

**Heterolanguage in Twenty-First-Century Cinema and Literature:
Transnational Mediations**

By

Mélissa Gélinas

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Comparative Literature)
in the University of Michigan
2017

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Frieda Ekotto, Chair
Assistant Professor Nilo Couret
Professor Jarrod L. Hayes
Associate Professor Daniel Chilcote Herbert
Associate Professor Christi Ann Merrill

Language is at the same time a site for empowerment and a site for enslavement. And it is particularly enslaving when its workings remain invisible.

—Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Speaking Nearby”

Mélissa Gélinas

mgelinas@umich.edu

ORCID 0000-0002-3978-5226

© Mélissa Gélinas 2017

Dedication

À Renaud

Acknowledgements

The help and support of incredibly generous faculty, colleagues, friends, and family have thoroughly shaped this dissertation and my intellectual journey. I am very lucky to have worked with a remarkably empowering and dedicated committee. Frieda Ekotto has been a true mentor: she has always thought of me as a colleague, and this has meant a lot to me throughout this process. She has trusted me, my insights, and my ideas from the beginning. Frieda provided me with the most unwavering and comprehensive support, along with the motivation (and the cheese!) necessary to persevere. Jarrod Hayes offered such sharp and stimulating perspectives on Québécois and Franco-Canadian materials that I decided to look at them again, differently, eventually including in this dissertation elements that so deeply resonate with me. Throughout this journey, Jarrod has offered excellent advice and the most pleasant and joyful of conversations. Christi Merrill, in her “Translation After Orientalism” class and beyond, gave my thinking the guidance and space necessary for the conceptual core of this dissertation to start emerging. Christi’s encouragement to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Screen Arts and Cultures was crucial in turning my interest into a firm and utterly enriching decision. And I will never thank her enough for bearing with me even as I kept thinking and saying, “I don’t do translation studies.” Right! Nilo Couret generously opened his office and schedule for crucial early and renewed conversations about this project. He offered honest and helpful feedback along the way, and invaluable advice when navigating the job market. Daniel

Herbert has helped me translate my knowledge and inquiries to a new field while enduring my “chronically late” condition in the classroom context. Dan’s engaging transdisciplinary curiosity and generosity have contributed more than he knows to my formation as a scholar. Dan cared about this project long before he became a member of my committee. I am very thankful for his time and dedication in helping me prepare for the next steps in my academic career.

The Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan has been a vibrant and welcoming place to work. As a department chair, Yopie Prins has been a wonderful advocate for graduate students. Nancy Harris, Paula Frank, Judy Gray, Griffin St Onge, Keaten North, and more recently Joseph Johnson and Katie Horne were also crucial to my experience as a graduate student. The Department of Screen Arts and Cultures has also connected me with an extraordinarily stimulating community. Carrie Moore, Mary Lou Chlipala, and Lisa Rohde-Barbeau provided much appreciated help in navigating this other institutional home and the graduate certificate experience.

I would like to thank the Department of Comparative Literature and the Rackham Graduate School for their generous funding throughout the years. Many funding opportunities have allowed me to attend national and international conferences yearly, to pursue crucial research, take courses, participate in summer institutes, learn languages abroad, and write this dissertation. I am also grateful to the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies for the African Initiatives Research Grant. It made attending the FESPACO possible, and it has allowed me to gain critical insights into the materials and context examined in Chapter 2.

Many others at the University of Michigan have actively contributed to my Ph.D. journey. Tatjana Aleksic and Caryl Flinn provided insightful and friendly advice well beyond the classroom and a healthy supply of humour about Canadians along the way. Fernando Arenas, Linda Mokdad, and Colin Gunckel welcomed me into their classrooms and helped me build and work through the foundations of Chapters 1 and 2. Matthew Solomon was especially generous in his mentorship, and his interest in classical film theory beyond the Euro-American and Anglophone spheres turned a term project into one of the most thrilling tasks of my graduate career. His encouragement was instrumental in opening new possibilities for my work. I am also indebted to the fascinating conversations I had with Ross Chambers, Markus Nornes, Phil Hallman, and Mark Kligerman.

Ever since I embarked on this journey—o mejor dicho—ever since Cuban detective Mario Conde convinced me to decline that OISE fellowship, I have constantly renewed my passion for the thrilling and fulfilling pursuit of an academic career. But becoming a scholar was not my destiny. I am forever grateful to my lucky stars for those who have inspired me and contributed to making this pursuit possible and incredibly rewarding: Jean Paquin, Hélène Dupuis (a.k.a Madame Hélène), Afef Benessaïeh, Alejandro Zamora, Suzanne Langlois, Jane Gilbert, Tsila Ratner, Martine Delvaux, Sherry Simon, Simon Harel, Tijana Mamula, Lisa Patti, Isabelle St-Amand, Sarah Henzi, and Masha Salazkina. I am also especially grateful to Lisa Patti, Isabelle St-Amand, and Masha Salazkina for their support with the postdoctoral application process. Your work and your

thoughtful advice have helped me identify exciting new directions for my research; you have helped me see the possibilities this dissertation has opened up for me.

Many thanks to my fellow graduate students and friends for making me grow in heart and head during the past six years. My particular thanks go to my fellow cohort member, fellow graduate student representative, co-organiser, and friend Harry Kashdan; to my fellow GSI and friend (the grandest woman on this planet and my sincerest inspiration), Sara Hakeem; to the “crap food dinner” crew; and to my friends Alexander Aguayo, Geneviève Creedon, Jocelyn Frelie, Irene Inatty, Leigh Korey, Preston Pasko, Shira Schwartz, Mariane Stanev, and Shannon Winston. Many special thanks to Geneviève Creedon, Sara Hakeem, Corine Tachtiris, and Patrick Tonks for their help with the job market. I also thank Philip Sayers and Jocelyn Frelie for being brilliant interlocutors and collaborators.

Je dédie cette thèse à mes proches.

À ma famille—À ma mère, Linda Bellemare, pour sa confiance, sa présence et son aide dévouée. À mon père, Michel Gélina, pour une soif de comprendre et une curiosité contagieuse et, depuis toujours, le dialogue. À vous deux, mes parents, pour beaucoup d’amour, un sens du travail acharné, des pieds sur terre bien plantés et un vent dans les voiles que vous avez su encourager. À ma grande sœur, Mylène Gélina, pour ses encouragements constants (les jolly ranchers autour du monde, le happy box de minion, les colleux, les sourires) et pour être aussi mon amie. À mon petit frère, Anthony Gélina, pour suivre la performance des Wolverines à ma place (fiouff!) et pour son intérêt pour

mon parcours. À ma petite sœur, Claudia Gélinas, pour les facetimes, les parties de train et de bines et pour m'avoir (des fois) laissé finir mes travaux à l'ordi tranquille. À Guillaume Robin, mon beau-frère, pour les questions sur la vie au Michigan, pour la course à pied et pour les scotchs. À tous mes Gélings, merci de votre patience avec ma bougeotte et de votre présence infaillible dans une vie que je suis heureuse et fière de partager avec vous.

À Jean-Claude Campeau, Francine Durand, Charlie Campeau et Stéphane Campeau. À Guy Boulanger, Sylvie Boulanger et Caroline Lavoie. À tous les membres de ma deuxième famille pour leurs encouragements, leur générosité, leur grande curiosité et pour toujours prendre le temps de prendre le pouls de mes étapes.

À ma deuxième mère et mon amie, Renée-Johanne Campeau, pour une présence aimante, sincère et capacitante depuis les tous débuts. Pour un souci de mon devenir allant bien au-delà des liens qui « en surface » nous unissent. Pour les road trips vers Ann Arbor et ceux à venir, pour les conversations passionnantes et pour l'envie de traduire ma thèse pour que tu puisses la lire.

À ma meilleure amie, Marie-Joëlle Robichaud, pour une complicité inégalée et un parcours croisé qui m'ont tant aidé à avancer. Pour une amitié vraie, dans toutes ses couleurs.

