | If they call you gay ’cause you hate gays, hang out with one to show you’re not gay! |

Eventually, Félix’ attitude toward François changes, and the shift in language seen above by Kopel, signaling a shift in emotion or attitude, occurs in translations of Félix’ and other characters’ dialogues as well.

Félix changes his linguistic dynamics dramatically during the film; he displays a newfound affection and sympathy for François and tempers his language accordingly. This abrupt (exaggerated, to be sure) linguistic and personal transformation, by nature of its existence as well as its suddenness, functions as a comic device both in French and in English. For example, after Félix has befriended François, he begins to care about him. Félix even buys François a present for his *fête* (subtitled as *birthday*, because the tradition of honoring one’s patron saint’s day does not exist in Anglophone culture, and a literal translation would only obfuscate the story line). As Félix tries to explain to his wife Agnès why he bought François a pink sweater, he uses the more politically correct *homosexuel* for the first time, subtitled as “gay” in the English: “Il est homosexuel et c’est sa fête. Voilà.” (49:05) (“He’s gay and it was his birthday”). To this, Agnès retorts: “Tu as offert un pull à un homosexuel?” (49:11) (“You gave a sweater to a gay guy?”). She, too, uses the softer, more neutral *homosexuel*, or *gay*.

Later on in the discussion, however, as Agnès becomes angrier and more threatened by Félix' obvious affection for François (she no longer regards François as just a gay co-worker, possibly to be pitied, but as a formidable rival for her husband's affections), her tone changes, as can be seen in 1) and 2):

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Si j'ai parfaitement compris, tu fais la cour à un homosexuel pour ne pas être viré de l'usine? (53:34) | I do [understand]. You're courting a gay guy to keep your job. |
| 2) Tu m'entends, Félix? Pour plaire à ce pédé tu lui as offert un pullover et tu le revisites avec des chocolats? C'est quoi la prochaine étape— Venise? (53:45) | You buy that faggot sweaters and chocolates! Next a Venice weekend! |

Significantly, Agnès uses *pédé* in 2)—like Kopel, her frustration causes her to use it pejoratively; *faggot* is a reasonable substitute in English.

Other secondary characters in the film shift from using neutral terms to derogatory expressions as a function of rising emotion. Like Kopel, Christine uses neutral terms for homosexuals (rendered in the subtitles) until she becomes angry. Her change in temperament becomes apparent through her progression from neutral to disparaging discourse. With François, Christine initially uses the unmarked *homosexuel*:

- | | | | |
|----|---|--|---|
| 1) | Christine to
François
(1:04:15) | Tu deviens homosexuel? | Are you gay? |
| 2) | Christine to
François
(01:12:06) | C'est quoi, cette histoire
d'homosexualité? | What's all
this that
you're gay? |
| 3) | Christine to
François
(01:12:53) | J'ai accepté ce dîner parce que
je t'ai vu en train de faire le
clown sur un char dans un
défilé d'homosexualité et tu
m'avais promis des
explications. | I agreed to
come
because I
saw you in a
gay parade. |

As the conversation becomes more heated and Christine loses her composure, however, her vocabulary changes. She clearly realizes that François is not gay, but she seeks to injure him with her words nonetheless:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1) | François to
Christine
(1:17:00) | Je ne suis pas
homosexuel. | I'm not gay. |
| 2) | Christine to
François
(1:17:30) | Je trouve malsain qu'un
garçon commence à
admirer son père parce
qu'il le croit pédé. | A boy shouldn't
admire his father
for acting like a
fag. |

Even the most sympathetic female character, Mlle Bertrand, finally shatters her veneer of political correctness (much in the same way as did Kopel, Agnès, and Christine) when she discovers François has accused her of sexual harassment: “Il m'accuse . . . oh, le pédé!” (44:02) (“He accused me . . . that faggot!”). Her anger is conveyed not just through her tone but also in the choice of words rendered in the English. Finally she is using *pédé* with the usual connotation—this step out of her typical linguistic reserve reveals to the TL audience that she has lost her sangfroid.

The connotative translations in *French Twist* by the characters in the out-group are the most consistently equivalent of all the films examined. When Loli doesn't notice that Marijo is a lesbian, Laurent points it out to her:

T'as pas remarqué que c'est une gouine, toi? (10:56) Can't you see she's a dyke?

Laurent consistently uses the term *gouine* throughout, reinforcing his image as homophobic and patriarchal. When he discovers Loli's attraction to Marijo, his anti-lesbian sentiments are intensified by his jealousy, but even before he is aware of Marijo as being a threat, he freely uses the word *gouine*. The English translation, *dyke*, has similarly negative connotations,⁶² and as in French, *dyke* is used as an insult. Later on, Laurent, in an attempt to rationalize his infidelity to Loli and explain why Loli's affair with a lesbian is different from his womanizing, he similarly uses the injurious *pédé* (at 31:29) to refer generally to gay men:

Mais moi, c'est normal. J'ai pas baisé un pédé. I never screwed a fag.

Marijo and Loli, as members of the in-group, do not generally use derogatory terms such as *gouine* or *pédé* to refer to lesbians or gay men. Antoine and Laurent, however, perhaps in a caricature of homophobic male hostility, use *gouine* throughout, though Laurent has a more personal motivation than Antoine for using hostile language.

⁶² The website *The Free Dictionary.com* describes *dyke* as "a disparaging term for a lesbian."

Later in the dinner, Laurent begins admonishing Loli about her flirtation with Marijo. Marijo returns to the table, having missed the exchange:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1) | Marijo
(25:54) | De quoi parlez-vous? | What are you talking about? |
| 2) | Loli
(25:56) | Des pédés, des gouines et de la pénétration. | Fags, dykes and penetration. |

As did François in *The Closet* during his conversation with Christine (cf 73), Loli is simply appropriating Laurent’s discourse, but in this case to mock and shock him. As Loli becomes more confident with her situation, she becomes more assertive in her language, and this confidence is rendered in English as well as in French.

Occasionally, even the unimaginative Laurent varies his name-calling:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1) | Laurent to
Loli (34:57) | Pourquoi tu ne vas pas trouver ta brouteuse en son joli minibus? | Why not go see bushwhacker in her pretty van? |
| 2) | Laurent to
Loli (44:01) | Quoi qui se passe—tu m’entends, Loli?—quoi qui se passe, je ne veux plus voir cette bonne femme dans la maison. | Whatever happens, Loli, whatever happens, I don’t want this diesel in my house. |

Notably, in the French, Laurent calls Marijo a “bonne femme” in 2), using the term ironically, as this term can be considered an insult in French, particularly in this context. Laurent’s use of *bonne femme*, a relatively mild term, following his use of the highly offensive *brouteuse*, demonstrates his instability (foreshadowing the film’s conclusion, when he becomes dominated by the women) as well as his inability to use the non-offensive neutral term *lesbienne*. For *bonne femme*, the English translation contains a harsher term, *diesel* (actually an adjective in the expression *diesel femme* or *diesel dyke*,

typically denoting a lesbian who drives a truck).⁶³ The English text matches the French text perfectly in the following excerpt:

Laurent to	Sous son toit, dès qu'il avait	As soon as he was
Antoine	le dos tourné, hop, on est allé	away, they'd start
(40:32)	brouter un petit peu le gazon.	bushwhacking!

In fact, only at the very end of the film, when she becomes jealous of Marijo's former lover Dani, does Loli resort to derogatory terminology in reference to lesbians for the first and only time:

Je ne vais pas les supporter—tant	I'm not putting up with dykes!
de gouines! (1:25:00)	

Loli also uses the expression *moche* (“ugly”) to describe Dani and refers to Dani's friend as a *parachutiste*, the latter presumably an insult as well.⁶⁴

The use of epithets by characters in *French Twist*, as in the other two films, seems to be dictated by the characters' functions in the film. The unsympathetic characters (Laurent, Antoine) use slurs to accentuate their bias, whereas the sympathetic characters (Loli, Marijo) tend to avoid this usage unless provoked. The subtitled expressions conform to the French in most cases in connotative intensity, on the linguistic, social, and cultural levels. However, these expressions have also been diluted somewhat in various incarnations, reflecting the influence of cultural and/or personal choices on the part of the subtitler.

⁶³ A website on lesbian terminology describes a diesel dyke as “a very butch or manly lesbian, especially one who is very aggressive. Or it can mean a very butch Big-Rig (or other heavy equipment) driving lesbian.” (<<http://lesbianlife.about.com/od/subcultures/g/DieselDyke.htm>>)

⁶⁴ Waldron 74.

2.4.3 In-Group and Out-Group—A Linguistic Coming Out

Self-referential language by homosexuals appears in *The Spanish Apartment* as well. The lesbian character, Isabelle, represents homosexuality in a very open way, and her choices are consistent with Marijo's in *French Twist*—she avoids epithets, but simply calls herself a lesbian, which is subtitled faithfully in the English version:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1) | Isabelle to Xavier
(46:51) | Quoi—heh heh heh heh? C'est ma copine. | What? She's my girlfriend. |
| 2) | Xavier
(46:53) | Vous avez fait des trucs? | Did you "fool around?" |
| 3) | Isabelle
(46:55) | Xavier, oui, on a fait des trucs. C'est ma copine, je te dis. | Yeah, she's my girlfriend. |
| 4) | Isabelle
(46:59) | Ma femme, quoi. Je suis lesbienne. | My woman, whatever. I'm a lesbian. |

Girlfriend, used in 1) and 3), does not always signify a sexual or emotional relationship in English (a woman could discuss spending an evening out with her "girlfriends," for example), but in this context: "She's my girlfriend," the possessive adjective *my* and the singularity of the complement most probably delineates a special dating relationship, as does the French *ma copine*. In 4), the English dialogue, unlike the French, on the other hand, allows no ambiguity concerning the word *femme* in French, since *wife* has not lexically evolved as a descriptor for lesbian partners due to widespread cultural restraints.⁶⁵

Since Xavier and Isabelle share a preference for women, when Isabelle uses argot to commiserate with Xavier about how difficult women are, her use of argot in the discourse creates further camaraderie at the word level, reinforcing the fact that they

⁶⁵ In current French, *femme* can signify "wife" or "woman," though two words distinguish *homme* ("man") and *mari* ("husband"), a sexist disparity not found in English.

belong to a certain group whose members prefer women, a group that happens to be lesbian in Isabelle’s case. This usage is consistent with the *Oxford American Dictionary* definition of argot as “the jargon of a group or class,” if lesbians and heterosexual males can be considered as belonging to the same class in the context of the film (“argot”):

Isabelle to Xavier (47:29)	Elles sont <i>tarrées</i> , les <i>meufs</i> , je te jure.	Chicks are wacko, I swear!
-------------------------------	---	-------------------------------

Meufs (an example of verlan—a French argotic form in which the second syllable of a word is pronounced first—for *femmes*) is subtitled as “chicks,” an approximate equivalency. *Tarrées* is also a rather informal term for “crazy,” and “wacko” serves this connotation well.

Xavier, curious, asks Isabelle how sex works between lesbians:

Xavier to Isabelle (1:04:45)	Je me suis toujours demandé . . . vous utilisez jamais des trucs, genre god, avec des filles?	I always wondered . . . do you ever use, like, dildoes with girls?
------------------------------------	---	---

Though the two characters appear to agree philosophically and sexually in the film, their different gender identities further reveal themselves as they continue their discourse. Isabelle uses the term “woman” or “women” (*femme* or *femmes*) consistently, whereas Xavier tends to refer to them as “girls.” Whether or not they view this disparity differently is a matter of speculation. Isabelle, a member of the in-group as a woman and a lesbian, may have a greater sensitivity to the impact of words than Xavier:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| 1) Isabelle
(1:04:54) | C’est marrant, parce que
souvent vous les mecs ne
comprenez rien aux
femmes. | It’s funny. Guys
understand nothing
about women. |
| 2) Isabelle
(1:05:00) | C’est con—je trouve
chaque sexe dans son coin
sans s’intéresser vraiment à
l’autre. | It’s ridiculous. Each
sex in their own
dark corner. |

Here again, in 1), Isabelle refers to women as *femmes*, but uses *mecs* in reference to men. There was space for “you” in front of “guys” in the English to reflect (“vous les mecs”), but it does not appear, most probably given the popular collocation “you guys” in English, which can be used as a simple collective term, synonymous with “you,” and often used nonspecifically, without gender identification, so this translation seems properly equivalent. In 2) (too long to render literally in the English), the attempt to convey the idea of each sex not being interested in the other and the unawareness that results is communicated by the word “dark” in English.

Earlier in the film, when Xavier and Wendy are discussing Isabelle’s lesbianism, cultural attitudes enter into their discourse. This conversation, like many in the film, is conducted in English, necessitating French subtitles in the original version. Here, Xavier’s discourse is subtitled using the neutral expression *gay* in French:

1)	Wendy (47:37)	Gay?	Gay?
2)	Xavier (47:40)	Yes.	Oui.
3)	Wendy (47:42)	She could have told us when we all spoke to her.	Mais on aurait pu nous le dire quand on lui a tous parlé.
4)	Xavier (47:45)	Come on, Wendy. She did not have to say it. How was she supposed to say it anyway: “I don’t have [a] dog, but I’m gay?”	Allons, Wendy. Elle n’avait pas à le dire. Comment elle était censée le dire n’importe comment? “Je n’ai pas de chien, mais je suis gay?”

Contrary to the message revealed in the subtitles in *The Closet*, “gay” emerges as a transparent term both in the SL and the TL (the characters using the word are presumed to be or at least want to seem accepting of the idea). The subtitles in French approximate

the length of the original dialogue, perhaps as a result of Xavier’s halting English. The subtitles represent practically a verbatim transcription of the English used, though the missing indefinite article—*a*—in the English dialogue in 4) has been reinserted in the French “Je n’ai pas **de** chien.” As Klapisch’s film focuses on tolerance of the Other—regardless of nationality, sexual orientation or class—even the subtitles in French respect this tolerance by rendering the subtleties of the English dialogue.

Both negative and neutral word usage also convey quite transparently in André Téchiné’s *Wild Reeds*. One of the young protagonists, François, uses negative language to discuss his own homosexuality to his friend Maïté. This language, meant to reveal his shame surrounding his homosexuality, is aptly conveyed in the English translation:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 1) | François
to Maïté
(48:53) | Je n’exagère pas. C’est
une malédiction en vrai. | I’m not. It’s a curse.
Really. |
| 2) | Maïté
(48:56) | Mais qu’est-ce que tu
racontes? Regarde
Cassagne. Il n’est pas
maudit du tout. Il vit avec
son ami. Ils sont très
heureux, très épanouis. | Stop. Look at
Cassagne. He’s not
cursed. He lives with
his <i>friend</i> . They’re
happy. |

In 1), the powerful negative effect of *malédiction* is preserved by *curse* in English, while at the word level in 2) the neutrality and ambiguity of the expression *son ami* is retained, since English *friend* doesn’t reveal the sex of the friend either. Had *ami* been modified with a pronominal adjective in French, the neutrality would have disappeared, where as English could have retained the neutrality (*cf ma meilleure amie* and *my best friend*).

Cassagne’s presence in the equation (expressed by “ils sont très heureux”) will automatically render any pronouns and adjectives referring to him and any friend, male or female, in the masculine plural form.

Later in the film, the word *pédé* translates to *faggot* in English, when François repeats it while looking in the mirror:

François (50:29) Je suis un pédé . . . I'm a faggot.

François repeats the sentence nine times, each time with progressively greater intensity. After three repetitions, the English subtitles disappear, as the English-speaking viewers should have surmised what the sentence means. English-speaking viewers will thus “learn” the meaning of *pédé* in this scene (not yet reappropriated in the early 1960s, the film’s setting, and always translated as “faggot,” reflecting the attitudes of the era) and may connect with its powerful negative connotations. Wendy Everett also remarks on the reference to both Narcissus and Lacan’s mirror stage as François comes to terms with his identity, discovering his own image, reflecting on his identity (55).

Throughout the film, the characters consistently use *pédé* as an epithet, represented by the English *faggot*:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|---|
| 1) | Maïté
(1:02:17) | Tu es un pédé immature et bourgeois en plus. Voilà ce que t’es. Ça y a eu. | You’re an immature, bourgeois faggot. That’s all. |
| 2) | Maïté
(1:03:03) | Il est très in petto, ton père. | Your father’s clueless. |
| 3) | François
(1:04:07) | Oui, qu’est-ce que tu veux? Il sait pas encore que je suis un pédé immature. | That I’m an immature faggot? |

When François attempts to get advice from Cassagne, a man he doesn’t know well but who is also gay, he uses *inverti* in lieu of *pédé*, a dated expression but representative of the language used at the time the film was set (during the Algerian War). This usage

seems logical, as it marks a telling difference between *queer* and *fag*, and *queer* has also been used less than *gay* in recent years:

François to Cassagne (1:28:27)	Je suis comme vous, je suis inverti, mais malheureusement j'ai pas de chance. Je n'ai pas encore rencontré l'âme sœur.	I'm like you—I'm queer, but I haven't met my soulmate yet.
--------------------------------------	---	---

The subtitles capture the French text quite efficiently but omit certain emotion-laden words that inform the viewer of François' struggles. The literal rendering would be: "I'm like you; I'm queer, but unfortunately I'm unlucky. I haven't met my soulmate yet." The subtitles do not convey this same spirit of confession or despondency about his current lack of companionship, and François, clearly nervous and embarrassed, appears in the TL version to minimize his emotions, representing a loss of dimension in the rendering of his character.

Like *Wild Reeds*, *La Cage aux Folles* reflects an early era. The 1970s-era resistance towards homosexuals is reflected in the subtitles; *pédé* is subtitled as a malefic invective, as *fag* or *faggot*. When Zaza walks into the bar, attempting to test his ability to pass as manly (imitating John Wayne's gait), he is immediately ridiculed:

Bar patron (50:06)	Alors, pédé!	Look at that fag!
--------------------	--------------	-------------------

Zaza quickly reports back to Renato, who then addresses one of the bar customers:

1) Zaza (50:14)	Il y en a un qui m'a traité de pédé.	Someone just called me a fag.
2) Renato (50:45)	C'est toi qui as traité mon copain de pédé?	Did you call my friend a fag?

Here, Renato refers to Zaza as "mon copain," since Zaza is attempting to appear macho, but the interpretation of *pédé* as "fag" is consistent. As the film dates from 1978, it is not surprising to find this consistently negative interpretation (*pédé/fag*) in both languages.

In *Sitcom*, François Ozon's black comedy about a dysfunctional family, one of the characters, Nicolas, comes out to his family. Like the characters in *The Closet*, characters who are sympathetic to (Nicolas, Sophie, Abdu) and unaccepting of (David) Nicolas' homosexuality all use the term *pédé*, but unlike the subtitles in *The Closet*, *pédé* is consistently subtitled in *Sitcom* as the negative "fag" or "faggot," while *homosexuel* is consistently represented as the neutral "gay" or "homosexual."

The significance of characters substituting terms is evidenced very early in the film. Nicolas calls himself a "homosexual" in his coming-out announcement. David immediately reacts negatively, and Sophie rebukes him for his use of *pédé*:

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1) | Nicolas
to his
family
(12:22) | J'ai quelque chose
d'important à vous dire.
Voilà. Je suis homosexuel. | I have something
important to tell you.
Here goes: I'm
homosexual. |
| 2) | David
(13:00) | Mais ça va sans dire.
Faites-moi confiance, parce
qu'à moi, les pédés . . . | You can count on me
there, madam. 'Cause
when it comes to fags
. . . |
| 3) | Sophie
(13:04) | Mais qu'est-ce qu'il lui
prend de parler comme ça.
Ça va pas, quoi . . . | Don't talk like that. |

Later, however, Sophie uses *pédé* both neutrally and pejoratively; neutrally, in a plea for acceptance of Nicolas:

- | | | |
|----------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Sophie (13:41) | Si Nicolas est pédé, il est
pédé, c'est tout. | Hey, if he's a fag, he's
a fag! |
|----------------|--|------------------------------------|

and pejoratively as a recrimination of her father:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|--|---|
| 1) | Sophie
(43:53) | Mon père—ce pédé! | My father...the
faggot! |
| 2) | Mother
(43:57) | Qu'est-ce que tu dis, Sophie?
Tu sais que c'est un
mensonge—ton père n'est
pas un homosexuel. | Watch your mouth,
Sophie. You know
your father's not a
homosexual! |

The mother maintains her neutrality in her discourse in 2). Abdu, another gay character, talks to Nicolas in neutral terms:

- | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Abdu (16:24) | Comment tu peux dire que tu
es homosexuel? | How can you say
that you're gay? |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|

Later, Maria and the mother both retain neutral discourse, reflected both in French and in English:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Maria
(17:16) | Dans la famille, nous avons
une tante lesbienne qui est
très sympathique qui vit
depuis 10 ans avec une
femme très masculine,
mais gentille. | I have a very nice
lesbian aunt. Her
girlfriend of 10 years
is quite masculine but
really sweet. |
| 2) | Mother
to Maria
(52:14) | Abdu est homosexuel? | Abdu is homosexual? |
| 3) | Mother
to Maria
(52:30) | Enfin, Maria, votre vie de
couple avec un
homosexuel, vous y
pensez? | Maria, what about
being married to a
homosexual? |
| 4) | Maria
(52:38) | Tu sais, ça m'arrange
plutôt. Les hommes m'ont
déçue. | That's okay with me.
Men have
disappointed me. |
| 5) | Maria
(52:41) | Je sens que j'ai des
tendances lesbiennes
comme ma tante. | I think I have a
lesbian side, like my
aunt. |

In this film, only those who feel anger, jealousy or disgust toward the gay characters Abdu and David (and this does not even include Abdu's wife, Maria, who accepts her husband's homosexuality) use deleterious terms when discussing or addressing the gay characters. The translations above function quite effectively to render the approximate sense of the SL dialogue. The clinical manner in which characters discuss Nicolas' homosexuality contributes to the unnatural feel of the film in general, meant to satirize the saccharine sitcom format, and the absence of lyricism and idiomatic expression in the dialogue may contribute to a more equivalent translation. As this film satirizes American sitcoms in particular, the political correctness conveyed in the language as a new form of bourgeois hypocrisy must have made it easier for the subtitler to translate into the TL.

2.5 Clever Solutions?

Though oftentimes the wordplay in French must be sacrificed in the English, given linguistic and cultural limitations in the TL or time and space constraints, occasionally the English subtitlers can provide an extra bit of wordplay based on the nature of English collocations, an unexpected gift for the TL audience, as in this exchange between Guillaume and Félix in *The Closet*:

Guillaume to Félix (24 :13)	Ça va t'échapper au restaurant, je te connais, tu vas lui dire, "On n'a pas de pédés au P.S.G."	You'll goof up and say, "Who needs gays in Gay Paree?"
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The "Gay Paree" translation is a clever way to avoid compensating for the names of soccer teams in France (P.S.G. stands for Paris-Saint-Germain),⁶⁶ with which English speakers may not be familiar, as well as retaining the alliteration of the SL dialogue.

⁶⁶ Official Paris-Saint-Germain website: <http://www.psg.fr/>.

However, the cultural element is absent from the subtitles, which do not reference the macho, testosterone-driven world of soccer, particularly the PSG fans, known for their violence, aggression, and racism.⁶⁷

In *French Twist* the rather homophobic and seemingly slow-witted Antoine's attention to the subtleties of language is surprising as he delights in the double entendre during the dinner scene:

Antoine	Il fait gaffe avec la paëlla.	Paella's dangerous. All it
(26:54):	Il suffit d'une moule...	takes is one clam.

Here, the subtitlers cleverly substituted the English counterpart to French slang for female genitalia, *la moule*. "Clam" is used more consistently in English; "mussel" is not used, though the term could even be construed in its homophonic sense as a misspelling of *muscle* in English.

Another clever solution is found in François' exchanges with Henri and Serge in *Wild Reeds*:

Henri to	Ne t'inquiète pas. Je	Relax. I'll send you
François	t'enverrai une carte postale	a postcard of nice
(1:31:36)	de Marseille, avec une belle	cocks. Coxswains
	bite, des barreurs de	from Marseille.
	Marseille. Sympa?	

In this exchange, the alliteration and association between "cocks" and "coxswains" works most satisfactorily. In 2) below, the subtitler made an elegant decision to rhyme "fish" and "swish," since no corresponding English expression exists for "*être pédé comme un*

⁶⁷ An article in the *International Herald Tribune* dated November 23, 2006 states: "There have been at least six incidents of major fan violence involving PSG supporters over the past 14 months" and "[o]vert racism is a common occurrence at the Parc des Princes, the home stadium of PSG."

phoque” (to be queer like a seal),⁶⁸ but “fish or a swish?” evokes the playful nature of the conversation:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1) François to Serge
(1 :34 :43) | Ah bon, je me dis, j’ai vécu comme un poisson dans une vie antérieure. | I must have been a fish in another life. |
| 2) Serge (1:34:46) | D’abord, plutôt un phoque? | A fish or a swish? |

These clever solutions attempt to bridge the linguistic and cultural lacunae that often separate the languages, bringing the TL audience closer to the original dialogue and providing important contextual nuances that often must be omitted for clarity and continuity. The relatively small number of instances in which this equivalence is achieved further demonstrates the limitations of linguistic and dialogic transfer between the SL and the TL. Double entendres and wordplay often take on a particular importance when used to express attitudes towards the Other; these comic devices can function as an expression of derision and antipathy, and the culture’s ambiguity towards homosexuality, even when couched in a “comedic” genre. As these methods have prominence in both French and English, the rendering of double meaning can have a particular salience, something the subtitlers who attempted the solutions listed above were cognizant of in their efforts to provide equivalencies.

2.6 Gendered Language

Aside from the question of lexical labels, another issue intrinsic to queer studies is grammatically gendered language. While “the dyadic structure of the linguistic gender system in French lends itself to a multiplicity of meanings . . . [and] . . . can express in-

⁶⁸ The expression “to be as queer as a seal” does not originate from a reference to the animal but most probably from ‘foc,’ a sail on a boat driven by wind behind it (Francparler.com).

group solidarity or outsider status, sympathy, or antagonism” (Livia 365), English, as a non-gendered language, cannot adequately express all these nuances. Livia and Hall indicate that “while grammatical gender in different languages may enforce a vision of the world as inherently gendered, the linguistic gender system also provides a means to express one’s relationship to the concept of gender” (14). Since French is gendered and English is not, losses in meaning and TL viewers’ understanding of the contextual clues can and do result from this difference.

Although, as Livia maintains, “gender distinctions in nouns and adjectives are tending to disappear . . . many French gay men are still using feminine terms to address or refer to others in the community, including their lovers and themselves—indeed, this practice is a staple of drag acts” (358). In other words, gay men and lesbians may not feel encumbered by the need to apply the established gender codes for their physical embodiment, but may instead select the term with which they most closely identify. Gay men will also use the female pronoun in English to refer to other gay men:

Speaker A: Speaking of fags, where’s Miss Thing?
Speaker B: You mean Ron?
Speaker A: Yeah.
Speaker B: I don’t know where she is. (Rudes and Healy 61)

Even so, as mentioned above, the gendered nature of the French language provides far more opportunities to make this distinction than does English; a closer examination of selected films below will show this difference. Where the sexual identity of the subject is ambiguous, French speakers can adapt the gendered nouns to make a feminine reference, for example. Livia cites an interview in *Paris-Match* in which Olivier Royant plays with the word *idole*, feminine in French, to “underline Michael Jackson’s

bizarre sexual status and way of life” (361).⁶⁹ These types of examples can also be seen in many films, and unfortunately these linguistically constructed commentaries are difficult if not impossible to reconstruct adequately in the subtitles. In contrast, masculine terms are rarely used in reference to lesbians, Livia notes (362), since masculine terms often simply represent the unmarked form in a gendered language (and even in a non-gendered language like English in such expressions as “Everyone has his book.”).

It is possible (as mentioned hereabove) to denote a gay character by using feminizing discourse in English, but many terms in French, with the various dimensions of meaning, cannot always be rendered in English. In the case of *The Closet*, several characters employ feminizing language to refer to François. Since English is non-gendered (possessing no feminine forms of adjectives, for instance), and feminization of names does not usually occur (other than, perhaps, adding Miss or Mrs.), many opportunities for transparency of subtle wordplay are lost in the subtitles in this film.

For example, when two of the characters in *The Closet*, Ponce and Alba, notice Félix waving to François in the cafeteria, they immediately poke fun:

T’as bon goût! Elle est mignonne, la Pignonne! (21:24)	You’ve got taste! Pignon is mignon!
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Two problems arise here for the subtitler. First, there is the troublesome rhyme with “*Pignon*” and “*mignon*,” which the subtitler chose to leave in despite the fact that *mignon* is not used in English (except in the expression “*filet mignon*,” which few English speakers may consider as two French word units). Second, the English translation cannot

⁶⁹ “Qu’arrive-t-il à mon idole? Il paraît qu’elle est en train de devenir raide dingue et c’est Michael Jackson...roi du disco . . . C’est elle et lui mon idole.” (“What is happening to my idol? It seems that she is becoming completely crazy and it’s Michael Jackson . . . king of disco . . . She and he are my idol.”) (*Paris Match* 17 July 1987: 43-45, qtd. in Livia 361).

convey the reference to Pignon as *elle* and *la Pignonne*, both references doubly characterizing Pignon as feminine.

When Ponce and Alba spot François waiting for his son at school, they immediately assume he is a sexual predator:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1) | Alba
(42:27) | Il marque les petits jeunes
du lycée, cet enfoiré! | That fairy's ogling
teenage boys! |
| 2) | Ponce
(42:35) | Ah, la salope! | Dirty fruitcake! |

The characters' references to François above, ranging from the masculine *enfoiré* (described as “fairy,” a feminizing term in English) to *la salope* (given as “fruitcake” in English), accentuates their homophobia and adds to the overall impression of their brutishness. Once again, as with *la Pignonne*, the word *salope*, normally an epithet for a woman (“slut” in English), further emasculates François. In the above exchange, the progression in the SL passes from masculine to feminine, while in the English the insult progresses from the feminine to neutral. This progression in French could illustrate the French machismo, not manifested in the same way on the cultural and linguistic plane in English.

Other female-directed terms not typically endowed with a negative connotation in standard usage also become insults when applied to gay men, such as *bonne femme* and *tante*; additionally, reference to stereotypically female behavior, such as hysteria, or crying, is used in an emasculating sense when attributed to gay men, also revealing the underlying sexism in the depiction of women, a topic which will be examined further in the following chapter on women. Other characters in *The Closet* use techniques of this nature to treat François linguistically as a female figure. A semantically charged term in

French recognizable to SL viewers but which does not have the same impact when translated into English is “*regard*,” a term casting François in a feminine role, subject to the gaze, or *regard*, of others:

Belone to François (14:41)	Restez l’homme discret et timide qu’ils ont cotoyé pendant des années. Ce qui va changer, c’est le regard des autres.	Just stay the shy, discreet person they’ve known for years. What’ll change is how they perceive you.
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Ariane’s comments, like Ponce and Alba’s, further feminize Pignon:

1) Regardez-moi cette folle! (32:28)	Look at that flamer!
2) Vous vous êtes conduit comme une bonne femme hystérique—je peux vous dire que si vous continuez comme ça, vous n’aurez plus d’amis dans l’entreprise! (45:12)	You behaved like an old biddy. Soon you’ll have no friends here!

In the example above, Ariane’s feminizing remarks have equivalent English subtitles.

Though the idea of “old” does not enter into *bonne femme hystérique*, the collocation

“old biddy” attempts to convey the “hysterical” connotation given in the SL dialogue;

however, the mental instability portrayed in the French dialogue does not convey to the

subtitles. Félix, too, appropriates feminine terms, using them in exaggerated fashion,

which comes through in both languages (*tante* and *queen*) to refer to François (and gays

in general) throughout the film:

1) Je me suis comporté comme une tante avec cette fiotte! Et c’est la dernière fois que je vais inviter cet enfoiré! (29:24)	I acted like an old queen with that sissy! I’m through with that fruit!
2) Vous êtes comme des tantes! (31:00)	You’re all a bunch of sissies!

In English, the insults are almost as varied as they are in French, with a few notable differences. In 2) *tantes* is represented as *sissy*, as is *fiotte*. However, *enfoiré* in 1) does not have a gender-specific connotation; *fruit* quite obviously does in English, so an additional gender label has been added in the subtitle, rendering *enfoiré*, a non-gendered term, by the feminizing *fruit*. Félix sees François as somehow inadequate and weak, so his use of feminizing expressions as insults—such as *tantes*⁷⁰ to negatively inspire his rugby team—is consistent with his personality. It is only toward the end of the film, after his change in attitude, that Félix’ language begins to evolve. Félix undergoes a profound transformation as he develops sympathy and affection for François, and his personal enlightenment is revealed in his recognition of the effect of his linguistic labeling. In the exchange below, Félix first uses the term *fiotte*, but then quickly recognizes the term’s opprobrium and apologizes. Félix has metamorphosed from a gay-bashing homophobe to a linguistically, socially sensitive individual:

Félix to François (1:09:00)	J’ai les larmes aux yeux, vraiment je me sens une fiotte. Oh, pardon!	My eyes are moist, like a fairy. Oh, sorry.
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Félix’ transformation reveals itself in the subtitles as well, through the jarring juxtaposition of *fairy*, and his hasty addition, “Oh, sorry.” The subtitles seem somewhat limited—*fiotte*, not found in mainstream dictionaries, has an exclusive use as an insulting term, usually towards a man, though the noun is feminine,⁷¹ whereas “fairy” must be

⁷⁰ Tante: “Pejorative, insulting word designating male homosexuals, notably those who are (or are perceived as) effeminate” (“Mot péjoratif et injurieux désignant les homosexuels masculins, notamment ceux qui sont (ou sont perçus comme) efféminés”) (my translation) (*Dictionnaire de la zone* 459).

⁷¹ The *Dictionnaire de la Zone* describes *fiotte* (feminine noun) in the following way: “1. Passive homosexual; synonyms: tafirole, tapette, tarlouze. 2. A cowardly man. synonyms: tafirole, tarlouze. 3. Injurious term for a person (generally a man).” (1. Homosexuel passif. Syn. tafirole, tapette, tarlouze. 2. Homme lâche, couard. Sy tafirole, tarlouze. 3. Terme d’injure désignant une personne (un homme en général). (my translation).

contextualized in order to convey a negative meaning.⁷² Additionally, it would not naturally follow that fairies are characterized by moist eyes; Félix' emotion does not communicate itself in this subtitle, most probably limited as a result of spatial and temporal constraints. The distance between enunciation of the word *fiotte* and his awareness of his linguistic gaffe is marked by his adding the pejorative suffix *-otte* to the word *fille*; this phonetic distinction does not, of course, appear in the subtitle, a written rather than oral form.

This use of gendered language, quite frequent in *The Closet*, exists in other films cited as well. In *My Life in Pink*, when Ludo refers to himself as *belle* (“beautiful”), his otherwise free-thinking grandmother gently corrects him, saying he should use the word *beau* (“handsome”) (Cairns 123). This particular gender distinction is possible in English, since two different words exist for *belle* and *beau*—not always the case with adjectives. In *French Twist*, Loli doesn't even notice Marijo is a lesbian, even after her son mistakenly refers to Marijo as “le monsieur,” rendered as “the man” in English. The dialogue in *La Cage aux Folles* also plays quite liberally with gendered use of language. In fact, Livia considers *La Cage aux Folles* a perfect example of the performative nature of gender in that the gendered wordplay calls Zaza into existence as a feminized character (363). The gendered wordplay, however, often goes unattributed in the TL version; even the film's title involves a loss due to this feminization process, since despite the fact that the French title was maintained in the English subtitled version, TL viewers unfamiliar with French will not appreciate the nuanced meaning of the film's title. *La Cage aux*

⁷² *The Oxford American Dictionary* lists “a male homosexual” under the second entry for *fairy*, after the primary meaning, “a small imaginary being with magical powers.” The word becomes derogatory only when used in an insulting context.

folles, the transvestite cabaret’s name, also represents a pun on *la cage à poules*, “which is both a henhouse and a police station—where many unfortunate transvestites end up—as well as on *folles*, whose unmarked meaning is ‘crazy females’ but which may also be used to mean ‘gay men/queens’” (Livia 363). Once again, the implied feminine *poule* of the film’s title represents to the SL viewer yet another insulting way to denote homosexuals. Further, through mannerisms, dress (conveyable in the English), and especially through gendered language, Albin “performs femininity” (Livia 363). The feminine gender, used to address and refer to the drag queens, is often either omitted or lost on many levels in the English translation.

In some cases, a reworking of an otherwise ambiguous usage of personal pronouns, as Livia insists, “is used to signal in-group membership,” albeit in a quite complex way (363). Livia suggests, for example, that when the doctor comes to see Zaza/Albin, he may call Albin Zaza but avoids gendered language in French in 1) below by using the third-person *on* and thus “avoids a confrontation between his own set of values and those of the *Cage aux Folles*”(364). Even the doctor’s carefully unmarked adjective selection (in 2) below) does not commit him to feminizing discourse in the English subtitles:

1)	Doctor (5:21)	On va vite se montrer pour que le docteur voie Zaza.	Be a good girl and uncover yourself so I can see you.
2)	Zaza (5:25)	Mais je suis affreuse, je suis affreuse, enfin!	But I’m a monster. I’m horrible, Doctor!
3)	Doctor (5:36)	Soyez raisonnable, je vous en prie.	Stop acting like such a prima donna!