Par-dessus tout, à Renaud Boulanger, mon amoureux, mon ami, mon confident, mon plus grand allié, mon compagnon de parcours le plus aimant. À toi pour des ailes et la force, les rires et leur contraire. À toi pour une proximité malgré des distances océaniques ou tout « simplement » nord-américaines. À toi pour le projet et la

concrétisation de ce doctorat, pour tous les efforts qu'il nous a coûtés. À toi pour une écoute et une confiance sans cesse renouvelées. À toi surtout, à toi pour beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup. Voy contigo.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	x
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	
Trailers/Filters:	
Untranslated Indigenous Languages in Transnational Latin American Cinema	30
Chapter 2	
“Francophone” Sub-Saharan African Cinema as Global Art Cinema:	
Heterolanguage and “Utopian Spectatorship”	47
Chapter 3	
Remaking Junot Díaz’s <i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> (2007)	84
Chapter 4	
From Canada to ... Canada? “Sub-dubbing” Chiac in France Daigle’s <i>Pour sûr</i> (2011)	170
Conclusion	262
Appendix 1	
Médium large—Segment “Canada: The Story of Us” Translated Transcript	269
Bibliography	275

Abstract

“Heterolanguage in Twenty-First-Century Cinema and Literature: Transnational Mediations” analyses multilingual films and novels that prominently feature “heterolanguage,” or a language that is not easily accessible to part or all of a text’s target audience. As this dissertation demonstrates, heterolanguage offers a novel, non-binary way of apprehending language and linguistic alterity based on access (as opposed to prestige). By making heterolanguage the backbone of a new reading practice, this dissertation zooms in on the multilingual qualities and the non-translation stance that are prime features of the corpus herein constituted. By examining how the deployment of heterolanguage can subvert established linguistic power relations across a variety of geolinguistic contexts, this study fleshes out the eminently political potential of heterolanguage as a cultural device.

At the same time, this dissertation argues for the necessity to make the new reading practice proposed reflective of current transnational circulation trends. With the global intensification of cultural and economic flows, twenty-first-century cultural productions increasingly depend on processes of transnational mediation to travel beyond their context of inception. This study focuses on the impact of three such processes (i.e. translation, film trailers as a form of paratext, and the category of “global art cinema”) on key texts of Latin American cinema, Franco-Canadian literature written in Chiac, Sub-Saharan African cinema, and U.S. literature written in Spanglish.

By analysing the transformations endured by the selected texts as they circulate from one context to another, this dissertation reveals how transnational mediations decisively affect heterolanguage's subversive potential. By grinding out the conceptual lens offered by heterolanguage, this dissertation also pushes the study of multilingual experiments into previously uncharted territory. Designed at the confluence of film and media studies, comparative literary studies, and translation studies, this dissertation proposes an innovative methodology that contributes to all three fields by shedding light on how, in the twenty-first century, the global system of circulation and its infrastructures crucially carry, shape, *and* re-shape the politics of heterolanguage.

Introduction

Once, a 2007 Irish film, is known by most people as the story of an unlikely relationship between an Irish busker and a Czech immigrant who meet on the streets of Dublin. For others, *Once* also evokes the slow-burning hit that gave rise to the eponymous Broadway show. Yet others think of *Once* as a key player in the alleged global revival of the musical, or as one of the most profitable Irish films of this century. But *Once* is also about language. It is a multilingual film in which access to language is fraught, moving the plot in crucial ways. In a film where the language of music does significantly more than verbal language to support genuine communication between the Guy and the Girl (as the credits “name” the otherwise nameless protagonists), three scenes stand out for their peculiar multilingual qualities.

The first one is staged during the Guy’s introduction to the Girl’s apartment. As she opens the door and lets the Guy in, the camera, shooting from inside the apartment, reveals an older woman and a little girl, with whom the Girl starts speaking Czech. The camera goes from capturing the action in the room to zooming in on the Guy’s confused and then surprised facial expression, and back and forth, as he (with the audience) finds out that they are the Girl’s mother and the Girl’s daughter. Visually, the rest of the scene unfolds in a similarly puzzling fashion, at the same time as an untranslated conversation takes place between the Girl and her mother. Kept at a language’s distance, the Guy is nonetheless brought into a space of intimacy with his newfound friend.

The next scene foregrounds how language is key to accessing the ESL immigrant experience. After all, *Once* is a music film that Irish director John Carney wanted to write “about a Dubliner who was more like one of the immigrants and who identified more with people who were coming into the country than [...] people who were here, striking up a relationship with one of them.” (“Director”) The first shot establishes the Guy and the Girl sitting at a table, having dinner. They are soon interrupted by three young non-Anglophone men who enter the apartment, greeted by the Girl. She quickly explains that they live next door and come here to watch *Fair City*¹ because there is only one “telly” in the building. They soon reveal that “*Fair City* we love” and use it to learn English, comically proceeding to demonstrate their newly acquired vocabulary: “Are you not pregnant?,” “How are you, man?,” “What is the hurry?” The scene closes on a shot taken from the point of view of the “telly” that all the characters are now watching, with *Fair City*’s “Irish sounding” theme song enveloping the scene: somewhere between parody and social commentary, a new Ireland appears to be staring at us. This marks a moment of proximity between the Guy and this “new Ireland.”

The film’s pivotal moment is also fraught with multilingualism. Having till then (about two thirds into the movie) navigated the ambiguous development of their relationship largely through music, the Guy, who just learned that the Girl is still married to her daughter’s father, asks her “What’s the Czech for ‘do you love him?’” She tells him, and he immediately directs the question back at her. Her answer, the key to figuring out

¹ *Fair City* is the most popular and longest Irish soap opera. It is produced by the public service broadcaster *Raidió Teilifís Éireann* (RTÉ) and aired on its flagship channel *RTÉ One*, the most widely available and most watched TV channel in Ireland. The TV series has been on the air since 1989.

their relationship as well as the film's main narrative arc, is given in Czech with no accompanying translation whatsoever. Language, in this scene and the ones previously described, crucially calls attention to itself as language, precisely because of its (presumed) inaccessibility. In *Once*, this inaccessibility is something that the Guy (with the audience) *must* make do of and *must* work through.

As these key scenes illustrate, *Once* is one example of a twenty-first-century cultural text that foregrounds *by design* the “epistemological baffles” of multilingualism. Gramling and Warner introduced this term to refer to the general and hypothetical demand that “multilingual thinking” places on all speakers in a “linguistically opaque world”: the demand to recognise “other meaning-making presences.” (1-2) By contrast, I here want to emphasise the baffle as a tangible mechanism; one that redirects, prevents access, in sum regulates the flow of a substance. In this sense, I propose that we understand the epistemological baffles of multilingualism as actual “dispositifs,” (devices, systems, apparatus) that regulate not the flow of light or a fluid (as they commonly do in material objects and machinery), but the thoughts, foci, experiences and forms of knowledge that we derive from our engagement with multilingual cultural objects. By emphasising the epistemological baffles of multilingualism as tangible cultural mechanisms, I extend Gramling and Warner's use of the term, suggesting that we closely consider the actual demands placed on those who engage with the multilingual cultural objects in which these epistemological baffles have been so unavoidably planted. What are these epistemological baffles asking from the audience and why? Why would John Carney, for instance, choose to plant such devices right in the way of his audience, and at

such crucial moments in his film at that? Why make these baffles such an integral part of *Once*? After all, an artistic representation of language is always an “image of a language,” the carefully crafted result of key representational choices (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 336).

My dissertation examines films and novels which, like *Once*, possess peculiar multilingual qualities in that the image of language that they offer markedly foregrounds *heterolanguage*, or a language that is inaccessible to part or all of their target audience. In making heterolanguage, a term I explore in more depth later, central to their works, cultural producers like John Carney opt to make the epistemological baffles of multilingualism “passages obligés” (prerequisites, necessary conditions, lit. compulsory paths) for their audience. As this dissertation will demonstrate, these *passages obligés*, coupled with the powerful capacity of artwork to freeze-frame life for us and use these suspended moments to get us to consider what we might otherwise not, create intense and impactful waves of multilingual thinking in a world that otherwise still functions according to monolingual tenets. Therein lies the radical potential of heterolanguage, a phenomenon which, as the next section explores, is best understood in circulation.