It would be impossible to translate 1) literally, since the third-person singular *on* does not exist in English, so the subtitles have the doctor addressing Zaza directly in the second person. The nearest equivalent, something like, “You’re going to uncover yourself so the doctor can see Zaza,” is expressed as faithfully as possible in the subtitle. The doctor’s way of addressing Zaza in the third person is often used with children and patients (much like a nurse saying, “How are *we* feeling today?” in English when there is only one patient in the room), so the English translation, “Be a good girl,” reflects this same type of infantilizing discourse while managing to include a feminizing reference, which compensates in a way for the loss (in English) of Zaza’s self-referential feminizing discourse in the next exchange; the feminine form (of *affreuse*) in 2) cannot be expressed in English. The *prima donna* reference in 3) does not literally translate the French (“Be reasonable, I ask you!”) but could represent an attempt at equivalence for the *affreuse* comment in 2).

The inconsistency of gender usage in the film is done deliberately, Livia maintains, and is determined by the situation (364). For example, when Renato calls the doctor in to see Zaza, Renato uses the feminine to signify Zaza’s temperamental diva attitude, but after the examination, Renato refers to Zaza as “he”: “Qu’est-ce que je fais s’il tombe malade? Je ferme la boîte?” (7:09) (“If **he** gets sick, do I close the club?”). This exchange seems to grant the doctor permission to use the masculine pronoun, “Soyez gentil avec **lui**” (7:16) (“be kind to **him**”) instead of the ambiguous indirect object pronoun used earlier in such constructions as “[I]l lui reste des calmants?” (6:46) (rendered as “Any tranquilizers left?” in English, but literally “does he/she have any tranquilizers left?”) (Livia 364). The subtitle avoids the question of direct reference by

eliminating pronouns entirely in this instance, depersonalizing the exchange to a certain extent.

Other strategic and telling uses of gender play in the film, not always possible to convey in English, and enumerated by Livia (364) involve Renato's use of the masculine with his son when referring to both Albin/Zaza and himself, a concession to his son's heteronormative behavior. Albin/Zaza, on the other hand, uses feminine terms when using self-referential language in Laurent's presence, while Laurent assiduously uses "Albin" in an attempt to circumlocute entirely Albin's in-group pronoun use. Albin/Zaza prefers to be called "Tatie," which, given as "Auntie" in English, has the double meaning of "gay man." Equally essential to the narrative, Albin's presentation of himself in the feminine represents his role as "stepmother" to Laurent as well as foreshadows his posing as Laurent's mother later in the film. Sadly, English does not provide the same opportunities to showcase this inventive use of gender in the film as does the French.

Zaza insists on a double feminization when he sees the inscription on the cake they bought for Laurent. The English translation will leave target language audiences wondering, whereas in French the distinction is not only exaggerated but also points out the linguistic importance of the written feminized form, which, though not pronounced in standard French, is reflected in the regional accent, or *accent du Midi*, of the characters in the film.⁷³ Source language viewers are meant to appreciate the comic effect of this distinction:

⁷³ The Midi (or southern French) accent differs from a standard French pronunciation by virtue of the influence of neighboring Mediterranean countries Italy and Spain. One distinctive feature of Midi pronunciation is the pronunciation of final e as schwa, as is done in poetry and song, so a word like "Tatie" (Auntie) pronounced [tati] in standard French, might be pronounced [tatiə] in a Midi accent.

Zaza (28:10)	Ah, non! Ils ont écrit “sa tati”! C’est pas “sa tati,” c’est “sa tati eu h” “À mon Lolo, sa tatie”! Sinon, “sa tati”! Ça ne veut rien dire!	Oh, no! He forgot part of the inscription! “Aunt” is not “Auntie!” “To my Lolo from Auntie!” I ordered the usual “Auntie,” not “Aunt.”
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Even Renato begins to refer to himself in the feminine—this, too, is deliberate, according to Livia:

In the end, however, Renato explodes, and his anger is expressed not only in the content of his speech but also in his use of a feminine term to refer to himself. “Oui, je mets du fond de teint. Oui je vis avec un homme. Oui je suis une vieille tata. Mais j’ai trouvé mon équilibre.” (Yes, I wear foundation. Yes, I live with a man. Yes, I’m an old faggot. But I’m happy with myself.) In this outburst, he reintroduces a variation of the term *tata* (aunt/fag), which Laurent had rejected in Albin’s speech, showing solidarity with his lover and expressing a covert reprimand to his son’s earlier reproof. (365)

Jacob, the young manservant, enjoys feminized self-referential language as well:

Jacob (22:51)	On m’a déjà traité de nègre, on m’a déjà traité de tante, mais jamais de Français.	I’ve been called black, queer, but French, never!
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Additionally, the orality of SL dialogue leaves the question open as to whether Jacob referred to himself in the feminine or masculine (a written form could be “on m’a déjà traitée,” the additional *e* a silent gender marker), but in the SL dialogue, he distinctly uses the masculine form of *Français* for the second half of the sentence.

The ability to feminize in French shows further limitations in the English translation at the syntactic level, for French is delightfully ambiguous with indirect object pronouns. Such ambiguity presents a quagmire for subtitlers, often requiring considerable linguistic acrobatics to attempt to express ambiguity where it exists in the original.

In Renato's words below, the English subtitler chose to translate *lui* as "him," where "her" could just as easily have been used. In fact, the way the French dialogue is constructed in 1) continues to feminize Zaza:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Renato
(39:42) | Mais qu'est-ce que je vais lui dire? Je vais lui dire, "Va-t-en, grosse vache, tu encombres?" "Disparais, tire-toi, vieille tante?" | What am I going to say to him? "Get out, you're in the way!"? "Get out, fag!"? |
| 2) | Zaza
(48:33) | Si tu veux me tuer, tu le dis carrément! Tu veux me tuer, c'est bien ça? Vise les yeux, alors, c'est plus sûr! | You have something against me. You want to kill me, old bitch? |

Perhaps as compensation for the dearth of feminizing language in the English, the expression "old bitch" was added in 2) where it did not exist in the French immediately preceding, or possibly, the addition is meant to recall the loss of *grosse vache* in the French dialogue noted in Renato's statement in 1) above. The TL reduces meaning on a lexical and grammatical level; for a more balanced translation, *tante*, a degrading term for homosexual, should have been rendered with an equivalent feminizing expression (femininity has been announced twice in this statement with *grosse vache* ("fat cow")), such as *sissy* or *fairy*; additionally, "old bitch" and "fag" carry a much more offensive connotation than *grosse vache* and *tante*.

These nuances, unexpressed in the subtitles, fail to reveal the pioneering character of this film, one of the first to portray homosexuals in a positive light; indeed, the wordplay and the feminization of the language in the SL add to the depiction of Renato and Albin as sympathetic, noble homosexual characters and the inexactitudes in the subtitled version—i.e. a more offensive register, the lack of feminine signifiers—unfortunately function as an obstacle to the historical perspective of the film.

2.7 Conclusion

In all three primary films, language used to address and refer to homosexuals is not always expressed in an equivalent manner in the TL. In the SL, many pejorative terms for homosexuals exist, but the full force and meaning of the insults is not always conveyed in the TL. In *My Life in Pink*, the TL audience experiences a loss in meaning with the words *tapette* and *gonzesse*, as well as with use of gendered language that fails to translate adequately into the TL. The SL audience is privy to the highly-charged double entendres from the start, and this knowledge nuances the SL audience's understanding of the plight and confusion of poor Ludo, but the TL audience is not provided this information. The characters depicted as unsympathetic in *The Closet* habitually use injurious words (such as *fag*) to describe François (and homosexuals in general), but other characters use both neutral and pejorative terms, depending on their personal attitude toward François at the time, even though it is often the same word in French, *pédé*, which makes up the SL dialogue. The TL dialogue appears in some instances as antiseptic compared to the SL dialogue; further, feminizing language does not always convey in the TL dialogue. Several colorful expressions appear in *French Twist*, apart from the ubiquitous *gouine*, which is universally subtitled as "dyke" in English. Even starting with the film's title—*French Twist* versus the more explicatory *Gazon maudit*—unavoidable losses in meaning result. Additionally, the status of French as a gendered language allows each film to foreground the perceived femininity of male homosexuals, but not the perceived masculinity of female homosexuals, while English does not typically allow grammatically gendered wordplay.

Inspired by Judith Butler's work on the performative nature of gender, analysis of subtitles in these films shows that the naming in the films, and in particular the accuracy of the subtitles, significantly influence the TL spectator's comprehension of the narrative and the context of the dialogue. Butler's mention of the prescriptive nature of gender particularly informs films such as *The Closet*, *La Cage aux Folles*, and *My Life in Pink*, and the degree to which feminization occurs in the subtitles can enhance or detract from the TL viewer's understanding of cultural and contextual nuances. Anna Livia's work on feminization and grammatical gender in translation provides insight to the feminization of terms of address in *La Cage aux folles*. Arnold Zwicky's work on reclamation of pejorative forms of address helps explain strategic use (or strategic elision) of derogatory language such as *pédé*, *tante*, and *folle* by homosexual characters in the films and the omission or inclusion of these terms in the subtitled version. Anna Livia and Kira Hall's theories on linguistic determinism and linguistic relativism provide insight to the discrepancies between the SL and TL versions, supporting the idea that culturally accurate subtitles are necessary for maximum comprehension of the films' narrative and contextual content. Of the films selected, the cultural milieu of *The Closet* most closely approximates the American workplace and its concerns with how to address homosexuality in the office in a professional manner; also, *Sitcom*, being a parody of American sitcoms and exaggerated political correctness, shares similarities with American culture in this way. The two films represented fewer cultural difficulties for the subtitler than the other films in this study, such as *French Twist* and *My Life in Pink*. *La Cage aux Folles* represents quite possibly the most difficult film to convey through the

subtitles, due to its innovative featuring of two homosexuals as protagonists and the cultural and social context of the less-tolerant 1970s.

Translation of the dialogue in the above-mentioned films approaches equivalence at certain moments; the subtitled dialogue occasionally provides more information than is given in the SL dialogue, such as a foreshadowing of sympathetic characters by their use of non-offensive language in the TL version, as in *The Closet*, for example, but more often significant cultural lacunae exist between the SL and TL versions—cultural references resulting either from naming or grammatically gendered language (often signaling a sexist, male-dominated point of view and offering very few unmarked lexical options) prove problematic to render in the subtitles. Elements in the SL dialogue serving to maintain the tone of the discourse—for example, wordplay, regionalisms such as accents and register, as well as references to cultural elements outside the linguistic realm—all create a specific impression in the SL viewer’s mind and nuance the representation of the characters in these films. These references are often altered, diluted, or are simply unavailable to the TL viewer in the subtitles, owing to specific linguistic and social factors. All these elements play an important role in presenting homosexuals in the perspective of a “performance” in a heterocentrist and chauvinistic society (represented by references to professions, sports, and behaviors).

Given the various situations listed above and being limited to access of the spoken dialogue via the subtitles, the TL viewer cannot fully appreciate the semantic impact of the words chosen to describe and refer to characters in these films and therefore cannot experience the film in the same way as can a member of the SL culture who has full access to the language used in these sorts of situations. Stereotypical representations of

homosexuals persist in the two languages; however, the way in which these names and insults are rendered can significantly affect the viewers' interpretation and comprehension of a film dialogue. Additionally, the use of gendered language in French to devalorize homosexuals by associating them with women is not only problematic to render in English but also suggests a devalorization of women in general by appropriating female-referential terms to use in an insulting way, a topic which will be explored next in Chapter 3, on treatment of women. Certainly, further research in use of language used to denote homosexuals and its translation in the subtitles could result in an increased sensitivity to cultural specificities, helping subtitlers find increasingly creative, culturally relevant solutions to these challenges.

Chapter 3: Women, Girls, Hookers, and Whores

[W]omen experience linguistic discrimination in two ways; in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language use treats them. Both tend, as we shall see, to relegate women to certain subservient functions: that of sex object, or servant; and therefore certain lexical items mean one thing applied to men, another to women, a difference that cannot be predicted except with reference to the different roles the sexes play in society. (Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* 4)

Indeed, women's relationship with language both determines and describes their treatment and a societal view of women in general. Molly Haskell, in *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in Movies* (1973), describes how, in film, women have often been characterized in ways that perpetuate their oppression and underscore their identity as marginalized members of society. Laura Mulvey was among the first feminist theorists to provide a psychoanalytical analysis of the question of women's representation in cinema in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in which she discusses the voyeuristic nature of women's depiction in films. Mulvey suggests that woman is no more than the object of the gaze, displayed for a male audience to desire in a scopophilic manner—an attempt to compensate for his fear of castration (symbolized by the woman) by fetishizing the object of his fear, and for a female audience to identify with in a masochistic sense (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," 42). Certainly camera angles and other non-textual elements can reflect this scopophilic tendency, but spoken language also reinforces woman's role as object, whether, as Peter Newmark says, sexist language is "conscious or unconscious" (114), and sexist language poses particular ethical problems for translators, who cannot remain detached throughout the process, since every decision represents engagement in the sexist debate.

Theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and others have examined the gendered component of language (especially in reference to written rather than oral expression), but how does the cinematic language (in this instance, the oral narrative as transcribed in the subtitles) reflect tendencies to discuss and to view women in ways that also objectify and fetishize women and what is the relationship between their expression in French and English? Teresa De Lauretis rightly states that “the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation”(5), and these two aspects play important roles in the examination of women in cinema, particularly with regard to subtitled films. The subtitling process accounts for and accommodates differences in the SL and the TL where possible, and the product (the subtitled version) reveals the degree to which the process reflects the original language by interpretation of the SL into a meaningful dialogue in the TL.

The specific characteristics of these two languages themselves (ways of expressing grammatical gender, terms of address, naming) present challenges for the translator. The words used to describe women reflect cultural attitudes towards the subject, and the subtitles directly influence the other characters’ reactions to the female characters based on the cultural impact of the specific words used. Certainly, other factors, such as tone, gestures, facial expressions, body language, and accent, affect the nature of the discourse, but they cannot and should not be represented in an examination of the subtitles alone.

The French and English languages differ in the ways used to denote and describe women as well as the ways in which women are addressed directly and talk about themselves. On the linguistic level, grammatical gender plays a role both within each

language and in the process of transfer of French to English, as developed in Chapter Two. On the narrative level, a character's gender often influences the choice of words used to describe him or her, and the definition of these roles translates across cultures with varying degrees of equivalency regarding positive, negative, and neutral denotation. Though studies by Gambier, Tomasciewicz, Jäckel, and others treat cultural connotations of subtitles in general and treatment of women in film *vis-à-vis* the non-dialogic factors, very little has been written about the way in which the various discriminatory language behaviors alternately are translated or are absent in the subtitled version of films, the primary focus of this chapter.

Various uses of grammatical gender, professional titles, honorifics, forms of address, and words employed to refer generally to women can all subtly undermine women's power, linguistically as well as socially. While there have certainly been some strides in this domain in recent years, language usage still reflects misogynistic attitudes of varying degrees and levels. Moreover, the "narrative" of the gaze and the perspective of the narrator, whether a male or female interlocutor, expressed through language, must pass through the medium of translation to result in subtitled form.

3.1 How Woman is Characterized

As man frequently constitutes the subject of the narrative and woman the object (Flitterman-Lewis 5), Mary Ann Doane argues that women spectators are forced to witness their own commodification in cinema, perpetuating their objectification (25), or, to use Mulvey's term, "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," 40). Mulvey notes that the patterns of spectatorship and point of view naturally create "a

‘masculinization’ of the spectator position regardless of the actual sex (or possible deviance) of any real live moviegoer,” but in developing this theory she did not consider the female spectator, something she feels is missing from her 1975 article (Mulvey, “Afterthoughts,” 69). Indeed, much has been written about the role of women in films, with particular attention devoted to the gaze shaped by framing and editing as well as the types of women a particular film portrays. For example, initial presentation of a woman can consist of a close-up of a particular body part, such as Marlene Dietrich’s legs or Greta Garbo’s face (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” 40), reducing the woman to her physical attributes and sexualizing her. The dialogic language used reinforces this type of representation, and a close examination of the narrative and subtitles also reveals a great deal about characterization of women in films.

Stereotypical representation of women in media ranges from the harlot to the homemaker, from the go-getter to the girl next door. Maggie Humm describes this situation: “Film . . . often and anxiously envisions women stereotypically as ‘good’ mothers or ‘bad,’ hysterical careerists” (3), and in this way language, largely patriarchal according to Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Marina Yaguello, among others, doles out linguistic penalties for women considered to deviate from society’s expected view of the “good mother” by categorizing them into the opposite category—that of the prostitute. These linguistic penalties are numerous, with the majority of insults expressed in English by such terms as “slut,” “whore,” “bitch,” and in French by terms such as *putain*, *salope*, *conne*, since any deviation from the virgin/mother figure threatens patriarchal society and often provokes those who would prefer to maintain the status quo to lash out linguistically.

This way of classifying women as a variation on the Madonna/whore dichotomy serves as an extension of Michel Foucault’s theory about the “hysterization of women’s bodies”—an analysis of women according to roles in the society, family space and the life of children—personified by the Mother (104). Foucault states that:

[I]n the process of hysterization of women, ‘sex’ was defined in three ways: as that which belongs in common to men and women; as that which belongs, *par excellence*, to men, and hence is lacking in women; but at the same time, as that which by itself constitutes women’s body, ordering it wholly in terms of the functions of reproduction and keeping it in constant agitation through the effects of that very function. (Foucault 153)

Historically, women have been placed into neat, predictable categories, usually a variation on the Madonna/whore dichotomy. The filmic environment also fosters this ideological bias. Often, as the object of the gaze the female character becomes viewed as an agent of certain hegemonically pre-determined roles rather than by her inherent individual characteristics.

Both French and American cultures take the role of mother extremely seriously, and language reflects any dissatisfaction with women who stray from this role. Isabelle Huppert’s character, Marie, in *The Story of Women* (Claude Chabrol, 1988) references the societal expectation that women fulfill their primary role as mothers, the role assuming even more importance if she gives birth to a son, reducing her to her reproductive function as well as rewarding her for bringing a male child into the world:

Marie (3:22)	Avoir un garçon, c’est déjà une réussite.	It’s always right to have a boy.
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The literal translation, “Having a boy, that’s already an accomplishment,” does not seem adequately rendered by the English subtitles, as the term “always” fails to convey the idea that having a boy represents a mark of success or achievement (in French-speaking

as well as English-speaking cultures). Though Marie is aware of her expected societal role, she remains determined to maximize her benefits by any means available to her, qualities that may be seen as positive for a man and for which women, especially mothers, are vilified. Her status as a wife and mother defines her, and her deviation from this role by consorting with prostitutes provokes outrage from her societal peers, particularly the male members:

Paul to Marie (58:35)	Fréquenter des putes t'a fait une pute quand même.	Being with whores had made you a whore.
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Not only does Marie keep company with disreputable women, but she performs illegal abortions for them, an offense for which she is ultimately hanged. As the townspeople gather around to witness her execution at the film's end, they relish the opportunity to see her punished for her crime, even more so because, as a woman, she has broken a pact with society by stepping outside of her expected role and because of her willingness to prevent other women from performing their primary role as mothers, whose main objective is the production of male children.

As did Marie, *Séverine* in *Belle de Jour* (Luis Buñuel, 1967) also deviates from her societal role. It could be argued that the film does not completely correspond to the other films in this study in terms of time frame and the director's culture, since Buñuel was raised in Spain; however, as he moved to France in his youth, spending many years working there, he knew French culture quite well. Further, the author of the novel on which the film is based is French and the screenplay was co-written by Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière (a Frenchman), the film still represents a great deal of linguistic prejudices and merits discussion in this context. The film, a satirical treatment of the

humiliation of women in bourgeois French (or European) society in all its aspects, including linguistically, proves especially fruitful in providing a multitude of insults.

In addition to physical humiliation, the main character in *Belle de Jour*, Séverine, a prostitute, suffers linguistic degradation by her clients in various ways, from being called vulgar names to being reduced to an object not being referred to by name, even by Marcel, who professes to love her. The relationship between Marcel and Séverine shows Marcel's simultaneous repugnance by and fascination with Séverine's role as a prostitute: the language reflects this Madonna/whore dichotomy which exists in both French and English-speaking cultures, and seems to play a significant role in their relationship.⁷⁴

Mona, the heroine of *Vagabond* (Agnès Varda, 1985), is also punished for not conforming to an idealized view of a submissive being, obsessively attentive to her appearance and personal hygiene, living to please. To the men (and even most of the women) in the film, her independence rankles at the least and threatens in the extreme. Mona in no way conforms to the Madonna persona (though "Mona" as a shortened form of "Madonna" provides an interesting contrast), but rather is depicted as the whore, emphasized by her actions, her lifestyle and certainly in her manner of communicating. In 1995, twenty years after Cixous's original use of the term, Flitterman-Lewis remarks that this film is a prime example of *l'écriture féminine* in the cinema, in the way Mona is characterized and by the patterns of dialogue throughout the film (40). Flitterman-Lewis mentions the director, Agnès Varda, as one associated "with the use of particular

⁷⁴ Molly Haskell mentions the interesting duality of the representation of Séverine by Buñuel and states that "he enables us to see Séverine from both a man's and a woman's point of view: as a spectator, a man luxuriates in the peculiarly erotic tension between the fashionable young bourgeoisie and the masochistic voluptuary that emerges each afternoon; for the female spectator, she embraces all women who have ever fantasized such anonymous degradation; that is to say, all women . . . In the end, a tragedy must occur because society (husband, lover, friend) cannot tolerate her dual nature" (305).

narrative, discursive, textual strategies” (33) that make her work unique and female-centered. For example, Varda frequently interrupts the flow of the story to defy “traditional notions of character and plot” (34).

This female-centered approach is also reflected in the dialogues. The style of the dialogues in *Vagabond*—the ways Mona and the other characters communicate with and about each other—appears not linear but layered and fragmented (Flitterman-Lewis 243), almost schizophrenic in a Deleuzian sense. The subtitles capture this fragmentation quite accurately where possible; Mona takes a bit of linguistic control as she picks and chooses with whom she will use *tu* and *vous* (the familiar and formal forms of address—see section below on *tutoiement*). She does not always respond when spoken to, and she does not exhibit any of the behaviors typically associated with a woman seeking approval.

When Mona is picked up by a trucker who condescends to her, immediately addressing her familiarly in the beginning of *Vagabond*, she swiftly changes the subject when the trucker asks rather hopefully if she would like to sleep in the back of his truck:

Mona to trucker (7:15)	Oh, ça va. On change de disque.	Yeah, I've heard that before.
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The English doesn't quite convey Mona's disdain as does the French, but it approximates it. Then when she asks the trucker if he has a radio, Mona's mocking tone conveys itself in the English as well:

Mona to trucker (7:22)	Tout le confort mais pas la radio. Il est nul, ton bahut.	Everything but a radio. What a heap!
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Not only does Mona address the trucker just as informally as he addresses her, but her tone is anything but subservient—the English translation reflects this as well. In this

instance, the direct “voice” of Mona as subject serves to counterbalance the voices of the narrators who, in telling her story, objectify her.

In addition to Mona’s character, many of the female characters in the films selected—Séverine in *Belle de Jour*, Isa in *Dreamlife of Angels*, Juliette in *Thieves*, Isabelle in *The Spanish Apartment*—behave in nontraditional ways and become objects of scorn and ridicule. With the exception of Séverine (who displays masochistic tendencies), these characters do not meekly accept being belittled, nor do they accept being categorized according to the Madonna/whore dichotomy. In *Dreamlife of Angels*, Isa’s way of speaking directly and confidently makes her a strong character, more so than Marie, although Marie certainly seems independent initially as well. Varda gives independent voices to the female characters through the dialogue while having the male characters address the females in disrespectful, demeaning ways that provide a stark contrast to the female characters’ expression. Some examples of male speech, aptly subtitled in their connotative intensity, include:

Charly to Marie (42:34)	T’es qu’une baiseuse , en fin de compte. Ça doit être ça.	You just screw around. That must be it.
Guy at gate (14:19)	Dis-moi, cocotte , l’argent, ça se gagne.	If you need money, get a job, darling.

The way in which the female characters appropriate the familiar speech most associated with men (and considered unladylike) further demonstrates their independence. *Conne*, *cunt* in English, has undergone significant neutralization to *fool* in the subtitles, disguising the earthy nature of Isa’s discourse:

Isa to Charly (01:24:47)	C'est Marie, elle est avec un mec. Elle se laisse tromper. Il la prend pour une grosse conne , là.	It's Marie—she's with this guy. He's taking her for a fool.
Isa to Charly (01:26:45)	Je comprends rien! Je suis une grosse conne .	I don't understand. I'm a fool.
Isa to Marie (01:20:30)	Faut pas t'humilier, lui courir après comme une conne . T'es pas son chien.	Don't humiliate yourself! You're not his dog!

Other female characters, such as Anne-Sophie in *The Spanish Apartment*, or Marie in the last few scenes of *Dreamlife of Angels*, for example, and other minor characters in each film, serve mainly to provide contrast to the strong female characters or as backdrops for the male characters' actions, thoughts, and egos. Anne-Sophie's timidity in her dealings with Xavier, even in her language, as the following section on *tutoiement* will show, and her general linguistic hyperformality seem to be attempting to embody a virtuous Madonna-like persona. The very first time she addresses Xavier, it is only in response to his direct question. Standards of politeness generally associated with in her role as a bourgeois, submissive wife, including a feigned interest in him, dictate that she respond in kind, formally, to his informal question:

Xavier to Anne-Sophie (13:56)	Et toi, tu ne parles pas du tout l'espagnol?	And you, you speak Spanish?
Anne-Sophie to Xavier (13:59)	Non. Et vous, vous parlez espagnol?	No. And you—Do you speak Spanish?

Anne-Sophie speaks only when directly addressed, and her submissiveness is underscored by her husband's brusque manner and constant interruption. Jean-Michel speaks **about** her rather than to her, while he addresses Xavier directly:

Jean-Michel to Xavier (18:53)	Anne-So fera un petit truc à manger, hein?	Anne-So can fix you a snack.
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If the English had been translated as a direct address, Jean-Michel’s chauvinistic manner of speaking and general behavior would have been diminished somewhat, but Jean-Michel’s way of speaking directly to Xavier as if Anne-Sophie was not even in the room has been preserved in this example and helps solidify the image of Jean-Michel as a macho, domineering husband accustomed to being responsible for all decisions, no matter how small, in his domain. Jean-Michel’s appropriation of the conversation in this exchange provides but one example of the many discriminatory language behaviors present in the male-female discourse in these films.

Though the subtitlers have succeeded in several of the foregoing examples to convey the sexist or feminist message in the dialogues, the TL viewer relying on subtitles for dialogic information will still have difficulty perceiving all the nuances in this domain provided in the SL dialogue through discriminatory language patterns, sexist language, gendered language, and various degrees of insults.

3.2 Discriminatory Language Patterns

Which discriminatory language behaviors can be examined? Sexism presents itself in the use of gender-marked language, in the use of formal and informal forms of address, and through the choice of insults used—not just expressed in general insults, but in more subtle forms of disparagement and belittlement, such as the use of “girl” in reference to an adult woman. These nuances are often reflected in the subtitles, but there also exist

several instances in the films cited in which the language is not or cannot be rendered in the TL.

Claude Tatilon discusses the sexist components of linguistic practices in French in “La langue, le discours et l’égalité des sexes,” naming three main oppressive language-related behaviors in discourse:

1. Men’s domination of the conversation, which is characterized by interruptions, long-winded discourse, raising one’s voice to silence the other;
2. Choice of words: for example, whether conscious or unconscious, putting the man in the foreground of a story;⁷⁵
3. Scornful language: sexist clichés. (135)

All these language behaviors merit consideration in any discussion of sex-based language behaviors, and each has a place in the present discussion of translation of subtitles and will be treated individually.

The male characters in these films seem to dominate the conversation. Again, Jean-Michel’s macho, controlling persona in *The Spanish Apartment* provides a perfect foil to Anne-Sophie’s meek, deferential housewife.⁷⁶ Jean-Michel’s need to control the discourse extends to his dealings with other males in the presence of his wife Anne-Sophie, a type of linguistic territorial marking. When Xavier phones Jean-Michel to ask whether he may stay at their place till he finds an apartment, Xavier is constantly interrupted by Jean-Michel.

⁷⁵ Tatilon cites an article in a French newspaper reporting the rape of a woman. The story focused primarily on the horrors of a man having to witness the rape of his wife, an aspect emphasized more than the trauma the victim experienced (135).

⁷⁶ Though this deferential behavior is not reflected in the subtitles, it is interesting to note that when Anne-Sophie is suggesting dinner possibilities to Xavier, she is looking directly at Jean-Michel as if seeking his approval rather than exerting a confidence in knowing what there is in their larder. Speaking to Jean-Michel rather than looking Xavier in the eye could also be another way of manifesting wifely modesty.

Jean-Michel’s choice of words when commanding Anne-Sophie to prepare some food for Xavier: “Allez, zou” (“Hop to it” in English) demonstrates his role as master of the household. Anne-Sophie’s repetition both in the original and the subtitles suggests she is processing the order and is ready to obey (but possibly a little weary of the power dynamic, though this is conveyed more by her facial expression and tone than the dialogue).

Linguistically, however, Anne-Sophie changes during the course of the film, gradually assuming conversational control. After Anne-Sophie and Xavier have spent an afternoon together, Jean-Michel directs his questions about the afternoon to Xavier (again an alpha-male technique of maintaining control), but Anne-Sophie is the one who responds, which suggests that she either feels more comfortable with Xavier or that she wants to control a bit of the conversation herself:

Jean-Michel to Xavier (36:53)	Ça s’est bien passé cet après-midi ?	How’d it go this afternoon?
Anne-Sophie (36:55)	Très bien.	Very well.

This exchange clearly demonstrates an inhabitual expression of assertiveness on Anne-Sophie’s part. Later during that same conversation, perhaps as a way of reestablishing his linguistic dominance, almost as if he subconsciously sensed a threat in Anne-Sophie’s new-found burst of confidence, Jean-Michel presses Anne-Sophie to relay to Xavier an anecdote that clearly embarrasses her. Jean-Michel’s insistence becomes immediately apparent as a form of linguistic bullying:

Anne-Sophie to Jean-Michel (37 :49)	Non, mais ça me gène.	No. I'm embarrassed.
Jean-Michel to Anne-Sophie (37:55)	Oh là là, la chochette! Mais c'est quoi qui gène ?	Oh, what a fuss! What's so embarrassing?
Jean-Michel to Anne-Sophie (38:07)	Allez, vas-y! Dis-le . . . bordel!	Go on! Tell the damned thing!
Jean-Michel to Anne-Sophie (38:11)	Sors de ta coquille un peu, chérie !	Get out of your shell, sweetie!

Jean-Michel's discourse takes on an increasingly hostile and domineering tone. Because of his need to hear Anne-Sophie tell another man how much she was attracted to him (another way of asserting his dominance), Jean-Michel becomes very abusive when she refuses. The translation conveys this very attitude, with "damned" conveying the impatience and anger of "*bordel!*" in French without bordering on true vulgarity, as *bordel* equals "damn" in connotative intensity. *Bordel* used in this way, however, does not remind the TL viewer of the original meaning of the word ("bordello"), and the sexist nature of the word does not find an equivalent in "damned." The expression "*Sors de ta coquille*" has a directly equivalent expression in English, so it was not necessary to find a substitute, as is often the case with idiomatic terms.

On the other hand, Xavier's roommate Isabelle speaks more confidently and informally and does not hesitate to pepper her discourse with slang. Her relaxed manner and frank speech suggest she clearly considers herself an equal to anyone she addresses:

Isabelle to Xavier and other classmates (27:20)	Oh, putain , je comprends rien en cours en catalan. Comprenez- vous ?	I don't understand a word of Catalan. Do you?
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Isabelle displays great confidence as she participates fully in and appropriates the conversation without awaiting direction from her male interlocutor, momentarily stunning Xavier. Isabelle's use of *putain* (a common interjection, but, like *bordel* above, stemming from a sexist word, originally meaning "whore") goes untranslated in the subtitles, even though its use by Isabelle, a woman who does not follow the patriarchal model concerning her sexuality, exemplifies a defiance of sexist linguistic codes, this omission in the subtitles effectively truncating a part of her characterization. She even pokes fun at Xavier when he politely comments that her job as a babysitter must be "great," mocking his pat response:

Isabelle to "Oh, ben c'est génial." "Oh, that's great."
Xavier (30:54)

By her confident, equal participation in the conversation, Isabelle refuses domination, linguistically or otherwise.

Tatilon mentions that word choice can demonstrate further evidence of sexual domination in conversation: for example, whether conscious or unconscious, putting the man in the foreground of a story can focus attention on the man as the most important character (135). When they first meet, Jean-Michel answers Xavier's questions about why they were in Barcelona by simply talking about himself and his job. Anne-Sophie's role is irrelevant. Also, when he relays the story of his and Anne-Sophie's first encounter, Jean-Michel puts himself in the foreground.

Of Tatilon's three categories of oppressive language-related behaviors noted above, the third—scornful language and sexist clichés— provides the greatest number of examples that can be examined from a translation perspective. Both Tatilon and Yaguello (152) mention Pierre Guiraud's *Dictionnaire érotique*, which contains more than 1500

words describing women that are “almost all degrading and demeaning” (“dégradants et dévalorisants dans leur presque totalité”) (my translation) (Tatilon 136). Descriptions of women all generally relate to woman’s utility to man in some fashion (woman as utensil). Even the term used simply to denote the female of the species takes on a derogatory tone when used in French.⁷⁷ Yaguello puts this concept the following way: “A gallant woman is a prostitute, whereas a gallant man is a well-educated man . . . ‘Male’ can refer to man as well as an animal, without being pejorative” (142, 144).⁷⁸ The word “female,” on the other hand, has a negative connotation:

But ‘female,’ referring to a woman, or better still, a man! is a term of denigration, as if there were an underlying semantic rule investing a man with a positive value, and woman with a negative value. That is where you find the ‘semiology of sexes’ (my translation).⁷⁹ (Tatilon 136)

Many feminist linguists have discussed the phenomenon that there exists a much greater variety of words to denigrate women than to disparage men. It is possible, as Yaguello suggests, that this preponderance of derogatory woman-centered insults directly reflects the relationship of the oppressed to the oppressor, the oppressor having a much more extensive array of derogatory terms at his disposal (Yaguello 150).

⁷⁷ Even a seemingly neutral term such as “professional” takes on a different connotation when applied to a man or a woman (Lakoff 30). The following sentences exemplify this difference:

1b: John is a professional.

2b: Mary is a professional.

In 2b, “professional” could indicate that the subject is a prostitute, whereas it would not in 1b. In French as well, “*une professionnelle*” appears to have the same pejorative sense as in English (Yaguello 136).

⁷⁸ “Une femme galante est une femme de mauvaise vie, un homme galant est un homme bien élevé [. . .] Mâle peut se dire aussi bien de l’homme que de l’animal, sans être péjoratif, au contraire” (Yaguello 142, 144).

⁷⁹ “Mais femelle, attribué à une femme—ou mieux, à un homme !—est un terme de dénigrement. Comme s’il existait une règle sémantique sous-jacente investissant l’homme d’une valeur positive, la femme d’une valeur négative. Où l’on retrouve la ‘sémiologie des sexes.’”

Men, Yaguello claims, have thousands of words to designate women, and the vast majority of these words are pejorative (150).⁸⁰ Yaguello even provides a list of insults found in Pierre Guiraud's 1978 *Dictionnaire érotique* (152).⁸¹ Erotic language tends to validate a man and condemn a woman: *un bon baiseur* ("a good screwer") is virile, adept, while *une bonne baiseuse* is an expert but probably trained by a man (Yaguello 160). Even the word *mariage* contains *mari* [husband] (Yaguello 161).⁸²

Yaguello mentions the particular productiveness of the animal metaphor to describe women in French (156); the metaphor ranges from characterizing women using French words for "horses" to "birds" to "cows" to "cats" to "dogs." Similarly, in English, sexist expressions like "chick," "bitch," "cow," "pussy," and "pig" are just a sampling of

⁸⁰ "[L]es hommes ont-ils des milliers de mots pour désigner les femmes dont l'immense majorité sont péjoratifs" (Yaguello 150).

⁸¹ almée, amazone, (petite) amie, amante; baigneuse, beauté, belle, blonde, blondine, bête, *bête à con, boudin, *bourrin, *briquette; brune, brunette, belle-mère, bonne soeur, bambine, bonne, bas-bleu; commère, créature, courtisane, cocotte, camériste, chipie, concubine, caillette, cotillon, *cale, *carne, *cerneau, chameau, chatte, *chiasse, *chevreuil, *colibri, *colis, *con, *conifère, *connaude, *côtelette; dame, demoiselle, demi-vierge, déesse, donzelle, demi-mondaine; épouse, égérie; fille, fille d'Ève, femme du monde, femme d'intérieur, femme galante, fée, femelle, femmelette, fatma, *fesse, fillette, *fumelle, favorite, furie; grisette, garce, garçonne, garçon manqué, gonzesse, grognasse, *gerce, *gibier d'amour, *gisquette, *goyo, greluce, *grenouille, gendarme; houri, héroïne, hommasse, hétaire, *horizontale, harpie, *hirondelle; ingénue; jeune personne, jouvencelle, *jument, jupon; laideron, lorette, luronne, *laitue, *langue, *lièvre, *limande, *linge; Mère, ménagère, mégère, miss, matrone, maritorne, maîtresse, muse, madone, mijaurée, marâtre, moukère, mousmé, moitié, midinette, *mangeuse d'andouille, *mangeuse de pommes, *mémé, *mistonne, môme, *morue, maîtresse femme, maîtresse de maison, mondaine; nana, *nénesse, nymphe, naïade, *nière, *niousse, *nistonne; odalisque, ondine; péronnelle, poule, poulette, poupée, *pétasse, petite, *pisseuse, *planète, *planche, poison, *pot de chambre, *pot de nuit, poufiasse, (belle) personne, personne du sexe, pucelle; rombière, rousse, *requin, *ravelure, repoussoir, *résidu, rosse, roulure; soeur, sirène, soubrette, sainte nitouche, souris, snobinette, *sac de nuit, *saucisson, *sexe, sorcière; tendron, *tortue, *trumeau, *toupie, typesse; virago, vénus, vierge, vieille fille; *zigouince ["note: the asterisk marks words which are only found in Guiraud's work and whose usage is manifestly more restricted"] (Yaguello 152).