Transnational Circulation

Once is not only a film in which heterolanguage plays a pivotal role. As a microbudget film that won an Academy Award,² was distributed in more than 30 countries, and grossed \$7 million US in box office revenues in the United States alone, *Once* is clearly a

² It won the Academy Award for Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures, Original Song, for the song “Falling Slowly.”

crossover success story.³ Like many twenty-first-century cultural texts that were designed to foreground the epistemological baffles of multilingualism, *Once* is also a film that demands to be understood in circulation. The twenty-first century is characterised by the unprecedented acceleration of global cultural flows. As such, cultural productions are increasingly shaped by their transnational circulation. While *all* texts only acquire full significance in circulation (Watts 113), this is certainly crucially the case for those whose poetics and politics are so closely tied to their prominent deployment of heterolanguage. Every time a text's access to a new audience in a new context is negotiated, it is the whole text that can be affected by this re-negotiation: even the most boldly planted baffles can be toned down, amplified, obliterated, in sum, modified. By making inaccessible a language to part or all of a text's target audience, heterolanguage crucially influences its mode of address. Yet, because it hinges on prominent inaccessibility and non-translation, it is also a device that is extremely vulnerable to the kinds of mediations that transnational circulation supposes. As we have seen, heterolanguage in texts like *Once* is of high significance: understanding how the processes that enable these texts' transnational circulation can shape heterolanguage is thus important. How does the broad transnational circulation of films like *Once* affect the features that made them cultural texts with peculiar multilingual qualities in the first place? How does thinking about films like *Once* from the point of view of their transnational mediations help us to

³ Shot in 17 days in Dublin with a budget of around \$150,000 US (mostly financed by the Irish Film Board), *Once* had its world premiere (as a rough cut) at the Galway Film Fleadh, Ireland's leading film festival, in July 2006. It was then rejected by several big European film festivals before being selected to show at Sundance, in January 2007. There, it packed six screenings, won the World Cinema audience award, to then be picked up by Summit Entertainment for worldwide sales. Summit Entertainment is a major American film production and distribution company with headquarters in Universal City, California, and international offices in London. Since 2012, it has been a subsidiary of Lionsgate Entertainment.

more fully grasp the significance of heterolanguage and to animate its political potential? These questions constitute my dissertation's horizon of inquiry.

Critical Multilingualism Meets Critical Transnationalism

By delineating an epistemological space for heterolanguage, as it appears in twenty-first-century films and novels, my dissertation first integrates and contributes to critical multilingualism as an emerging school of thought. Bringing together researchers from across the humanities and the social sciences, the field of critical multilingualism sheds new light on multilingual phenomena and practice, understanding multilingualism as part of a deeper paradigm shift. Research on multilingual phenomena and practice is not in itself new. Fields like literary studies, education, linguistics, and translation studies have long been home to scholarly inquiries about multilingualism. But a multilingual turn has been increasingly observable in the humanities and the social sciences at the turn of the twenty-first century, with a wealth of materials being published on the topic,⁴ with new venues for publication being created,⁵ and with multilingualism becoming

⁴ Cf. Werner Sollors's *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (1998), Steven G. Kellman's *The Translingual Imagination* (2000), Isabelle de Courtivron's *Lives in Translation: Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity* (2003), Doris Sommer's *Bilingual Games: Some Literary Investigations* (2003), Sherry Simon's *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (2006), Lawrence Alan Rosenwald's *Multilingual America: Language and the Making of American Literature* (2008), Ania Spyra's *Cosmopoetics: Multilingual experiments in transnational literature* (2008), Joshua Miller's *Accented America: The Cultural Politics of Multilingual Modernism* (2011), Yasemin Yildiz's *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Post-Monolingual Condition* (2011), Juliette Taylor-Batty's *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (2013), Emily Hayman's *Inimical Languages: Conflicts of Multilingualism in British Modernist Literature* (2014).

⁵ A perfect example of that is the journal *Critical Multilingualism Studies*, founded in 2012 by the already cited David Gramling and Chantelle Warner, both professors in the Department of German Studies at the University of Arizona. The journal provides a forum for the "searching, vigorous, and cross-disciplinary" study of multilingualism, a platform formally initiated in 2012 during an international symposium organised at Arizona under the title *Multilingual, 2.0?*.

increasingly relevant to fields where it traditionally had been marginalised (e.g. American culture). Critical multilingualism seeks to move beyond a cursory celebration of the current “culture of multilingualism” (Gramling and Warner 6). For although ubiquitous and ostensible, the current manifestations of this culture are, for the most part, still doing the work of monolingualism. Epistemologically speaking, this is still a world where institutions and people largely cling to monolingual *modi operandi*. As my introduction will later contextualise, the twenty-first century is a time of unprecedented multilingualism. Yet, at the same time, it is a period in history when linguistic diversity is shrinking the most. As more and more languages seem to be visible, fewer and fewer are in fact in a position to be strong vehicles of culture, to carry the voices and knowledge of their communities across time and space. The necessity to pause and carefully examine the significance and implications of this multilingual paradox is clear. And this is precisely what critical multilingualism proposes to do, by mobilising disciplinary intersections to probe the depths of “experience along the multilingual-monolingual spectrum” and by identifying and interrogating the blind spots of multilingual praxis and theory (Gramling and Warner 4).

In addition, by examining heterolanguage in twenty-first-century cinema and literature from the standpoint of transnational circulation, my dissertation allies critical multilingualism’s apt focus and methods with those of critical transnationalism. The main proponents of this paradigm are William Higbee and Song Hwee Lim, two film scholars at the University of Exeter, UK. In their 2010 article “Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies,” Higbee and Lim extend the film

and media scholarship that, from the transnational turn of the mid-1990s onwards, has “made the global system of circulation and its infrastructures its privileged object” (Salazkina 21). Their article, the theoretical backbone of the first issue of the *Transnational Cinemas* journal, contains the oft-cited manifesto for a critical approach to the transnational; one that, as they contend, would allow transnational film studies to become “a vital field for transnational, trans-lingual dialogue on cinema” (Higbee and Lim 19). While it emerged out of a film and media context, critical transnationalism invites conversation with “scholarship in other disciplines that also have an investment in the transnational and the postcolonial” (Higbee and Lim 18). This openly interdisciplinary engagement makes critical transnationalism able to account for what texts (films and others) as complex cultural objects mean and how they operate when they are shaped by the interplay between the sub-national, the national, the regional, the transnational, and the global, without any one level negating the others. Critical transnationalism focuses on the particularities, challenges, and possibilities that constitute texts, as products of this interplay and as they circulate across these various scales.

As I see it, the alliance that my dissertation establishes between critical multilingualism and critical transnationalism harnesses the strengths of literary and film studies around the specific concept of heterolanguage and the epistemological baffles that this peculiar form of multilingualism creates in twenty-first-century cultural texts. Literary scholars have long been fascinated by the poetics and politics of multilingualism through the acts of contestation and subversion performed by individual authors via multilingual texts. While a variety of studies do emphasise the socio-political and cultural

significance of multilingual texts, the vast majority of them examine literary texts in their (national) contexts of inception and in the language varieties that initially brought them to life. Multilingual experiments have been widely studied in the literary field, but with much less attention being devoted to questions of (transnational) circulation.

Film and media studies, in turn, constantly thinks of its objects of study in terms of circulation. Yet, as Patti and Mamula's introduction to *The Multilingual Screen* makes clear, the field has made relatively little of the extensive and profound impact that multilingualism has had on cinema. This might well be a consequence of the dominance in the field of Anglo-American scholarship with little permeability to issues of linguistic diversity (Higbee and Lim 19; Salazkina 19). Moreover, what most scholars at the forefront of film and media studies do today is ask what cinema means globally and how media work as processes, but increasingly rarely as texts *qua* texts. Scarce attention to textual features may further contribute to a lack of attention to the centrality of language and multilingualism in filmmaking practices. As Masha Salazkina puts it in "Translating the Academe" (2016), this lack of attention may also be attributed to disciplinary evolution and institutional history:

"the language of cinema" which presumably forms the literacy of a film scholar, is still perceived to be largely visual. [...] It is hardly surprising that the most influential aspects of sound studies as they impacted film and media remain those which leave behind any discussion of speech, dialogue or delivery. [...] The struggle for the autonomy of film (and media) from the institutional umbrella of language departments left a legacy of suspicion of any approach that is too far removed from the "moving image." [...] Thus, instead of the "marriage" of [film programs and foreign language programs] what often resulted was its hollowing out: even beyond the disciplinary distrust of attention to language and to the necessity of foreign language acquisition for film and media scholars [...] the shortening of the expectations for the time to degree completion and increasingly high demands on publishing productivity make it virtually impossible to take on comparative

transnational work that would be attentive to matters of language and perform the kind of translation necessary for the decentering of the current geopolitical paradigm [i.e. Euro-American and Anglo-centric]. (29-30)

In sum, the study of multilingualism is still burgeoning in the field of film and media studies, but issues of linguistic difference and plurality beyond audiovisual translation remain largely understudied. Even widely recognised work on translation⁶ still has limited impact on the way the discipline is taught (Salazkina 29).

Consequently, by bringing my dissertation under the purview of critical multilingualism and critical transnationalism, I can more fully take into account the crucial processes that shape a text's epistemological baffles as it circulates from a source culture to new target cultures. In addition, by combining these two approaches, I propose to urge film and media studies to consider the layer that heterolanguage adds to "the challenges and potentialities that greet films' transnational trajectory" (Higbee and Lim 18). Otherwise put, I do not simply wish to understand how transnational circulation affects heterolanguage, but how heterolanguage as a geolinguistically situated mode of address can support critical transnationalism's professed desire not merely to describe the processes that shape films as they cross borders without actually taking into account the asymmetries of power that plague contemporary global film cultures (Higbee and Lim 9; 18). Together, these approaches not only merge two crucial disciplinary concerns, but they also allow us to grasp the full significance of cultural texts that prominently deploy heterolanguage.

⁶ Cf. Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour's *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film* (2004), Markus Nornes's *Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema* (2007), Nataša Đurovičová's "Vector, Flow, Zone: Towards a History of Cinematic Translatio" (2010), Carol O'Sullivan's *Translating Popular Film* (2011), Tijana Mamula's *Cinema and Language Loss: Displacement, Visuality and the Filmic Image* (2013).

Defining Heterolanguage

Many contemporary films and novels, from popular to niche-market ones, use multiple languages. Contrastingly, few works are radically multilingual to the point where they partially or completely shun translation. Nevertheless, when filmmakers and novelists elect to do so, they create the conditions for heterolanguage to exist.

As a concept, heterolanguage originates at the crossroads of translation studies and film and media studies.⁷ It was coined by Carol O'Sullivan in her famous *Translating Popular Film* (2011) to designate any language that is not easily accessible to part or all of a film's target audience (5). O'Sullivan briefly mentions the term in her introduction:

Recognition of the bi- or multilingualism of films will require a different language with which to speak about it. The very term 'foreign language' is difficult. To speak of language as 'foreign' is to other its speakers from the onset. Foreign language is of course a mother tongue to other speakers, unless it is an invented language. To speak of languages other than English as foreign may result in English functioning as an unmarked norm which is far from the intention here. Instead the important distinction is one of *access*. 'Foreign language' is used throughout this book to refer not to a specific language, or from the point of view of a single language, but to refer to heterolanguage, in other words any language which is difficult or impossible of comprehension to all or part of a film's primary target audience, in a given communicative context. (5-6)

O'Sullivan here acknowledges the need to bend terminology to fully accommodate the complexity of the phenomenon she examines in her book (i.e. cinematic multilingualism in popular films) and the ways in which translation mediates it. Nevertheless, after pointing at some of the limitations of the notion of "foreign language," she coins the term heterolanguage in order to characterise and nuance her use of it throughout the book,

⁷ Heterolanguage must be distinguished from the term heterolingualism (Rainier Grutman, *Des langues qui résonnent*, 1997) which has helped various scholars, after Grutman, to describe the non-uniformity of the "language of the text" in ways that include both heteroglossia (i.e. for Bakhtin, the internal diversity that exists within any given language) and multilingualism (the use of different languages).

thereafter never using it or returning to it. In my view, what O'Sullivan does, for a brief instant, is hold up a prism to our eyes, a novel and challenging way to apprehend language and linguistic alterity, only to drop it immediately. Contrastingly, my dissertation effectively makes this prism the backbone of a new reading practice. It is not enough to imply in passing, as O'Sullivan does, that our modern notion of language has left us at an impasse, that there are countless experiences we cannot even fathom because of the limited view we have inherited. As the heart of a new mode of reading, heterolanguage, I argue, actually allows us to radically rethink a vision of language marked by coloniality while re-reading the extant linguistic hierarchies that this notion has crystallised as well as the paradoxes it continues to fuel.

In today's world, colonial epistemologies continue to inform our conception of language in unitary, nationalistic, and monolingual terms. This "coloniality of language" is what European modernity has established as the norm throughout the world, through the colonial imperial project and its extension into today's global capitalism (Veronelli 39). Colonialism, as Scott reminds us in *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (2004), played a crucial role in making colonised subjects the conscripted objects and agents of modernity (9). Spreading (and later crystallising) with the colonial imperial project was a highly historically-situated notion of language as unitary,⁸ tied to the romantic nationalist view that one nation was to find its deepest and purest

⁸ Bakhtin, for instance, describes the driving forces behind the European/modern notion of language as follows: "The victory of one reigning language (dialect) over the others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of illuminating them with the True Word, the incorporation of barbarians and lower strata into a unitary language of culture and truth, the canonization of ideological systems [...]—all this determined the content and power of the category of "unitary language." Linguistics, stylistics and the philosophy of language—as forces in the service of the great centralizing tendencies of European verbal-ideological life—have sought first and foremost for *unity* in diversity" (Bakhtin, "Discourse" 271, 274).

expression in one language, and geared towards the production and reproduction of monolingual minds and tongues. Thus was the world epistemologically conscripted, forced to “learn—and learn to inhabit as much as learn to transform—Europe’s natural and conceptual languages” (Scott 16).

Heterolanguage’s radical potential to disrupt the colonality of language opens up various conceptual and theoretical possibilities. By compelling us to think about language in terms of *access*, heterolanguage enables us to conceive of *language as it actually functions*, and not as modern European linguistics have tried to convince us it should function (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 271-4; Devy 165). Conceptually speaking, instead of ascribing foreignness to the Other’s language (as does the term “foreign language”), *hetero* (other, different) *language* foregrounds contingent and positional inaccessibility to the self. By flipping the mirror, the term signals difference across many possible boundaries and not just that of nationality. “Foreignness,” in the still prevalent national paradigm, more commonly denotes belonging to another country or nation. This denotation is often misleading, untenable, and reductive, in the sense that it ill reflects much of the texture of today’s socio-cultural landscape. The use of the term glosses over and naturalises the national paradigm instead of questioning its arbitrary construction.

Heterolanguage, in turn, offers a novel way to apprehend language and linguistic alterity together, one that allows for a more fluid and flexible understanding of language. It does not enforce a demarcation between languages on the basis of their perceived legitimacy, purity, or status. Heterolanguage is about one’s access or degree of access to any language; any “arbitrary system of vocal (or visual) symbols used by the members of a

speech community for the purpose of communication” can constitute heterolanguage (Nuessel 665). As each of my dissertation’s chapters will demonstrate in specific ways, the deployment of heterolanguage in cinema and literature entails a radical potential that is at least two-fold: 1) it brings out language politics, potentially altering language hierarchies, as they appear in various geolinguistic contexts; and 2) it undermines our modern conception of language as unitary and aligned with the national paradigm, even potentially disrupting the institutionalisation of this conception.