⁸² Similarly, early studies of names for women and men in English revealed that while "not only were there more words for males but that there were more positive words . . . [Moreover,] many of the words for women had sexual overtones and despite the fact that there were more words for men, of the smaller sample assigned to women there were 220 words for a sexually promiscuous female and only 20 for a sexually promiscuous male (Stanley, qtd. in Spender 15).

the many animal metaphors used to designate a woman. In *Belle de Jour*, Adolphe addresses Séverine as his “hen,” rendered in English as “honey”:

Adolphe (29:10)	Je suis pas Rothschild, ma poule .	I’m not a millionaire, honey!
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Although “hen” does not appear in the subtitle in this example, certainly “mother hen” and “hen party” exist in English to refer to women in other contexts, with a similarly demeaning effect, to indicate a woman or group of women less serious and important than their male counterparts. In *The Story of Women*, the animal metaphors translate directly to English equivalents:

Lulu (26:20)	. . . que les hommes nous prennent pour des canasses men treat us like horses.
Lulu (51:28)	J’ai l’impression d’être une vache .	I feel like a cow.

In addition to the animal metaphor, many metaphors for women both in French and in English include merchandise (food, toys), and most have to do with the idea of woman as prostitute or commodity or as spectacle (as object of the gaze); when the dialogue communicates this type of objectification, therefore, equivalency can be achieved in many instances. Often, as will be demonstrated later in the discussion about *tutoiement* (the informal use of “you”) and the use of the word “girl,” omissions or strategic use of words not typically considered insults can still have an insulting effect, since in many contexts the lack of recognition objectifies the woman, such as the use of “one” to refer to a woman, suggesting the interchangeability and dehumanized status of the woman. Several examples can be found in *Belle de Jour*:

1)	Adolphe (27:38)	Une nouvelle —tu nous as caché?	A new girl! Are you hiding her?
2)	Adophe (28:03)	L'autre jour, je suis tombé sur une Nègresse ...	The other day, I had a black one . . .
3)	Madame Anaïs (28:26)	Et bien, vous tombez bien. Une nouveauté, ça s'arrose.	Lucky girl! Champagne on your first day!
4)	Professeur / Gynocologist (40:23)	Envoyez-moi ça .	Good, send her in.
5)	Duke's valet (52:34)	Vous savez, celles qui vous ont précédée ne demanderaient qu'à revenir.	The girls before you would love to come again.
6)	Hippolyte to Séverine (1:03:33)	Assieds-toi, la nouvelle .	Come here, new girl!
7)	Marcel (1:05:38)	Il y en a beaucoup qui aimeraient être là à ta place en ce moment.	Many girls would love to be in your place.

In the above examples, specific mention of *woman* or *girl* never occurs in the original dialogue; the demonstrative or indefinite pronoun is used in all but example 2). In 1), Adolphe simply says, “Une nouvelle,” literally, “a new one,” and in Hippolyte’s command to Séverine in 6), he simply calls her “the new one,” reducing her to a commodity. The English translation at least names her as a being, albeit a “girl” in both instances.

This same phenomenon—Séverine objectified by virtue of her status as the newest prostitute—occurs in 3) as well. Séverine is a “novelty,” referred to in terms of her function in the bordello. Marcel’s comment in 7) relegates Séverine to a simple two-

letter pronoun, “en”—literally, “there are a lot [of girls/women/them] who would love to be in your place.” In all these examples, the word *woman* (or *femme*) is not mentioned—the women discussed are just “ones” and “them” or even “that,” as in 4): “*envoyez-moi ça*”—a non-French speaker would not get the full impact of the degrading effect of being referenced as “ça” (not “her,” but “that” or “it”) especially by a gynecologist. Séverine is linguistically reduced to her sexual organ, a nuance markedly absent from the subtitle.

In 2), the double entendre of “*je suis tombé sur une Nègresse*” (“I came upon” or literally “fell upon” a “Negress”) is lost in the English, as is the racial slur of *Nègresse*, though the idea of interchangeability of one woman for another is expressed with “a black **one**.” Unfortunately, the absence of a translation of *tomber* sacrifices the next line containing the idiomatic expression “*Vous tombez bien*” (literally but nonsensically, you fall well, or you’re in luck) uttered by Madame Anaïs.

Below, Husson in *Belle de Jour* uses much more colorful language in French than the English reveals when he greets Séverine and his wife; the meaning behind his French words hints at his sadistic tendencies (“lost punishments”), instead of the bland “two beautiful sights.”

Husson (9:44)	Que de châtiments perdus.	Look at that—two beautiful sights.
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Given the date the subtitling was performed, the subtitling may have been subject to societal constraints at discussing such a shocking topic for the late 1960s, which might explain the wide disparity between the original and the subtitles, or the subtitler may well have engaged in self-censorship in reaction to the licentious nature of the film’s subject and dialogue.

Linguistic objectification also occurs in *Vagabond*, when a man discovers Mona sleeping, and this objectification has been rendered in the subtitles:

Man in field on discovering Mona (8:20)	Hey, les gars, venez voir le petit lot qu'y a là-dedans!	Hey, guys, look at the prize I found!
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This particular use of demeaning language and the faithful rendering of it significantly informs the story line to describe the situation of the woman in question. The use of “one” to refer to a woman is mitigated only slightly by the use of “girl,” but in certain instances this represents a significant difference. In some contexts, the refusal even to assign a name or to address a person can have greater deleterious impact than the name itself. The much more accurate representation of sexist language in the subtitles in *Vagabond* highlights the feminist message of Varda’s film, whereas the diluted forms present in the subtitles of *Belle de Jour* weaken the satirical impact of Buñuel’s portrayal of the chauvinism and hypocrisy of the French middle class.

3.3 Insults and Epithets

The third of Tatilon’s categories, “scornful language and sexist clichés,” deserves a distinct mention, as it has particular pertinence to the dialogue as translated in the subtitles in these films. On the linguistic level, insults based on specificities of each language pose translation difficulties; on the cultural level, the insults reflect the idiosyncratic behaviors of the given society transmitted through the spoken language. The gamut of insults in French leveled at Séverine in her dream sequence in *Belle de Jour* is represented by less-varied English counterparts for the colorful, offensive language:

1)	Pierre (3:44)	Il faut perdre le gant avec cette petite salope .	You can be rough with this little tramp .
2)	Pierre (4:18)	Tais-toi, garce!	Shut up, tramp!
3)	Adolphe (35:53)	Tu te prends pour qui, espèce de salope ?	Who do you think you are, you little slut ?
4)	Pierre (37:41)	Comment ça va, petite ordure ? Alors, tu vas bien, espèce de traînée ? Vieille roulure ? Fumier ?	How are you, little slut ? Doing all right, bitch ? Old whore ? Maggot ? Pig ?
5)	Husson (37:52)	Vieille infirm e! Excavatrice ! Pouffi asse!	Scum ! Garbage ! Tramp ! Slut !

As the English translation of these exchanges cannot rival the French for sheer diversity of insults, several repetitions of the expressions “tramp” and “slut” appear in all the above TL exchanges. In 5), the expression *excavatrice*, or “bulldozer” in English, provides both a feminine noun and the impression of a person digging in the dirt, at the very moment when Husson throws dirt on Séverine (as well as an example of a “woman-as-machine” metaphor); the English “garbage” does not approach the imagery of this unusual expression. Does this lack of lexical variation in the English result from time and space constraints or does it simply reveal a lesser quantity of derogatory expressions to refer to women in English? Certainly the virulence and variety of insults in the dialogues in Buñuel’s film emphasize the opprobious nature of the characters using them, and the TL translation does not begin to approximate the depth of their misogynistic impact.

The most common insult found in the films is *pute*, or *putain*, translated generally as “whore” in English. *Pute* was first used in 1080 and actually predates *putain*, then was

readopted as a shortened version of *putain*, according to the *Dictionnaire culturel en langue française* (2245). The original meaning of *pute* was used both in a figurative sense as bad, or literally as “smelly,” a derivative of *puant*. By the end of the fourteenth century the word had come to mean “a woman who freely engages in sexual activity,” and now both terms have come to designate a prostitute or are simply used as an interjection in popular, familiar French (*Dictionnaire culturel* 2244 and 2245), as in the example above where Isabelle interjects, “*Oh, putain!*”⁸³

In the other films besides *Belle de Jour*, the term references a prostitute, as in 1) below. The subtitles preserve the full effect of the insult in these instances from the film *The Story of Women* when Paul and the judge refer to Marie:

- | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| 1) | Paul (25:59) | ... une pute | ... a hooker |
| 2) | Paul in letter to
Commissioner
(01:21:17) | ... à des prostituées . . .
. | ... to prostitutes .
.. |
| 3) | Judge (01:37:07) | ... femmes légères . . .
. praticiennes . . . | women of easy
virtue . . .
prostitutes |

Though register is often the first casualty of interlingual translation, occasionally creative solutions can salvage the register, as in the examples above. In 2), even the nuanced, slightly formal word *prostituées* is subtitled as “prostitutes” in English, since Paul is making a formal complaint in his letter to report his wife’s activities. The judge’s comment in 3) about *femmes légères* also constitutes an equivalent in register in the English. However, the second part of his comment, when he mentions *praticiennes* (an

⁸³ *Putain* is listed as vulgar slang, with the primary definition meaning prostitute. The second definition lists a “woman who freely engages in sexual activity.” The fourth definition lists *putain* as a popular interjection expressing surprise, admiration or exclamation” (2244-45).

archaic, almost objective term focusing on the professional aspect), loses this neutrality in the English “prostitutes,” a more judgment-laden expression.

Conne or *connasse*, a vulgarity with a wider range of meanings (from “bitch” to “cunt”) and which is more contextually defined than *salope*, is alternately translated as “bitch” and “fucking idiot,” both translations appropriate to the circumstances. The first definition in the *Dictionnaire culturel* for *con* designates it as dating from the early 13th century (first used in the *Roman de Renart*) and originally used to refer to the female genitalia. The second definition, from the late 18th century, refers generally to an imbecile or idiot or as an interjection. *Connasse* refers to the female sex organ or “an inept prostitute” (*Dictionnaire culturel* 1736). While *connasse* or *conne* specifically names a female, the subtitles often provide a gender-neutral expression, such as “fucking idiot,” (as in example 2) from *Thieves* below) or “sap,” or “fool” (in *Dreamlife of Angels*), and not always a female-oriented expression such as “bitch” (1) and 3) in *Thieves*, below).

1)	Juliette (10:15)	Elle va porter plainte, ta conne du magasin?	Is that bitch pressing charges?
2)	Alex (38:35)	Conne!	Fucking idiot!
3)	Alex (47:50)	C’est lamentable, cette fille. C’est une pauvre connasse . C’est une pauvre mine, une espèce de pauvre connasse .	She’s a loser. A rotten no-good stupid bitch.

In the following excerpt from *Vagabond*, translation of *conne* is avoided altogether:

Guy from train station (1:37:24)	Ah, la conne . Elle baisait bien. J’aurais même pu gagner du fric avec elle.	She was a good fuck. I could have made money with her.
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Though *conne* is not translated, the effect of name-calling is rendered by the use of a noun where the verb *baisait* (“she fucked well”) is used in French, a clever solution to a problem posed by time and space constraints, and an interesting reversal of the tendency towards a preponderance of verbs in English versus nouns in French, detailed by Vinay and Darbelnet (*cf* 61).

In the *Dreamlife of Angels*, Marie and Isa’s earthy speech (including use of *conne* and *connasse*) loses its personality when weakened to non-vulgar terms like *fool* and *sap* in English:

Marie to Isa (1:21:08)	Connasse!	You poor sap!
Isa to Charly (1:24:42)	C’est Marie, elle est avec un mec. Elle se laisse tromper. Il la prend pour une grosse conne , là.	It’s Marie—she’s with this guy. He’s taking her for a fool.
Isa to Charly (1:26:48)	Je comprends rien! Je suis une grosse conne .	I don’t understand. I’m a fool.
Isa to Marie (1:34:44)	Vas-y, prends-les, tes clopes, pauvre conne , va!	Keep them, you poor fool!

This curiously neutralized discourse, either a result of the subtitler’s self-censorship to keep the women’s language more “proper” or simply an example of avoidance of strong language in the written form, deprives the dialogue (and by extension the characters) of nuance, for Isa’s “non-feminine” manner of discourse frames her character as more sensitive to sexism and social inequality than Marie, who frequently allows herself to be seduced and often used. Frequently this neutralized discourse leads to loss of imagery at best (examples 1 and 2 below) and nonsense at worst (example 3: *mollasse*, a rather mild insult in French, leaves the TL viewer wondering at the sense in English:

1)	Marie to Isa (1:35:27)	Qu'est-ce que tu sais faire, à part de t'accrocher aux autres comme un boulet ?	You're just a hanger-on.
2)	Marie to Isa (1:35:35)	T'es une fille larguée , tu le vois même pas.	You're screwed up and you don't even realize it.
3)	Marie to Isa (1:04:31)	Sympa? C'est une mollasse !	Nice? She's wet!

In 1) the millstone image is lost (*un boulet* is a “millstone” in English), along with the irony (the literal translation: “What do you do, other than attaching yourself to other people like a millstone?” describes precisely Marie’s behavior). Again, in 2), the expression is altered—*larguée* means “dumped” figuratively—not simply “screwed up,” a curious lexical choice for Marie, who is later dumped by Chriss in the film.

Sometimes the insults are more subtle, simply an unfortunate combination of ordinary words creating an insulting comment, as in the example below from *The Story of Women*:

Lucien to Pierrot (1:12:18)	C'est la sale cuisine de bonnes femmes, ça.	That's women's business.
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Literally, Lucien’s comment translates as “that’s the dirty kitchen of housewives,” much more degrading than the neutral “women’s business,” which does not accurately reflect his misogyny. In certain instances, intensifiers are omitted, for space or time considerations, perhaps, as in Juliette’s exclamation to Mireille in *Thieves*, but “fucking idiot” would have better conveyed the heat behind the statement.

Juliette to Mireille (5:34)	La foutue idiote!	That idiot!
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It would seem that in many instances, the breadth and scope of the insults used for women is greatly reduced in English compared to the French. Often, expressions of vulgarity become desexualized in the English, as in the choice to use one of the many variations on “fucking” (as in the examples from *Vagabond* and *Thieves* above) or “screwing” (as in the example above from *The Dreamlife of Angels*) and do not refer specifically to women, but rather function as generally vulgar terms, albeit often omitted or less vulgar than the original, having the effect of diluting the film’s portrayal of a misogynist society. These examples suggest that either English contains fewer female-specific insults or that there are simply fewer opportunities in English to feminize insults due to the absence of grammatical gender in English.

3.4 Grammatical Gender: Linguistic Discrimination

English, being a “natural” gender language—that is, based on the actual sex of the noun—and not a grammatical gender language, like French (Nilsen *et al.* 43 and Cameron 63), is often used in a sexist way, since the modified noun has no gender to determine pronoun usage, and the unmarked form is masculine singular, as in the example, “Each student had his book open” (Nilsen *et al.* 43). Feminists, however, have said that “English gender is natural only if you are a man” (Cameron 63) and, for women, “the only semantic space in English is negative” (Spender 161). This awkward situation often leaves the linguistically sensitive scrambling for a neutral solution, leading to such suggestions as “his/her,” “their,” or simply reformulating the sentence, resulting in such convoluted permutations as:

1. Each student had his/her book open. (awkward)
2. Each student had their book open. (grammatically incorrect) or
3. Each student had an open book. (Spender 161)

Other solutions for neutral pronouns in English have also been proposed, such as *E*, *tey* and *per* (Cameron 89), though none has caught on. Though grammatical sexism certainly exists in French, the use of the possessive pronoun (the modified object determines the sex of the modifier) provides one instance in which the speaker avoids this particular aspect (“each student had [his/her] book open”—“book is masculine, and it would not matter if it were a female or male student as agent: “*chaque étudiant avait son livre ouvert*”). That said, however, the unmarked form for “student” is still masculine singular, as is the form for any mixed plural a masculine plural. In both languages, the masculine singular is automatically considered the unmarked form, a situation which linguists and feminists have challenged for years, insisting that the average speaker, conditioned to use the masculine in this way, will automatically assume the masculine in his or her mind.

Tatilon asserts that, in French, superiority of the masculine over the feminine is manifested in the following five ways. Detailed comments and comparisons with English follow.

1. Generic masculine;
2. Agreement in masculine plural;
3. Masculine predominance in word order: “Monsieur et Madame,” “messieurs/dames,” “Roméo et Juliette”;
4. Refusal of the “*épïcène*” words with an invariable signifier but which can have different gender: e.g. *enfant*, *guide*, *élève*, *artiste*, etc.;
5. “Masculinocentric” formation of nouns and compound nouns, such as formation of *maîtresse* (“mistress”) from *maître* (“master”). (Tatilon 138-41)

The French language dictates use of the generic masculine (1) much more so than English. Although Francophone Canada has adopted “les droits de la personne,” “les

droits de l’homme” is still used in France (Tatilon 138). In the U.S., common usage has moved away from the era of Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man* and “these are the times that try men’s souls” (International History Organization) to the collocation “human rights” in a mere 250 years.

Agreement in masculine plural takes precedence in French, where *ils* expresses the presence of at least one masculine element, no matter how many feminine nouns are included in the reference. French also features masculine predominance in word order. For example, common collocations typically follow the formula masculine/feminine, as in “Monsieur et Madame,” “messieurs/dames,” “Roméo et Juliette” (Tatilon 140). Further, adjectives are generally placed near the masculine where both genders are represented:

Les premiers électeurs et électrices . . . (The first [male voters] and [female voters] . . .)

Les artisanes et les artisans souvent courageux . . . (Often courageous [female artisans] and [male artisans] . . .)

Though not reflected in adjectives, this masculine predominance occurs in English as well. One need only look at the collocations “Mr. and Mrs.,” “Dear Sir or Madam,” “his and her,” the only exception being “Ladies and Gentlemen,” possibly because of the adage “Ladies first” (but women second, presumably).

Another sexist feature of French in Tatilon’s list is a refusal of the “*épïcène*” words with an invariable signifier but which can have different gender: e.g. *enfant*, *guide*, *élève*, *artiste*, etc. (141). There appears to be a preference for separate words for professions common to men and women, as in *boucher/bouchère* (“butcher/*butcheress”) (Tatilon 141). Henriette Walter indicates, however, that even as recently as 1988, a

national survey indicated that “80% of women pharmacists preferred the title *Madame le pharmacien* over *Madame la pharmacienne*” (Walter 286).

In (American) English, on the other hand, there is less of a tendency to delineate masculine and feminine-named professions, thanks in part to a concentrated effort by the U.S. Department of Labor to redefine over 3,500 job titles in its *Occupational Outlook Handbook* to make them gender-neutral,⁸⁴ though expressions like “actress” still remain the preferred designation (“actor” as a gender-neutral professional title has not quite caught on, but gender-neutral professional titles such as “flight attendant” are replacing “stewardess” and its ilk), as well as a tendency to add “lady” to a professional title, such as “lady doctor,” which has been described by Robin Lakoff as “suggest[ing] frivolity and a lack of seriousness” and is considered “condescending” or “an insult” (21), though in the 32 years since Lakoff’s book was published there has been some progress in this area. Various professional designations for women deserve a separate treatment and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Finally, Tatilon mentions the “masculinocentric” formation of nouns and compound nouns, such as formation of *maîtresse* (“mistress”) from *maître* (“master”) (Tatilon 141). *Maîtresse*, as its English counterpart, can also have a sexual connotation, whereas the male equivalent, *maître*, typically does not. This longer form recalls the

⁸⁴ “In early editions of the *Handbook*, it is not unusual to find third-person singular pronouns (he, his, she, her, and so forth) used in describing the nature of work in occupations in which most workers were either men or women. Equal employment legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 prohibited the use of sex- and age-specific language in inappropriate contexts by the public employment service. To conform to these regulations, the U.S. Department of Labor issued a publication in 1975 revising nearly 3,500 job descriptions in the D.O.T. that were considered potentially discriminatory with regard to sex or age. For example, terms circumscribing a person’s age, such as “boy,” “girl,” “junior,” and “senior,” were eliminated, as was sex-stereotyping language, such as “man,” “woman,” “lady,” and suffixes like “-ess,” denoting females. Thus, “foreman” was replaced by “supervisor” and “draftsman” by “drafter.” The Bureau formally adopted the use of nonsexist job titles in the 1976-77 *Handbook*, with the sole exception of “able seaman,” which, for reasons unknown, was retained” (Pilot 18).

Biblical story of Eve's formation from Adam's rib (Tatilon 141). Other male/female pairs represented in English with different connotations for each exist in English as well: "governor (ruler)/governess (child caregiver); tramp (homeless man)/tramp (prostitute or promiscuous woman)" (Cameron 77).

Indeed, French and English differ in that French favors feminization of masculine nouns, and English (except for borrowed words like *bachelorette* and the frequency of "man" as prefix or suffix in compound nouns like mailman, manhole, mankind, etc.), favors neutralization, especially given the federal government's attempts to make changes to job titles (mentioned above).⁸⁵

In English, grammatical gender is strictly functional, not syntactic, as in French; not only is gender arbitrary in French, Yaguello maintains, but it has no apparent usefulness, since non-natives who make gender mistakes can still make themselves understood (91). Still, gender is so ingrained in French sensibilities that Yaguello poses the question, "*Le genre est-il le reflet d'une vision de l'univers?*" (Is gender the reflection of a vision of the universe?) (my translation) (91-92).⁸⁶

Indeed, this very question and the cultural impact of the use of the feminine has prompted so many other linguists (including Peter Newmark, cited at the beginning of this chapter) to address the issue of whether gender can or should be translated. Roman

⁸⁵ In French, even with words like *personne* ("person") and *victime* ("victim"), which are feminine in gender but apply to both men and women, there is still a tendency to avoid using *personne* when talking about men exclusively; apparently, *homme* ("man") is used more frequently (Yaguello 120). Additionally, endings which feminize nouns—such as *-ouille*, *aille*, and *-ure*—tend to be pejorative (Yaguello 161).

⁸⁶ Where there is a physical personification of a gendered noun, the translation becomes even more problematic. For example, in the Bergman film *The Seventh Seal*, Death (masculine in Swedish) and shown as a man, is subtitled in French in the feminine, since *la mort* (death) is feminine in French—making it masculine would change the meaning (*le mort* would mean one dead man rather than Death in general, so the visual inconsistency had to remain in order to preserve the larger meaning) (Yaguello 97).

Jakobson remarks that “even such a category as grammatical gender, often cited as merely formal, plays a great role in the mythological attitudes of a speech community” and mentions “the difficulty faced by the translator in communicating the symbolism of genders” (149-50).

Often an original French text provides information about a subject’s gender not available in the English. For example, the speaker may use a feminized noun which has no gendered English counterpart. In these instances, in order to avoid omission, a translator will add a word such as “lady” in English; other times, however, the translator omits the reference entirely. Character designations rendered in the feminine do occur in French, and the English translators must scramble to make additions, usually being forced to add “girl,” “female,” or “lady” in the text, though sometimes this addition is avoided altogether. This occurs at several moments in *Vagabond*:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Trucker
(7:54) | Autostoppeuses , d’accord. Mais les rôleuses et les chieuses , je les vire de mon camion. Remarque, elle était mignonne. | Girl hitchhikers, OK. But if they’re a pain in the ass I throw ’em out. She was cute, though. |
| 2) | Gas station owner
(15:23) | Ces rôleuses , toutes les mêmes, des dragueuses , des fainéantes . . . | Female drifters, all alike, just loafers and men-chasers. |
| 3) | Uncle Aimé
(29:50) | Voir Yolande partir d’ici avec une armoire géante ou la campeuse s’emmener un grand tableau. | Imagine her carrying off a big wardrobe or the camper stealing a big painting. |

In 1), the feminine form to describe those who hitchhike, complain, and generally annoy cannot be so neatly stated in the English. In fact, the translator chose to supply the most important designation—hitchhikers—and compensate for the other designations

(*râleuses* and *chieuses*) with “pain in the ass,” an efficient solution though gender-neutral, and add “girl” to render *autostoppeuses*. In 2), the gas station owner affirms the feminine four times in his statement, all subtitled in English under a single “female” heading. For 3), the translator chose to omit “female” for “camper.”

In the examples below, no attempt is made to add the feminine. Though it is impossible to avoid adding the feminine and providing that additional information in the French, the English version does not insist upon the femininity of the hitchhiker. The French version reiterates the fact that it is a **female** hitchhiker, a **female** vagabond (in 1) and 2)), even a fat female in 3) (the English subtitle just gives “pig”), underscoring the idea that such identity is even more unusual and/or objectionable for a female. English, lacking grammatical gender, allows a certain ambiguity, perhaps a statement on gender in itself.

1)	Madame Landier in bath (44:43)	J’ai pris en stop une routarde , une vagabonde , quoi.	I gave a ride to a hitchhiker, a sort of vagrant.
2)	Madame Landier (52:49)	C’est une curieuse fille. Une stoppeuse , du genre sauvage et sale.	She’s a weird girl. A hitchhiker, wild and unwashed.
3)	Jean-Pierre’s wife to Jean-Pierre (54:51)	Tu ne vas pas me casser les pieds avec une graisseuse qui vous a blousés.	Stop talking about that pig who snowed you and Mrs. Landier.

In 1) and 2) the SL dialogue of Madame Landier (known to be sympathetic towards Mona) provides feminine forms of denotative and neutral terms which have more pejorative connotations in the TL, whereas Jean-Pierre’s wife uses an undeniably negative term in the SL, no matter what the context. It appears the subtitler attributed a negative connotation to the terms in 1) and 2) where none existed in the SL.

Stereotypical attitudes toward women reveal themselves and reflect either the character's or the translator's misogyny in Marie's discourse in *The Dreamlife of Angels*, as she muses about her options for the future and considers different occupations:

Marie to Isa (1:30:22)	Je vais peut-être bosser au Blue. D'abord comme serveuse , et puis après derrière le bar.	I might be working at the Blue as a waitress first, then a barmaid.
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In French, the distinction between *serveur* and *serveuse* (“waiter” and “waitress”) exists in English as well, but why use “barmaid” instead of “bartender?” “Barmaid” in English conjures up stereotypical images of attractive, though not terribly competent, young women fetching beer for thirsty, important men. It is a frivolous appellation, while “bartender” is a more serious and objective professional term. Could the usage of “barmaid” for “bartender” have been deliberately done to emphasize Marie's identification with a stereotypical female subservient role tied to her lack of self-esteem? Marie rarely betrays this vulnerability in her words, at least until the end of the film. Her character's trajectory from strong, independent woman to clingy, desperate girlfriend can be traced through the patterns of her dialogue and the translations.

When she first meets Isa in the factory, Marie discusses her former boss's mistreatment of her and the revenge she exacted on him:

1)	Isa to Marie (9:20)	T'es pas restée. Ça te plaisait pas d'être serveuse?	You didn't like being a waitress?
2)	Marie to Isa (9:23)	Il m'a vite gonflée, le patron.	The boss soon got on my nerves.
3)	Marie to Isa (9:26)	Il nous traitait comme de la merde, tout ça parce que, tout simplement c'était le patron.	He treated us like shit, simply because he was the boss.
4)	Marie to Isa 9:33	Putain, je lui ai envoyé un pain dans la gueule. Il ne l'a pas vu venir.	I slapped him once. He didn't see it coming.
5)	Marie to Isa (9:43)	Le lendemain, je suis revenue, je lui ai rayé sa caisse des deux côtés.	The next day I returned and scratched his car on both sides.
6)	Marie to Isa (9:47)	Putain, il était vert.	Shit, he was mad.

In 5), Marie continues, ignoring Isa's question immediately preceding "What did he do to you?" preoccupied by the memory of her revenge. Another element of Marie's toughness is her use of slang expressions, particularly in 2), 4), 5), and 6) above, translated much less colorfully in English and neutralizing many SL slang expressions like *putain*, *gueule*, *caisse*, and *être vert*, a slang usage marking Marie as streetwise and perhaps a bit coarse. The sterile English version does little to reflect Marie's idelect.

When Marie and Isa are approached by a ticket seller (in 1) and 2) below) and in the bar by Charly and Fredo (3) and 4) below), both women respond with strength and independence. Marie remains unflustered by the men who try to belittle or dominate her:

- | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|
| 1) | Marie to
concert ticket
seller (13:57) | Moitié prix, mon cul! De
toute façon, on n'a pas de
fric. | Half price, my
ass! We're
broke. |
| 2) | Marie to
concert ticket
seller (13:59) | Arrête de nous les brandir
sous le nez. Je te dis qu'on
n'a pas de fric! | Stop waving
them in our
faces! We're
broke. |
| 3) | Marie to
Frédo (19:12) | Et toi, t'es qui, toi,
d'ailleurs? | Who are you
anyway? |
| 4) | Marie to
Frédo
(19:13) | T'es qu'un videur. Donc
c'est certainement pas toi
qui vas nous donner du
boulot. | Just a bouncer.
You can't get
us a job. |

Though Charly ultimately becomes Marie's lover and clearly the submissive partner in the relationship, on their first meeting he assumes an adversarial, patriarchal stance, explaining ways Marie and Isa should alter their appearance to be considered attractive enough to enter the bar. Marie reacts:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Charly
to
Marie
(30:19) | Sapée comme ça, non. Ta
copine, qu'elle se laisse
pousser les cheveux, toi tu
t'arranges les tiens, vous vous
maquillez un peu, t'enfiles
une petite robe . . . vous
essayez de ressembler à des
nanas, c'est tout. | Not like that. She could
grow her hair, you could
have yours done, a little
makeup, you wear a
dress . . . Try and look
like girls. |
| Marie
to
Charly
(30:28) | C'est quoi, ton métier? Tu
judges d'après la gueule des
gens, c'est ça? | What a job! You just
judge people by their
appearance! |

Charly uses the word *nanas*, a slangier term (roughly equivalent to *chicks*) than the English *girls* (see further discussion of *nana* below). Marie's response shows her strength and sense of injustice at being judged as a woman by her appearance.

“Appearance” in the English gives a stronger meaning than *gueule* in that it encompasses

the face and the body—all the different ways women (for even though Marie uses the word *gens*—“people”—women are the ones judged) are evaluated and dissected by male objectification. In this sense the subtitle represents an addition and provides more nuance than the original statement.

Throughout most of the film, Marie’s dialogue reveals her strength (or rather bravado disguised as strength) as she and Isa become friends and search for work. Marie’s hardened exterior, however, results from a lifelong series of disappointments, and her inner vulnerability reveals itself in one other instance in both the French and English dialogue:

Marie to Isa (about Charly) (23:00)	Il m’a filé son téléphone, mais je ne l’appellerai pas.	He gave me his number, but I won’t call.
Marie to Isa (23:03)	Je suis pas du genre à m’attacher aux mecs et puis ils me gavent vite, quoi.	I don’t get stuck on guys. They get on my nerves.

The seemingly self-assured Marie utters these words in the beginning of the film, and the translation is quite sufficient (although *gavent* in French is much stronger; the verb is used to describe force-fed ducks). Later in the film, Marie’s tough exterior, a cover for her lack of self-assurance, begins to crumble even further:

1)	Marie to Isa (01:20:34)	J’en ai rien à foutre d’être humiliée. Si tu crois que j’ai pas été humiliée jusqu’ici.	I don’t mind. I’ve been humiliated before.
2)	Marie to Isa (01:20:37)	Avec une vie de merde, traîtée comme de la merde.	A shitty life, treated like shit.

The translation of 1) “I don’t mind,” does not adequately reflect Marie’s anger; literally, “I don’t give a damn about being humiliated” (though *foutre* in other contexts is

equivalent to “fuck” in English and is considered vulgar). The translation of the second statement, however, renders as exactly as possible Marie’s words.

Thus, Marie’s statement about becoming a barmaid, mentioned above, does not represent her particular “face” throughout the film but rather a pronounced change in her outlook after she has allowed herself to dream of a life with the handsome yet cruel Chriss, a man far above her social class. Her words reflect a certain vulnerability and subservience she has adopted since she began her disappointing affair, in sharp contrast to her earlier habit of spurning jobs as a waitress or roller-skating sandwich-board worker. Creative use of gendered language only provides one way of demonstrating different power relationships between men and women; the fact that English does not have this distinction often results in omissions, loss of meaning, or a transformation of the SL connotations in the TL subtitles. Though gendered language functions as a type of address, more direct forms of address will be discussed in the following section.

3.5 Forms of Address

3.5.1 *Vous* vs. *Tu*

“On peut se tutoyer, non?” [“We can use first names, right?”]
—Monique in *My Life in Pink*

When the neighbors arrive to welcome the Fabres to the neighborhood in *My Life in Pink*, one of the women, upon arriving, wants to establish informality and equality, a more familial relationship, by encouraging the new neighbors to use the French informal form of *you* with her and allow her to do the same. Since no English word or concept exists for *tutoiement*, the English rendering of “use first names” most closely resembles the original in that there is a metadiscourse, but the use of the informal “you,” *tu*, known as

tutoiement, compared to the formal and/or plural “you,” *vous* (*vouvoiement*), can convey many different subtle extralinguistic messages, quite different from simple use of the first name instead of the full name, which occurs quite frequently in English but does not necessarily indicate an intimate relationship.

When a French speaker chooses to use *vous* versus *tu*, with and to women, the usage reveals a great deal about the nature of their relationship. Though the “*tutoiement* dance” does not enter into the consciousness of English speakers, in French it subtly conveys a power relationship. In addition to distinguishing between singular and plural, “*vous* expresses distance and respect but also superiority, while the *tu* can express familiarity and solidarity but also inferiority” (my translation) (Dewaele 1).⁸⁷ Additionally, when there is a single interlocutor, the *tu* is usually used in a reciprocal fashion which reflects “social solidarity between speakers of the same age, same socioprofessional category, same family, [and] same institutional affiliation” (my translation) (Pires 27).⁸⁸ In fact, if this usage is not reciprocated it leads to loss of face (Brown & Levinson, qtd. in Pires 27).

Additionally there exists a “semantics of power” (Brown and Gilman, qtd. in Dewaele 1), characterized by an asymmetrical pronoun usage (a superior will *tutoie* a subordinate, who responds with *vous*) that Brown and Gilman suggest is shifting to a semantics of solidarity, where members of a certain social group use *tu* with each other, while those outside the group use *vous* (Dewaele 1-2). Brown and Gilman first reported

⁸⁷ “Le *vous* peut exprimer la distance et le respect mais aussi la supériorité, tandis que le *tu* peut exprimer la familiarité et la solidarité mais aussi l’infériorité.”

⁸⁸ “À l’exception de quelques usages établis en milieux scolaire, militaire, voire professionnel, celles-ci s’emploient de façon réciproque, convention qui traduit une solidarité sociale entre locuteurs de même âge, même catégorie socioprofessionnelle, même famille, même appartenance institutionnelle.”

on this shift towards *tu* in 1960, but forty-eight years later, power relationships are still expressed through the use of *tu* or *vous*. Dewaele suggests that political and personal opinions influence a choice of *tu* over *vous*, even going so far as to say, “French police who use *tu* when asking non-natives for identification and use *vous* when making the same request of natives would be considered racist” (my translation) (Dewaele 2).⁸⁹ “*Tu* expresses particular intimacy, or, more rarely, condescension, and *vous*, is public, relatively formal conversation and respect” (my translation) (Mühlhäusler & Harré 135, qtd. in Pires 28).

The bible of French grammar, *Le Bon Usage*, summarizes the situation in the following way:

tutoiement occurs when there is a certain familiarity, whereas *vouvoiement* creates distance, especially with strangers or those to whom respect is due; but there are important variations according to times, places, social classes, families, and individuals. (my translation) (Grévisse and Goosse 963)⁹⁰

Given the social and political significance associated with the decision to *tutoyer* or *vouvoyer*, it is not surprising that translation of *tu* and *vous* into English poses problems for the translator and that attempts to render it typically result in a loss of information.

In *The Spanish Apartment*, Anne-Sophie almost always uses *vous* to address Xavier. Normally in such relationships the older person (Anne-Sophie) would use the familiar form when addressing the younger person and later grant permission for *tutoiement* explicitly. However, this practice functions in reverse in the relationship

⁸⁹ “. . . les policiers qui demanderaient les papiers d’allochtones en utilisant le *tu* alors qu’ils vouvoieraient des autochtones dans la même situation seraient perçus comme racistes.”

⁹⁰ “Cet emploi de la 2e personne du pluriel au lieu du singulier s’appelle le *vouvoiement* . . . , qui s’oppose au *tutoiement*. Celui-ci implique d’ordinaire la familiarité, tandis que le vouvoiement marque une certaine distance, notamment s’il s’agit d’une personne inconnue ou d’une personne à qui l’on doit le respect. Mais il y a d’importantes variations selon les temps, les lieux, les classes sociales, les familles, les individus.”

between Xavier and Anne-Sophie, and Xavier's willingness to use *tu* with Anne-Sophie, indeed with everyone, conveys a certain confidence and impression of dominance. Anne-Sophie's use of the formal *vous* with Xavier, especially since she is a married woman, not very much older than Xavier, and he is a university student, will strike the SL viewer as unusual and will thus foreshadow the odd nature of their relationship and provide supplemental information about the personalities of each of the characters.