Nowhere is this radical thrust most pronounced than in texts that prominently feature “minor” languages. Minor languages are language varieties that are unfavourably situated within the contemporary geolinguistic and cultural landscape. To exist and be strong vectors of culture within the current (global) regimes of cultural power, these marginalised and/or minority languages require their users’ strategic resourcefulness. Many minor languages are not recognised. Considered illegitimate, they are deemed inappropriate in some or all communicative contexts. As Deleuze and Guattari’s seminal work on the concept of “minor literature” suggests, despite such unfavourable positionality, the “minor” remains a powerful site from which to subvert a dominant national language or culture from within, to make visible what would not otherwise be visible. Because my dissertation proposes a mode of reading to animate the political potential of heterolanguage as a cultural device, all of the texts I analyse are closely tied to “minor” language communities. It is indeed one of my dissertation’s main arguments that in a world where the global system of cultural circulation and its infrastructures are *also* crucial sites of geolinguistic struggles for legitimacy and recognition, the radical potential

of heterolanguage can most fruitfully be animated in relation to “minor” languages and the cultural politics of “minor” language communities.

Before I explain what each of this dissertation’s chapters will cover, I will flesh out some of the circumstances under which I see a pressing need to bring disciplines (film and media studies and literary studies) and paradigms (critical multilingualism and critical transnationalism) together for a new mode of reading contemporary multilingual texts. What does reading heterolanguage “amid and against the ritual constraints of monolingualism” mean (Gramling and Warner 2)? What is at stake in my decision to animate the political potential of the term heterolanguage by proposing to make it the pillar of a new reading practice? To answer these questions, I present in the next section the background against which the epistemological baffles of multilingualism are currently emerging.

Multilingualism in the Twenty-first Century

California Indians came to speak many different languages because they did not all receive an equal share of fire. Coyote, a trickster, interrupted Mouse as he sat on top of the assembly house, playing his flutes and dropping coals through the smoke hole. The people who sat around the edge of the room did not get any fire and now when they speak, their teeth chatter with the cold. And thus began linguistic diversity.

—The Maidu People, *Californian Indian Nights*

Exit Monolingualism?

Linguistic diversity is at the root of the human condition, a fact that various myths, from the Maidu people’s “fire story” to the Bible’s “Babel tale,” have helped people from a

variety of cultures to grapple with. Yet linguistic diversity, although foundational, all but belongs to the past: it continues to define many people's *modus vivendi* in the present and to fuel today's cultural productions. Moreover, this diversity is not only a matter of many languages existing. This multiplicity, as well as the ways in which it has been "organised" under the nation state and its major institutions since the nineteenth century, creates the conditions for multilingualism to exist. While multilingualism is present in virtually every country on this planet, only 25% of them recognise more than one language, i.e. commit to providing some resources to insure the maintenance and use of two or more languages within the same nation (Romaine 448, 459). This still leaves 75% of nations operating as monolingual with only one language being recognised for use in education and other crucial institutions.

This not only creates a power imbalance between the status of various languages. In practical terms, the nation state's propensity to operate as monolingual also generates a multilingual requirement for the speakers of all other languages. Navigating between languages is thus an unremarkable necessity of everyday life for the majority of the world's population (Grosjean 13-17). Monolingualism is more peripheral than multilingualism, a fact that the notion of national language(s) often operates to obscure. With less than 4% of the world's languages having any kind of official status in the countries where they are used and with fewer than 10% being used in education, it becomes clear why multilingualism is a widespread necessity and monolingualism such a powerful luxury (Romaine 449). When we add to this the fact that most languages are unwritten and often not standardised, sometimes restricted to small and local

communities and used primarily in the domestic sphere, the unevenness in the world statuses of different languages becomes unequivocally apparent.

Despite their global majority status, the world's linguistic minorities, dispersed across nation states, have traditionally not been in a dominant position. Yet alongside the multilingual requirement and/or marginalisation that have been their common (if intersectionally differentiated) predicament, the twenty-first century is witnessing the rise of a new multilingual élite. In a globalised world, the ability to speak multiple languages is becoming a valued commodity and an important vector of symbolic capital. The emergence of this polyglot élite has been associated with increased legitimacy and a cultural premium being set on multilingual cultural productions (Leclerc 23). Audiences are getting used to the ostensible and sometimes superficial and/or stereotypical presence of multilingualism in any and all productions, from popular TV shows such as *Orange is the New Black* to John Sayles's indie film *Amigo* (2010). This is not to say that because of its increasingly mainstream existence, the presence of multilingualism in cultural productions can no longer respond to the needs of multilingual communities and serve a deeper political purpose. Multilingualism is a prominent part of the twenty-first-century zeitgeist precisely because both diluted and bolder forms of it coexist in the contemporary socio-cultural and creative landscape. In this context, my choice to zoom in on heterolanguage is highly significant. Indeed, the reading practice I propose focuses on the marked deployment of heterolanguage as tied to "minor" languages, precisely because it has the potential to reassert some of multilingualism's most radical and "epistemologically baffling" possibilities.

Exit Linguistic Diversity? Or When More Is Less

As stated earlier, the unmistakable presence of multilingualism currently takes place “amid and against the ritual constraints of monolingualism.” And nowhere does this find a more powerful yet obscured manifestation than in the profound struggle between increasing internationalisation and its dual potential for cultural and linguistic homogenisation and diversification.

As Suzanne Romaine writes in “The Bilingual and Multilingual Community” (2012), the face of multilingualism in the twenty-first century is rapidly changing (456). The spread of global languages—a long-term consequence of the European colonisation of most of the non-European world—is greater than ever. In the linguistic sphere, the “coloniality of power,” to borrow Aníbal Quijano’s famous concept, concretely translates into the fact that the multilingual requirement often exists regardless of numbers. As Rey Chow has argued in *Not Like a Native Speaker: On Language as a Postcolonial Experience* (2014), the colonial situation has shattered “any illusion of a natural link between a language as such and those who are, for historical reasons, its users by default” (41). With colonialism, groups of people have been required to adopt and/or adjust to another group’s language for purposes of social organisation and mobility, without the reverse also occurring. The colonial situation has thus revealed something fundamental: language is not just a communicative tool, but an index of cultural superiority and inferiority (Chow 39). And instead of turning the tables, the post-colonial nation state has further crystallised this index by opting, more often than not, for linguistically disenfranchising the vast majority of its population in favour of the former colonial (i.e.

European) language. In this sense, the coloniality of language has become so internalised and institutionalised, so deeply engrained in people's minds and institutions, that it no longer requires the blatantly orchestrated violence of colonialism to operate and have extremely concrete consequences in their lives.

Increasing bilingualism in English is another correlate and noteworthy trend of the contemporary linguistic horizon. With the industrial revolution and its late culmination in today's globalisation, as well as improved means of travel and communication that have increased contact between speakers, English is becoming the global lingua franca (Edwards, "Challenges" 166). While 339 million people speak English as their first language (after Mandarin Chinese with an estimate of 900 million and Spanish with 427 million), an estimate of 1.5 billion would be non-native speakers of English (Lewis et al.; Romaine 456). Granted, this still leaves the vast majority of the world's 7 billion people *not* speaking English. Yet, the dominance of English in business, publishing, and the technologies that support today's unprecedented networks of mass communication, makes its global reach a historical novelty. Knowledge today does not necessarily speak English, but its dissemination largely does. Already by the end of the twentieth century, 91% of all scholarly publications were in English; 83% in the Humanities (Edwards, "Challenges" 177). The ESLisation of the world has also been tied to lower rates of multilingual proficiency for Anglophones, which, for all intents and purposes, translates into a certain delegation of multilingual proficiency to non-Anglophones. In his 2012 *New York Times* article "What You (Really) Need to Know," former Harvard University

president Lawrence Summers expressly advocated the lack of any need for multilingual proficiency:

English's emergence as the global language, along with the rapid progress in machine translation and the fragmentation of languages spoken around the world, make it less clear that the substantial investment necessary to speak a foreign tongue is universally worthwhile. While there is no gainsaying the insights that come from mastering a language, it will over time become less essential in doing business in Asia, treating patients in Africa or helping resolve conflicts in the Middle East.

According to Summers's overtly neoliberal approach to language learning, Anglophones had better not lose precious time learning other languages and simply outsource this kind of labour: non-Anglophones are already doing a much better job at it than their "real-business-oriented" mono-Anglo counterparts.