Indeed, Anne-Sophie has married above her class and is hoping to ascend socially. Xavier, on the other hand, comes from a rather privileged family and feels free of the social constrictions of the older generation. His use of *tu* also indicates his youthful idealism. It may also symbolize solidarity with Jean-Michel, Anne-Sophie's doctor husband, as males and social peers, since Xavier addresses Anne-Sophie as *tu* when the three of them first meet:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1) | Xavier to
Anne-Sophie
(13:41) | Et toi ? | And you? |
| 2) | Xavier to
Anne-Sophie
(13:59) | Et toi, tu parles
espagnol? | And you, you speak
Spanish ? |
| 3) | Anne-Sophie
to Xavier
(13:60) | Et vous, vous
parlez espagnol? | And you, you speak
Spanish ? |

In 3), Anne-Sophie's use of the formal *vous* with Xavier creates a chaste distance between them, establishes her perceived inferior status, and also expresses a certain deference towards Xavier despite the fact that Anne-Sophie is older than Xavier and a married woman. She immediately assumes the role of a demure, submissive woman, lacking in confidence, addressing a young man who already seems to have dominance in their relationship though he has only just arrived in Barcelona.

Later, when Xavier, Jean-Michel, and Sophie arrive at Jean-Michel and Anne-Sophie's apartment from the airport, Jean-Michel continues to use *tu* with Xavier, while Anne-Sophie uses *vous* with him:

Anne-Sophie **Vous** désirez du café? Want some coffee?
to Xavier (19:40)

The submissiveness established by the use of *vous* is emphasized by the formal manner in which she asks the question. This formulaic question is used by wait staff to clients in restaurants. The English translation suffers a loss of this formality, both in an unmarked “you” form and the general structure of the question; “Want some coffee?” appears a perfectly acceptable and expected exchange among social equals, contrasting with Sophie's stilted, timid manner of asking the same question.

Later, while Xavier and Anne-Sophie are alone together exploring the city, Xavier reverts to the formal “you” with Anne-Sophie (whose use of *vous* is rather antiquated, possibly a clue to her conservative, bourgeois class, as is her first name), perhaps to set up boundaries and create a distance between them, foregrounding Xavier's ambiguity between his desire for her and the attendant guilt, given Anne-Sophie's status as a married woman whose husband has served as a mentor of sorts, initiating him to life in a new, strange city (Xavier later finds a sexual mentor in Isabelle, who gives him advice on how to seduce Anne-Sophie). Target-language viewers who do not have access to this culturally coded use of language will have to guess at what is to follow:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) | Xavier to Anne-Sophie
(01:00:07) | Je connais plein d'endroits à Paris qui font tiers monde, mais . . . vous ne les connaissez pas. | I know just as many in Paris, but . . . you wouldn't know them. |
| 2) | Anne-Sophie to Xavier
(01:00:18) | Vous me trouvez coincée, c'est ça? | Do you find me repressed? |
| 3) | Xavier to Anne-Sophie
(01:00:42) | Vous ne faites pas trop "Juanita Banana." | You're not too "Chiquita Banana." |

Xavier's reversion to the formal form of address in 1) and 3) appears to reveal his particular seduction strategy, possibly to differentiate his relationship with Anne-Sophie at this point from the other men and women he so systematically addresses familiarly. His vacillation between *tu* and *vous* reveals his desire for her as well as his nervousness about the seduction. As with other uses of *tutoiement* and *vouvoiement*, the subtitles do not reveal this level of nuance. Yet Anne-Sophie is not only aware of his typical use of a more informal register (despite the fact that Xavier has just used *vous* with her), but she comments on this distinction in 1) below, directly referring to Xavier's use of the informal *tu* and the self-confidence necessary to use it. Xavier follows Anne-Sophie's lead and uses the formal form of *you* with her in response:

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1) | Anne-
Sophie to
Xavier
(01:01:17) | Vous parlez espagnol dans quelques mois . . . vous tutoyez tout le monde. | You learn Spanish in a few months . . . you're friendly with [you use tu with] everyone. |
| 2) | Anne-
Sophie to
Xavier
(01:01:21) | Moi, je n'y arrive pas. | I can't do that. |
| 3) | Xavier to
Anne-
Sophie
(01:02:42) | On n'est plus en France. Ça fait 6 mois que vous êtes là. Il faut commencer à regarder autour de vous. | You've been here 6 months! Open your eyes and look around. |
| 4) | Anne-
Sophie to
Xavier
(01:03:18) | Excusez-moi. | Pardon me. |
| 5) | Xavier to
Anne-
Sophie
(01:03:24) | Vous avez peur ? | Are you afraid? |

Finally, Xavier's abrupt switch to *tu* in the following exchange below linguistically betrays his desires, which become much clearer when he suddenly grabs Anne-Sophie in an embrace, while Anne-Sophie, even in her surprise, either as a result of her inability to free herself from linguistic propriety or as a final attempt at maintaining distance, continues to use *vous*:

- | | | | |
|----|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1) | Anne-Sophie to
Xavier
(01:07:30) | Mais qu'est-ce que vous faites, là? | What are you doing? |
| 2) | Xavier to Anne-
Sophie
(01:07:34) | Je te veux trop, toi . | I can't . . . I want you too much. |

It is only after she and Xavier have consummated their affair that Anne-Sophie uses *tu* with him for the very first time, and this linguistic daring coincides with a newly adventurous behavior, later reinforced when she impulsively embraces Xavier while her husband is in the adjoining room:

- | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| 1) | Anne-Sophie to
Xavier (in bed)
(01:20:49) | Tu [first time] es en
train de me rendre
folle. | You're driving
me crazy. |
| 2) | Xavier to Anne-
Sophie
(01:20:54) | On ne devrait pas faire
ça chez vous. | We shouldn't do
this at your place. |

Xavier's use of *vous* (an obvious plural) in 2) invokes Jean-Michel in the discourse (not possible in the subtitles) and reveals how aware and fearful he is of the possibility that Jean-Michel will discover their liaison.

In this same display of the power dynamic that exists in the decision to use *tu* or *vous*, Jean-Michel changes from *tu* to *vous* when Xavier comes to see him for a medical consultation. At first, Jean-Michel greets Xavier, seemingly in a friendly manner, sympathetic to Xavier's concern about his health, and uses *tu*:

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Jean-Michel to
Xavier
(01:32 :48) | C'est peut-être pas si grave
que tu dis. | It may not be
serious. |
|---|--|---------------------------|

Suddenly Jean-Michel changes registers, using *vous* for the first time with Xavier, thus distancing himself from Xavier linguistically, even though Xavier continues to use *tu*:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Jean-Michel to Xavier
(01:34:36) | Ne vous en faites
pas. On va tout
nettoyer. | We're going to
clean all that up. |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|

Jean-Michel's abrupt change to formal usage could simply reflect Jean-Michel's professional demeanor in the work situation (since Xavier is his patient at this point), or it could indicate that the nature of their relationship has shifted somewhat. SL audiences,

sensitive to this change, will anticipate the exchange that follows when Jean-Michel reveals his discovery of Xavier's affair with Anne-Sophie.

Finally, Jean-Michel explicitly mentions he does not want to see Xavier anymore, switching again to the familiar form of address, exemplifying a masterful use of language as an important social marker:

Jean-Michel to Xavier (01:36:14)	Par contre, je veux que tu arrêtes de voir Anne-Sophie.	I want you to stop seeing Anne-Sophie.
Jean-Michel to Xavier (01:36:18)	Je ne veux plus que tu la voies.	I don't want you to see her again.
Jean-Michel to Xavier (01:36:21)	Je veux plus te voir non plus.	I don't want to see you again.
Jean-Michel to Xavier (01:36:24)	Ta gueule.	Shut up.

Throughout the film *The Spanish Apartment*, the dialogue plays back and forth with the use of *tutoiement*, whether it occurs between Anne-Sophie and Xavier, Jean-Michel and Xavier, or Xavier and Anne-Sophie and Jean-Michel. SL viewers sensitive to the circumstances dictating the choice of one or the other will guess at the shifting intimacies and boundaries as the film proceeds, whereas TL viewers will not have access to this extralinguistic information.

Similarly, in *Vagabond*, the dialogues reveal an unexpected use of *vouvoiement* to show a power relationship, an aspect absent from the subtitles. Mona's female status, coupled with the attitude (and sex) of the speaker, primarily influence a user's decision to use *vous* or *tu* with her. The younger men tend to use *tu* with Mona—they have little respect for her and regard her as easy prey, a slut, a thing. In the example below (already

mentioned above), however, the older man whom Mona asks for matches is quite deferential, using *vous* with her:

Old man Mona asks for matches (10:19)	Mais, parfaitement. Je vais vous en donner, Mademoiselle.	Of course I'll give you some, young lady.
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In a reversal of the typical male-female power dynamic, which speaks to the feminist nature of the film, Mona uses *vous* with Madame Landier (who, despite the fact that she is older and of a higher social class, also uses *vous* with Mona—a sign of respect) but uses *tu* with Jean-Pierre, Madame Landier's assistant. In turn, Jean-Pierre uses *vous* with Mona (as well as Madame Landier, who reciprocates when she addresses Jean-Pierre), this formality an indication of both education and a deferential nature, neither of which Mona possesses:

Mona to Madame Landier (48:38)	Vous les soignez?	You treat them?
-----------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

Mona also uses *vous* with the older man at the gas station where she works, fully conscious of the effect of her choice of words, and her choices reflect her independence, spirit, and strength. She decides who merits linguistic respect and she confers it upon those who have treated her with respect, such as the old man and Madame Landier. Of course, this rather feminist dimension of the male-female dynamic indicated by the choice of *vous* vs. *tu* cannot be adequately represented in the English subtitles.

In *Belle de Jour*, *vouvoiement* occurs more frequently among all characters, primarily because the film dates from 1967 and the usage reflects a more formal era, but during moments in the film, usage and omission of formal *you* mark underlying attitudes on the part of the individual speakers towards women in general and Séverine in

particular. *Tutoiement* accompanies insults, underscoring a lack of respect, such as in Séverine's dream sequences where she is being abused by her husband and Husson:

Pierre (4:18)	Tais-toi, garce!	Shut up, tramp!
Pierre (37:41)	Comment ça va, petite ordure? Alors, tu vas bien, espèce de trainée?	How are you, little slut? Doing all right, bitch?

When Husson encounters Séverine and her husband at lunch, his use of *vous*, despite its customary formality, creates a menacing, insulting effect, in that it accompanies his obvious objectification of Séverine as he openly leers at her:

Husson (10:11)	Que vous êtes séduisante, Séverine!	You're so attractive, Séverine.
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Additionally, the loss of the word *séduisante* ("seductive"), a much more sexually evocative word than the generic "attractive," emphasizes the disparity between the SL and the subtitles, as the word underscores Husson's libidinous intentions.

During the scene at Madame Anaïs's brothel where Séverine goes seeking employment, the clients (such as Adolphe, Hippolyte, and Marcel) all use *tu* with the prostitutes and Madame Anaïs immediately. As the women represent commodities to these clients, the clients feel quite comfortable addressing the women in this way. The clients regard the women as expendable and interchangeable, undeserving of a formal means of address.

Madame Anaïs, on the other hand, uses a deferential *vous* with both clients and her new employee. Curiously, in the following example, in 2) Madame Anaïs addresses Adolphe, yet the subtitles translate this exchange as a direct address to Séverine in English, shifting the emphasis to the champagne and Madame Anaïs's kind treatment of Séverine and attempts to reassure her rather than to Madame Anaïs's attention to her

clients. In the English, this direct address further personalizes the character of Madame Anaïs and gives a closer dimension to her relationship with Séverine than the French text allows:

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| 1) | Adolphe
(27:38) | Une nouvelle— tu
nous l’as cachée? | A new girl! Are you
hiding her? |
| 2) | Madame
Anaïs
(28:26) | Et bien, vous tombez
bien. Une nouveauté,
ça s’arrose. | Lucky girl!
Champagne on your
first day! |
| 3) | Adolphe
(35:53) | Tu te prends pour qui,
espèce de salope? | Who do you think you
are, you little slut? |
| 4) | Hippolyte to
Séverine
(01:03:33) | Assieds-toi , la
nouvelle. | Come here, new girl! |
| 5) | Marcel
(01:05:38) | Il y en a beaucoup qui
aimeraient être là à ta
place en ce moment. | Many girls would love
to be in your place. |

Other characters in the film use *vous* in ambiguous ways; before his assignation with Séverine, the Duke begins formally:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Duke (in
park) 51:36 | Vous êtes exactement la
jeune fille que je cherche. | You’re exactly the
woman I’m looking
for. |
|-------------------------|---|---|

but abruptly ends the assignation by insulting her, ejecting her from his house. The vast age difference between the Duke and Séverine leaves some uncertainty as to whether he means *daughter* or *girl* in the French, and yet the English translation is *woman*, a word not normally used to connote *young* in English (unless coupled with the word *young*), since the idea of youth is typically conveyed through *girl* instead. The terms *girl* and *woman* are culturally loaded expressions in English (as are their French counterparts *fille* and *femme*) and the choice to use one or the other can affect the meaning of the utterance, as will be detailed in the following section. *Jeune fille*, moreover, can be seen as a

positive expression in French, with the emphasis on the “young” aspect of *young woman*, in addition to simply naming her as an unmarried woman. The word *woman* as rendered in the English does not convey this meaning, nor does it communicate the ambiguity of the words and behavior of the Duke.

As in *Belle de Jour*, the use of *tutoiement* asserts a power relationship in *The Dreamlife of Angels*. At the film’s beginning an unknown man, seeing Isa selling Christmas cards in the street uses *tu* with her, immediately establishing her lower status. His use of the *tu* form (in “Dis-moi”), coupled with the term *cocotte* (“darling” approximates the French term), show his disdain and sense of superiority in 1). In 2), her boss at the factory, furious with Isa for her incompetence, uses *tu* in her harangue, firing her on the spot.

1)	Man at gate (14:19)	Dis-moi, cocotte, l’argent, ça se gagne?	If you need money, get a job, darling.
2)	Woman at clothing factory (16:23)	On n’a pas besoin de filles comme toi. Tu dégages—tu quittes la machine. Tu sais pas travailler. Tu t’en vas!	We don’t need girls like you! You don’t know how to work. Go!

The presence of *tutoiement* in some characters’ lines efficiently and subtly conveys additional information about the power dynamic between the speakers; often this linguistic nuancing is mis- or under-represented in the target language. The male characters frequently use the familiar form with the female characters to mark the females’ social inferiority or sexual availability (in the case of Anne-Sophie in *The Spanish Apartment*), a distinction which cannot be apparent to non-natives, but which seems tied to the idea of belittlement, much in the way the term *girl* or *fille* is used to demean a woman.

3.5.2 *Gir/Fille* vs. *Woman/Femme*

In English, the term *girl* carries tremendous societal connotations, and its use conveys power to the speaker over the one to whom it refers. Robin Lakoff notes that *girl*, a euphemism (though she questions the term *euphemism*, as it is generally employed to raise the status or put a more appealing face on an otherwise unsettling term) is used for all ages of women, whereas *boy* is generally not used beyond teen years to describe males (other than in the collocation “going out with the boys” which still suggests adolescent freedom); where “lady” is thought to be “ennobling,” “girl” bestows an attitude of youth (but also immaturity and irresponsibility) on a woman (25). This cultural and linguistic bias also applies to French, though its sexist connotation is not recognized as strongly in hexagonal (i.e., in France) French culture as in American culture.

The disparity between *girl/boy* and *man/woman* reveals itself in the dictionary definitions for the words, both in English and in French. To thoroughly examine the use of and equivalency of subtitled instances of these terms, a comparison of the inherent meaning in both French and English proves useful, since if subtitlers substitute *girl* for *fille* and *woman* for *femme*, the terms should at least have similar meanings, and, if not, those differences should be explored to provide additional context and reflect the cultural differences noted hereabove. All the French entries, translated, come from the *Robert* (1991)⁹¹ and can be analyzed with the English counterparts, all taken from the *Oxford American Dictionary of Current English* (1999) (hereafter *OADCE*).⁹² The original French is provided in a footnote.

⁹¹ *Le Robert Dictionnaire d'aujourd'hui*. Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 1991.

⁹² *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford UP, 1999. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford UP.

<i>fille</i> (my translation) ⁹³	girl
<p>I. 1. someone's daughter (person of the female sex (opposed to son considered in relation to her father and mother).</p> <p>2. My girl (an affectionate term).</p> <p>3. Literary. Descendant. <i>A daughter of kings. Daughter of Eve, a woman.</i></p>	<p>1. a female child.</p> <p>2. (<i>colloq.</i>) a young woman.</p> <p>3. (<i>colloq.</i>) a girlfriend.</p> <p>4. (<i>derog.</i>) a female servant.</p>
<p>II. 1. child or young human of the female sex (opposite of boy). <i>It's a girl, this baby? Girls' cloakroom.</i></p> <p>2. Slang. (with an article or adjective) young girl or young woman. <i>He married a girl his age. A pretty girl. A beautiful wisp of a girl [literal translation]. She is a good girl. She's a rather beautiful girl.</i></p> <p>3. Little girl; female child up to the nubile age.</p>	

The first French entry provided in category I above calls to mind the female's status as property. The third definition, though literary, recalls the first one: female descendant. The second category takes a bit more objective perspective, referring to a "child or young human being of the feminine sex (the opposite of a boy)." The definition also lists the usage in a colloquial sense, "with a determinative," as in "young girl or young

⁹³ "‘fille.’" [fij] n.f. I. 1. la fille de *qqn*, Sa fille, etc.: personne du sexe féminin (opposé à *fils* considérée par rapport à son père et à sa mère. => enfants. *Ils sont venus avec leur fille aînée et leurs deux fils*. Fam. *la fille Dupuis*. => mademoiselle. Fam. Ma fille, term d'affection. 2. Littér. Descendante. Une fille de rois. Fille d'Ève, femme. II. 1. Enfant ou jeune être humain du sexe féminin (opposé à garçon). C'est une fille, ce bébé? Vestiaire des filles. 2. Fam. (Avec un déterminatif) Jeune fille ou jeune femme. Il a épousé une fille de son âge. Une jolie fille. Un beau brin de fille. ---(en attribut) Elle est bonne fille. Elle est assez belle fille. 3. Petite fille: enfant du sexe féminin jusqu'à l'âge nubile" (*Le Robert* 430).

woman.” The examples given still conjure up images of a woman’s status as property and in relation to a man: “He married a girl his age. A pretty girl. A beautiful wisp of a girl [literal translation]. She is a good girl. She’s a rather beautiful girl.” The language in definition 3 differs vastly from any English rendering, since “nubile” has connotations in English referring to marriageability or sexual attractiveness.⁹⁴ These definitions highlight the physical appearance of a girl, with her primary role linked by her association with someone else, presumably someone in a superior position, like a parent or a husband or even a boy.

The *OADCE* entry for “girl,” as the entry for “woman,” projects a fairly neutral and concise association, providing no sexist expressions such as “career girl,” a collocation spurned by feminist linguists (Holmes and Sigley 252 and 258 *et al.*).

Definitions for *garçon* and *boy* in the respective languages provide interesting contrasts to their feminine counterparts:

⁹⁴ “nubile.” *adj.* (of a woman) marriageable or sexually attractive. (*OADCE*).

garçon (my translation)⁹⁵

boy

I. 1. Child of the masculine sex. *Girls and boys. This little girl is a tomboy [missed boy], she behaves like a boy.*—LITTLE BOY: child between the age when he starts to talk and around the twelfth year. BIG BOY. *You are a big boy*, said to a child to flatter him or appeal to his reason. YOUNG BOY: adolescent. 2. Young man. *A boy of 20.* (locution) A handsome boy. He's a well-mannered boy. BAD BOY: a hoodlum. 3. Young unmarried man—single. (antiquated.) Stay a boy (one says old boy, in this instance). (locution) *Boys of honor*, in a marriage procession.

1. a male child or youth.
2. a young man.
3. a male servant, attendant, etc.
4. (the boys) (*colloq.*) a group of men mixing socially.

II. Specialized or in locution: 1. Man who works as an aide. Boy hairdresser, grocer, butcher. Shop boy, office boy. Errand boy. 2. Employee who serves the clientele of an establishment – café boy, restaurant boy, hotel—waiter. *Waiter, a draft beer!*

The *Robert* describes *garçon* (*boy*) as “Child or young human being of masculine sex,” not in relation to someone else. The English counterpart can be used to this effect as well, but to a much lesser degree and usually indicates inclusivity, except, of course, in a racially motivated slur.

⁹⁵ garçon n.m. I.1. Enfant du sexe masculin. *Les filles et les garçons. Cette petite est un garçon manqué, elle se conduit comme un garçon.*—PETIT GARÇON: enfant entre l'âge où il commence à parler et la douzième année environ. => garçonnet – GRAND GARÇON. *Tu es un grand garçon*, se dit à un enfant pour le flatter ou faire appel à sa raison. JEUNE GARÇON: adolescent. 2. Jeune homme. *Un garçon de vingt ans.* => gars.—Loc. *Un beau garçon. Il est joli garçon, beau garçon.*—*C'est un garçon bien élevé.* Un MAUVAIS GARÇON: un voyou. 3. Jeune homme non marié. => célibataire. Vx. *Rester garçon* [on dit: *vieux garçon*, dans ce sens). –Loc. *Garçons d'honneur*, dans le cortège d'un mariage. II. Spécialt ou en loc. 1. Homme qui travaille comme aide, comme commis. *Garçon coiffeur, épicier, boucher. Garçon de magasin, de laboratoire, de bureau. Garçon de course.* => coursier. 2. Employé chargé de servir la clientèle d'un établissement. –*Garçon de café, de restaurant, d'hôtel.* => serveur. *Garçon, un demi!* (“Garçon.” *Robert* 1991: 462-63).

Definitions for woman/*femme* and man/*homme* provide an additional basis for interlingual comparison. In English, “women are often assigned subordinate status by virtue of their gender alone, and . . . they are treated linguistically as subordinate, regardless of their actual power or status in a particular context” (Holmes and Sigley 247). In other words, “females are marked linguistically and socially” (Holmes and Sigley 247).

The following definitions for *femme* and “woman” (Robert 493) shed further light on this linguistic and social (not to mention grammatical) marking:

femme (my translation)

woman

I. 1. Human being of the child-bearing sex. 1. a woman: an adult human being of the feminine sex. 2. *la femme*: woman (collective): human being of the feminine sex. (as an adjective) having femininity. 3. Young nubile girl or who is no longer a virgin. 4. *jeune femme*: young woman: woman (married or thought to be) who is young. 5. *bonne femme* (good woman). 6. *sage-femme* (wise woman).

II. Spouse.

III. Collocations. *femme d'affaires*: businesswoman: woman executive or director of a private company. *femme politique* . . . *femme objet*: woman considered by man (men) as an object and not as a person, a subject.⁹⁶

1. an adult human female.
2. the female sex; any or an average woman (*how does woman differ from man?*).
3. a wife or female sexual partner.
4. (prec. by *the*) emotions or characteristics traditionally associated with women (*brought out the woman in him*).
5. a man with characteristics traditionally associated with women.
6. (*attrib.*) female (*woman driver*).
7. (as second element in *comb.*) a woman of a specified nationality, profession, skill, etc. (*Englishwoman; horsewoman*).
8. (*colloq.*) a female domestic servant.

⁹⁶“*femme* [fam] n.f.’ I. Être humain du sexe qui met au monde les enfants. 1. UNE FEMME: un être humain adulte de sexe féminin.=> fille, fillette, jeune fille. *Les hommes, les femmes et les enfants. Une belle, une jolie femme. Une maîtresse femme*, qui sait se faire obéir. *Cette femme est professeur, c’est un professeur; un professeur femme. Femme médecin*, doctoresse (ou docteur). 2. LA FEMME (collect.): l’être humain du sexe féminin. *La psychologie de la femme. Émancipation de la femme.*—(En attribut) *Elle est femme, très femme*, elle a de la féminité. /contr. mâle/ 3. Jeune fille nubile ou qui n’est plus vierge. *À présent, tu es une femme.* 4. JEUNE FEMME: femme (mariée ou supposée telle) qui est jeune. 5. => bonne femme. 6.=> sage-femme. II. Épouse. *Jeanne est la femme de Philippe. C’est sa femme. Sa première femme, sa seconde femme. Prendre femme*, se marier. III. Loc. FEMME D’AFFAIRES: femme cadre ou chef d’entreprise privée. —*Femme politique*. — femme de chambre: domestique attachée au service intérieur d’une maison, d’un hôtel. =>servante, soubrette. — FEMME DE MÉNAGE: femme qui vient faire le ménage dans une maison et qui est généralement payée à l’heure.—femme de service: employée d’une collectivité, chargée du nettoyage. — FEMME OBJET: femme considérée par L’HOMME (les hommes) comme un objet et non comme une personne, un sujet.”

The very first definition denotes the female's biological function ("female human being who bears children") and is also quite objective, since biology is the primary differentiation between men and women in a very basic sense. Definition 3, "Young nubile woman or who is no longer a virgin" is, however, surprising in an era when a woman's sexual experience is not considered to be a subject for discussion or as a means of qualifying her (this edition of the dictionary appeared in 1991). Definition 4 for *jeune femme* makes the distinction between from a young girl: "woman (married or assumed to be) who is young." The last entry, *femme objet* ("sex object") gives the impression of an attempt at appeasement, objectivity, or even irony, after all the preceding terms which treat woman exactly as such.

The *OADCE* attributes a more neutral sense to the word "woman" generally than does its French counterpart; in fact, definition 3 above does not limit the association as a partner to a heterosexual relationship, though definition 6 still acknowledges in its way an existing sexism by using woman as a modifier for a profession ("woman driver," not needed for a male). Definition 5 presents a curious scenario; the same type of definition can be found in the same dictionary for the entry under "man: a person showing characteristics associated with males."⁹⁷

⁹⁷ "man *n.* & *v.*" *The Oxford American Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford UP.

<p><i>homme</i> (my translation)⁹⁸</p> <p>I. 1. Being belonging to the most evolved animal species on Earth, mammal from the hominens family, sole representative of its species, living in society, characterized by a developed intelligence and an articulated language. Remark: In this sense, <i>homme</i> designates men and women, but is not used when talking about women only.</p> <p>II. Male human being. 1. Male adult human being. Married man=> spouse.</p> <p>III. Individual dependent on an authority (civil or military).</p> <p>IV. <i>jeune homme</i>: 1. young man. 2. pubescent boy, young single man.⁹⁹</p>	<p>man</p> <p>1. an adult human male, esp. as distinct from a woman or boy.</p> <p>2. (a) a person (<i>no man is perfect</i>). (b) the human race (<i>man is mortal</i>).</p> <p>3. a person showing characteristics associated with males (<i>she's more of a man than he is</i>).</p> <p>4. a worker; an employee (<i>the manager spoke to the men</i>).</p> <p>5. (a) (usu. in <i>pl.</i>) soldiers, sailors, etc., esp. nonofficers. (b) an individual (<i>fought to the last man</i>). (c) (usu. prec. by <i>the</i>, or <i>poss. pron.</i>) a person fulfilling requirements (<i>I'm your man</i>).</p> <p>6. (a) a husband (<i>man and wife</i>). (b) (<i>colloq.</i>) a boyfriend or lover.</p>
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Definition 1 for *homme* specifically mentions the usage of man for individual but explicitly notes the impossibility of *homme* used as a signifier for women only. The English 5 (b) functions in the same fashion but provides no explanation of differences in usage when referring to women only.

⁹⁸ “homme.” *Le Robert* (503-04). Note: this truncated version of the full, much more detailed entry reflects only aspects pertinent to the present comparison.

⁹⁹ “‘homme. n.m.’ 1. Être appartenant à l’espèce animale la plus évoluée de la Terre, mammifère de la famille des hominiens, seul représentant de son espèce, vivant en société, caractérisé par une intelligence développée et un langage articulé. –rem. Dans ce sens, homme désigne les hommes et les femmes, mais ne se dit pas en parlant seulement des femmes . . . II. Être humain mâle. 1. Être humain mâle et adulte. . . . homme marié => époux. III. Individu dépendent d’une autorité (civile ou militaire). IV. *jeune homme* : 1. homme jeune. 2. garçon pubère, homme jeune célibataire.”

In English, *woman* appears to be the preferred term of reference, certainly over *girl* (Holmes and Sigley 250), and the research on its increased usage is encouraging. According to studies undertaken in some English-speaking countries, between 1961 and 1991, “in British, American and New Zealand usage, instances of usage of *woman/women* had increased dramatically over the last 30 years, whereas *lady/ladies* had decreased” (Holmes and Sigley 248). This is especially true in written material. Nevertheless, “*women* in the plural is used most of all (more than *men*), probably because women are being talked about as a group” (Holmes and Sigley 250).

When used to describe occupations, the feminine modifier has both denotative and connotative significance. The presence of *lady* or *woman* draws attention to the lack of gender parallelism in the occurrence of such terms as “family man” and “career woman,” for one would never hear a non-ironic use of “family woman” or “career man” (Holmes and Sigley 252). There does appear to be an increasing trend toward pre-modifiers (“woman X”) from post-modifiers (“-man”), and the use of “girls” to refer to female adults has become identified as disparaging and a denial of competence (Holmes and Sigley 254, 258). Moreover, “[g]irl” is more than three times more likely than ‘boy’ to refer to an adult” (Holmes and Sigley 259). These labels are more than denotative, for they also “provide a linguistic version of the glass ceiling” (Holmes and Sigley 260). Certainly, *fille* should be translated as *girl* for maximum social contextual effect. Given that the word *girl* is short and doesn’t pose any technical problems, subtitles almost always reflect this linguistic correspondence.

The films reveal varying degrees of consistency in the subtitles when compared to the SL. In *Thieves*, for example, the *girl/woman* references are translated mostly faithfully in the subtitles:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--|---|
| 1) | Alex
(18:30) | Pour être gentille, tu peux sortir de ma voiture. Tu peux dire à mon frère que je préfère les belles femmes . Les femmes du monde. | Be a good girl and get out. Tell Ivan I prefer pretty women. Women of the world. |
| 2) | Thug
(Fred)
(1:09:35) | Moi je ne bosse pas avec les gonzesses . | I don't work with girls . |
| 3) | Ivan to
Jimmy
(1:10:07) | Elle est assez grande—elle peut le décider, non? | She's a big girl .
Let her decide. |

In 1), Alex clearly distinguishes between insignificant, powerless, obedient little girls who should be addressed as *tu* and the “women of the world” he prefers. Fred states (in 2)), “I don’t work with girls,” (the term *gonzesses*, quite colloquial in nature, would be better rendered as “chicks” to add more information about the nature of the speaker, as was done in *The Dreamlife of Angels*, mentioned below). Though Ivan refers to Marie in 3) as big enough to decide for herself, the very fact that he deems himself the one who determines that status contradicts this idea, and instead implies his domination of her and doubts about her abilities. In both 1) and 3), the addition of *girl* in English seems to reinforce aforementioned feelings about the women, even though “girl” (*fille*) is missing in the original text. The addition in English enhances the translation in 1) and 2), but a definite loss exists in 2). The subtitles reveal the increased sensitivity toward the affective sense of the loaded term “girl” in the TL.

In the following excerpts from *The Dreamlife of Angels*, however, the subtitles substitute “girls” for every instance of *filles*. In 3), “chick” is an appropriately slangy

rendering of *gonzesses*—“girl” would not have been sufficient here. In 1), 3), 5), and 6) the speaker, whether male or female, clearly disassociates himself or herself from the group known as *filles* and *gonzesses*. The female manager in 1) places herself above her employees and would never refer to herself as a “girl.” Isa, on the other hand, does refer to herself as a girl, implicitly including herself in the group of females who work for the concerts as she tries to get herself hired as one of them. Marie includes herself in the “girl” category as she talks about her time spent hitchhiking and moving around.

1)	Woman at clothing factory (16:23)	On n’a pas besoin de filles comme toi. Tu dégages—tu quittes la machine. Tu sais pas travailler. Tu t’en vas!	We don’t need girls like you! You don’t know how to work. Go!
2)	Isa to Charly (18:33)	Elles font quoi, les filles sur les concerts? Y’a pas de filles sur les concerts.	What do the girls do? There aren’t any girls.
3)	Frédo to Marie (18:57)	T’as de la chance que t’es une gonzesse toi, je te jure!	You’re lucky you’re a chick!
4)	Marie to Isa (22:08)	Une fille de la route. C’était très pratique, hein?	A girl on the road. It was practical.
5)	Organizer for the Hollywood (1:01:57)	Vous dites bien que c’est gratuit pour les filles le vendredi et samedi soir.	Don’t forget, it’s free for girls on Fridays and Saturdays.
6)	Chriss to Isa (1:32:19)	C’est une fille bien, mais c’est fini, j’arrête.	She’s a nice girl, but I’m stopping.

Possibly, the fact that these young women (Isa and Marie) are addressing each other and not someone outside the group that includes young women affects their tendency to use “girl.” The type of interlocutor can influence the degree of connotative effect of the term, since the use of the plural could be an indicator of solidarity (Holmes

and Sigley 260), though, if either one had been talking to a man, would their words be different? Probably not, since neither one seems likely to consider a word choice a political statement, as indicated in 2) above in Isa's comments to Charly. Neither Isa nor Marie exhibits sufficient self-awareness in terms of being women or lower class to convey this awareness in their discourse.

Isabelle in *The Spanish Apartment*, on the other hand, appears quite cognizant of the political and social effect of her words. When she and Xavier are sitting in their room discussing women, their linguistic choices betray their attitudes towards women, both parties preferring women as sexual partners. Xavier behaves childishly, smirking like a twelve-year-old as he asks Isabelle to explain the nature of her sexual relationship with her *copine*. Isabelle consistently uses the term *femme*, faithfully translated as "woman" in English, an important clue to the socially conscious nature of her character. She occasionally uses slang terms like *meuf* or *nana* (both terms are a bit subversive and slightly derogatory, though *nana* was first reclaimed by feminists, then by the general public) but never *fille*. Xavier, on the other hand, seems to have a less imaginative, more patriarchal vocabulary and uses "girl," again faithfully rendered into the English, as their conversations below will attest.

Isabelle to Xavier (46:51)	Quoi—heh heh heh heh? C’est ma copine .	What? She’s my girlfriend.
Isabelle to Xavier (46:59)	Ma femme , quoi. Je suis lesbienne.	My woman, whatever. I’m a lesbian.
Isabelle to Xavier (47:29)	Elles sont tarées, les meufs , je te jure.	Chicks are wacko, I swear.
Xavier to Isabelle (1:04:45)	Je me suis toujours demandé . . . vous utilisez jamais des trucs, genre god, avec des filles ?	I always wondered . . . do you ever use, like, dildoes with girls?
Isabelle (1:04:54)	C’est marrant, parce que souvent vous les mecs ne comprenez rien aux femmes .	It’s funny. Guys understand nothing about women.
Isabelle to Xavier (1:05:02)	Lorsque je suis sûre que si un mec avait vraiment envie de s’intéresser aux femmes il serait le roi du pétrole.	While if a guy took an interest in women he’d be a pig in shit.
Isabelle to Xavier (1:05:38)	Quand tu caresses les fesses d’une nana . . .	When you caress a girl’s ass . . .

Xavier even refers to Anne-Sophie—an older, married woman—as a “girl”:

Xavier to Anne-Sophie (01:00:45)	Disons que vous n’êtes pas trop dans le vent comme fille , vous le savez bien.	You’re not too hip, you know that.
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In the example above, the English translation does not include “for a girl,” an unfortunate loss, since Xavier’s use of the word “girl” reestablishes their power structure after a brief period of both speakers communicating in a formal, mutually respectful register. The use of *fille* adds a foreshadowing of conquest as well as belittlement not reflected in the subtitles, which tend to highlight Anne-Sophie’s repressed nature rather than Xavier’s ambiguous attitudes towards women.

The way in which characters refer to Mona in *Vagabond* suggests a disdainful attitude, and most of the characters refer to her as a “girl”:

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| 1) | Two men
looking at
postcards
(5:31) | Mais quand on tombe
sur une vraie fil le à
poil, il se dégonfle. | Yeah, sure, for once
we find a real naked
girl, he chickens out. |
| 2) | Two men
(5:40) | Une fil le seule—on
peut y aller, hein? | A girl all alone is
easy. |
| 3) | Nun (30:36) | Bonne route, ma fil le.
La porte sera toujours
ouverte. | Travel safely,
daughter. Our door
will always be open. |

In 1) and 2), the meaning is quite clear, and the subtitles accurately reflect the sexist use of “girl.” The statement by the nun in 3), however, could be translated either as *girl* or *daughter*, but the translator seemed to feel, rightly so, that *daughter* better conveyed the nun’s generous, kind spirit. In the French, however, the use of the possessive adjective *ma* recalls the ecclesiastical form of address as in “ma soeur,” etc., much as “my sister” exists in the same context in English. The addition of “my” would have enhanced the translation, bringing out this particular aspect of the statement, showing the ambiguity that exists between an affectionate designation and the traditional religious designation.

In *Belle de Jour*, the *girl/woman* question arises on several occasions. One would think that Madame Anaïs would refer to the prostitutes who work for her as “girls,” but she does so very rarely, yet it is always rendered as such in English:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1) | Madame
Anaïs
(25:35) | D’abord, je ne supporte
que les gens bien
élevés—et surtout de
bonne humeur. | My girls have to
be polite and
cheerful. |
| 2) | Madame
Anaïs
(25:45) | La semaine dernière,
j’ai été obligée de me
séparer de Maïté, une
bonne fille pourtant. | Just last week I let
a girl go—very
beautiful. |
| 3) | Madame
Anaïs
(27:09) | Ces demoiselles ont
soif. | The girls are
thirsty. |

In (1), Madame Anaïs refers to her workers as “gens,” yet this statement is not translated as “people” in the English. Translating the word literally would better reflect a certain respect and professionalism that Madame Anaïs affords her workers, a respect that is minimized by the English “girls.” In 2) Madame Anaïs mentions an individual worker, Maïté, as a *bonne fille* (a good girl, translated as “a beautiful girl” in English). Though presumably her beauty added to her worth in her profession, Maïté’s worth as a good worker is emphasized in French, and Madame Anaïs sees her as such, not as a client. In 3), Madame Anaïs uses *demoiselles*—represented as “girls” in English. Madame Anaïs uses *demoiselles* ironically in this exchange, utilising this often pejorative expression to accommodate the clients. Madame Anaïs, in her role as boss, does not use *filles* as the clients do, preferring to emphasize the business/power/economic relationship.

The clients refer to the prostitutes as “girls;” not always rendered as *filles* in the original French, as in 1) and 4) and 5), but the English addition seems appropriate. In 3), the double meaning of “daughter” adds to the awareness of the age difference as well as the oddness of the interlude between the Duke and Séverine:

1)	Adolphe (27:38)	Une nouvelle—tu nous as caché?	A new girl! Are you hiding her?
2)	Duke (man in park) (51:36)	Vous êtes exactement la jeune fille que je cherche.	You're exactly the woman I'm looking for.
3)	Duke (54:03)	Ma fille bien-aimée . . .	My beloved girl . ..
4)	Hippolyte to Séverine (1:03:33)	Assieds-toi, la nouvelle.	Come here, new girl!
5)	Marcel (1:05:38)	Il y en avait beaucoup qui aimeraient être là à ta place en ce moment.	Many girls would love to be in your place.

Generally, the demeaning nature of many uses of *girl* become apparent in the English version, an important factor when its usage connotes so much of the misogyny and belittlement in the interactions between men and women in the films. In the cases where the term is added, a loss of meaning can lead to an incomplete appreciation of the various nuances conveyed by such a culturally and socially loaded expression, such as “une/la nouvelle” or “en” (in examples 1), 4), and 5) above, respectively).

The various ways of conveying dominance linguistically in French, from the very general to the specific, have varying degrees of equivalencies in screen translation in the films studied. The way linguistic treatment of women in the two languages is represented in the dialogues and the way it is translated affects the TL spectator’s understanding of the film in significant ways. As noted above, one lexical characteristic common to both languages is the use of *girl* for a woman as a means of diminishing her power and authority. When this usage is reflected in the English, the meaning is transferred across the linguistic divide. However, in cases where the term *fille* is conveyed by a feminine noun, and the word *girl* has been added in English, this addition can serve to belittle the

woman more so in translation than in the original; other times, the English will contain “woman” in place of *fille*, resulting in a loss of the demeaning aspect of the original.

3.5.3 Titles

Use of the French honorific, much like use of *fille* or *femme*, can be highly contextual. Though the *Robert* (606) gives the primary meaning for *Madame* as “title given to a woman who is or has been married,” the second entry also includes the possibility of its use as a marker of respect: “title given in respect to certain women, married or not,” providing the example “Madame la Directrice,” suggesting that in certain professional circumstances, *Madame* would be acceptable, regardless of the marital status of the woman in question, though the use of “certain” in the definition implies that this usage is still quite selective.¹⁰⁰ *Ms.* in English provides a reasonable equivalent for situations in which *Madame* designates a woman in a professional capacity. However, *Ms.* is still slow to be accepted in mainstream English, and even in the twenty-first century many women refer to themselves by their husbands’ first and last names.¹⁰¹ So *Madame* has not always been replaced by *Ms.* in the subtitles of these films, in those few instances where the female characters are referred to by the honorific at all.

¹⁰⁰ “1. Titre donné à une femme qui est ou a été mariée. 2. Titre donné par respect à certaines femmes, mariées ou non. *Madame la Directrice.*” (my translation)

¹⁰¹ According to Wendy Atkins-Sayres, “Ms.” dates from 1767 and was considered an abbreviation of “Mistress” and as a female counterpart to Master before “mistress” came to be known in a negative connotation as prostitute or concubine. But by the 19th century, the terms “Miss” and “Mrs.” “were used solely to indicate marital status rather than age” (Atkins-Sayres 10). Though the term *Ms.* was revived by feminists in 1970 (it had been found in a secretarial manual as an alternative form of address), its adoption was met with great resistance (Atkins-Sayres 10), and it was not until 1986 that the *New York Times* finally added the term to its list of acceptable honorifics (Atkins-Sayres 11). Furthermore, Atkins-Sayres asserts, only ten percent of women overall have kept their birth names; this number is twenty percent among college-educated women (Atkins-Sayres 14).

In the selected films, very few of the female characters have titles associated with their names, particularly in cases in which the title confers a certain importance. Séverine is simply that, or “Belle de Jour” when she is working. The characters in *The Spanish Apartment* all go by first names, as do Isa and Marie in *The Dreamlife of Angels*, as well as Juliette and Mireille in *Thieves*. Two characters represented by *Madame* and the surname are Marie in *The Story of Women* (but not consistently, as will be explained later) and Madame Landier in *Vagabond*.

Madame Landier, the botanist in *Vagabond*, is always referenced by her honorific; in fact, her first name is never stated, and in the film credits hers is the sole character listed with a title.¹⁰² A majority of the other characters are named in the credits according to their function in the film (for example, “the shepherds” and “the ditchdigger”) with the exception of very few characters, such as “Mona Bergeron, sans toit ni loi” (both first and last names are given), David, and Yolande (who are listed by their first names only). Madame Landier, an educated, kind-spirited woman, sympathetic to Mona’s situation and willing to help her, has positively influenced Mona’s life, albeit in a small way. This kind-heartedness may have earned her a title, whereas the other characters drift in and out of Mona’s life, seemingly interchangeably. Madame Landier acts as an authority figure, accustomed to being in a position of power with Jean-Pierre and the workers around the tree sites, who treat her quite deferentially, always addressing her as Madame Landier. Even Jean-Pierre’s wife Éliane refers to her in this way:

Éliane to Jean-Pierre (54:51)	Tu ne vas pas me casser les pieds avec une graisseuse qui vous a blousés, toi et ta Landier.	Stop talking about that pig who snowed you and Mrs. Landier.
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¹⁰² *Vagabond [Sans Toit ni loi]*. Dir. Agnès Varda, 1985. DVD. The Criterion Collection, 2000.

Curiously, “*ta Landier*” (“your Landier”) has been subtitled as “Mrs. Landier,” even though there is no indication that Madame Landier is or has been married. In the French, it is obvious from Éliane’s comments that she does not admire or even like (and is possibly a little jealous of) Madame Landier. Subtitling that as simply “you and Mrs. Landier” neutralizes the expression and results in a loss of meaning. Though Madame Landier always calls Jean-Pierre by his first name, as in the example below,

Madame Landier (59:36)	Bonjour, Jean- Pierre.	[not subtitled, but they shake hands]
Jean-Pierre (59:38)	Bonjour, Madame Landier.	Hi, Mrs. Landier.

Jean-Pierre always refers to her as “Madame Landier,” even when discussing her in her absence. In English, however, the title is consistently subtitled as “Mrs.” Landier, a translation choice that seriously undermines her authority in the context of the film:

Jean-Pierre to worker (52:42)	Je vous présente Madame Landier. Je vous en ai parlé.	I told you about Mrs. Landier.
Worker (52:44)	Oui. Bonjour, Madame, oui.	Sure, ma'am.
Jean-Pierre (01:34:32)	Allô, Gérard? Gérard, je l’ai trouvée . . .	Hello, Gérard? I found her . . .
Jean-Pierre (01:34:35)	mais tu sais, la fille que Madame Landier avait prise en stop . . .	the girl Mrs. Landier picked up hitching . . .
Jean-Pierre (01:34:47)	Je le dis à toi, mais je ne le dirai jamais à Madame Landier.	I'm telling you, but I'll never tell Mrs. Landier.

Why would the subtitler choose to use Mrs., when “Ms.” or “Dr.” or even “Madame” would have sufficed and, more importantly, better conveyed her authority? The Madame Landier character evidently enjoys a position of power and authority in her

relationship with Jean-Pierre; this power relationship conveys itself clearly through their interlocutory style in the SL but does not transmit to the subtitles, resulting in an informational loss for the TL viewer. In *The Story of Women*, on the other hand, when Marie is called *Madame* Latour, her status as a married woman is emphasized, and the corresponding subtitles naming her as “Mrs. Latour” appropriately reflect this status.

Mademoiselle is used infrequently in the films. In *Vagabond*, Mona is referred to as “*Mademoiselle*” by the old man who gives her matches, and in the English it is rendered appropriately as “young lady.” This designation stands out as a surprising sign of respect for a woman who does not seem to command respect from most people she meets. Similarly, in *Dreamlife of Angels*, Isa is at the receiving end of an unaccustomed formality by being referred to as *Mademoiselle*, though the English does not reflect this, so the English-speaking public is not aware of the respectful nature of the exchange between Isa and Madame Val’s brother and cannot react to the inhabitual appellation, something which will strike French viewers immediately:

Madame Val’s brother showing the apartment to Isa (01:26:45)	Bonjour, Mademoiselle.	Hello.
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Isa is also treated with respect by the nurses in the hospital when she goes to visit Sandrine, the young woman in a coma in whose apartment Isa and Marie are staying. In the two “feminist” films, *Vagabond* and *Dreamlife of Angels*, these ironic usages of rather sexist forms of address in French (*Madame* and *Mademoiselle*) are not reflected in the translation. The title of Madame Anaïs in *Belle de Jour*, however, is of course retained in English, since *Madam* reinforces her professional status; likewise for Séverine’s title, “*Belle de Jour*” (noted above).

3.6 Conclusion

The differences between the two languages are significant enough to cause misunderstandings to occur, especially when it is a question of naming (based on grammatical gender and titles) or a sudden change in register (reflected in use of *tu* versus *vous*), indicating a shift in power. The preceding analysis of the subtitles in the selected films also suggests several differences between French and American cultures regarding women. At the lexical level, in French, the greater range of woman-directed insults implies a possibly greater degree of sexism and misogyny reflected in the language; the corresponding English translations do not reflect such variation, and often the insults are of a more generic nature rather than gender-specific. The subtitles reflect in most cases a weakening of the deleterious impact of woman-centered insults and provide an altered version of the spoken dialogue when female characters are belittled and presented as victimized in some way.

For those films in which the female protagonists are meant to be strong characters (and the film is more female-centered and female-sympathetic), such as *Dreamlife of Angels* and *Vagabond*, and, to an extent through Isabelle's character in *The Spanish Apartment*, the linguistic force of the dialogues has been preserved in English. The hierarchic nature of *tutoiement* and *vouvoiement* (another way of expressing domination and subjugation linguistically) cannot be expressed in English, and any corresponding power dynamic that this usage reveals is necessarily lost in an English translation.

However, one area in which the French language examined in the films reveals itself as less gender-biased and more egalitarian is in the use of *Madame* as an indicator of age and not necessarily marital status in *Vagabond*, reversing a general trend in the

language. Researchers such as Wendy Atkins-Sayre have shown that the expression “Ms.” has not become a completely integral part of the English lexicon (14), certainly not comparable to the ubiquity of *Madame* in French. It would seem that women are still mostly identified by their marital status in American English, despite efforts to rename professions in a more gender-neutral way. *Madame*, which must be considered contextually, has not always been translated in the films as “Ms.,” and the substitution of “Mrs.” for *Madame* in the dialogue alters the meaning for the target language spectator and actually minimizes the impact the title confers in terms of power and authority. In female-centered films, this omission alters the emphasis significantly.

This examination of selected films suggests a need for a more detailed study of significant differences between the two languages in terms of gender-specific language. Sexist depictions placing women within the Madonna/whore dichotomy as well as representations of the woman through the male gaze find expression in the films examined not simply in the framing and editing (as described by feminist film theorists such as Mulvey and Haskell) but also at the linguistic level in both the SL and TL versions of the films. The degree to which these stereotypical, often misogynistic representations—i.e., selective use of language by the characters in terms of *tu/vous*, titles such as *Madame* or *Mademoiselle*, appellations such as *filles* and *femmes*, male-centered discourse, gendered language, scornful language, and sexist clichés—in the SL all convey to the TL that dialogue is dependent on the ability of the translations to render such distinctions with equivalent denotative and connotative impact. From the foregoing research, it would appear that in many cases the TL translator rendered less sexist representations by means of omission, or diluted language, attributable to a lack of

equivalent connotation in the TL or an attempt at self-censoring and political correctness on the part of the subtitler. Portrayals of strong female characters also rely on the contextual linguistic cues in the SL to find similar expression in the TL, and in this area, the translations seem to transmit the SL dialogue in a more equal fashion. Both the SL and TL versions, however, characterize the woman (albeit to different degrees as a function of translation) as the Other, on the margins of society, linguistically and culturally marked, much as the foreigner is marked by his or her presence in an Other-dominated world, as the following chapter will show.

Chapter 4: Racial and National Identities Translated

Perhaps the most troublesome part of translating another culture's idiom is negotiating a third space in which the meaning is rendered with the least amount of ambiguity in the translations.¹⁰³ In his article "Translating/Editing 'Race' and 'Culture' from Caribbean French," James Arnold, editor for Édouard Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse*, discusses this difficulty in terms of literary translation, but these same principles can be applied to screen translation. As Arnold writes:

Editing literary translation is a complex process of cultural transmission involving a struggle between the temptation to render the Same (in a linguistically transparent translation) and the temptation to retain Diversity (in a dense, resistant texture). (215)

The most problematic aspect, Arnold contends, is determining the audience, since editors (or in films, distributors) will want to reach the widest audience in order to maximize sales, but the translator (subtitler) may have difficulty making the translation so transparent that it loses its cultural personality (215). While maintaining cultural specificities could reduce the number of TL viewers likely to understand them, removing them could deprive the TL viewer of access to important information about the narrative and the characters. For the subtitler, providing enough information to be useful but not too much as to alienate the viewer as Other is desirable but not always possible.

Indeed, this chapter attempts to explore the nature of cultural differences between a dominant culture and the Other, "foreign" culture, but through the third space (and sometimes fourth or fifth) of transmission of ideas through two or more cultures in the subtitles. The films chosen all treat the question of the place of the foreigner in a

¹⁰³ Homi Bhabha's third space is well documented in his work *The Location of Culture*, where he claims that the third space is "based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity," and that "it is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (38).

dominant society, even “after” colonialism (“after” is in quotation marks, since the vestiges of colonialism and the attendant power relationships between those considered “French” and immigrants or second-generation and formerly colonized French as exemplified through language regularly appear in the films set in formerly colonized territories as well as in films set in France). To categorize these films as postcolonial is not altogether accurate, for, as Anne McClintock rightly states, the term “postcolonial” suggests both a linear progression from pre-colonial to colonial and then to postcolonial (292). McClintock’s further assertion that the term is “prematurely celebratory” (294) merits exploration as well. Françoise Lionnet also objects to the term “postcolonial,” citing a preference for the term “postcontact” (4), which more accurately describes the linguistic and cultural hybridization that characterizes all the films in this study. For the purposes of this discussion, the term merely describes regions where French language and social traditions have influenced and continue to shape the culture linguistically, socially, and politically, or any combination of these three factors.

The “foreigner”—so named by virtue of nationality, skin color, or religion—has a wide variety of appellations designed to point out his or her otherness. In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Edward Saïd points out the tendency of Westerners to make distinctions between “us” and “them”:

With Orientalism, the world is divided into Western and Eastern, with “us” represented by the West (“us” being at first France and Britain; lately the Americans can represent the colonizers) and “them” by the East. The idea that “they” cannot see or do things as “we” do is an extension of colonialism and imperialism. (12)

Not only do specific words exist to reference persons of a different nationality but also those of a different race or religion, often categorized as a different ethnos. Dominique

Schnapper gives the following definition of *ethnos*: “The ethnos is defined in two dimensions: the history community and the cultural specificity” (“L’ethnie se définit par deux dimensions: la communauté historique et la spécificité culturelle”) (my translation) (29). Even the word in French—*étranger*—translates differently in English, which contains different words for different concepts: *foreigner* (designating someone from another country); *stranger* (meaning simply someone one has not met before); and *alien* (which, though the word denotes a non-American or non-resident, often has a negative connotation, i.e. a person of illegal, if not extraterrestrial, status, in English). For the purposes of this discussion, and in instances where there is an opposition between dominant and nondominant members of a society in the films, we will assume that the dominant culture comprises some or all of the following categories of race and ethnicity: white, Christian, Western, rich, and educated, whereas the nondominant culture may consist of black, Muslim, Jewish, Arab, poor, and uneducated persons.

Wherever there is prejudice, there exists an attendant lexicon to reference the out-group; racially inspired lexical referents certainly extend far beyond the scope of the use of “they” and “them” and even “those people” (though this last designation can never be construed as anything but negative when used to describe the Other). Despite efforts to reappropriate certain offensive terms—and this reappropriation is reflected in different degrees within the French-language and English-language cultures—opprobrious expressions appear in abundance in the selected films, with varying degrees of connotative equivalency in the subtitles.

Beyond the lexical aspect, oftentimes ways to express cultural references to describe the Other—use of another language, for example—exist in French but require a

reasonable, comprehensible substitute in English in order to achieve the goal of transmitting a particular concept. In other instances, such a transmission is impossible and must be abandoned. Cultural specificities reveal themselves through interlinguistic practices such as code switching and code mixing, through overt references to elements of the society unfamiliar to TL viewers expressed in the dialogue, or in written text visible to the spectator but not expressly integrated into the dialogue. Code switching can reveal a great deal about the power relationships and attitudes of the persons using the two languages, as can the ways in which the characters refer to each other. Non-dialogic text—for example, street signs, newspaper articles, radio and television transmissions, songs—made available to the SL viewer but not to the TL viewer can constitute a loss in transmission. Additionally, references to customs, political events, and practices which may or may not be known to the TL audience merit exploration and often clarification.

4.1 Other-Centered Films

Each film was chosen for its relevance with regard to the depiction of the Other. Though this work contains an Appendix giving a synopsis of all films analyzed in the study, the films in this chapter seem particularly diverse and it appears beneficial to provide a justification for their inclusion in this chapter. First, the directors come from various backgrounds. They are either native-born French, immigrants or second-generation (*beurs*) living in France, or they live in former or current French colonies or departments. Representing a diverse group yields information on what each director's perspective lends to the current study, and, indeed, the question of national origin plays an important role in any issue related to the situation and identity of the "foreigner," as in various examples of the immigration debate, as explained by Dina Sherzer:

[T]he distinction between French-French (*Français de souche*, i.e. children from French parents) or French-Non-French (children of immigrants, *beurs*, naturalized citizens from any country), and Non-French (immigrants), is frequently alluded to, and xenophobia, hatred, and racism are countered by pleas for tolerance and acceptance of difference (SOS Racisme). The notion of hybridity (*métissage*) is more widespread, referring to cultural manifestations, artistic trends, and individuals born of interracial couples who are becoming an important segment of the population. (149)

Drawing on Sherzer's account of the importance of national origin, the directors of the selected films can be delineated in terms of their own backgrounds. Mathieu Kassovitz, director of *Café au Lait*, born in France of a French Catholic mother and a Jewish Hungarian father, highlights the immigrant experience through each central character's connection to a non-dominant ethnic identity—Jewish, North African/Muslim, and Martinican—in his multi-layered film. Though Kassovitz is better known in *beur* cinema for his second film, *Hate [La Haine]*, *Café au Lait* provides many examples of interracial, interethnic, religious, and class differences, even at the level of metadiscourse. The conversations of the three main characters, Félix, Jamal, and Lola, with and about each other—the way they express themselves and the comments they make—provide a great deal of social commentary on the stereotypes and prejudices associated with the different categories of the Other.¹⁰⁴

Yamina Benguigi, French-born but a child of Algerian immigrants, represents the *beur* perspective. *Inch'Allah Sunday*, a *beur* film, is set in the mid-1970s around the time of the French government's decision to reunite immigrant families in France with their families abroad in 1974, and centers around the young protagonist, Zouina, who, with her children and mother-in-law Aïcha, leaves her home in Algeria to join her husband Ahmed

¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that time codes for examples in *Café au Lait* have been formatted beginning with each new chapter rather than throughout the film, as has been the format for all the other films in this study.

in France. As Zouina attempts to assimilate culturally, linguistically, and socially, her efforts to make a life for herself despite oppression by her tyrannical husband and contemptible mother-in-law underscore her isolation within a foreign country and particularly within her own home. Zouina represents the Other, both inside and outside her native culture, and she tests her boundaries in an attempt to achieve a happier life. Zouina's divided allegiance between her traditional Algerian identity and her modern French identity reveals itself in the subtitles, as do the other characters' attitudes about their collective and individual identities.

Euzhan Palcy, a Martinican, can be included among French nationals, but as a resident of an overseas department and former colony, she resides between the two worlds with respect to her relationship with the colonialization experience. Though the majority of the corpus of films in this study date from 1990 on (see Introduction), since many important postcolonial theorists have come from Martinique (such as Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon) and because Martinican film is underrepresented in cinema as a whole, *Sugar Cane Alley*, dating from the early '80s, deserves inclusion. *Sugar Cane Alley* also provides important examples of linguistic cohabitation (specifically, Creole and French) expressed in code switching, a primary focus of this chapter.

Films from three African directors were also chosen for this exploration of the linguistic dimension of cultural hybridity: *Faat Kiné* (Ousmane Sembène); *Madame Brouette [L'Extraordinaire destin de Madame Brouette]* (Moussa Sena Absa); and *Games of Love and Chance [L'Esquive]* (Abdel Kechiche). Ousmane Sembène, "widely acknowledged as the pioneer of African cinema" (Adesokan 37), seemed an obvious choice. Often the decision to include a film rested on whether or not it was released in the

U.S.¹⁰⁵ *Faat Kiné*, in Wolof and French, highlights the constraints of the title protagonist's struggle to reconcile her traditional background and modern aspirations in a post-colonial Senegal. Moussa Sena Absa, who has had several films released in the U.S., provides a second Senegalese perspective on the post-colonial experience. *Madame Brouette* [*L'Extraordinaire Destin de Madame Brouette*], like *Faat Kiné*, is set in Dakar, and traces in flashback the developments that may have led up to the murder of Mati's lover, a crime for which she has been implicated. The film traces Mati's struggles within a patriarchal society slow to accept the notion of an independent woman, her attempts to follow her dream of opening a café (and being able to abandon her job selling goods from a wheelbarrow—*brouette* in French), and her relationships with her daughter, her parents, and her friends. As in *Faat Kiné*, questions of conflict between traditional and modern customs and attitudes create tension and provide a backdrop for her personal struggle for an independent life. Abdel Kechiche, a Tunisian, complements the choice of the Senegalese directors. Kechiche, born in Tunisia in 1960, four years after Tunisian independence, has not lived under the colonial regime *per se*, yet his portrayal of *beur* teenagers living in the Paris suburbs provides a fresh perspective on the hierarchies of class, ethnicity, and age in the dominant culture and highlights the inability of escaping one's social constraints. As many of the directors also speak a second language other than French, incorporation of these languages in the film's dialogues expresses cultural hybridity and conflict through the use of code mixing, primarily lexical in nature, or code switching, an actual transfer of and between languages.

¹⁰⁵ Many otherwise pertinent films were rejected for this very reason, since a film could not lend itself to the current study if there was no chance of it being released for an American English speaking audience.

4.2 Code Mixing

Code mixing occurs when speakers borrow from a second language where no word or concept is linguistically possible in the first language (Taylor 65). Citing Ousmane Sembène's literature in particular, Taylor remarks that code mixing comprises different languages for different functions: "[o]bjects, concepts, greetings, proverbs of cultural specificity, feature in Wolof, and greetings, belonging to religious conventions, in Arabic" and then goes on to say that translations and supplementary explanations would be inadequate, since "their inclusion in the original represents an important act of identity" (Taylor 66) and serves as a reminder of the influence of the other languages on their culture. Certainly, in Absa's *Madame Brouette*, code mixing occurs alongside code switching, the difference being that code mixing represents use of a word in a second language where none exists in the first, and code switching involves use of entire sequences of the sentence in the second language. Even the main characters, who speak French among each other, use greetings in Wolof and Arabic:

Biraan to no one in particular, but just as he crosses the threshold where Ndaxté is (31:06)	[Arabic] Salaamaalekum!	Peace be with you.
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Certain words, too, have originated in the African language and have a specific meaning for which there is no appropriate counterpart, especially to describe the Other. The white person in Africa, for example, is a toubab, a word meaning "a white person in Africa" (my translation).¹⁰⁶ This word has not been translated in the English subtitles, and the TL viewer is left to extrapolate, based on whatever knowledge he or she may have of

¹⁰⁶ Définition de: "toubab" [nom masculin]: Ajouté au *Dico des mots* le 01/08/2006. Contraction du mot toubabou. Désigne un blanc qui est en Afrique (peut se mettre au féminin). <<http://www.dico-des-mots.com/definitions/toubab.html>>.

the situation in Senegal, the identity of these privileged toubabs. In *Madame Brouette*, Mati's daughter N'deye speaks about the *toubabs*:

N'deye (19:39)	J'en ai marre d'être la femme de toute la maison.	I'm fed up with being the maid around here!
N'deye (19:43)	On ne voit jamais les toubabs faire la cuisine.	We never see the Toubabs cooking.
N'deye (19:45)	A la télévision, ils sont toujours en train de manger en plus!	On TV, they're always eating!
Mati (19:53)	C'est parce qu'ils ont de l'argent.	They have money.

Creole has a similar term providing another example of code mixing: *béké*, “a Creole term used for white planters and their descendants in Martinique” (Glissant 262). The word, also found in the French *Dictionnaire culturel en langue française*,¹⁰⁷ is simply subtitled as “white,” precisely because the idea behind *béké* cannot be expressed in a single word in English. The TL viewer suffers a loss, since this word definitively marks the cultural milieu and the hybridity that characterizes the Creole culture. In *Sugar Cane Alley*, the word *béké*, rendered as simply “white,” does not begin to describe the complex relationship between whites, blacks, and various degrees of *métissage* that play such a significant role in Martinican society. Specifically, the character Léopold, son of a white man and a black woman, represents this tenuous relationship between whites and blacks and the significance of the *béké* in Creole society.¹⁰⁸ This one example of lexical disparity reveals the difficulty of translating an entire idea of a multiracial society and the

¹⁰⁷ “béké. n.m. (mot du créole martiniquais). Franç. des Antilles. Planteur blanc (aux Antilles françaises)”[White planter in the French Antilles] (Rey 856).

¹⁰⁸ In her screen adaptation, Paly created Léopold, a character not in Zobel's novel (on which the film is based), to “illustrate the liminal political and social position occupied by the mulatto in Martinican society” (Ebrahim 149).

attendant hierarchical divisions of power. *Béké* is almost consistently translated as “white” or “the white man,” as in the example below, and in several others too numerous to provide:

Médouze (20:54)	On nous a vendus pour couper la canne de ces blancs qu'on appelle <i>békés</i> .	We were sold to cut cane for the whites .
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Occasionally, however, *béké* is translated in a more pejorative sense, as “Whitey,” designating a power relationship, where “Whitey” is the oppressive boss of a minority, usually black, cadre of workers, as in the following example from *Sugar Cane Alley*:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1) M. Saint-Louis
eulogizing
Médouze
(53:02) | que les békés lui
même donnaient le
samedi soir avec un
gros coup de pied dans
le derrière . . . | that Whitey gave
him with a kick in
the ass . . . |
| 2) Ma Tine to José
(56:04) | Dieu me donnera la
force et le courage | God will give me
the strength and
courage |
| 3) Ma Tine to José
(56:09) | pour remonter à la
canne des békés . | to return to
Whitey's cane
fields. |
| 4) Carmen to José
(1:19:15) | Le vieux béké a
essayé de me gâcher la
journée. | Old Whitey tried
to ruin my day. |

As the film based on Joseph Zobel's 1950 novel, *La Rue Cases-Nègres*, recalls a colonial but post-slavery era (1930s Martinique), “Whitey” appears consistently in the subtitles when characters reference the relationship of the cane workers to their bosses, but not when *béké* refers simply to the white man; this difference does not apply in a Martinican context and represents a translation error. Titles can also be altered in subtitles—either

they are inaccurate (using *Whitey* for *béké*) or inefficient (using *Toubab* in the subtitles where no meaning exists in English).

SL viewers will recognize certain French words in the non-French language, representing another aspect of code mixing; these words represent concepts originating in or somehow more common to the French culture. Several examples noted in *Inch'Allah Sunday* of items for which French is used in the Arabic dialogue include school items: *école, stylo, cartable* (school, pen, bookbag); certain clothing and household items: *chaussure, manteau, jupe, placard* (shoe, coat, skirt, closet); and words associated with industry and regulations: *usine, interdit, danger* (factory, off-limits, danger). While the reason for the presence of many of these French terms in Arabic seems apparent, a more detailed explanation of the use of these terms in Arabic, while worthy of exploration, extends beyond the scope of the present discussion, devoted to their translation in subtitles.¹⁰⁹

When, in *Inch'Allah Sunday*, Ahmed and his colleague are discussing the “*regroupement familial*,” they refer to it in French, even though their conversation is mostly in Arabic, since the concept is specific to French politics:

Colleague of	[Arabic] le	“The Family Reunion?”
Ahmed (7:28)	regroupement familial	No way, not for me.
	[Arabic]	

In 1974, then-Prime Minister Jacques Chirac proposed a law closing French borders to immigrants, except for family members wishing to join immigrant workers already living

¹⁰⁹ In keeping with the spirit of Arabization, Abu-Haidar remarks, “Algerian fundamentalists . . . want to stop using French loanwords and replace them with equivalent terms used in the Middle East, regardless of whether they are of Arabic origin or not” (162), but this suggestion does not present an immediate danger to the existing lexicon.

in France. This phenomenon is explained and defined in the opening sequence of the film:

Soon after World War II, France was in need of a labor force. The government recruited masses of North Africans, particularly Algerians. A migration of men began, but the law did not allow them to bring their families. In 1974, Chirac's government wanted to stop the continuing immigration. Wives and children were now allowed to join their husbands and fathers. This was known as "The Family Reunion." (00:19-00:43)

Incidentally, the translation "Family Reunion" in English carries connotations of picnics and long-lost hordes of cousins convening for a meal, as the word *réunion* in French might have suggested. "Family regrouping," awkward as the phrase may seem in English, would likely have better conveyed the administrative, antiseptic nature of the law.

French loanwords exist in Wolof as well, and the SL viewer will recognize them interspersed with the Wolof in *Faat Kiné*. Some examples include words like *client*, *clé*, *essence*, *chaise roulante*, and *toilettes* (client, key, gas, wheelchair, toilets) in French, used when Faat Kiné and her assistant are talking to the Wolof-speaking characters such as Pathé. The SL viewer will, of course, recognize them and might remark that these words all represent modern social conveniences rather than allude to traditional habits or customs. The subtitles, all in the TL, do not permit the TL viewer to note this distinction.

4.3 Code Switching

Another feature common to the selected films in which the alterity and identity of the characters are defined and underscored is through the use of code switching. While code mixing, primarily lexical in nature, consists of substituted words for concepts not available in the speaker's primary language of use, code switching, as the name implies, involves a transfer from one language code to another during discourse in word

sequences. French-language viewers will be sensitive to a shift in language, whereas the non-French language viewer will likely not perceive a change from one language to the other, focusing primarily on reading the subtitles in the time allotted. Even if the viewer does detect a difference in the sounds of two languages, the non-French language will not necessarily resonate with the non-native viewer as it will with a native viewer. The effect of the linguistic hybridity will therefore be diminished, and the overall sense of a filmic scene becomes diluted for the TL viewer, who does not perceive the linguistic hybridity.

Code switching effectively brings this linguistic hybridity to the SL viewer by imparting information beneath the verbal message. Carol Myers-Scotton and Janice Jake define code switching (hereafter CS) as “the use of two or more languages in the same discourse” (280). John J. Gumperz, among the first to identify code switching, characterizes CS in the following way: “In instances of CS, speakers are often unaware of which language they are using at a given time – their main concern is the communicative effect of their discourse” (61). Regarding Creole, for example, Daniel-Henri Pageaux posits that French and Creole have certain functions appropriate to specific situations, and that use of both in a linguistic hybridity underscores the diversity of the Creole experience represented by:

. . . [T]he new literature which is intersected by orality, from a writing that practices linguistic and stylistic hybridization, from a novel whose imaginary world begins with the city and the diversity of languages, cultures, social groups; finally, from an esthetic with underlying philosophical and ideological principles which promote a ‘diversal’ vision of the world, as opposed to a ‘universal’ principle of western inspiration . . . novel writing is founded on linguistic and stylistic hybridization (oral/written, official language/popular language, and a still-existing European culture/tradition and vernacular, insular folklore. (my translation) (Pageaux 84)¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰“ La nouvelle littérature traversée par l’oralité, d’une écriture qui pratique l’hybridation linguistique et stylistique, d’un roman dont l’imaginaire s’ouvre sur la ville et la diversité des langues, des

The CS phenomenon, not exclusive to Caribbean expression by any means, exists wherever two or more languages are used, such as Wolof and Arabic in the Senegalese films, Arabic in *Inch'Allah Sunday*, Portuguese in *Games of Love and Chance*, and Yiddish in *Café au Lait*. Moreover, in formerly colonized countries such as Senegal, the written word necessarily excludes a number of the non-literate population (no matter if the text was in an African language rather than French) but, since eighty percent of the Senegalese people speak Wolof, the medium of film in an indigenous language can bring the language and message to a greater population in a culture (Taylor 66-67). The advent of films in Senegal served as the reflection of an oral tradition, and

[S]ubtitles, permitting the commercial circulation of films to a French-reading audience, offered not only choice of language for an entire film, but the possibility of infinite manipulation of languages in the plural, in an intricate dance of linguistic cohabitation. (Taylor 67)

To reflect this “linguistic cohabitation,” many examples of CS occur intersententially in the films and depict the seemingly unconscious usage of a second language in daily life. By using the language in this way, the characters themselves deterritorialize language in a way that creates a space between the French-speaking and non-French speaking facets of their identity. The TL audience, however, in reading the subtitles, may not experience an awareness of this hybridity, resulting in a diminished version for the TL viewer.

Gumperz gives a description of CS consistent with the situation of the inhabitants of Rue Cases Nègres, the *cit * in *Games of Love and Chance* and *Inch'Allah Sunday*, and Senegal as members of a racially and ethnically diverse community: “CS occurs in

cultures, des types sociaux; enfin, d’une esth tque sous-tendue par des principes philosophiques, id ologiques qui promeuvent une vision “diversale” du monde, oppos e   un principe “universel”, d’inspiration occidentale . . . l’ criture du roman est fond e sur l’hybridation linguistique et stylistique (oral/ crit, langue officielle/langue populaire, et encore culture europ enne/tradition et folklore insulaires et vernaculaires). ”

conditions of change, where group boundaries are diffuse, norms and standards of evaluation vary, and where speakers' ethnic identities and social backgrounds are not matters of common agreement" (70). As will be demonstrated below, the various films analyzed all provide examples of code switching, but the functional use of code switching has particular relevance in the films *Sugar Cane Alley*, *Inch'Allah Sunday*, and *Faat Kiné*.

While code mixing emphasizes the influence of another language on the lexicon of the source, creating a general impression of linguistic hybridity, code switching imparts other, more complex kinds of information. When used in discourse, according to Appel and Muyskens, CS:

1. Serves a *referential* function, in that it often involves lack of knowledge of one language or lack of facility in that language on a certain subject;
2. Serves a *directive* function, in involving the hearer, either by excluding or including him or her;
3. Has an *expressive* function, in that speakers emphasize a mixed identity through CS;
4. Serves to indicate a change in tone of the conversation and hence a *phatic* function;
5. Serves a *metalinguistic function*, when it is used to comment directly or indirectly on the languages involved. (118-120)

Each of these functions, inspired by Jakobson's seminal work *Linguistics and Poetics*, is represented in the selected films by the use of CS in very different ways. A more detailed exploration of these five functions follows, providing examples that explain their effectiveness in nuancing the characters' interpersonal relationships, the setting, and the social and political climate.

4.3.1 Referential Function

Jakobson named the referential function, also referred to as “denotative” and “cognitive,” and said that it provides “an orientation towards the context” (66). This is consistent with Appel and Muyskens’ assertion that information is given where the other language is insufficient to convey the message or the speaker does not know a corresponding word in the same language. Physical descriptions, commentary by secondary characters, and legends in a second language all provide additional information, mood, and shading to enhance the cultural milieu.