Alongside the ESLisation of the world, globalisation, by creating increasing opportunities and necessities for transnational communication, is leading to another important trend: added layers of diglossia on an international scale. While speakers of minority languages within their national or regional spheres (e.g. Saami people in Sweden) have for a long time needed to know the dominant language of the nation state they lived in (e.g. Swedish), it is now increasingly necessary for such speakers also to possess a language of wider transnational currency (e.g. English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese). The difference is that part of the multilingual requirement that accompanies "minority language" status is now often shared with nationally dominant speakers (e.g. Swedish-speaking Swedes) who speak a language of lesser global currency. This particular trend not only increases multilingualism on a global scale, it also encourages an awareness of the implications and consequences of diglossia that countless linguistic

minorities and speakers of marginalised languages, scattered across nation states, have been experiencing for a long time.

Finally, at the same time as continuing and new waves of immigration keep increasing host countries' linguistic and cultural diversity (sometimes with the explicit support of the host countries' institutions), many small speech communities are facing the prospect of extinction. This is mostly due to the lack of official support for schooling and the production of culture in languages other than the national or dominant language(s); migration and urbanisation making the transgenerational transfer of the language increasingly difficult; and the concurrent encroachment of other, more dominant languages. While 6% of the world's languages (app. 400) have at least one million speakers, accounting for 94% of the world's population, 94% of languages are spoken by a meagre 6% of the planet (Romaine 449). It is estimated that in the past 500 years, as many as half of the known languages of the world have ceased to be used. At least half of today's 6,900 spoken languages are projected to vanish in the next century, most of which are indigenous languages.

In sum, by operating hand-in-hand with the national paradigm, the colonality of language is thus creating a crucial paradox: linguistic diversity is shrinking in an increasingly multilingual world.

As Canadian sociolinguist John Edwards puts it, "the twin aspects of language," that is language as an instrument of communication and language as a symbolic marker of identity, "generally coexist in mainstream or majority-group cultures: for members of such groups, the language in which they do their shopping, go to work and talk to their

neighbours is also the ancestral variety, the medium of history, legends and poetry” (“Challenges” 105). But these aspects are separable, and “the linguistic coexistence” that speakers of dominant languages enjoy is rarely a reality for minority or marginalised language communities (Edwards, “Challenges” 105). “Languages are totems as well as tools,” Edwards tells us. But under the current system, few languages circulate widely and especially in their written form. What is the percentage of people in the world who have access to a textbook in their first language? How many novels have been published in the past year in Bambara? In any of the indigenous languages of what is now Mexico and Central America? As linguistic coexistence becomes a more isolated phenomenon, most people’s totems become increasingly marginalised as tools.

A crucial trend to consider is the dual potential that new media and the globalisation of telecommunications can have on minority or marginalised language communities, despite the unequal access to the (largely digital) technologies that support them. The future of linguistic diversity in China is an interesting case study in this regard. With seven major “dialects” and thousands of smaller ones (many of which are mutually unintelligible), China is home to an impressive degree of linguistic diversity. In 1955, the Chinese Communist Party constitutionally made Putonghua (or Mandarin Chinese) the official language, as a means to promote “national unity.” In 2000, seeking to more strongly enforce the use of the official language across the nation—and not coincidentally three years after the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong (where Cantonese Chinese and English are more widely used than Mandarin Chinese) from the United Kingdom to the People’s Republic of China—Beijing passed the “Law on Standard Spoken and Written

Chinese Language.” While effectively making Mandarin the language of instruction and of mandatory use for government functions, the law could do little to change people’s use of other language varieties at home and in non-official public life. As local varieties have increasingly gained popularity in recent years through music, films, and television programs, Beijing has increased pressure. For instance, in 2014, China’s media regulator (the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television) issued a notice to order TV anchors and guests to use Mandarin, warning that programs that refused to comply would be taken off the air (Roberts; Xinhuanet). While it has been relatively easy for Chinese media regulators to force many broadcasters to align linguistically with the government’s Mandarin-centred vision, Beijing is having a much harder time micro-managing people’s language use on the internet and in text messaging, for instance.

Overall, while the world’s shrinking linguistic diversity may be mitigated by the emergence of new media and the globalisation of telecommunications, the fact that it is occurring precisely as the world is becoming increasingly multilingual, and quite visibly so, is certainly the sign of a poignant paradox. In the twenty-first century, multilingualism is more than ever an inescapable phenomenon of everyday life, one that is no longer only the terrain of minority language communities. Yet, at the same time, we are constantly reminded of the vast trickling down and now globalised effects of the continued thinking and management of our complex linguistic experience in deeply reductive terms that reinforce linguistic concentration; the marginalisation and scarce representation of

“minor” languages in all contexts, including the cultural realm; and the ensuing loss of linguistic and cultural diversity on a local, national, and global scale.

It is in this particular context that it becomes crucial to study the deployment of heterolanguage as a profound manifestation of multilingualism that is endowed with the potential to undermine the “coloniality of language” and its various manifestations. To do so effectively, it is necessary to take into account how the global system of circulation and its infrastructures not only carry the texts that deploy heterolanguage, but also how it shapes them and their radical potential. To fully grasp the meaning of these texts in the twenty-first century, we must examine how their unprecedented (transnational) mobility affects their ability to disrupt the “coloniality of language.”

Summary of Chapters

To begin, all of my chapters converge around questions of transnational circulation. For instance, how did the dissemination of a work beyond its context of inception affect the version its creator initially chose to craft? Did international distributors or publishers proceed to rid the film or the novel of (some or all of) the baffles planted in it? Did they modify them? If so, how so, and what were the consequences of these decisions? To address the impact of circulation in specific ways, I zoom in on various forms of transnational mediations, including paratexts, the art cinema infrastructure, and translation. In addition, to flesh out the socio-cultural and political significance of heterolanguage and the epistemological baffles of multilingualism in context-specific

ways, I turn to a variety of geolinguistic contexts, including Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the United States, and Canada.

Chapter 1, entitled “Trailers/Filters: Untranslated Indigenous Languages in Transnational Latin American Cinema,” focuses on the mediating impact of film trailers on heterolanguage, specifically in relation to transnational Latin American cinema. Colonialism has transformed multilingualism into a pervasive societal condition in most Latin American countries; a situation that has had an extensive and profound impact on the region’s cinema. Nation-building in Latin American countries has involved the forced and unequal cohabitation between marginalised indigenous communities and the dominant descendants of the European settlers who colonised these territories. As a result, many Latin American films mobilise the ensuing multilingualism to register the consequences of this unequal cohabitation and, sometimes, to offer powerful critiques of “the coloniality of power” (Quijano 113).

It is also possible to discern in the cinema of the region a trend of multilingual films that not only use indigenous languages, but also leave them untranslated. Through the use of this sustained and recurrent device, heterolanguage becomes central to these films’ form and politics. This chapter examines the significance of this phenomenon while also situating it in the context of contemporary Latin American cinema’s modes of production and circulation.

More specifically, this chapter focuses on paratexts as mediating processes. As primary facilitators of transnational circulation, paratexts (e.g. trailers, posters, reviews) start establishing frames and filters through which we interpret a film, *before* we even

encounter the film and, actually, *whether or not* we do end up engaging with it as a whole. Adopting a paratextual approach, I analyse various trailers of Juan Carlos Valdivia's *Zona Sur* (Bolivia, 2009) and Diego Quemada-Díez's *La jaula de oro* (Mexico, 2013). These two emblematic yet contrasting examples of transnational Latin American cinema are also multilingual films that make prominent use of untranslated indigenous languages, namely Aymara and Tzotzil. The chapter provides insight into trailers' management of those languages in the transnational marketing of the films by engaging with the following questions: How did the many trailers that proliferated around the transnational circulation of *Zona Sur* and *La jaula de oro* frame and interpret them? As promotional paratexts, did the trailers foreground the importance of heterolanguage in the films? How? What does that reveal about the implicit claims made by the international distributors (and other stakeholders in the process) about the films' target audiences?