The characters themselves can also serve as background in *Sugar Cane Alley*. Minor characters speaking Creole not only add local flavor, but also serve as examples of what Maryse Condé has referred to as “characters unlikely to express themselves otherwise” (“personnages peu susceptibles de s’exprimer autrement”) (my translation) (111). For example, the characters’ conversation in the sugar cane fields is not subtitled, but it certainly adds background, and the SL viewer will recognize the language as not French, and, given the location, as Creole. When the language changes from French to Creole, this modification furnishes the SL viewer with information about class differences among the characters; for example, the field workers all use Creole. Interestingly, even the children, who throughout the film have consistently used standard French amongst themselves, use Creole, even with each other, once they begin to work in the fields. Tortilla, whose father forbade her from accepting a scholarship, insisting she was needed to work in the fields, uses Creole later in the film in the sugar cane fields, though she did not among her playmates in the opening sequences of the film. Her assumption of the Creole language indicates her identification and solidarity with the

field workers as well as her acceptance of her passage from schoolgirl to worker:

Older girl to José (31:28)	[Creole]	Saturday we'll get paid. You'll get nothing.
-------------------------------	----------	---

Tortilla's use of Creole with José also marks her separation from the world in which José lives—the French he uses delineates the world of school and culture from Tortilla's (and the other cane field workers') world of work and tradition. In using Creole with José, Tortilla makes a distinction between the two worlds, erecting a linguistic barrier which José does not cross. The monolingual subtitles do not reveal this significant demarcation, and the TL viewer is excluded from this extralinguistic narrative information.

The referential function of CS can also be extended to include explanation of superstitions, legends, and everything that has to do with magic or sorcery, all elements featuring prominently in Martinican culture. In *Sugar Cane Alley*, the words *volan*, sorcerer, *jan gajé*, *gens gagés*—all are invoked when the conversation turns to things mystical or religious and provide an example of code mixing, but often, the characters (such as Ma Tine) vacillate between Creole and French (and back again) at the sentence level. These references represent the construction of the identity of a unique socio-economic and cultural group in Martinique (or perhaps other overseas departments or territories—"DOM-TOM" in French—as well). These usages of Creole do not appear evident, as the English subtitles never indicate a change in idiom from French to Creole. The film attempts to depict the ambiguity in Zobel's and Palcy's message—whether social elevation exclusively favors those who adopt the French language and culture, thus representing a small minority—and TL viewers may not understand this message.

Although the question of code switching as a means to represent attitudes toward and within the social hierarchy has been developed by Antillean theorists and critics, CS

is certainly not exclusive to Creole and applies to other languages used in the films. Arabic language songs used throughout the films *Inch'Allah Sunday* and *Madame Brouette*, and the legend of the ogress that Aïcha in *Inch'Allah Sunday* shares with her grandchildren and their young friend, Nicolas, or Zouina's explanation of the importance of finding another Algerian family to celebrate the Eid holiday, also serve as powerful symbols for the characters and to remind the SL viewer of the primary culture as well as to provide cultural roots for the characters, such as the stories told by Médouze to José in *Sugar Cane Alley*.

4.3.2 Directive Function

Another informative function is achieved by engaging the hearer in some way, either by including or excluding him or her, as in the directive function. According to Jakobson:

Orientation toward the addressee, the conative function, finds its purest grammatical expression in the vocative and imperative, which syntactically, morphologically, and often even phonemically deviate from other nominal and verbal categories (68).

Stephen Gross explains that low-status individuals with few opportunities for upward mobility will often use marked code switching (or intentional code switching) as a face-threatening strategy (1283). There are three groups who use marked code switching: 1) those who stand to gain power; 2) those of high status; and 3) marginalized groups, since they have little to lose. Those who feel threatened by an outsider, as is often the case with the residents of Rue Cases Nègres, will resort to use of the vernacular, switching the code to an in-group language as a way of intimidating the outsider. Also, CS is often used as an identifier, either to include or exclude the addressee in certain social groups. Howard Giles defines this phenomenon more precisely:

in many social interactions, speakers desire their listeners' social approval, and use modification of their speech towards the listeners' code as a tactic to get this approval. This is called speech *accommodation* or *convergence*. But in other situations, speakers may wish to dissociate themselves from listeners; they do this by accentuating their linguistic differences. This is called speech *divergence*. (qtd. in Myers-Scotton 66)

As Joshua Fishman indicates, "one of the first controlling factors in language choice is group membership" (90). Among the different social groups in the films, the characters engage in marked code switching to delineate exclusion from or inclusion in certain groups; a primary function of code switching, Jill Taylor notes, "is to include speakers present, or exclude them from the conversation" (71). The films contain examples of both exclusive and inclusive uses of the second language, reinforcing Natalie Hess' claim that CS underscores the marginality of certain characters, depending on how the CS is used and who is using it (18).

Convergence: Inclusive Usage

Creole can be used to draw in someone who is outside the group. In *Sugar Cane Alley*, though he generally uses standard French with José, Médouze expresses his tenderness towards him using Creole:

Médouze 22:58 Hélas, **iche** mwen . . . Alas, my child . . .

Médouze also uses CS with José to provide him with a sense of his African identity, reminding him of his roots among the oppressed as José begins his path toward achieving a higher social status through his educational opportunities. Though José never speaks Creole in the film (and again the subtitles do not reflect this), he seems to understand it; this understanding demonstrates his awareness and acknowledgment of his mixed

identity. The subtitles do not portray the linguistic dimension of Médouze's use of the inclusive function of CS in this way.

In *Faat Kiné*, those characters proficient in both French and Wolof code-switch easily to accommodate the non-speakers. Kiné, her children Aby and Djip, Sagna, and Jean speak Wolof to those characters who do not use French, such as Pathé, Adèle, Kiné's mother, and the woman who fills the vases on Kiné's desk each day. In addition to the practical aspects of communicating with those not fluent in French, this linguistic accommodation reveals the versatility of the bilingual speakers as well as an inherent respect for the speakers of the non-French language. In two cases of inclusive CS, Sagna, Kiné's employee and presumably second in charge, speaks Wolof to the workers, including them in the discourse, but then changes to French when he addresses his employer, a sign of respect and recognition of her higher status:

Sagna to employee (15:39)	[Wolof]	Is he getting gas?
Sagna to employee (15:48)	[Wolof]	Make sure he pays you.
Sagna to Faat Kiné (15:59)	Et ça, c'est l'enveloppe des bons.	Here is the envelope with the receipts.

This inclusive usage of CS also can be seen in *Games of Love and Chance* when Krimo's former girlfriend Magali answers her mother in Portuguese rather than responding to her in French, even though she uses French outside the home, in an act of deference to her mother's higher status; this exchange, subtitled, does not convey the accommodative CS that occurs:

Mother to Magali (2:42)	[Portuguese]	Where are you off to? [not rendered as non-French]
Magali (2:44)	[Portuguese]	Just a second.

In *Café au Lait*, however, though Félix appears to understand his grandfather's Yiddish, he responds to his grandfather exclusively in French. Félix, being a stronger character than Magali, may avoid use of the non-dominant language as a means of separating himself from his grandfather's generation, or he may simply not know how to speak Yiddish—this is not clear from the context of the film.

Many characters in *Inch'Allah Sunday*, especially the children, are quite adept at code switching to accommodate non-bilingual speakers. They transition quite easily between Arabic and French, often responding in French, even when addressed in Arabic by their father, grandmother, or Malika, the Algerian woman they meet. This ease of transition reflects the children's desire to adapt to their surroundings and their positive attitude towards their new culture, a feeling sharply contrasting Aïcha's refusal to assimilate, two extremes between which Zouina's attitude lies. The children usually speak Arabic to their grandmother and vacillate between Arabic and French with their father and their mother. The children occasionally use their facility with the two languages in an exclusive way, however, as noted below.

Exclusive Usage: Divergence

One way to exclude outsiders from the in-group is to use the second language, creating distance between those who understand the second language and those who do not understand this second language. This exclusive usage functions with the dominant as well as the secondary language, from the colonizers who did not want the native

population to understand them to the native population regarding use of the non-dominant language as subversive and a way to keep their conversation from being followed by dominant members of the culture.

As “the preferred code of in-group solidarity” (Brooks 119), Creole insults usually come from the in-group to refer to outsiders in a threatening or derisive way. The fact that the overseer in *Sugar Cane Alley* translates the standard French of the white boss into Creole, even though the field workers are most likely capable of understanding him, serves as a reminder of the workers’ lower-class status. In this way, CS is used for exclusionary purposes.

The children in *Inch’Allah Sunday* feel a sense of superiority in their linguistic facility, and in defiant moments, use this facility to deliberately exclude the grandmother, a tactic not entirely lost on a non-French speaking audience. When, in 1) below, the older boy insults his grandmother, he does it in French so she doesn’t understand—she becomes the Other. In 2), Aïcha asks him to explain in Arabic, and in 3) the boy, though using an incorrect tense in French, clearly enjoys using the French as a means of defying his strict grandmother, in a form of linguistic rebellion:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 1) | Older boy to
grandmother (25:49) | Méchante! | You’re mean. |
| 2) | Aïcha (25:52) | [Arabic] | What is “mean?”
I don’t
understand. |
| 3) | Older boy to
grandmother (26:22) | Mais il fallait lui
dire. | You should tell
her. |

Equally important to the social dynamic of the plurilinguistic environments in the films is the use of CS to define and assert power among the various characters. According

to Carol Myers-Scotton, there are two types of socially situated power: statusful power and interactional power (199). Code switching involves interactional power to

the extent to which a speaker shows her/himself off to advantage in an interaction relative to other participants controlling the floor or the direction and/or outcome of the interaction (e.g. topics) and also in terms of attracting favorable attention to oneself (e.g. highlighting one's expertise, one's other interpersonal associations and experiences). (199)

For reasons that become evident as *Inch'Allah Sunday* progresses, Zouina finds the French language a source of tremendous power as a way of highlighting her interpersonal associations in various situations, particularly to distance herself from her mother-in-law and husband. Zouina's attempt to assimilate linguistically and culturally is in part based on her abandonment of her native language and culture. The fact that her French is imperfect adds a touch of poignancy to her character, for she continues to make efforts to speak it, and her linguistic and personal journey reveals itself in these efforts. Yet, in keeping with the widespread notion by some subtitling theorists (such as Gambier and Anna Jäckel) that the written form should appear more elevated than its oral counterpart, Zouina's French is almost always subtitled without grammatical errors—the non-French speaker therefore misses the effect of this linguistic exploration and cannot empathize with her character as can a native French speaker who witnesses this progression. Zouina uses CS both inclusively and exclusively; when she meets the children's young friend Nicolas, she greets him in French, whereas Aïcha primarily uses Arabic with Nicolas and really makes little attempt to communicate with him in his language, even though she knows some basic phrases in French. Later, when Zouina meets another Algerian woman, Malika, she speaks Arabic with her initially but then lapses into French when discussing the *Ménie Grégoire* radio program, a forum for

discussion on topics such as love, sexuality, and other subjects not considered acceptable for Muslim women. Malika expresses her shock at the mention of such scandalous topics by responding in Arabic (even spitting as she exclaims, “Shameful!” in Arabic), demanding to know what Zouina’s husband thinks of these topics, and finally throwing Zouina out of her house. Through exclusive use of CS, Malika creates a linguistic barrier, effectively barring Zouina from her home and life. The TL viewer, limited to monolingual subtitles, is necessarily excluded from the effects of Malika’s very powerful uses of CS to reflect her repudiation of the French culture, illustrated not only by her eschewal of French behaviors and attitudes but also by her rejection of the language as a vehicle for discussing ideas concerning these behaviors.

Exclusive use of CS occurs in *Sugar Cane Alley* as well, as Creole in songs has a particular effect on the hearer. Under the directive function, the addressee is involved as the intended recipient of the message, and recalls Jakobson’s model of the conative function, where “the magic, incantatory function is chiefly some kind of conversion of an absent or inanimate ‘third person’ into an addressee of a conative. ‘May this sty dry up, *tfu, tfu, tfu, tfu*’ (Lithuanian spell)”(68).

The singing of the workers has a subversive effect in passive-aggressive assertion of power, as the white boss does not understand the song’s meaning and the mulatto overseer dares not translate for the boss:

Ti Coco starts song (11:19)	[Creole]	Whitey's in his easy chair
Workers and Ti Coco (11:20)	[Creole]	Black man burns in the sun
Workers and Ti Coco (11:22)	[Creole]	Ti Coco pisses
Workers and Ti Coco (11:24)	[Creole]	Bossman comes along

These songs in Creole create a dream-like effect and provide a form of escapism. They also recall the setting, lest the SL viewer forget after being lulled by the familiarity of the French. The SL viewer who does not understand Creole is thus thrust into the situation of the whites in the film; this perspective cannot be appreciated by the TL spectator, who reads the subtitles, and, in gaining access to more of the information, may therefore miss the political message of the film.

4.3.3 Expressive Function

Speech is not always used to involve the hearer, however. Speakers will often use CS to express their own mixed identity (Appel and Muyksens 119). Again, as in the directive function, this will usually be expressed in oral dialogue. Jakobson uses “emotive or expressive function” to describe “a direct expression of the speaker’s attitude toward what he is speaking about” (66). While it could certainly be argued that every use of CS is an expression of a mixed identity, several examples highlight that identity in particular, and, in accordance with the Jakobsonian model, the speaker deliberately uses a second language to convey a mixed identity in a way that reveals an attitude toward this identity. Characters often use a second language to create a specific mood, an atmosphere of familiarity, in acknowledgment of their cultural hybridity and tradition of orality.

In the following example, Faat Kiné uses Wolof and Arabic to express certain strong emotions and reactions during the film, the Arabic recalling her Muslim religious identification:

Faat Kiné to first husband [Wolof] [chim] Disgusting!
(10:59)

Faat Kiné after hearing of [Arabic] Allah Praised be the Lord!
her children's success on ham!
the bac (12:07)

One of Kiné's most defining characteristics is her seemingly contradictory personality; a sexually, financially, and emotionally independent woman, she clearly feels bound to the cultural aspect of her Muslim faith, even though her actions run counter to behavior expected of and typical of a Muslim woman (i.e. she has multiple lovers, smokes, drinks, speaks frankly about controversial topics). This aspect of Kiné's personality represents the central theme of the film: despite her non-traditional ways, she questions whether she can marry a man outside her faith, driving home the powerful influence of cultural and social forces on an otherwise strong female figure.

In *Café au Lait*, Félix' grandfather's identification with both the French and Jewish aspects of his culture reveals itself in his discourse. When he and Félix are talking about Lola, his French is subtitled (in French) in the original as well as in the TL version, so the TL viewer sees the French subtitles on the bottom of the screen with the English subtitles at the top, indicating that there may be a second language spoken, whereas the SL viewer will recognize the French. Kassovitz uses this technique to emphasize the fact to TL viewers of the presence of another language in the grandfather's identity and to SL viewers that the grandfather's Yiddish accent is very pronounced, at the same time reminding viewers of Félix' Jewish origin, transmitting his cultural heritage through the

subtitles. The TL viewer may not notice the incongruity between the spoken Yiddish dialogue and the French subtitles later in the scene as representing different languages, but the CS that occurs is employed in a most innovative way. In the presence of two sets of subtitles (one in French, one in English), both SL and TL viewers witness, as outsiders, the grandfather's linguistic hybridity. In the examples below, the grandfather references the grandmother's history; this information perhaps considered too important to the viewers' understanding of the characters' Jewish heritage to risk a possible miscomprehension of the accented French by the SL audience. Perhaps, too, though it is an emotional topic, the grandfather wants to ensure that Félix understands him:

Félix' grandfather (talking about the grandmother) (Chap 11: 1:55)	[in French, subtitled in French] Elle a vécu des choses plus terribles que ça.	She's been through worse things.
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Félix' grandfather (Chap 11: 1:58)	[in French, subtitled in French] Enfin, elle a quand même fait un an à Buchenwald.	She spent a year in Buchenwald.
---------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------

Later in their conversation, however, the grandfather changes to his native tongue, indicating his emotions:

Félix' grandfather (Chap 11: 2:02)	[Yiddish, subtitled in French] Alors, de quoi tu parles?	What are you talking about?
---------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------

Félix (Chap 11: 2:03)	Rien. On n'est plus ensemble, c'est tout.	We split up.
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Félix' grandfather (Chap 11: 2:06)	[Yiddish, subtitled in French] Vous avez eu une dispute?	You had a fight?
---------------------------------------	--	------------------

Félix (Chap 11: 2:07)	Oui, en quelque sorte.	[not subtitled]
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Félix continues to respond (in French), clearly demonstrating he understands his grandfather's words:

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1) | Félix' grandfather
(Chap 11: 2:12) | [French again, subtitled in French] Je l'ai croisée ici il y a 15 jours, par hasard. | I bumped into her two weeks ago. |
| 2) | Félix to grandfather
(Chap 11: 2:26) | Et vous avez parlé de quoi? | What did you talk about? |
| 3) | Félix' grandfather
(Chap 11: 2:30) | De toi. [switches to Yiddish; subtitled in French] Elle était très jolie. Elle rayonnait comme le soleil. | You. She was very pretty. Radiant like the sun... |

The grandfather switches to French when recounting his meeting Lola in 1); in 3), he begins to respond in French, then when expressing his admiration for Lola's beauty, he returns to Yiddish. This exchange strongly maintains the depiction of the grandfather's linguistic and cultural hybridity. Though the grandfather does not use the language consciously to express his mixed identity, he expresses it all the same. Through the grandfather's character, Kassovitz provides an excellent example of the expressive function in this exchange; the grandfather uses French to recount the extreme horror of the Holocaust (perhaps as a way of distancing himself, now that he is firmly and safely established in his adopted country far from Buchenwald) and Yiddish to describe the exceptional beauty of Lola. The addition of the French subtitles to the English ones helps include the TL viewer in this linguistic exchange to some extent.

Characters in *Inch'Allah Sunday* and *Faat Kiné* also engage in expressive uses of CS. In emotionally charged moments, the various speakers lapse into Arabic, even when the lingua franca is meant to be French. For example, in *Inch'Allah Sunday*, after

Zouina's attempt to strangle the neighbor, Madame Donze, in a comic altercation, Ahmed, while talking to the French *gendarme*, erupts into Arabic once he hears Zouina lifted her skirt in order to complete the attack, as Ahmed apparently deems the skirt-lifting a greater offense than attempted murder.

In *Faat Kiné*, the conversation Kiné has with her children, Aby and Djib, reveals her highly emotional state as Kiné alternates from French to Wolof to French again:

1)	Kiné to Djib (1:24:08)	Reviens!	Stay right here!
2)	Kiné to Djib (1:24:10)	[Wolof]	Don't take off like a rooster who has seen a hawk.
3)	Kiné to Aby (1:24:24)	[Wolof]	So, you say you already got laid?
4)	Kiné to Aby (1:24:35)	Tu n'es pas la première, et tu ne seras pas la dernière à perdre sa virginité.	You are not the first and you will not be the last to lose your virginity.

Kiné's use of French in 1) continues their conversation, begun in French. In 2), she changes to Wolof, expressing her rising agitation, using a simile reflecting the Senegalese culture. She then addresses Aby in Wolof in 3), and finally, seemingly regaining a bit of control, resumes the conversation in French, perhaps asserting her authority by using the dominant language. In both *Inch'Allah Sunday* and *Faat Kiné*, the cultural hybridity underscores the conflict between traditional and modern conceptions of sexuality and the role of women, and the expressive use of CS portrays this conflict quite effectively, a nuance the TL viewer will miss through the subtitles.

4.3.4 Phatic Function

Often, CS indicates a change in the tone of the conversation or a means prolong it, as defined by Appel and Muyskens (119). This is consistent with Jakobson's definition of the phatic function, which is a bit more detailed:

There are messages serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works ("Hello, do you hear me?"), to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention ("Are you listening?")...This set for contact, or in Malinowki's terms phatic function, may be displayed by a profuse exchange of ritualized formulas, by entire dialogues with the mere purport of prolonging communication. (68)

Each expression acts as a "ritualized formula" (Jakobson 68), and perhaps that is why these expressions are not translated in each occurrence. These ritualized formulas move the message along without the reader being required to pause and consult a translation. Repetition of certain expressions prolongs communication, the primary purpose being to continue the narrative rather than to impart specific information. In *Inch'Allah Sunday*, the Arabic *Inch'Allah* (or "God willing") serves this function. Though the expression is never translated in the subtitles, its importance is understood, so much so that it is retained in the film's title, *Inch'Allah Sunday* (*Inch'Allah Dimanche* in French), blending Arabic and French (or English in the subtitled version), so all viewers will appreciate the hybridity of the title, which foretells the linguistic and cultural *mélange* that comprises the film's dialogue. The expression *Inch'Allah* appears in numerous exchanges in *Games of Love and Chance* as well, serving in both films as a metaphor for the desire to prolong the history of the protagonist and his or her struggles.

In *Sugar Cane Alley*, the *yé krik! yé krak!* used by Médouze (below) when he is telling José the tale of his African father is not meant to be translated, as its sound

conveys meaning for the TL viewer, and its attention-getting function quite clear. In keeping with a tradition of orality, the musicality lies in the words and is not translatable in the other tongue, but the subtitler has chosen in this instance to represent the sound regardless, perhaps to preserve the onomatopoeia and avoid confusion of the word with any other possible TL signifier:

Médouze to José (18:56)	Yé krik!	And cric!
José to Médouze (18:57)	Yé krak!	And crac!

Immediately after this exchange, however, Médouze and José use another series of similar phatic formulas. This time they are not subtitled:

Médouze (19:03)	Aboubou!	[not subtitled]
José (19:04)	Ya!	[not subtitled]

When Monsieur Saint-Louis is eulogizing Médouze, the *yé cric! yé crac!* formula is used once more and is not subtitled. Perhaps because the phatic function of this expression has already been established, the subtitler chose to omit rendering the words. The TL audience has seen this expression several times and thus will recognize their function as an attention-getting device. Palcy succeeds in communicating this phatic function of CS on two levels: allowing the viewer to identify with José and also showing parallels between José's narrative and Médouze's, each character attempting in his own way to recreate the history of an oppressed community.

4.3.5 Metalinguistic Function

The final function of CS, the metalinguistic function, allows direct or indirect comments on the languages involved. Jakobson defines the metalinguistic function in the following way: “Whenever the addresser and/or the addressee need to check up whether they use the same code, speech is focused on the code: it performs a metalingual (i.e., glossing) function” (69). References to use or avoidance of French make strong statements about the interlocuteur’s rank in society as well as the prejudices surrounding their place. This differs from the directive function in that the notion of expression in the language is expressly referenced. In *Sugar Cane Alley*, Léopold’s father Jacques (who has never spoken to him and has no basis for his statement other than pure prejudice) attempts to malign José’s character and intelligence by attacking his language skills, for, as Fanon asserts in *Black Skin, White Masks*, speaking the language means to “assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (18). Additionally, Fanon writes, “[m]astery of language affords remarkable power” (18). Therefore, in Martinique, for example, the person who speaks “French-French” is admired and feared (Fanon 20-21), and conversely, one who is assumed not to speak French-French is reviled (Léopold’s father cannot evaluate his French but makes the assumption that José speaks poorly on the basis of José’s black skin).

In *Sugar Cane Alley*, Fanon’s suggestion that use of the dominant (colonizer’s) language functions as a symbol of elevated status in the culture is revealed by Jacques’ comment to his son about José’s French:

Jacques to Léopold 1:02:34	Que fais-tu avec ce petit nègre aux pieds nus	What are you doing with that barefoot boy
Jacques to Léopold 1:02:38	qui ne sait même pas parler français?	who can't speak French?

Throughout the film, an SL viewer would remark that José speaks French flawlessly (as opposed to Ma Tine, for example, who speaks a less grammatically polished version, interspersed with Creole), but the tendency of subtitles not to render ungrammaticality would not provide the TL viewer with any insight on this point. In Senegal, too, often the ability to speak French is associated with a higher level of intelligence and education than attributed to non-French speakers where two languages exist (Taylor 76), and in *Faat Kiné* the characters who have received formal education all speak French, whereas the ones who have not (Maamy, the maid Adèle, Pathé, beggars in the street) all speak Wolof.

Certainly, too, the existence of institutions such as the *Académie française* along with the various laws enacted to protect the purity of the French language exemplifies the high premium placed on “correct” French expression in the Hexagon as well as in other countries where French is spoken.¹¹¹ While typically the refusal to speak the colonizer’s language is a sign of defiance on the part of the (de)colonized, the opposite situation exists for Zouina in *Inch’Allah Sunday*. Zouina’s growing mastery of both reading and speaking French represents a threat to her controlling, abusive husband and dominating mother-in-law. The French language serves as a metaphor for rejection of her oppressive

¹¹¹ While French remains an official language in Senegal, Algeria has declared Arabic the official language of the country in a succession of laws promoting the Arabization of administrative offices and institutions of higher education (Abu-Haidar 151); however, “Algeria’s language policy was unsuccessful in encouraging Algerians to give up French” (Benabhi 195).

patriarchal culture as well as a symbol of her growing independence. Interestingly, for Zouina, the language of the colonizer represents her salvation.

Though the TL viewer might miss the Arabic, the use of French is pointed out here expressly. Aïcha, the mother-in-law, specifically refers to the fact that Zouina has begun speaking French around the house:

Mother-in-law to Zouina (48:13)	[Arabic]	You forgot Arabic. You speak French now?
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Earlier in the film, when Aïcha mentions to her grandchildren that Ahmed is learning to read, she references the question of the second language, French. This exchange serves to portray Ahmed as less omniscient and humanizes him a bit:

Aïcha to older boy (25:26)	[Arabic]	Ahmed is learning to write, too, just like you.
Older boy (25:35)	Mais Papa va être plus grand,	But Daddy is older.
Older boy (25:36)	il saura écrire mieux que moi.	He'll be able to write better than me.

Ahmed's linguistic deficiency manifests itself in his insecurity that he has not yet mastered the language, and when, later in the film, he finds Zouina's book and makeup samples, he becomes furious, especially upon discovering the book. Clearly, he feels threatened by Zouina's superior ability in French, and (as shown below) he screams at her (in Arabic, naturally, as he feels dominant in this tongue) while beating her:

Ahmed to Zouina (1:20:13)	[Arabic]	You know how to read now? You know how to read now?
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In both instances above, Aïcha and Ahmed respectively use the Arabic language to reinforce linguistic (and cultural) dominance.

The examples and discussion above demonstrate the ways in which incorporation of a second language into the text by code switching infuses the narrative with meaning. The use of CS provides extralinguistic information not available to a non-Francophone who may or may not notice a difference in languages. By using both languages—French and the non-dominant language—in these films, the directors draw the SL viewer into the story and the feeling of life in the different societies. Not only does the code switching provide local color and cultural shading, especially through the expressive and referential uses of CS, but it also has the effect of allowing the SL viewer to experience how this linguistic phenomenon reflects the various attitudes, prejudices, and insecurities of marginalized peoples in a way that a TL viewer cannot readily access, since the English subtitles cannot demonstrate the code switching that occurs. CS adds a psychological and political dimension to the films, adding another layer to the intricate weave of personalities, languages, cultures, and classes which make up their society, bringing to light such issues as dominance, public and private discourse, and questions of identity. The practice of code switching, then, not just a linguistic phenomenon, but, as used in the films, acts as a supplemental narrator, creating and reinforcing the negotiated space between French and non-French expressions of identity and enhancing the meaning of the story on a multitude of levels.

4.4 Non-Dialogic Text

Apart from the narrative itself, other elements of the language of the film can be analyzed—the words to the film's music, the film's title, and the names of the characters (Eades 353). All three of these elements could be clarified for non-French speakers, but

often they are not. In addition, any text made available in the source language—or “non-dialogic text,” such as street signs, newspaper articles, radio and television transmissions—should be made available to the TL audience where possible and considered as part of the narrative; any addition or loss influences the SL viewer’s comprehension in important ways. Translation of these non-dialogue textual elements has been accomplished to varying degrees in the films.

In *Sugar Cane Alley*, when José arrives in Fort-de-France for the scholarship competition, he notices signs advertising a *grand concert musical*, which needs no translation for TL viewers, and reinforces the idea that he has arrived in a world vastly different from his native village. Later, at home, however, José is reading the play *Topaze*, by Marcel Pagnol, immediately recognizable to French viewers as classic literature and part of the canon of a formal education in French schools. Later in the film, when José and Carmen are in Madame’s room (at 1:25:03), the camera pans over a copy of *Chéri* by Colette, presumably Madame’s bedside reading. As Colette is known for her libertine ways by the French general public, seeing that Madame has been reading her book will signal the SL viewers that she may be a free spirit, leaving viewers less surprised than TL viewers that Madame has initiated a liaison with her black houseboy Carmen. As these allusions refer more to knowledge of culture rather than to linguistic knowledge, it is more likely that a SL viewer would appreciate and understand the references than would a TL viewer.

Printed non-dialogic text is not limited to street signs, posters, and books, however. In *Café au Lait*, the t-shirt Félix is wearing when he sits down to breakfast with his grandmother, grandfather, sister, and aunt makes an intentional statement, as the

camera deliberately pans on the back of the shirt to allow the viewers to notice the words printed on it. The words, not subtitled, are lyrics to a song by the rap group Assassin, whose music comprises much of the film's soundtrack:¹¹²

La justice nique sa mère	Justice fucks its mother
Le dernier juge que j'ai vu	The last judge that I saw
Avait plus de vice	Had more vices
Que le dealer dans ma rue	Than the dealer in my street (my translation)

This information is not provided for the TL audience, though the message clearly supports the portrayal of Félix as a rebellious rapper, providing a form of social commentary and perhaps a comic element, as these vulgar words do not appear to provoke a response in his elderly family members. It is also possible that these family members, foreigners from Eastern Europe, do not understand the words, another way of emphasizing the foreigners' removal from key elements of the dominant culture as well as the gap existing between the generations.

4.4.1 Film Titles

Film titles are another key element that often, but not always, offer clues as to the film's content. "[T]he choice [of a film title], far from reflecting the author's decision, is often the result of negotiations between producers and distributors" but also the title is an integral part of the filmic narrative (Eades 358). A film's subtitled title must also be negotiated between the French and American distributors in that case, and a misinterpretation of a title can lead to such disastrous results as *Maman, J'ai Raté l'Avion!* ("Mom, I Missed the Plane!") for *Home Alone*. Caroline Eades notes that a film title like *Les Roseaux sauvages* recalls the fable (well-known to French speakers) by La

¹¹² Mathias Cassel, brother of Vincent, who plays Félix' brother Max in the film, is a member of Assassin.

Fontaine, “Le Chêne et le roseau,” “which provides both the title and the metaphor of the film” (363). Similarly, *l’esquive*, a fencing term meaning “a dodge,” will inform the content that is to follow in *L’Esquive*; the English title, *Games of Love and Chance*, does not represent any cultural referent with the non-French speaking audience as would *Le Jeu de l’amour et du hasard*, nor does it translate the original title. Part of the literary canon of French-educated schoolchildren, the Marivaux play describes the impossibility of escaping one’s social status, a theme in the film which informs the dialogue for the SL viewer, foreshadowing the outcome of the relationship between Lydia and Krimo and framing the story in a way that highlights the *banlieue* experience.

Some film titles, however, have English versions approaching the general sense and meaning of the original. *Inch’Allah Sunday* [*Inch’Allah Dimanche*] blends Arabic and French in the original title (and Arabic and English in the subtitled version), so all viewers will appreciate the hybridity of the title, which foretells the linguistic and cultural *mélange* that comprises the film’s dialogue. *Café au Lait* conveys the idea of *métissage* with the light-brown imagery of the signifier (a very creative solution), though the full cultural connotations of *Métisse* cannot convey to the English title. The term *métisse* does not exist *per se* in English, and any attempt to render it takes on a pejorative character. The term *métissage* is problematic, Arnold contends, since it quite literally means “interbreeding between ‘races’ [Arnold’s quotation marks],” whose product is a “half-breed,” making it very difficult to find a way to convey a positive connotation (219). In the Kassovitz film, the choice of *Café au Lait* for *Métisse* constitutes an effectively non-negative, creative signifier for this signified concept.

Madame Brouette has been shortened from *L'Extraordinaire destin de Madame Brouette*. The French title recalls the film *Le Fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* and invites SL spectators to make a comparison between the two films. As the latter film was titled simply *Amélie* in English, a direct translation proves neither necessary nor effective. The word, *brouette*, wheelbarrow in French, sets up her character's profession, but perhaps the subtitler opted not to disrupt the linguistic continuity of the name in French by making it *Madame Wheelbarrow*.

Sugar Cane Alley does little to recall the original *Rue Cases-Nègres* (literally, "Nigger Shack Road") and the English title serves to "'sweeten' (or romanticize) the harsh material existence of black peasants in colonial Martinique" (Ebrahim 147). The term *nègre* has been assiduously scrubbed of its racial connotations in the English title as well as throughout the majority of the film. Translation of titles varies from very sophisticated solutions (*Games of Love and Chance*), to clever solutions (*Café au Lait*), to simple translations (*Madame Brouette*), to no translation (*Faat Kiné*) or tendentious renderings (*Sugar Cane Alley*).

4.4.2 Character Names

Not all the characters' names have cultural significance beyond the scope of the TL viewer's experience, but certain of them convey a particular resonance worth mentioning. Just as a name like "Vanderbilt" or "Rockefeller" would have significance to English-speaking viewers, the names "de Thorail" (the *de* implying aristocracy) and his son Léopold (calling to mind King Léopold of Belgium and his colonization of the Congo as well as Léopold Senghor) in *Sugar Cane Alley* are likely equally revelatory to French-speaking viewers. Jacques de Thorail even reminds his wife, Honorine, of the

significance of the family name in his deathbed renunciation of his mulatto son, after she implores him to recognize him, saying having the name de Thorail would be the most lasting inheritance for Léopold:

1)	Jacques to Honorine (1:05:33)	De Thorail...	De Thorail...
2)	Jacques to Honorine (1:05:36)	Ce nom a appartenu à des générations de blancs.	That name was borne by generations of whites.
3)	Jacques to Honorine (1:05:44)	Ce n'est pas un nom de mulâtre.	It's not a mulatto's name.
4)	Jacques to Honorine (1:05:47)	C'est un nom de blanc.	It's a white man's name.

French viewers will immediately recognize the prestige and reference to aristocracy that a surname beginning with *de* (as noted in 1)) represents. Jacques then emphasizes in 2), 3), and 4) that this name could never belong to a non-white. In 2), he uses the past tense to show that the name, and thus the family, will expire with him, rendered from the active voice in French to the passive voice in English, much more common in English, and often used to create a distance between the agent and the complement. The father bequeaths his land and his ring to the son, but refuses to formally acknowledge his son by giving Léopold his last name, and in so doing has deprived him of his heritage, for, as Eades states:

Taking the last name from the colonized character serves to marginalize him or her doubly on the narrative plan by taking away the designating sound for him or her, but also the history of his or her ancestors, in other words all characterization of his or her familial, social, national and religious identity. (my translation) (369)¹¹³

¹¹³ “Enlever son nom au personnage colonisé revient à le marginaliser doublement sur le plan narratif en lui ôtant le vocable qui le désigne, mais aussi l’histoire de son ascendance, c’est-à-dire toute caractérisation de son identité familiale, sociale, nationale, et religieuse.”

In a sense, Léopold and his mother could be considered to be “colonized” subjects of his father. Depriving Léopold of his name erases any history he has of his father and in return symbolizes the extinction of the de Thorail lineage, though perhaps at the same time ending the colonizer’s domination.

Names of other characters in *Sugar Cane Alley* carry significance as well. The names in French (untranslated in the subtitles) will resonate with SL viewers but not with TL viewers, such as Douze Orteils (Twelve Toes in English); Monsieur Roc for the steadfast, honest schoolteacher; Ma or Maman Tine, identifying her immediately as the mother, because Mamie would symbolize Grandmother for the SL viewer. The Creole names include Ti Coco (not changed in English, and the TL viewers might not realize the irony of Ti—Creole for petit—for such a large man); Médouze, and Tortilla, names situating the characters firmly in the Creole setting.

In *Faat Kiné*, certain names carry additional weight, and this significance does not always extend to the TL viewer, who might miss or misinterpret a character’s name. TL viewers may appreciate the significance of the name “Pathé,” given its proximity to “pathetic” in English. However, the closing credits list Kiné’s mother’s character as “Maamy,” which might have been a better choice than the subtitled “Mammy,” which recalls old Negro spirituals and racist parodies. The woman attempting to use counterfeit money in Kiné’s gas station is listed as “Faussaire” (Counterfeiter) and her husband “Mari Faussaire.” Of course, the question of written representation of names does not exist in the SL, nor in the dubbed version, but only presents a problem in the subtitled version.

4.4.3 Song Lyrics

Song lyrics add another layer of linguistic information and linguistic shading to the filmic text, and non-French speakers may not have access to subtitles to complement their appreciation and understanding of the text; depriving them of this information represents a loss. Sometimes, too, however, the song lyrics are in a non-French language and are not subtitled at all, and this omission equalizes the sense of deterritorialization for the SL and TL viewers. Additionally, lyrics to songs in French, such as *La Marseillaise*, may be so familiar to an SL viewer that they need no particular attention and bring up “sentiments of patriotism and also nationalism” (“sentiments de patriotisme, voire de nationalisme”) (my translation) (Eades 357), but the song’s significance may be lost on a TL spectator.

In *Café au Lait*, for example, the rap song “La peur du métissage” (by the group Assassin, mentioned above) enhances and informs the narrative and even recalls the movie title *Métisse*. Dayna Oscherwitz describes French hip-hop (which she also categorizes as one manifestation of “*banlieue* music”) as a means of expressing a “multicultural vision” and adds:

it is widely recognized by French youth, sociologists, and politicians alike that hip-hop has become the dominant vehicle for urban youth to articulate their vision of the world, to describe the social and material realities of the *banlieue* and to foreground the problems experienced by those in France’s urban centers. (43)

French and American hip-hop differ in the way they are perceived in their respective cultures. “Hip-hop music is instantly recognizable to French speakers as a vehicle of political expression,” forming a “discourse that challenges prevailing notions of French national and cultural identity as fixed and stable, while simultaneously embodying an

alternative, multiculturalist vision of France” (Oscherwitz 44). From its inception in the early 1980s, hip-hop, or *banlieue* music, received a great deal of media attention in France. Unlike American rap music, which is not immediately associated with a political message, French hip-hop does address issues of racism and multiculturalism, both through the message in its lyrics and the different linguistic and musical elements contained in the songs, such as different musical styles, neologisms, slang, or foreign words (Oscherwitz 48).

Belonging to the category of rappers implies living in a world quite different from Jamal’s world of international diplomacy, for example, and Jamal makes his own statement about “two-bit rappers” when he first learns about Félix’ involvement with Lola:

Jamal (2:19)	Je connais par coeur ces rappers à deux francs, ils sont avec des Noires parce que c’est à la mode.	Those two-bit rappers go with black girls to be hip.
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It is not a transparent translation if the translator is relying on the music alone to create a mood for the TL audience when the SL audience can understand the lyrics. Of course, it can be argued that many rap lyrics are intentionally difficult to interpret, even in one’s own tongue. Even so, the lyrics are primarily accessible to the SL viewer, but this is not the case for the TL viewer. As mentioned above, in the TL, rap has different connotations than in the SL (usually of gangs and misogyny), so a translation of the lyrics would have helped the TL viewer identify with the sociopolitical message of the film, framing the narrative. As we see Félix riding his bike during the opening credits of *Café au Lait*, Assassin’s “La peur du métissage” is playing. Despite the quick pace and difficulty of capturing all the lyrics, several phrases come to the forefront. Given that the

song (beginning at 1:13) is played for a full minute and a half while Félix rides his bike through the Paris streets, the song would appear to have significance. The snippets of lyrics heard in the song recall the struggle between races to understand each other:

all the people on the planet are fighting for the same cause . . . respect for order, respect of those of the same color, fight for the black, fight for the white, fight for history . . . (my translation)¹¹⁴

These lyrics prepare the SL viewer for the discourse that follows and sets up the main conflict of the film’s content, i.e., questions of race and identity and the difficulty of coexistence, prompting an emotional response.

Even before the opening credits, *Café au Lait* begins with radio transmissions in several languages as well as miscellaneous extracts from French-speaking programs to accompany first a long-range camera image of the earth, after which the camera then zooms in on Europe, then on France, and finally on a representation of the *banlieue* of St.-Denis, where Félix lives. The bits of dialogue heard in French are listed below. This transmission would be difficult to subtitle, but the absence of any subtitles minimizes the importance of framing the movie first with this radio information, and then with the rap song “La peur du métissage” (mentioned above).

Opening credits (Chap. 1: 00:53)	[Radio transmissions in different languages : the French ones] “il y en a qui détestent les Français...” “c’est un mélange racial” “Je suis fier de tout ce que je suis . . .”	[not subtitled—my translation] “There are those who hate the French,” “it’s a racial mix,” “I’m proud of all that I am . . .”
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Though these transmissions do not have meaning for an American audience, various elements will be recognizable to the TL viewers. Kassovitz, a longtime admirer of

¹¹⁴ “ tous les gens sous la planète se battent pour la même cause . . . le respect de l’ordre, le respect de ce qui ressemblent à leur couleur . . . se battent pour le noir, se battent pour le blanc, se battent pour l’histoire . . . ”

American director Spike Lee, pays tribute to him and to the influence of American rap on French youth in the *banlieues* in the *Café au Lait*. The film itself models *She's Gotta Have It* in that both films feature a strong female protagonist who cannot choose among her various lovers. At one point, Spike Lee's name is directly invoked by Jamal, completing the homage:

Jamal to Félix (Chapter 22: 4:39)	Arrête de parler comme dans des films, d'accord, parce que t'es pas Spike Lee.	Stop talking like in a movie. You're not Spike Lee!
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Mention of Spike Lee in the film provides an unexpected cultural reference and a bit of familiarity for American viewers as well.

In *Inch'Allah Sunday*, as Zouina is leaving her mother and birth family behind for France, the film begins with a song in Arabic which is not translated. The timbre and sadness of the song shades the narrative, and the fact that the Arabic is left untranslated leaves the SL (non-*beur*) and TL viewers with a sense of a lack or loss. Later in the film, however, when Zouina is washing clothes and reflecting on her isolation, a very similar song is played, this time with subtitles (but not for the SL viewer) which enhance the narrative and help concretize the expression of Zouina's despair:

Arabic song (1:01:28)	[Arabic]	I have a secret that only I know.
Arabic song (1:01:32)	[Arabic]	I am hiding a sadness, an eternal love.
Arabic song (1:01:36)	[Arabic]	An eternal love, an eternal love.
Arabic song (1:01:42)	[Arabic]	My eye is crying, my heart is broken.
Arabic song (1:01:46)	[Arabic]	My eye is crying, my heart is broken,
Arabic song (1:01:51)	[Arabic]	To my country I'm going back to see my friends and family.

The subtitled lyrics provide a fitting subtext and add to the feeling of Zouina's desperation and anguish and flashbacks to her departure. In this example, the TL viewer receives information about the narrative that the Francophone non-*beur* viewer does not, in an unusual circumstance privileging the non-SL viewer.

Later in the film (beginning at 1:11:15), perhaps in an attempt to mitigate the loss of lyrics for the Arabic song for the SL viewers, a familiar French song is played on the radio, a Françoise Hardy song from 1963, "Le Premier Bonheur du jour." Unlike the song mentioned in the previous example, this time the lyrics are not subtitled, yet the song serves as a cultural reminder (much like the aforementioned *La Marseillaise*) to orient the SL viewer in time and to lend a certain mood, reminding Zouina of feelings she does not know in her loveless marriage. Zouina loses herself in reverie until Aïcha strides in,

abruptly snapping off the radio. The French lyrics are below,¹¹⁵ alongside my unofficial translation:

Le premier bonheur du jour	The day's first happiness
C'est un ruban de soleil	Is a ray of sunlight
Qui s'enroule sur ta main	Which wraps around your hand
Et caresse mon épaule	And caresses my shoulder
C'est le souffle de la mer	It's the breath of the sea
Et la plage qui attend	And the beach that awaits
C'est l'oiseau qui a chanté	It's the bird that sang
Sur la branche du figuier	On the branch of the fig tree
Le premier chagrin du jour...	The first unhappiness of the day...

Another significant feature of the song is its date, 1963, the year after the end of the Algerian War, possibly used to represent the colonizing culture from which Algeria was liberated that is either rejected or adopted by members of the independent Algerian culture, this time from their perspective as equals. During the song, the mother-in-law Aïcha arrives and puts a stop to Zouina's daydreaming by cutting off the music just after the line "The first unhappiness of the day," providing subtle shading to the narrative that the lack of subtitles cannot portray.

The subtitler for the film *Madame Brouette*, on the other hand, must have felt certain lyrics added nuance, for most songs in the film, including French songs playing when Mati and Naago have their first date and then make love for the first time, as well as the songs in Wolof providing much of the film's narration, have been subtitled for the TL viewers, but not for the SL viewers, similar to the Arabic song in *Inch'Allah Sunday*. Much of the text in the film is related by *griots* (identified as such in the film's credits), who narrate, comment, and function much like a chorus throughout the film. The *griot*,

¹¹⁵ Françoise Hardy, "Le premier bonheur du jour." <<http://www.paroles.net/~20478.htm>.> Paroles: Frank Gérald. Musique: Jean Renard, 1963.

defined by Glissant (265) as an “African storyteller and singer,” has a clearly defined social status and is a “‘professional’ as opposed to the Caribbean storyteller, who is generally an agricultural worker for whom the art of storytelling is pure recreation.” The songs of the *griots* move the dialogue along, and, indeed, make up a majority of the dialogue. They have been translated throughout the film but only in English, allowing the TL and Wolof speakers to follow the story. This inclusion underscores the subtitle’s apparent respect for the word of the narrator as that of an authority.

Sugar Cane Alley has its *griot* in Médouze, who, by relating tales of Africa and his ancestors, serves as the “guardian of popular memory” drawing on “his own experiences and that of a popular collective memory, to challenge the emphasis on French history that the children of Martinique are inundated with at their local schools” (Ebrahim 147). Though the storytelling may initially appear as a simple tale recounted to entertain a young boy, it is soon clear that Médouze takes his role quite seriously, and when he dies, it is as if a bit of history has been scattered to the winds. The sugar cane workers in *Sugar Cane Alley* also function as a sort of collective or communal *griot*, and while their singing initially appears peripheral to the narrative, the songs’ subversive nature is accurately captured in the subtitles, including the viewer in this act of defiance:

Ti Coco starts song (11:19)	[Creole]	Whitey’s in his easy chair
Workers and Ti Coco (11:20)	[Creole]	Black man burns in the sun
Workers and Ti Coco (11:22)	[Creole]	Ti Coco pisses
Workers and Ti Coco (11:24)	[Creole]	Bossman comes along

Later in the film, another song immediately recognizable to SL viewers, “J’ai Deux Amours,” by Josephine Baker, played by Honorine, the light-skinned Martinican wife of the wealthy white Jacques de Thorail, with its lyrics (my translation)

J’ai deux amours/ Mon pays et Paris/ Par eux toujours/ Mon coeur est ravi.	I have two loves/ My country and Paris/ By them always/ My heart is delighted.
---	---

reminds the SL viewer of the divided loyalties of Honorine between her native Martinique and her husband’s country, France. Haseenah Ebrahim suggests as well that Palcy, by choosing to highlight the music of Josephine Baker, an icon of success as an American black woman having achieved fame in Paris at a time of great racial injustice in her own country, “captures the complexity and irony of the position of Honorine” (149), who must surely identify with Baker, though the Martinique she inhabits does not represent this same spirit of racial equality. Several seconds elapse as Honorine and Léopold silently listen to the song—as this part does not contain subtitles, the significance of the song cannot be appreciated by TL viewers.

Non-dialogic elements are often overlooked in the subtitles, for reasons of efficiency or simple inattention to their importance. However, often these elements provide important cues about the narrative and the characters that contribute to an understanding of the filmic message and cultural context, and in some cases, these elements reinforce a strong denunciation of linguistic, economic and cultural domination, particularly in the films of Palcy, Benguigi, and Sembène.

4.5 The Cultural Other

Beyond the CS and CM expressed in the dialogues and non-dialogic text, however, many references point directly to the colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial experience (or an assumed shared knowledge of certain customs on the part of the SL audience), and the accuracy of the cultural transmission depends upon the accuracy of the translation.

Certain themes recur throughout the films. One in particular is the clash of the new Western culture (i.e. the French culture) with the old culture (often a more patriarchal society), either in vestiges of a colonial presence as in the Senegalese and Martinican films, or *in situ*, as in *Games of Love and Chance*, *Inch'Allah Sunday*, and *Café au Lait*, reflected in references to folklore, religious and social customs, and often these categories are intermingled in certain locutions, such as names referring to superstitions and voodoo in *Sugar Cane Alley*, the practice of polygamy versus monogamy in in the two Senegalese films as well as in *Inch'Allah Sunday*, and various degrees of inclusion of religious symbols and practices in all of the films. Additionally, political and economic references provide cultural information which may not be immediately accessible to a TL audience not as familiar with the history of colonialization as the SL audience.

4.5.1 Family References

Often, as a result of shared struggle, members of a marginalized group may feel as though they are part of a larger family unit, especially in times of colonial oppression, and it is possible that this carries over into the present day, manifesting itself in a familiar form of address. The familiar form *tu* is also used more abundantly, suggesting a feeling of solidarity and camaraderie. Often the use of *tu* will differ in non-French (but French-

speaking) cultures less bound to hierarchical divisions of power whose members may perceive themselves as members of a more cohesive unit, commonly united under colonial rule. Also, in many Muslim cultures, for example, it is common to refer to friends as “my brother,” an aspect reflected in *Games of Love and Chance*.¹¹⁶ While “my brother” is used in urban American slang among black men, in this film the designation is used to address male and female characters alike, although the expression does not always appear in the subtitles, as in 1) and 3) below:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Lydia to
Krimo
(30:38) | Quoi, ben t’es malade ou
quoi? On va jouer bientôt, là,
et tu me dis “Laisse tomber”?
La pièce se répète tous les
jours, mon frère . | Are you crazy?
We’re performin’
soon! |
| 2) | Lydia to
Krimo
(1:00:54) | C’est pas possible, mon frère
eh. | Not possible,
brother. |
| 3) | Nanou to
Frida
(1:19:45) | Un mec qui se bat avec une
meuf, c’est pas un mec, mon
frère . | A guy who beats
a chick is no real
guy. |
| 4) | Krimo to
Fathi
(1:33:55) | Arrête de leur casser les
couilles. Laisse-les
tranquilles, mon frère . | Stop bustin’ their
balls. Leave ’em
be, brother. |

In similar fashion, the lines between community and family appear more fluid in Senegalese culture, and family friends, even recent acquaintances living in proximity, become known as Uncle or Auntie (*Tonton* and *Tata*), as in the films *Madame Brouette* and *Faat Kiné*, a cultural phenomenon which may appear strange to the TL audience. This exemplifies Léopold Senghor’s assertion that the group has “priority over the individual” as opposed to the “dualistic spirit of the whites” (Senghor 32).

¹¹⁶ Telephone conversation with Dr. Mohammed Salama, Professor of Arabic, San Francisco State University, August 25, 2007.

Djip to Jean (49:16)	Tonton , croyez-vous que Jésus Christ ou Mohammed vont faire opposition à votre union?	Uncle, do you think Jesus Christ or Mohammed would be against your union?
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Djip to Jean (49:59)	Tonton , j'aime que tu sois le premier à me tutoyer.	Uncle, I want you to be informal with me.
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Similarly, in *Madame Brouette*, Samba calls Mati *Tata*, an abbreviation of *Tante*, shortly after Mati and her daughter have moved to the small community where they all live:

Samba to Mati after she calls to him (1:14:42)	Oui, Tata .	Yes, Auntie.
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Clearly, Samba and Mati are not related, nor have they known each other for very long, but this designation represents the closeness as well as the respect that enhances the relationship between members of the community in this particular culture. This familiarity might strike the TL viewer (and perhaps even the SL viewer) as unusual, but Mati accepts the title quite naturally. The term *Tata* has its English equivalent in “Auntie,” but in the third space, the cultural referent is much more widespread than its English counterpart, a very literal, familial interpretation of “Auntie.”

4.5.2 Religious References

In Senegal, ninety-four percent of the population are Muslim, five percent are Christian, and the other one percent belong to “traditional religions.”¹¹⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, to encounter an abundance of references to the Muslim religion in films set in Senegal as well as in *Inch'Allah Sunday* (beginning with the film's title), and where there

¹¹⁷ Official Site of the Government of Senegal (Gouvernement du Sénégal: Site Officiel. Accessed 26 August 2007 <<http://www.gouv.sn/senegal/index.html>>).

is an Arabic influence, such as the *cit * in *Games of Love and Chance*, and by Jamal, a Muslim, in *Caf  au Lait*.

References to the Koran, even by teenagers in *Games of Love and Chance*, remind the viewer of the characters' ties to Muslim culture, whether the characters are religious or not. Also, the diversity of backgrounds evident in the appearance of the characters themselves (one teenager, Slam, appears to be of Asian descent; Lydia appears to be of Eastern European descent; Magali's mother speaks Portuguese) coupled with use of these Arabic-influenced expressions substantiates the pervasiveness of the immediate culture despite the assumed ethnicity of the characters. References to the Koran, *halal* diet, and God in general have all been translated faithfully in the subtitles to convey this diversity across languages, even to the point of retaining the Arabic "*Inch'Allah*." For this film, it could be argued (as is the case in *Inch'Allah Sunday*) that using *Inch'Allah* is evidence of code mixing; however, in *Games of Love and Chance* the teenagers do not actually speak another language *per se* but rather a modified French; the slang they use is sometimes difficult even for natives to follow—not just on a lexical level, but on the level of accent and intonation—constituting their idelect and an important characteristic of their communal identity.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Richard Porton specifically addresses the issue of language in his interview with the director, Abdellatif Techiche, in *Cin aste*. The interviewer mentions the difficulty some viewers had in understanding the argot of the adolescents. Techiche asserts that he used the slang deliberately to emphasize the difference between the speakers of this "dialect," as he names it, and Parisians living "in the seventh, eighth or sixteenth arrondissements [who] have to realize that they live in a little world that is actually quite small." When the interviewer suggests that "the gap between speakers of standard French and the language of the suburbs is connected to a social problem, namely, segregation," Techiche agrees, arguing that "the social difference that exists between these groups promotes the creation of a new dialect" (Porton 46-47).

The retention of *Inch'Allah* in the subtitles in most cases (rather than an English translation of the expression) assumes that the viewer has added this expression to his or her vocabulary during the course of the film. The choice to keep the original language in 1) below gives the viewer better access to the cultural referent than if the subtitles had been translated entirely into English. In 2), however, the original statement contains Arabic as well as French to express the same idea, a reflection of the character's mixed identity, though the translator's decision to translate it to "God willing" only sporadically reveals the unconscious repetition of the expression, making its use seem arbitrary and devoid of meaning for the characters:

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| 1) | Lydia (33:45) | Inch'Allah. | Inch'Allah. |
| 2) | Nanou (33:46) | Inch'Allah, si
Dieu le veut, c'est
bon. | God willing. |
| 3) | Lydia to Nanou
and Frida
(1:03:37) | Ben, Inch'Allah,
ça va s'améliorer
mieux en mieux,
quoi. | Inch'Allah, he'll get
better, bit by bit, like. |
| 4) | Lydia to Nanou
and Frida
(1:03:44) | Ben, Inch'Allah,
ça sera bien à la
fin. | Inch'Allah, he'll be
good in the end. |

In most cases in the film, the subtitler chose to leave the Arabic *Inch'Allah* rather than transcribe "God willing" in English. This decision helps the non-French viewer see the influence of the Arabic in the community and underscores the cohesiveness of the relationships between the characters in the *cit * by showing a commonality of vocabulary and language despite the language that may be spoken at home (Arabic for Krimo, Rachid, and Nanou, for example; Portuguese for Magali). However, it cannot be assumed that the TL viewer would understand the meaning of this expression. With immigration,

many linguistic and cultural elements originating from the Magreb have been integrated into French society that would not be recognized in their English translations.

When the teenagers want to attest to the veracity of a statement, they invariably use the Koran to emphasize their intentions:

Krimo to Rachid (31:50)	Sur le Coran de Mecque ?	On the Koran of Mecca?
Lucienne to the others (34:17)	Sur le Coran!	On the Koran!

In this instance, the flavor of the original communicates itself in the subtitles as well, providing the TL viewer with a sense of the cultural significance of and identification with the Koran in these teenagers' daily lives. As members of a secular country, however, the SL viewers may find this repetition jarring, while at the same time the repetition throughout the film deprives the term of meaning for these characters. The TL viewer cannot therefore grasp the significance of this third space, since the Bible is typically invoked in expressions of this nature in American society.

Two proverbs used in *Faat Kiné* whose meaning may not be evident in the subtitles are provided in 1) and 2) below:

1)	Alpha to Kiné (43:16)	Tu es une vraie musulmane.	You're a real Muslim.
2)	Alpha to Kiné (43:17)	Tu ne manges pas le haram.	You don't engage in illicit transactions.

Alpha is asking Kiné for money but she is unwilling to give him any, so the TL viewer may not be certain if the statement in 1) is meant in a pejorative sense (as in the derogatory use of "Jew" to mean "stingy" in this regard in English) or not. The statement in 2), if literally translated as "You don't eat *haram*," would likely have been lost on a TL

audience unfamiliar with the culture, so the subtitler wisely opted to render the meaning rather than a verbatim translation. These expressions do not reflect French culture either, so this choice made sense from a practical standpoint as well. *Haram*, according to *The Oxford Essential Dictionary of Foreign Terms in English*, refers to “a Muslim sacred place, forbidden to non-Muslims” or “food, forbidden under Islamic law (opposite of *halal*).” As this term is presumably as incomprehensible to the SL viewer as to the TL viewer, its use (untranslated) demonstrates a reappropriation of the French language by the Senegalese culture to the point of alienating the French-French speakers. Response 1) shows the ambiguity, but response 2), by providing the unfamiliar term in the original, excludes the French-French viewer while including the TL viewer, since three categories of viewers can be enumerated: the French-French SL viewer, the Senegalese SL viewer, and the TL viewer.

4.5.3 Political and Economic References

Despite the common perception that the world is becoming more and more globalized, political and economic references still prove nearly impossible to translate completely, so the translator must make approximations to convey a sense where he or she can. In *Madame Brouette*, references to the CFA franc¹¹⁹ are explicitly made in the English translation but are not expressed in French (assuming a cultural understanding and tradition on the SL audience’s part of the fact that the francs are different in the formerly colonized nations):

¹¹⁹ As of 26 August 2007, the CFA (*Communauté financière d’Afrique*) franc had an exchange rate of 655,957 FCFA to one euro (approximate \$1.37). Gouvernement du Sénégal: Site Officiel. Accessed 26 August 2007. <<http://www.gouv.sn/senegal/index.html>>.

Naago to Mati (25:41)	Tu lui offriras cent pièces de cent francs.	You'll give her a hundred 100-CFA coins.
Ndèye to Naago (34:54)	Mes cent francs.	My hundred CFA.

Presumably, a SL viewer would know Naago and Ndèye are not referring to French francs, and the dialogue reflects this assumed knowledge on the part of the SL viewer; why would the designation CFA have meaning for the TL viewers? In *Faat Kiné*, however, the CFA is explicitly mentioned in French as well as in English:

Alpha to Kiné (42:36)	Prête-moi deux million de francs CFA.	Lend me 2 million Francs, only 2 million CFA.
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It would appear that the disparity between rendering the CFA in the original version may simply reflect the writers' differing assumptions about the SL viewers' knowledge. The subtitles remain consistent in their references to this particular unit of currency. In this way, the third space exists for French viewers of *Madame Brouette*, whereas the dialogues in *Faat Kiné* contrast Senegalese or African viewers with the other French-speaking viewers, a nuance that is difficult to convey in translation.

Additionally, the concept of a *tontine* in *Faat Kiné* must have posed a bit of difficulty for the subtitler:

Alpha to Kiné (42:47)	Je sais que c'est toi qui as empoché le montant de ta tontine .	I know you just collected money from your tontine.
--------------------------	--	--

Often, there simply is no opportunity to explain a concept (as in literary translation through supplementary notes), since attempting to do so would break the narrative thread, and, additionally, the word “tontine” does exist in English, though its use is quite

specialized and archaic and the word probably not recognized by most TL viewers.¹²⁰ The *tontine* is primarily an African practice, functioning much like the banking system in Western countries, but is not necessarily a familiar concept to a non-African SL viewer either. The translator may have chosen to retain the word, not having had the opportunity to explain its meaning to the TL audience.

Sembène uses his characters in *Faat Kiné* to make statements about the political situation in Senegal as well. At the film's end, during the final scene between Djip and his father (and his father's friend Monsieur Sène), Djip, in a stirring speech, roundly rejects the traditional values of his father's generation (also rejecting his father) and the way in which Africa has governed itself post-colonization:

¹²⁰ *Tontine* is listed in the *OED* as "a financial scheme by which the subscribers to a loan or common fund receive each an annuity during his life, which increases as their number is diminished by death, till the last survivor enjoys the whole income; also applied to the share or right of each subscriber. Introduced first in France as a method of raising government loans. Afterwards tontines were formed for building houses, hotels, baths, etc."

1) Sène to Djip (1:48:43)	Vous serez l'équipe de demain . . .	You will be the leaders of tomorrow . . .
2) Sène to Djip (1:48:46)	. . . et vous ne devez pas faire fi des valeurs africaines.	. . . and you should not ignore African values.
3) Djip to Sène (1:49:18)	Tu parles de l'Afrique?	Are you speaking of Africa?
4) Djip to Sène (1:49:21)	À quelle Afrique tu fais référence?	Which Africa are you speaking about?
5) Djip to Sène (1:49:24)	À celle que vous avez enfantée!	The Africa you gave birth to!
6) Djip to Sène (1:51:42)	Vous et BOP, vous êtes l'image des pères de l'ancienne dépendance.	You and BOP are the images of our independence!
7) Djip to Sène (1:51:50)	Philistins— moralistes impuissants, et incapables de propoger une Afrique nouvelle.	Our founding fathers proved . . . incapable of giving birth to a new Africa.

In 3), Djip uses *tu* even with his father's friend, an older man whom he presumably has not met before, a distinction that cannot be conveyed in the subtitles, but one which signifies to the SL viewer his defiance and rejection of a patriarchal hierarchy, represented by his father's generation. In 5), Djip directly refers to the post-colonial legacy, placing the blame on the first in line, continuing the metaphor of the child and parent in 6) and 7). Though the subtitles are accurate, culturally this reference will not resonate with the TL viewer as it will for the *Français de souche* who watches the film.

4.5.4 *Le Langage des Jeunes*

Youths, representing the segment of society coming from another generation, oftentimes find themselves exposed to questions of hybridity on the national, linguistic, and generational levels. Young people, especially in the *banlieue*, typically appropriate language as a means of creating their own identity and space. The use of non-standard French increases the translation difficulties for the subtitler, who must try to find equivalents in the target language, an objective that cannot also be met without significant loss of context. The language in *Games of Love and Chance* must surely have posed a problem for the translator, for it is central to the film to convey that the teenagers speak their own jargon, yet the English translations often come across in a very different way. These teenagers live in an urban environment, however, so the translation is not complete. Also, as teenagers' slang changes frequently, so should the translations. The dialogue is also peppered with the ubiquitous *ou quoi?* "or what?" (particularly by Lydia) throughout.

Given the ever-changing linguistic landscape of teenagers, the risk of using anachronistic language also runs high for translators in a film highlighting teen discourse. In *Games of Love and Chance*, the language of the subtitles appears extremely dated and not convincing as teenspeak. In 1), for example, the expression "I'll clock you" will strike the TL viewer as oddly anachronistic and likely to originate from a Marx Brothers movie rather than the mouth of an adolescent, particularly when combined with the appropriately translated "chill," which does seem in keeping with modern parlance; likewise, the expressions "blowing a fuse" ("losing it" would be a more acceptable

alternative) and “give a toss” in 2) and 3) have a jarring effect and do not seem convincing in the least:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Fahti to Frida
(1:17:33) | Mais il faut te calmer ou je vais t’en mettre une. | Chill or I’ll clock you. |
| 2) | Fahti to Frida
(1:17:38) | Parce que moi aussi, j’commence à péter un câble. Elle est en train de le faire tourner en rond, elle le fait kiffer pour rien. | I’m blowin’ a fuse too. She’s there, teasin’ him . . . |
| 3) | Frida to Nanou
1:19:25 | Il veut qu’elle donne une réponse. Moi, je ne sais même pas quoi faire. | He says he wants a reply. Do I give a toss? |

Verlan, used frequently by young people, especially in the *banlieue*, also proves difficult to translate. Jäckel argues that the deliberate innovative manipulation of language in *verlan* and slang, related to its ludic function, loses its creativity and energy in the subtitled version (228). Though *verlan* was originally used in the *banlieue* as a means of asserting independence and to challenge authority, it has now been reappropriated by other youths not living in the *banlieue* (Jäckel 226).

Creative uses of slang expressions which may not be familiar to the SL viewer cannot be reflected in the subtitles, as in 1) and 2) below:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Magali to Krimo
(3:05) | Ah, fais pas zarma ton innocent. | Don't play innocent with me. |
| Krimo to Magali
(3:17) | Et j’ai voulu appeler de chez moi, laisse tomber. Ma daronne . . . elle a reçu la facture. | I couldn't call from home, the old lady just got the bill. |

In 1), *zarma* comes from Arabic and is used to “accentuate derision in a sentence” (my translation).¹²¹ The same source lists *daronne* as a slang term for mother and even lists the verlan *reum* (for *mère*) as a synonym.¹²² The use of “old lady” in the subtitles roughly approximates the connotative and denotative function of this expression. The use of expressions such as *meuf* (for *femme*) and *ouam* (for *moi*) throughout, as well the use of vulgar language such as *niquer* (“fuck”) and references to *couilles* (“testicles”) by and to both male and female characters, further asserts the characters’ unique linguistic and cultural identity outside the standard French of the older generation as well as those living outside the third space of the *banlieue*.

Sometimes attempts to convey these argotic expressions can still transmit the idea behind the meaning; at other times these attempts create a completely erroneous impression in English. Words such as “ho” and “homey,” as in 1) and 2), seem to be reserved for inner-city African-American teenagers and do not reflect the type of multiethnicity expressed in the French, though, in 1), “ho” the equivalent translation shows quite effectively that sexist expressions transcend linguistic and social barriers, whereas in 3) “to be hot” has come to be known in popular American English parlance as *attractive* rather than *attracted* to someone; this translation gives an entirely different meaning than the original, as *kiffer* is a slang expression (coming from Arabic) meaning

¹²¹ *zarma* *interjection*. De l'arabe (maghrébin) *zarma* (c'est-à-dire). Accentue généralement le côté dérision dans une phrase : « Zarma, depuis qu'il bosse chez Carrefour, Djamel, il veut même plus nous adresser la parole ! » Syn. genre, style. *Dictionnaire de la zone*. Accessed 27 August 2007. <<http://www.dictionnairedelazone.fr>>.

¹²² *daronne* *nom féminin*. Mère, maîtresse de maison : « Je peux pas rester, ma daronne veut que j'rentre ! » Syn. reum. *Dictionnaire de la zone*. Accessed 27 August 2007. <<http://www.dictionnairedelazone.fr>>.

to really like someone or something.¹²³ The linguistic and cultural specificity of the *beurs* does not convey to the linguistic and cultural situation of those living in the American inner city:

1)	Fahti (1:06:04)	Ça veut dire que cette pute , elle lui a retourné le cerveau.	That ho's turned his brain.
2)	Krimo to Lydia (30:21)	J'étais . . . je vais au cinéma avec un copain mais il a attrapé la crève.	I was goin' with a homey but he's sick.
3)	Slam (1:06:37)	Si elle le kiffait , elle ne lui ferait pas passer tout ça.	If she was hot, she wouldn't put him through all that.

In this film, the subtitles, like the original dialogue, deliberately emphasize the difference between Marivaux's French and the *banlieue* French, since the play's lines are spoken in an elevated register as well. The difference between *banlieue* and standard French is less obvious in the subtitles, except for a metalinguistic reference by the professor, who says, "Do you still say that?" This effort to show the disconnectedness between the teacher's language and the students' is quite effective:

Teacher (25:52)	Lisette vient de nous dire, au début de l'acte 2 . . . acte 2, scène 1 . . .	Lisette has told us at the start of Act 2, scene 1 . . .
Teacher (25:56)	. . . qu'Arlequin craquait pour elle, hein. Vous vous souvenez? Je sais pas si vous dites encore "craquer" d'ailleurs. Non?	that Arlequin fancies her. Do you say "fancy" these days?

¹²³ *Dictionnaire de la zone* lists *kiffer* as a derivation of *kif* (from Arabic *kayf*, a mixture of tobacco and hashisch or cannabis) and has been extended to mean something which brings pleasure.

In this way, the subtitles show clearly that here the teacher emphasizes the generational difference and not a difference between *beurs* and French, residents of the suburbs and Paris, rich and poor, or any other distinction.

4.5.5 Untranslatable: Proverbs, Idioms and Accents

Cultural references such as proverbs and idioms present particular challenges for translators; it is difficult to retain meaning without losing the cultural significance of the words. However, a too-literal translation would simply serve to distract the viewer from the film’s message. In *Café au Lait*, the translator chose to sacrifice the cultural flavor of the proverbs in favor of a more comprehensible translation:

1)	Félix (Chap. 2: 2:14)	On avait élevé des cochons ensemble pour que tu me parles comme ça, toi?	Hey! Watch your mouth!
2)	Félix (Chapter 15: 2:18)	Lui aussi est au courant? Putain, c’est pas une famille que j’ai héritée, c’est un grand téléphone arabe.	He knows? This isn’t a family tree, it’s a fucking grapevine.

In 1), the proverb’s meaning is not readily comprehensible in English—a quasi-literal translation would be “We did not raise pigs together” (or, word-for-word: “Did we raise pigs together so you can talk to me like that?”), a well-known expression in French but one only likely to perplex a TL viewer if translated literally.¹²⁴ The essence of 1) has been captured somewhat in the subtitle, though the relationship reference and the cultural resonance of the proverb was abandoned. Later, in 2) when Félix talks about his own

¹²⁴ “A very commonly heard French expression meaning we are different, we belong to different ethnic groups, we have nothing in common” (Sherzer 156).

family who beleaguer him for details about Lola, he uses the expression, “Arab telephone,” a negative stereotype representing confusion; the French equivalent of what is known as “Chinese telephone” in UK English, or simply “telephone” in US English (Sherzer 156). The subtitle revealed a clever solution in making a connection between family tree and grapevine, as well as accounting for the earthiness of the expression *putain* with the addition of “fucking.”

Equally difficult to render in a different tongue are the phonological differences that occur, either due to regional differences or the fact that the speaker is using a non-native language. When a character speaks haltingly, uses incorrect syntax, or has a particular enunciation of certain words, this conveys extralinguistic information about the speaker’s origin and often his or her social class. For example, it is immediately obvious to a native speaker when another person is not a native speaker, based on grammatical mistakes or phonetic cues, but that information is not easily conveyed in translation. Any attempt to render ungrammaticality can prove to be too much of a distraction in translation, as can a false or different register where slang is used. An informal register can take many forms and often it is impossible to find an appropriate equivalent.

Apart from the lexical aspect, the phonological aspects of the teens’ dialect in *Games of Love and Chance*—standard French combined with *verlan* blended with influences from Arabic and simply teenspeak—must have proven particularly problematic for the subtitler. In American English, casual speech can be rendered by the dropping of final letters, but often this creates a particular impression for the viewer, such as the register of Southern U.S. speakers, which carries its own stereotypical interpretation often not an acceptable rendition of the original speech. It is indeed

tempting to classify the slang of the *banlieue* as another language and describe their dialogue as code switching (especially since, as mentioned above, standard French speakers have a difficult time understanding it), but mainly the differences are lexical (discussed above) and phonological.

Phonologically, the teen speakers in *Games of Love and Chance* appear to use more of a guttural pronunciation (recalling Arabic) than exists in standard French as well as an informal elision of unaccented vowel sounds, such as in 1) below in the French (*t'es*). An attempt to “casualize” the English has been done in the form of dropped consonants at the end of words. The exchanges below represent a small sampling of a multitude of these types of examples in the film:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--|--|
| 1) | Lydia to
Krimo
(30:38) | Quoi, ben t'es malade ou
quoi? On va jouer bientôt,
là, et tu me dis “Laisse
tomber”? La pièce se
répète tous les jours, mon
frère. | Are you crazy?
We're performin'
soon! |
| 2) | Nanou to
Lydia
(33:25) | Tu n'as pas le sens de ce
que je te dis. | You don't feel me,
you don't get the
meanin' of my
words. |
| 3) | Magali to
Lydia (34:54) | Je te bouge là? | Am I botherin' you? |
| 4) | Hanane
(36:30) | Il a sa vie à faire,
d'accord? Il a pas seule-
ment vous vous vous. | He has a life too,
outsida you. |

The dropped “g” in subtitles 1), 2), and 3) above, for instance, often signifies a Southern American accent commonly associated with rural speakers; an *a* at the end of words such as “outsida,” in 4), instead of “outside of” recalls a New York Bronx accent in American

slang, as in Brando's, "I coulda been a contenda."¹²⁵ This imbalance in regional specificities renders the dropped letters more of a distraction than a help.

Alan Riding, addressing the issue of intercultural transmission through subtitles in Kassovitz's second film *Hate*, mentions that Kassovitz, in an interview, specifically referenced what he considered a flaw in the subtitles in his first film, *Café au Lait*, saying the language of the subtitles "came straight out of the American inner city," and Kassovitz added that in *Hate*, the next film, "he did not want ghetto slang to be used [in the subtitles], because he felt that it had alienated the audience" (1996). For example, when Jamal references Félix' attempts to appear tough, he specifically mentions Félix' race, a point that does not transmit to the subtitles, but still appropriates the American inner city language as well as the imagery:

Jamal to Félix (Chapter 22: 4:42)	T'es qu'un p'tit Blanc qui porte des Adidas pour faire comme à New York.	You're a maggot in Adidas trainers acting the New York homeboy!
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The phonological component of Jamal's non-standard elision and omission of grammatical markers, typical in familiar, spoken French, proved impossible to render in the subtitles in the above example.

Sometimes, however, phonological differences have been reflected, despite the difficulty of doing so, to the benefit of the TL viewer. In *Inch'Allah Sunday*, the mother-in-law's French isn't as good as Zouina's, so Zouina enjoys a bit of privileged secret conversation when Nicole comes to visit. The mother-in-law's lack of facility with the French language is reflected in the subtitles, deliberately showing her mispronunciation of Nicole's name as "Nicoool":

¹²⁵ *On the Waterfront*. Dir. Elia Kazan. 1954. <<http://imdb.com/title/tt0047296/>>.

Aïcha to Nicole
(33:28)

Nicool, [Arabic]

Nicool, how are
you?

The fact that the mother-in-law continues to address Nicole, the grandchildren's friend Nicolas, and the neighbors in Arabic highlights her unfamiliarity with the language and her disconnectedness with her new surroundings. Even the subtitles show this, since "Nicole," a first name familiar to TL viewers, has already appeared in its correct form multiple times in the subtitles, allowing the TL viewer complicity with the SL viewer in recognizing Aïcha's disconnectedness with the language and with her surroundings. For Zouina and Nicole, on the other hand, the French language creates a bond between them, excluding the mother-in-law, who assumes they are mocking her as they converse in French. From the dialogue (and the subtitles), the mother-in-law clearly does not understand the French, but the many instances in which the mother-in-law speaks Arabic to Nicole instead of French are not readily observable to a non-French speaker relying on the subtitles.