Chapter 2 turns to the category of "art cinema" and its infrastructure (i.e. its modes of financing and its structures of production and distribution) as a key mediator of transnational circulation. As Galt and Schoonover indicate in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories* (2010), "for most countries, art cinema provides the only institutional context in which films can find audiences abroad," mostly through the global film festival and art-house theatre circuits (7). Nowhere is the dependency on the art cinema infrastructure more staggering than in the context of Francophone Sub-Saharan African cinema: a cinema that has been haunted throughout its history by the lack of infrastructures to support a sustainable, steady African audience (Rosen 257). The few

Francophone Sub-Saharan African films that exist today exist through the channels of global art cinema, and seldom do they reach African audiences.

This chapter, entitled “‘Francophone’ Sub-Saharan African Cinema as Global Art Cinema: Heterolanguage and ‘Utopian Spectatorship,’” examines Sarah Bouyain’s *Notre étrangère* (2010, Burkina Faso/France), asking how its prominent deployment and thematisation of heterolanguage (in the form of untranslated Dioula) can be understood in this context. How does global art cinema, at the same time as it enables the circulation of this film, shape its use of heterolanguage? What does thinking about this film from the point of view of circulation allow us to understand about the politics of heterolanguage in this context. What kind of cultural text does Bouyain’s film become when viewed by Dioula speakers? What happens when we add to this equation the fact that this so seldom happens? Overall, this chapter shows that Bouyain’s deployment of heterolanguage, on the one hand, facilitates the global circulation of *Notre étrangère* as “art cinema,” while, on the other, it constitutes a radical gesture by which Bouyain constructs a “utopian spectatorship.”

Chapter 3 focuses on *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, arguing that its politics crucially reside in the linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation stance that characterise the text, resulting in the bold deployment of heterolanguage. *Oscar Wao* was among the first linguistically-hybrid (and markedly so) texts to be published by a mainstream U.S. press (Riverhead Books), and certainly the first unapologetically code-switching novel to win a Pulitzer Prize. I argue that these elements, coupled with the substance of Díaz’s experiment and the politics behind it, make the novel a symbolic act

of recognition and legitimisation of Spanglish as a cultural and linguistic phenomenon. The U.S. version of this *Bildungsroman* is as much about the *Bildung* of its Latino protagonists as it is about the *Bildung* of Spanglish itself. The fictional rendition of Afro-Latino *Bildungen* was also one of Díaz's core projects with *Oscar Wao*, an endeavour that is significantly supported by the use of African American English in the novel.

In "Remaking Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)," I analyse the strategies employed by Cuban-American writer-translator Achy Obejas in her translation of the novel. Her translation of *Oscar Wao* virtually destroys the novel's prominent deployment of heterolanguage. While Obejas's translation enabled the transnational circulation of the novel in Spanish (and importantly, in a non-hegemonic Spanish, i.e. Dominican Spanish), I argue that the decision (hers and others') not to maintain the linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation stance of the source text effectively created a remake. *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* functions as a de-hybridised and Dominicanised (i.e. re-nationalised) remake of its earlier U.S. version. Thinking of *Oscar Wao*'s Spanish translation as a (transnational) remake creates the possibility of giving recognition to the social and political project that is at the heart of *Oscar Wao*, while also acknowledging the inherent multivalence of texts across contexts.

Finally, **chapter 4** examines the English translation of *Pour sûr* (2011), France Daigle's thirteenth novel and boldest literary experiment with the Chiac language to date. The publication of the novel by Boréal, a mainstream Montreal press with a strong presence in the French market, creates the conditions for the novel's prominent use of "uncushioned" (Torres, "In the Contact Zone" 79) Chiac to constitute heterolanguage for

most of its target audience. The novel thus lends support, poetically and through metacommentary, to the Chiac language, in the context of its stigmatisation and minoritisation, both in Canada and in the wider Francophone world. In 2013, the novel was translated into English by Robert Majzels and published by the small Toronto-based House of Anansi, whose mandate it is to publish Canadian authors and whose distribution base is primarily Canadian. This suggests that the translation was meant to enable the sub-national circulation of the novel between the Franco-Canadian and the Anglo-Canadian audiences. Majzels, Daigle's long-time translator, used various strategies to resist the normalising drives of conventional translation practices, going as far as inventing a non-normative English inspired by Newfoundlansese and Cape Breton Industrial to reflect Daigle's conscious decision to use Chiac in a radically playful way in *Pour sûr*.

In "From Canada to ... Canada? 'Sub-dubbing' Chiac in France Daigle's *Pour sûr* (2011)," I analyse some of Majzels's strategies and motivations to preserve the radical potential of heterolanguage in his translation, arguing that his overall gesture constitutes a form of "sub-dubbing." I argue that Majzels's translation constitutes a "sub-dubbing" of Chiac (i.e. a re-voicing that leaves key traces of the source text). This kind of innovative gesture not only enables the (trans)national circulation of the novel, but also makes possible an awareness and recognition of the source text's linguistic specificities and politics, across languages and across the Canadian cultural scene.

Chapter 1

Trailers/Filters: Untranslated Indigenous Languages in Transnational Latin American Cinema

In the article “Paratext and Digitized Media” (2013), Birke and Christ, echoing Gérard Genette’s notion of the “paratext,” effectively sum up the concept’s main heuristic value. From a functional point of view, the paratext organises a text’s relationship with its potential and actual audience. The *raison d’être* of the paratext is the text itself; and, as such, it reveals how an artistic project negotiates its existence and circulation through commodifying channels. As Birke and Christ also note, the paratext

focuses attention on how an abstract entity like a text is always presented in a specific form, which is affected by historically and socially determined modes of production and reception. It brings into view the question of how readings are circumscribed by factors that are usually seen as marginal (or even external) to the text, and it supplies a vocabulary to talk about these aspects. (66)

This chapter focuses on paratexts as crucial mediating processes, specifically addressing the role of film trailers (or previews). As Lisa Kernan indicates in *Coming Attractions* (2004), the trailer can be understood as “a brief film text that usually displays images from a specific feature film while asserting its excellence, and that is created for the purpose of projecting in theaters to promote a film’s theatrical release” (1). While Kernan’s definition (focused on the Hollywood context) emphasises theatrical distribution, many trailers are made without the clear telos of theatrical release in mind. In any event, trailers remain promotional paratexts. As such, they are tied to a set of

rhetorical strategies that effectively interpret and characterise the films they construct, at the same time as they postulate audience desire, in order to facilitate the films' circulation.

One crucial element about film trailers is that as primary facilitators of transnational circulation, they establish frames and filters through which viewers start interpreting a film, *before* they even encounter the film and, actually, *whether or not* they do end up engaging with it at all. As Jonathan Gray puts it in *Show Sold Separately* (2010), before we actually encounter the film itself, “we have already begun to decode it and to preview its meanings and effects” (3). A trailer attempts to promote and create the film as a “meaningful entity for ‘viewers’ even before they become viewers, or even if they never become viewers” (Gray 18). The way a trailer manages prominent elements of and about the film can reveal the assumptions made about the target audience's expectations. For films that prominently deploy heterolanguage, the ways in which a trailer deals with this crucial element in promoting the film already begins to frame/shape the meanings and importance of heterolanguage for the viewer *before* she encounters the actual text. This chapter foregrounds the importance of trailers as prime mediating processes in the transnational circulation of Latin American films that markedly deploy heterolanguage.

Multilingualism in Transnational Latin American Cinema

A significant portion of the multilingualism in today's Latin American cinema implicates indigenous communities. As recent films, such as *Salvando al soldado Pérez* (Beto Gómez, 2011, Mexico), *I am from Chile* (Gonzalo Díaz, 2013, Chile), *Guten Tag Ramón* (Jorge

Ramírez-Suárez, 2013, Mexico-Germany), and *La Salada* (Juan Martín Hsu, 2014, Argentina) exemplify, a multilingualism grounded in stories of migration and global mobility is also very much present in Latin American cinema. Nevertheless, colonialism has transformed multilingualism into a pervasive societal condition in most Latin American countries, a situation that has had an extensive and profound impact on the region's cinema. As is the case in many countries, nation-building in Latin America has also involved forced and unequal cohabitation between marginalised indigenous communities and the dominant descendants of the European settlers who colonised these territories. As a result, many Latin American filmmakers mobilise the ensuing multilingualism to register the consequences of this unequal cohabitation and, sometimes, to offer powerful critiques of what Aníbal Quijano has called the coloniality of power. Language as a plot point and multilingual dialogue tracks have thus been important resources for filmmakers who wish to highlight the varied ways in which the coloniality of power continues to affect Latin American societies to this day in the form of lingering social and racial stratification, class privilege, dispossession, cultural domination and/or differential cultural capital, clashing articulations of modernity, and so on. It is also possible to discern in the region's cinema, a trend of multilingual films that not only make use of indigenous languages, but also leave them untranslated.