Other untranslatable expressions have to do with naming of the Other that exists in the SL but not in the TL. For example, the word *nègre* has proven problematic for translators, as the term "black" in English is rather neutral and does not adequately reflect the true sense of the word, "nigger" is too racially charged (translators generally do not use the word), and "Negro" is outmoded. The current edition of the dictionary of the *Académie française* defines *nègre* in the following way:

An expression formerly used to designate a black man or black woman (this expression, often considered derogatory, was sometimes reappropriated in the 20th century by Blacks to affirm their identity. (my translation)¹²⁶

¹²⁶ "nègre." *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*. Accessed 28 August 2007. <<http://atilf.atilf.fr>>. "Terme dont on usait autrefois pour désigner un homme noir, une femme noire (ce terme, souvent jugé dépréciatif, a été parfois revendiqué au XX^e siècle par les Noirs pour affirmer leur identité."

As with the word “nigger” in English, the interpretation of *nègre* is often contextually bound by who is using it; i.e., whether or not the speaker is black. The use of the word among in-group members connotes a shared experience and a common struggle that “black” cannot convey. Alain Rey’s discussion of the word calls attention to the fact that *nègre*, although pejorative, is not considered to have the same degree of racist overtones as the nearest English counterpart, “nigger,” and specifically mentions an in-group usage of the term as separate from the out-group usage, calling it a “racist term, except when it is used by blacks themselves.”¹²⁷ This in-group usage recalls other terms reappropriated by marginalized groups, such as *pédé* for a gay man and *fille* for a woman, mentioned in Chapters Two and Three.

In the two-page discussion of the term *nègre* which follows the definition, the editors explicitly mention that *nègre* is not as pejorative as the English “nigger”:

The Latin word *niger*, “black,” like *negro* used in Spanish and Italian (who also use *nero*) is descriptive and relatively neutral, like the English “black,” but the French word *nègre*, taken from Spanish in the 16th century during the time of great discoveries, and English “nigger” **even more so** [my emphasis], have become insulting. (my translation) (Rey 924)¹²⁸

For accuracy, Creole theorist Arnold (as an editor) insists on dated translations since “the positing of an audience involves temporal, as well as social (i.e. class) and

¹²⁷ “*nègre*. I. Vieilli, péjoratif. (Terme raciste, sauf lorsqu’il est employé par les Noirs eux-mêmes.)” *Personne de race noire. Dictionnaire culturel en langue française*. Ed. Alain Rey. Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 2005. 923.

¹²⁸ “Le mot latin *niger* “noir”, comme l’espagnol et l’italien *negro* (qui dispose aussi de *nero*) est descriptif et relativement neutre, de même que l’anglais *black*, mais le français *nègre*, pris à l’espagnol au XVI^e siècle, époque des grandes découvertes, et l’anglais *nigger* plus encore, sont devenus insultants.” The word *nègre* is also used in certain pejorative collocations, such as *petit nègre*, defined as “incorrect French spoken by black Africans in former French colonies” or, by extension, “poor French, or a confused, disorganized style” (Rey 923).

ethnic aspects of the target language” (216). For the English edition of *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*, the term *nègre* was first translated as “nigger” in 1947, a choice Arnold approves, but then it was translated in the 1960s as “Negro”—politically correct but not accurate (Arnold 216-17). The 1960s-era version of *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* with *nègre* rendered as Negro is still in print, reflecting an editing choice Arnold considers “unfortunate,” stating that

readers who have no French can never understand the importance of the poem if this is their only access to it. In a word, the cultural significance of the negritude movement at its inception has been so diluted as to have been lost in this translation. (217)

Arnold’s argument is well taken. On the other hand, a TL audience member is likely to experience a visceral negative reaction to the word “nigger” in a culture where the word is rarely spoken except in euphemism (“the N word”), so most instances of *nègre* in French would only distract if they were rendered as such in English.¹²⁹ The subtitler in *Sugar Cane Alley* dared use the “n-word” only once in the film, and this usage effectively communicates the effect of the contempt of the white man for the black man:

M. Saint-Louis eulogizing Médouze (53:05)	en lui disant, “Allez, vieux nègre, senti le pipi . . .	saying, go on, old nigger, smelling of piss,
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¹²⁹ Such a high level of sensitivity surrounds the use of “nigger” in American culture—“the superlative racial epithet” (Kennedy 28)—that even the use of words resembling it but with no common etymological root can have disastrous consequences. In 1999, when David Howard, a white councilman in Washington, D.C. used the term “niggardly” in a budgetary speech, the word’s usage caused such a furor that Howard resigned his position (Kennedy 120). D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams later conceded that he “acted too hastily in accepting David’s resignation” and would rehire him in another department, but the case strongly indicated the powerful impact of even the suggestion of the word “nigger” (Woodlee A1). Despite this apparently inadvertent slur, and though Kennedy maintains that “blacks use the term with novel ease to refer to other blacks, even in the presence of those who are not African American” and “[w]hites are increasingly referring to other whites as niggers, and indeed, the term both as an insult and as a sign of affection is being affixed to people of all sorts” (174), translators understandably avoid this term and any term resembling it, as it continues to signify a virulent form of hate speech. As recently as 2006, American actor Michael Richards used the term to career-ending effect, and it is doubtful that the term will ever be accepted in mainstream American English usage.

However, when the term in *Café au Lait* expresses deliberate offense, the farthest the translators will go is to translate *nègre* as Negro, since using “black” would dilute the intensity of the insult, but “Negro” still denotes an intentionally offensive reference:

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1) | Félix
(Chapter 3
00:50) | Elle a fait l’amour . . .
avec un sale nègre! | Screwing with
a negro! |
| 2) | Jamal to cop
(Chapter 22:
4:20) | Ça fait chier de voir un
nègre dans une voiture
que tu ne pourrais pas
acheter, hein? | You hate
seeing a negro
in a car you
couldn’t buy. |

The translator’s timidity with the language reveals itself in the omission of *sale*—“dirty”—before *nègre* in 1). In 2), the word “negro” seems unnatural, given the intensity of Jamal’s remark to the police officer, who has assumed Jamal has stolen the car since he is black. In both examples, the connotative force of the words has been drastically diluted in the subtitles.

Words to indicate a negative aspect of the white culture do not exist in such abundance, a fact which reinforces its dominant status, but some characters make efforts to create racially insulting terms despite the lexical limitations. In *Café au Lait*, Jamal calls Félix a *blanchaud*, translated as “maggot” in English, a derogatory term as well (and in an example cited above he uses *p’tit Blanc*, also translated as “maggot”):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Jamal to Lola
(Chapter 20: 3:08) | Comment peux-tu
préférer ce
blanchaud à moi? | How can you prefer
this maggot to me? |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|

The translation does not do justice to the inclusion of *blanc* in the word itself, supplemented by the pejorative suffix *-aud*,¹³⁰ so the meaning should translate as roughly “white guy” or possibly “whitey” or “cracker” (though “cracker” is generally used to portray a Southern American white person, much like “redneck”).

4.6 Language Proficiency and Syntax

When a character is speaking French as a second language, the level of grammaticality of the discourse reveals the character’s level of development in that second language. Often, an ungrammatical sentence in French is not translated as such in English, depriving the TL viewer of additional knowledge about the character. Though it could be argued that such ungrammaticality serves as more of a distraction than an aid, an omission of this syntactic aspect represents a loss for the TL viewer; perhaps a slight approximation of the ungrammaticality in the subtitles would bridge the gap between the two language renderings. In *Inch’Allah Sunday*, for example, the halting French of Zouina’s mother-in-law, Aïcha, does not get reflected in the subtitles, and yet her narrow grasp of the language reveals a great deal about her character and is emblematic of her refusal to learn the language and adapt to her environment. Particularly striking are Aïcha’s conversations with the neighbor, Madame Donze, an exaggerated caricature of a bourgeois housewife, roughly the same age as Aïcha, and also determined to resist change:

Aïcha to Mme Donze (20:16)	Pas content? [Arabic]	You don’t like it? Shut up!
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¹³⁰ Here, *blanchaud* functions as the opposite of the word *noiraud*, mentioned in Grévisse, *Le Bon Usage*: “-aud is found in pejorative nouns and adjectives : lourdaud, noiraud” (“-aud...se trouve dans des noms et adjectifs péjoratifs: lourdaud, noiraud”) (my translation) (210).

Though space and time constraints normally require omission of words from the original dialogue, omission of the word “You” from the English text in the example above would have better highlighted this lacuna in Aïcha’s language skills, deepening the TL’s understanding of her character. In poetic terms, the anacoluthon, though used abundantly for expressive purposes by Francophones, indicates in this example a lack of sequence in Aïcha’s expression, providing a key to her agitated mental state, and this construction has been retained in the subtitles; the effect of the aphaerisis, however, indicated by “Pas content?” instead of “Vous n’êtes pas contente?” is lost. Aïcha’s level of French is not proficient enough for her to make fine distinctions such as using the feminine form of the adjective *content*, nor does she include the subject and verb; however, the subtitles provide the complete sentence, and of course English does not make the gender distinction. While it has been seen that in other circumstances (as noted in Chapters Two and Three), gender distinctions can be used deliberately by Francophones for homophobic and sexist purposes, the absence of this distinction further marks Aïcha as a linguistic outsider. Zouina’s French, as well, contains some syntactical errors, but this does not deter her from continuing to practice and improve her French. Her mastery of French as a work in progress mirrors her personal development and growth; the minor grammatical mistakes endear her to the SL viewers and reinforce the determination and courage of her character.

Evidently, there is a great deal more that can be explored in the realm of cultural references; the preceding discussion is merely a beginning point which shows the multitude of cultural messages involved in language transfer. Rendering these

untranslatable aspects of linguistic expressions proves extremely difficult in films attempting to represent characters as belonging to a third space.

4.7 Conclusion

Given the various ways in which cultural hybridity can be transmitted through the medium of the text made available to the SL viewer, the subtitles cannot sufficiently provide the information needed for a full appreciation of the linguistic and cultural *métissage* characterizing the films selected. Expressions of cultural hybridity, dominance, and attitudes toward the Other signified through many elements beyond the word level—code mixing, code switching, explicit and implicit cultural allusions—must often be sacrificed for considerations of efficiency and economy of text. SL viewers have access to at least one code and a greater knowledge of the source culture than do the TL viewers. The subtitles often do not contain contextual cues provide by non-dialogic elements such as song lyrics, radio transmissions, street signs, and even printed t-shirts. Occasionally the films succeed in portraying elements of cultural hybridity, such as in the use of juxtaposed English and French subtitles in *Café au Lait*, or subtitled lyrics for Wolof and Arabic in *Madame Brouette* and *Inch'Allah Sunday*, but generally, for TL viewers dependent on subtitles for information about the characters and the societies in which those characters live, as well as the ways in which they express and negotiate their linguistic and cultural hybridity, the subtitles prove an imperfect medium, and even subtitlers' attempts to provide cultural references in the subtitles may create consternation or confusion for the TL viewer rather than increase his or her knowledge about the source culture.

Postcolonial theorists, such as Fanon and Condé, have asserted that the question of the Other appears indissociable with the place of the Other in the history and culture of a linguistic community, and while the subtitling process, in providing a single-language rendering of the SL dialogue, contradicts arguments of some theorists for the place of the non-standard language alongside standard French in literature and film, this informational deficit in the subtitles must simply be recognized as a natural casualty of attempting a transparent translation. Subtitling of narratives linked to this question, therefore, proves extremely difficult given differences between the French and American history and heritage of colonization in the two cultures, and subtitling represents its own third space between comprehension of and identification with the various cultures and traditions associated with representations of the Other to a TL audience in this medium. Particularly in films describing or highlighting the foreigner experience, the subtitles can only render a fraction of the cultural message—the context must provide the rest, to the greatest extent possible.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

As subtitled films grow in popularity following the rhythms of an increasing trend of globalization, more and more viewers have access to foreign films. TL viewers must rely on subtitles as their sole source of dialogic information in a foreign film and they often experience alterations of the message as it is transferred from the SL to the TL, not simply as a result of arbitrary choices effected by the subtitlers (although subtitlers' decisions can significantly affect the TL result) but also due to an ensemble of linguistic and social factors influencing these decisions. Subtitling, or audiovisual translation, represents a hybrid field of translation, focusing on the transfer of an oral code to a written text, and subtitlers attempt to account for time and space limitations as well as extra-dialogic elements present in the film, such as the *mise-en-scène*, facial expressions of the actors, prosody, soundtrack, and unspoken but visible textual cues, all of which are available to the TL viewer and can inform his or her perception of the film in various ways. The spoken dialogue necessarily undergoes cultural and linguistic alterations in the subtitling process; what has been examined here is the degree to which these alterations have been affected. Attempts to provide an equivalent version of the spoken dialogue often result in subtitles that offer varying degrees of results, ranging from a reasonably equivalent version of the dialogue (a rarity) to a neutralized version of the sociocultural references (a common occurrence) to a radically different TL message, representing significant cultural and linguistic alterations of the original message.

The stakes of these cultural and linguistic alterations increase significantly when subtitlers must reproduce SL film dialogue used to describe marginalized members of society, given the thorny navigational obstacles of connotative and denotative language.

Ideally, language used to denote these historically marginalized societal groups—homosexuals, women, and foreigners—should represent equivalency with the SL dialogue in terms of neutral, positive, or negative associations in the subtitles, but this is not often possible for the reasons stated above. Significant differences in resulting TL subtitles reflect intrinsic differences, often subtle, in the cultural and linguistic phenomena between the SL and the TL, and the effects of these differences can seriously alter the TL viewer's perception of the filmic message and perhaps his or her perception of the groups in question as portrayed through the characters' dialogue as a result. As in other forms of translation, the source message often becomes neutralized in the target version; in audiovisual translation, however, the constraints of the medium often necessitate a significantly truncated version of the original spoken dialogue, and this limited range of expression often leaves the TL viewer with a diluted, omitted, or differently nuanced version of the dialogue which affects the TL viewer's perception of the film's message considerably.

The concept of linguistic determinism raised by Sapir and Whorf, and expanded and applied by Livia and Hall to gender studies, asserts that the language one uses is a reflection of one's culture and that cultural attitudes are conveyed through language, raising the stakes for those members of any groups outside the dominant culture and at risk for discrimination (represented in this study by homosexuals, women, and foreigners, but which could certainly be extended to other members of society living in a state of Otherness), who are necessarily more vulnerable and sensitive to homophobic, sexist, and racist attitudes expressed through language.

Attitudes projected in films through language towards and by characters comprising gay men (including cross-dressers), lesbians, and characters with gender identification issues carry particular importance for members of the homosexual community. As sexual and gender identity are expressed through what Judith Butler identifies as the performative nature of language, language choices make a statement about gender identity. French, as a grammatically gendered language, allows significant wordplay and additional linguistic shading, particularly when used to reference gays and lesbians, allowing expressions that nuance gender-centered discourse in ways that English cannot convey. French's status as a gendered language also provides opportunities for creation and use of grammatically inspired epithets towards homosexuals not possible in English.

The cultural context of the films plays an essential role in that films dealing with issues common to both the source and target cultures, such as homosexuality in the workplace in *The Closet*, provide more plentiful examples of equivalencies at the lexical and syntactic level than films more contextually linked to the source culture. Comparison of differing uses of derogatory language in the SL and TL cultures furnishes supplemental information about prevailing attitudes towards members of the homosexual community, and in some instances the subtitles can provide equivalencies. Still, rapprochement does not always occur, especially in films with less universal settings and themes.

Characterizations of women also find expression in altered translations that frequently lack the nuances of the original and are often diluted in connotative intensity. Misogynistic depictions of women, particularly as the object of the gaze as transmitted

through the SL dialogue, have been modified or watered down in most subtitled versions of the French films enumerated, with a few exceptional cases. Objectification and belittlement of women by use of the term “girl” for *fille* in French remains fairly consistent in the films examined, but there are instances in which the subtitler has apparently self-censored, adding or removing “girl” from the subtitles, depriving the dialogue of an additional layer of cultural shading.

Based on research by Tatilon and others on the ubiquity of woman-centered insults available in French, as well as on observations of equivalent expressions in the TL versions of the selected films, it would appear that French contains many more woman-centered epithets than does English, necessitating repetition of certain terms in the English in numerous instances. Even expressions of vulgarity often become desexualized in the English rendering, as noted in several examples. This disparity, though not apparent to a strictly TL viewer, creates the impression of differences in SL and TL cultural attitudes towards women and leaves questions as to what has inspired such a plethora of negative terminology in French. In addition to the dearth of derogatory terms in English in comparison with French as noted in the English subtitles, the English language does not provide as broad a range of ways to define hierarchical boundaries as does the French, and so differences in power expressed by strategic uses of *tu* and *vous* in the SL dialogue get omitted or otherwise modified in the subtitles. English does not provide an acceptable equivalent to *Madame*, and this title has been translated as *Mrs.* in many of the films analyzed. Where a title such as *Madame* or *Mademoiselle* confers respect in the original, it has been omitted in the subtitles. In the films examined,

depictions of strong female characters generally fare better in the subtitles in terms of equivalency than do those of weaker female characters.

Films selected for analysis of the third marginalized group, foreigners, provided a means to examine not only epithets and elements of register as were observed in the chapters on homosexuals and women but also an opportunity to observe linguistic phenomena serving to reinforce the cultural hybridity of the characters, such as code switching, code mixing, and specific cultural references defining these characters' Otherness in relation to the dominant culture. As the TL viewer must rely on subtitles for dialogic information, he or she assumes the role of foreigner in a certain sense and can experience that Otherness. In films featuring characters who are immigrants or denizens of a former French colony, SL viewers also assume the foreigner role to some extent but will identify with the presence of French in the films in instances of code switching, whereas the TL viewers will not. Additionally, cultural references to the Other can present challenges when used in context-specific situations with which the TL viewer has little or no familiarity or experience, and the subtitles often revealed missing or puzzling references that did not approach an equivalent rendering of the SL dialogue. Non-dialogic elements, such as film titles, signs, character names, and song lyrics all furnish the SL viewer with additional information about the setting, characters, and context, and these elements are often absent from the subtitles, depriving the TL viewer of this supplemental knowledge. More than a simple transfer of lexical signifiers, the process of translating

confers great power and responsibility; Lawrence Venuti, in discussing literary translation, emphasizes

the power of translation to form cultural identities, to create representation of a foreign culture that simultaneously constructs a domestic subjectivity, one informed with the domestic codes and ideologies that make the representation intelligible and culturally functional. Within the hegemonic countries, translations fashion images of their subordinate others that can vary between the poles of narcissism and self-criticism, confirming or interrogating domestic values, reinforcing or revising the ethnic stereotypes, literary canons, trade patterns, and foreign policies to which another culture may be subject. (159)

In the domain of audiovisual translation, the message is further constricted by the time, space, and commercial constraints. These constraints force subtitlers to find ways of transmitting the dialogue as efficiently as possible while still recognizing the extra-dialogic elements available to the viewer. The foregoing study has analyzed the degree to which this formation of cultural identities and perpetuation or omission of stereotypes and hegemonic ideologies in depictions of three categories of marginalized characters—homosexuals, women, and foreigners—has been achieved through the subtitles in the selected films. Explicit cultural references do not provide the only means of expressing these attitudes; other means of cultural transmission—social and cultural markers, forms of address expressing power relationships, gendered language—prove nearly impossible to duplicate in the subtitles, thus eliminating or at the very least altering the nuances provided by these important extralinguistic cues for the TL viewer.

Subtitled films provide a modified, sometimes radically altered, version of the spoken dialogue for the TL viewer, and, while preserving the prosody of the language, subtitles limit the availability of pertinent information available, which, filtered through the subtitles, becomes diluted, mistranslated, or omitted altogether, depriving the TL

viewer of the full contextual and linguistic experience and skewing the signifier/signified relationship as meaning migrates between languages.

What, then, can be gleaned from subtitle analysis? Research in the field of subtitling as a form of intercultural comparison, though relatively recent, has broad applications in translation theory, queer studies, film studies, women's studies, post-colonial studies, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies, either singly or in combination with other disciplines. A new application of existing theories to this field by scholars familiar with both languages as well as with the cultural specificities of these linguistic settings can provide new insights to questions of identity between dominant and marginalized members of society and will furnish a fresh perspective on cross-cultural identity issues.

Indeed, a study of this nature raises many questions that remain unexamined, demonstrating the dynamic potential of continued critical, qualitative assessment of subtitles. Studies of subtitled films about homosexuals, for example, could be extended into various subgenres for analysis: films focusing exclusively on gay male characters, as well as films featuring lesbians, transgendered individuals, and/or gender identification issues. Coming out films could be explored to determine whether there exists a common negotiated "language" in French and English for this type of important stage in the life of the gay male, lesbian, or transgender individual, and, if not, what differences exist in this realm.

Though the foregoing study is mainly synchronic in nature, the inclusion of *La Cage aux Folles* in Chapter Two and *Belle de Jour* in Chapter Three raises the question of the value of a diachronic study of subtitles over a longer period of time; for instance,

what would closer scrutiny of the depiction of women through the filter of subtitling over, say, half a century, reveal about changes in language, perception, and social status of women in film and society? Women in films could be analyzed by the type of character portrayed in the film, especially women outside hegemonically-determined societal roles, such as prostitutes, thieves, and other marginal characters. Melanie Williams has researched the construction of female identity in British cinema through an analysis of female film characters outside the margins in these types of roles;¹³¹ her work could be supplemented by an analysis of the subtitles in French films featuring female characters who occupy roles outside the accepted ones. Studies on women in other roles—housewives, for instance, or professional women—could also prove fruitful. This type of diachronic study could certainly have pertinent application to the other two marginalized groups in this work, homosexuals and foreigners, to determine what changes in societal designations for and perceptions of members of all these groups, as reflected in language, have occurred over the last 50 years.

Studies treating the role of the foreigner could be extended by analyzing a corpus of films describing a particular society; studies confined to *beur* films, films examining a foreign director's entire oeuvre, or even films within a singular post-colonial culture all present possibilities for further research. And what are the effects on French viewers of English-language films subtitled into French? In what ways are elements of American culture portrayed, subsumed, or omitted in the French subtitled version? What perceptions—or, rather, misperceptions—arise? Though this study has assumed a hexagonal French speaker as the SL viewer, opportunities exist for analysis and

¹³¹ Melanie Williams. "Women in Prison and Women in Dressing Gowns: Rediscovering the 1950s Films of J. Lee Thompson." *Journal of Gender Studies* 11.1 (March 2002): 5-16.

comparison of films in non-hexagonal French, such as Quebecois, Belgian, and others with hexagonal French.

Other types of audiovisual media have been explored to some extent, but more could be undertaken in this domain as well. Study of subtitled television programs, such as Lourdes Lorenzo *et al.*'s analysis of *The Simpsons* subtitled in Spanish,¹³² as well as subtitle analysis applied to documentaries, music videos, and perhaps even surtitling for plays and opera both to and from French and English could offer interesting insights about culture as reflected in the language.

Researchers such as Zoë Pettit, Alain Piette, Jorge Diaz-Cintas, Cees Koolstra et al., Miguel Mera, and others have provided important information in comparing the relative merits of dubbing and subtitling.¹³³ Few researchers have attempted case studies comparing the same film's dubbed and subtitled versions, such as Jean-Pierre Mailhac's analysis of *French Twist*;¹³⁴ further comparative analyses of this nature could well provide significant contributions to the cross-linguistic intercultural message of a given film. American remakes of French films could be compared with subtitled versions of the

¹³² Lorenzo Lourdes, Ana Pereira, and Maria Zoubanova. "The Simpsons/Los Simpson: Analysis of an Audiovisual Translation." *The Translator* 9.2 (2003): 269-92.

¹³³ Zoë Pettit. "The Audio-Visual Text: Subtitling and Dubbing Different Genres." *Meta* 49.1, 2004: 25-38; Alain Piette. "Translation Onscreen: The Economic, Multicultural and Pedagogical Challenges of Subtitling and Dubbing." *Teaching Translation and Interpreting 4. Building Bridges*. Ed. Eva Hung. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002. 189-95; Cees Koolstra, Allerd L. Peeters, and Herman Spinhof. "The Pros and Cons of Dubbing and Subtitling." *European Journal of Communication* 17.3 (2002): 325-54 ; Miguel Mera. "Read my Lips: Re-evaluating Subtitling and Dubbing in Europe." *Links and Letters* 6 (1999): 73-85; Jorge Diaz-Cintas. "Dubbing or Subtitling: the Eternal Dilemma." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 7.1 (1999): 31-40. *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts*. CSA. 13 July 2004 <www.csa.com>.

¹³⁴ Jean-Pierre Mailhac. "Subtitling and Dubbing, For Better or Worse? The English Video Versions of *Gazon Maudit*." *On Translating French Literature and Film II*. Ed. Myriam Salama-Carr. Amsterdam-Atlanta, Georgia: Rodopi (2000): 129-154.

original to determine the changes that have occurred between the original and the Hollywood version.

Many issues relating generally to screen translation can also have interesting applications to cross-cultural studies with respect to and beyond depiction of marginalized characters. The difficulty of transmitting humor and wordplay in subtitles has been addressed in part by researchers such as Christopher Leeds and Dirk Delabatista,¹³⁵ and is also touched upon in certain sections of this work, but could have significant applications to the research. In the same fashion, Vera Lúcia Santiago Araújo's work on emotional components of situational clichés in screen translation of American films into Brazilian Portuguese¹³⁶ inspires potential supplementary information for sociolinguistics and cross-cultural studies. The question of censorship in subtitling, whether by the translator or outside parties, mentioned in Chapter One and raised by Gambier (204-11, 213-14) and Scandura (125-27), among others, seems particularly pertinent in an examination of gender labels and perceptions and representations of the Other.

Finally, non-dialogic text elements have not received the attention they merit *vis-à-vis* the unique manner in which these visual cultural cues can inform the text. As mentioned in Chapter Four, these supplemental textual elements are not limited to billboards and newspaper headlines but extend as well to song lyrics (perhaps worthy of a discussion all its own), particularly in cases where the lyrics are provided for the TL

¹³⁵ Christopher Leeds. "Bilingual Anglo-French humor: an analysis of the potential for humor based on the interlocking of the languages." *Humor* 5.1/2 (1992): 129-148; Dirk Delabatista. "Translating Puns. Possibilities and Restraints." *New Comparison* 3 (1987): 143-158.

¹³⁶ Vera Lúcia Santiago Araújo. "To Be or Not to Be Natural: Clichés of Emotion in Screen Translation." *Meta* 49.1 (2004): 161-171.

viewer and not the SL viewer in the event of a third language (as in *Madame Brouette* and *Inch'Allah Sunday* mentioned in Chapter Four), radio transmissions, book titles, designs on t-shirts, etc., or any supratextual elements that provide supplementary knowledge to the SL viewer able to read and comprehend them but which the TL viewer cannot access, provide opportunities for further study.

Continued research in the field of subtitles analysis has applications in numerous disciplines and important implications for research in a burgeoning field, as subtitled films gain popularity and availability through DVDs and video streaming delivery and by an increasingly globalized population. Critical studies carried out from the perspective of subtitles analysis can address questions of culture, language, translation, and perception that lie in the peripheral space between oral and written expression, interlingual components, and cross-cultural traditions.

On a final note, it is worth mentioning one recent innovation in the practice and presentation of subtitling that complements the foregoing analysis and offers fresh perspectives on present subtitling research, taking subtitling beyond a standard representation in a way that challenges and engages the audience. Russian director Timur Bekmambetov has developed an unconventional method of subtitling his own films in such a way as to involve the viewer and inform the narrative in surprising fashion. Bekmambetov has designed his subtitles

to reflect the mood and action of the film. Some glide across the screen from different angles. Others glow in red, if a character is especially angry or agitated (as they often are in Bekmambetov's movies). One explodes in a puff of smoke after an explosion. Another, uttered when a character heard voices in his head while swimming, dissolves like blood in the water of the pool. (Rawsthorn 2)

Bekmambetov adds that he “conceived the subtitles as ‘another character in the film, another way to tell the story,’ rather than treating them as extras” (Rawsthorn 2). As efforts to read subtitles often result in a loss of TL viewer perception of other visual cues in a film—a perpetual concern of and consideration for subtitlers—this interactive style of subtitling could help bridge communicative gaps between the SL dialogue and the TL text, providing metalinguistic information and crossing interlinguistic, cross-cultural barriers in an expression of hybridity that shapes the narrative as an extension of the creative expression of the film, filling in the margins of liminality between the source and target culture viewer’s cinematic experience.

Appendix I: Synopsis of Films by Chapter

Chapter Two: Pédés, Gouines and Tapettes: Gender-Based Stereotypes of Homosexual Characters

The Closet (Le Placard). Dir. François Veber. Miramax, 1993.

François Pignon is a simple, unimaginative accountant leading a simple, unimaginative life. Separated from his wife, estranged from his son, he has few friends, even at the office where he spends most of his time. When he accidentally overhears that he is about to be fired, he considers ending his miserable, unremarkable life, but a neighbor stops him and together they devise a plan to save his job. He allows his colleagues at the condom factory to believe he is gay so they will be hesitant to fire him. His attempts to keep his secret as well as the reactions of his coworkers and the prejudices they reveal provide the comic framework for the film.

French Twist (Gazon maudit). Dir. Josiane Balasko. Miramax, 1995.

Loli lives with her husband, Antoine, and their son. One day Marijo, a lesbian truck driver, stops at their house for directions and a love affair develops between the two women. The homophobic, domineering Antoine is outraged but Loli insists she does not want to give up either of her lovers. Antoine's reaction to the changes which develop as they live in their *ménage à trois* reveals a great deal about stereotypes and prejudices.

My Life in Pink (Ma Vie en rose). Dir. Alain Berliner. Haut et Court, 1997.

Eight-year-old Ludovic has decided that he was meant to be a girl and shocks his family and their bourgeois neighbors when he begins to dress as a "girl" and act in typical

“girl” behavior. His female gender identification soon causes an uproar at school, at home, and in the neighborhood. As in *French Twist* and *The Closet*, the film’s focus on the reactions of friends, family, and neighbors reveals their irrational and often comical expressions of prejudice towards homosexuals.

La Cage aux Folles. Dir. Edouard Molinari. MGM, 1978. DVD. MGM/UA Video, 2001.

Renato’s son, Laurent, is getting married and begs his father, who has been living with his gay lover Albin for 20 years, to pretend he is straight for just one night in order to impress Laurent’s fiancée’s very conservative parents, who are coming to dinner. This proves difficult, and beneath the efforts to masquerade as “normal,” the stereotypes and petty concerns of middle-class society are lampooned.

Sitcom. Dir. François Ozon. 1998. DVD. Mars Films, 1998.

This black comedy and apparent parody of American sitcoms depicts a middle-class family in all its dysfunctional glory. The son announces he is homosexual, the daughter exhibits sado-masochistic tendencies, the father has a great deal of odd habits, and the mother attempts to keep the family together despite their vast differences as individuals.

The Spanish Apartment (L’Auberge espagnole). Dir. Cedric Klapisch. 2002. DVD. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2003.

Xavier, a young French student, has moved to Barcelona to study in the Erasmus exchange program. He lives in happy disorder with several other students, all from different countries, and even has a forbidden liaison with the wife of a fellow French

national. Through his experience as a stranger/foreigner, he learns a great deal about life and his own identity.

Wild Reeds (Les Roseaux sauvages). Dir. André Téchiné. Ima Films, 1994. Universal Music, 2007.

This coming-of-age film depicts François and Maité, friends growing up in 1962 in the South of France, at the end of the Algerian War for Independence. Other classmates include Henri, a *pied noir* who feels conspicuous in the small town, and Serge, the son of Italian immigrants whose brother weds at the film's beginning in order to avoid fighting in the war. François discovers and acknowledges his homosexuality during the film, and all the adolescent characters wrestle with questions of sexual, political, and intellectual development against the larger backdrop of the war.

Chapter Three: Women, Girls, Hookers, and Whores

Belle de Jour. Dir. Luis Buñuel. 1967. DVD. Buena Vista Home Video, 2002.

Séverine, the respectable wife of a well-to-do Parisian doctor, discovers a hidden desire to lead a secret life as a prostitute. She tries to keep her secret from her husband, but it becomes more difficult when a friend of her husband's learns of her avocation when he becomes a client.

The Dreamlife of Angels (La Vie rêvée des anges). Dir. Erick Zonka. 1998. DVD. Columbia TriStar Home Video, 1999.

Isa and Marie are two young, independent women drifters who share a temporarily abandoned apartment and become friends and confidantes. The pressures of

living and loving drive a wedge between the two women as each negotiates her existence in her own way.

My Life in Pink (Ma Vie en rose). Dir. Alain Berliner, Haut et Court, 1997. DVD. Columbia TriStar Home Video, 1999.

See description above.

The Spanish Apartment (L'Auberge espagnole). Dir. Cedric Klapisch. 2001. DVD. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2001.

See description above.

The Story of Women (Une Affaire de femmes). Dir. Claude Chabrol. 1988. DVD. Home Vision Entertainment (HVE), 2004.

Based on a true story, Marie, a wife and mother living in Nazi-occupied France in 1941, decides to help the women in her neighborhood by performing illegal abortions. She soon earns enough money to move her family to a better place but is eventually turned in to the police by her husband. Her efforts earn her the admiration and gratitude of many women in the film, but she is clearly seen as a threat to morality and the State by her husband and the Vichy authorities.

Thieves (Les Voleurs). Dir. André Téchiné. 1996. Videocassette. Columbia Tri-Star, 1998.

Alex, a police officer, returns to his childhood home after his brother is discovered murdered. Through a series of flashbacks, the relationship between Alex and his brother is explored, along with the love triangle between Alex, Juliette, and Marie.

Vagabond (Sans Toit ni loi). Dir. Agnès Varda, 1985. DVD. The Criterion Collection, 2000.

Mona, a young woman who is found dead in a ditch at the film's beginning, is a wandering vagabond with no apparent ties to family or friends. Through flashback and the documentary-style interviews of those with whom she came into contact during her brief life, the viewer learns about her life, which can be seen as one of an independent free-spirit or a sad, lonely drifter.

Chaper 4: Foreigners and Strangers: Postcolonial Representations of the Other

Café au Lait (Métisse). Dir. Mathieu Kassovitz. 1993. DVD. KOCH Vision LLC, 2005.

Lola, a young middle-class Catholic Martinican woman, discovers she is pregnant, but the identity of the baby's father is in question—the baby's father is either Jamal, a wealthy African Muslim living in Paris, or Félix, a lower-class white Jew from the *banlieue* of St.Denis. After some controversy, the three characters set up house in a multi-racial, multi-ethnic *ménage à trois* and the conversations of the three main characters with and about each other—the way they express themselves and the comments they make—provide a great deal of social commentary on the stereotypes and prejudices associated with the different categories of the Other.

Inch'Allah Sunday (Inch'Allah Dimanche). Dir. Yamina Benguigi. 2001. Film Movement, 2006.

This *beur* film, set in the mid 1970s around the time of the French government's decision to reunite immigrant families in France with their families abroad in 1974, centers around the protagonist, Zouina, who leaves her home in Algeria to join her

husband. She attempts to assimilate culturally, linguistically and socially, and her efforts to make a life for herself despite her tyrannical husband and contemptible mother-in-law underscore her isolation in a foreign country and particularly within her own home.

Zouina is the Other, both inside and outside her native culture and she tests her boundaries in an attempt to achieve a happier life.

Games of Love and Chance (L'Esquive). Dir. Abdel Kechiche. 2003. DVD. New Yorker Films Video, 2006.

Set in the *cit * of Saint-D nis, a Parisian suburb, the film highlights the inability of escaping one's social constraints. Krime, who has become enamored of his high-school classmate, Lydia, tries to involve himself in the school play, *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, itself a metaphor for the inescapability of one's social position.

Faat Kin . Dir. Ousmane Sembene. 2000. VHS. California Newsreel, 20XXX.

Faat Kin , a single mother of two high-school graduates who have just passed the *baccalaureat*, defies stereotypes as an independent woman in a slowly-evolving patriarchal society in Dakar. Unmarried, she feels no compulsion to change that status and takes lovers as she likes, much to the disapproval of her mother and children, who decide she needs to have a husband. The film highlights the constraints of a traditional society on Faat Kin  and provides some hope for those who would defy these constraints.

Madame Brouette (L'Extraordinaire Destin de Madame Brouette). Dir. Moussa Sena Absa. 2002. DVD. TLA Releasing, 2005.

Madame Brouette (or Mati) has been accused of murdering her philandering lover, a crooked cop with many enemies. Set in Dakar, the film traces (in flashback) the developments that may have led up to the murder—her struggles within a patriarchal society slow to accept the notion of an independent woman, her attempts to follow her dream of opening a café (and being able to abandon her job selling goods from a wheelbarrow—*brouette* in French), and her relationships with her daughter, her parents and her friends.

Rue Cases-Nègres (Sugar Cane Alley). Dir. Euzhan Palcy. 1983. DVD. New Yorker Video, 2004.

José lives with his grandmother, Ma Tine, in Sugar Cane Alley among the other residents, most of whom work in the sugar cane fields for little pay, despite the backbreaking work. José, an exemplary student, ultimately receives a scholarship to study in the capital of Martinique, Fort-de-France. His progression from his home in Sugar Cane Alley to the boarding school in Fort-de-France serves as a metaphor for the often mixed cultural identity comprised of the personal and social advancement opportunities provided by the French educational system and his allegiance to his African roots.

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