This chapter examines the trailers made around the transnational circulation of two Latin American films that belong to this trend: Diego Quemada-Díez's *La jaula de oro* (Mexico-Spain, 2013) and Juan Carlos Valdivia's *Zona Sur* (Bolivia, 2009). These multilingual films share the prominent use of an untranslated indigenous language

(respectively Tzotzil and Aymara), and they both address topics of high national pertinence using an art-cinema mode of narration that has facilitated their global circulation. The way trailers deal with these film's deployment of heterolanguage as part of their global circulation and marketing sheds light on the negotiation between the national and the global that is a prime feature of contemporary transnational Latin American cinema.

Transnational Latin American Cinema—Inward/Outward Configuration

As Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie note in *The Cinema of Small Nations* (2007), globalisation (in the form of neoliberal economic and political pressures) has forced many filmmakers and national film industries into a greater dependency on external markets. Orientation towards a global as well as a national audience, out of necessity or as a means to increase profits, is what makes a significant portion of today's Latin American productions transnational. This certainly includes the films which this chapter focuses on.

At the same time, the institutional and financial transnational arrangements that support much cinematic production in contemporary Latin America favour, as Hjort and Petrie put it, a potentially “centrifugal or centripetal momentum in terms of national engagement,” or “local colour” (10). This has been linked to the emergence of a “globalised art-house film aesthetic” and a reinforcement of territorial markers such as land and language as a means to “successfully” juxtapose the local and the global (Falicov 260; Finnegan 30). Cinematic production can be oriented either outwards for consumption in a wider and sometimes global arena, or inwards for consumption by a

primarily domestic audience, or both. This inward/outward impulse, along with its institutional-financial ramifications, is thus key to understanding most of the Latin American cinema that circulates outside of the subcontinent today. This chapter articulates the place of heterolanguage (in the form of untranslated indigenous languages) in this inward/outward configuration, considering *Zona Sur* and *La jaula de oro* as two emblematic films of this trend.

***Zona Sur*—Context**

The title of *Zona Sur* (Southern District) refers to the suburb which has for many years sheltered the wealthy, mestizo-criollo élite of La Paz, Bolivia. In contrast with the spatial distribution of wealth in most Latin American cities, in La Paz the rich live in the lower, southern area, while the poor have traditionally concentrated in El Alto. But in the 2000s, this was slowly beginning to turn upside down, as the film's vivid portrait of the last crumbling days of an upper-class *Zona Sur* family reveals. The film offers a powerful snapshot of and commentary on the restructuration of the social pyramid that was starting to occur three years after the first indigenous president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, came to power. In *Zona Sur*, there are various scenes in which Wilson and Marcelina, the indigenous staff of the house in which most of the film is set, speak Aymara. The rest of the well-to-do members of the household they work for only speak Spanish. In the initial Spanish version of the film, Valdivia chose not to provide translation for the many scenes in which Aymara is used. This deployment of heterolanguage emphasises the distance and asymmetries of power between the Spanish-speaking Euro-Bolivian characters and

the Aymara-speaking indigenous protagonists after more than four hundred years of “cohabitation.” It also highlights the socio-economics of diglossia: the Aymara characters have been “employed” by the family as domestic workers for decades (although now, due to the family’s crumbling economic status, they have not been paid for months). In addition, the use of heterolanguage signals a flipped linguistic privilege under Evo Morales’s newly-elected indigenist government. Centuries of Euro-Bolivian domination led to the requirement to be multilingual for the Aymara-speaking characters, which the film now clearly presents as an advantage on their side and not the other way around. It is important to note that in the non-Spanish-language versions of the film, subtitles are provided for both the Aymara and Spanish dialogue, thus cancelling the Spanish-language version’s initial deployment of heterolanguage.

***La jaula de oro*—Context**

La jaula de oro (trans. The Golden Dream, lit. The Golden Cage) follows four teenagers on their journey from a Guatemalan slum to the United States in search of better opportunities. Having left their community, Juan, Sara (who, to avoid extra dangers on such a perilous expedition, attempts to pass as male, using the name “Osvaldo”), and Samuel proceed to travel through Mexico on their way to the American border. Early in their journey, in the southern state of Chiapas, they meet Chauk, an indigenous teenager. Chauk speaks only Tzotzil, a language none of the other Spanish-speaking protagonists know. Despite Chauk’s centrality to the story, Quemada-Díez chose not to translate the Tzotzil. This deployment of heterolanguage serves to underscore the mestizo racism

towards Chauk, the Tzotzil-speaking indigenous character. It also has the effect of making the contemporary presence of a Mexican indigenous person visible in and of itself and as part of the context of undocumented youth migration from Central America and Mexico to the United States. In addition, heterolanguage reverses the linguistic privilege that normally exists in Hispanoamerica. Juan, Samuel, and especially Sara endeavour to learn to speak with Chauk as much as he attempts to learn to speak with them. In this sense, heterolanguage provides an opportunity to present a mestizo-indigenous dialogue and relationship that is not merely or even primarily based on assimilation to the dominant regional language (Spanish). The film equally emphasises that the mestizo characters do not speak Tzotzil and that Chauk does not speak Spanish. The burden of translation is shared. It should be noted, that unlike *Zona Sur*, no form of extra-diegetic translation (e.g. subtitles, voiceover narration, etc.) is provided for any of the versions of the film.

The Trailers—Overview

Both films in their original versions present numerous and important scenes in untranslated Aymara and Tzotzil. This is reflected in two of the three “original” trailers that exist for *Zona Sur*: Trailer A is completely in untranslated Aymara, Trailer B has no dialogue, and Trailer C features a portion in untranslated Aymara. The English and German subtitled versions of the same trailers *all* translate the Aymara dialogues. Trailer D was later edited for *Zona Sur*’s UK distributor Axiom Films. This trailer remixes the film’s three “original” trailers, and it has one line of Aymara, which is translated. The

subtitled film festival copy of *Zona Sur* translated all the Aymara dialogues for the audience, as is also done in the two known DVDs of the film (German and British versions). My research shows that no Spanish version provides subtitles, including the one available on YouTube.

This overview reveals that those watching the film in its “Spanish” version (Bolivians and other Spanish-speaking audiences worldwide) did not have access to subtitles for the Aymara dialogues. Those who watched a non-Spanish version had subtitles for both the Spanish and Aymara dialogues. This means that the management of heterolanguage in all trailers except Trailer B did prepare each audience for the kind of viewing experience that it was likely to have in terms of language accessibility.

As for *La jaula de oro*, multiple trailers also exist. Trailer X has been used in most countries, including France, Spain, and the United States, where it was adopted by the indie distributor Double Exposure to promote limited theatrical release and by online platforms such as HBO Now, iTunes, Amazon VOD, and Google Play. Trailer X makes heterolanguage and non-translation central elements of the interpretation it provides of the film. Cinépolis Distribución, owned by Cinépolis, the fourth biggest exhibition circuit in the world and the largest outside the United States, offered the film a wide theatrical distribution in Mexico (for a Mexican film), opening with one hundred copies. The trailer used in Mexico (Trailer Y) is completely different from other trailers: it does not make even a passing reference to the centrality of heterolanguage to the film. It is also the most fast-paced and “conventional” of all trailers, with a very discernible three-act structure, focused on action, and sweeping orchestral music to heighten the suspense at the end.

Peccadillo Pictures' UK version (Trailer Z) is also faster-paced and more action-oriented; it is the only trailer I found that translates the one line spoken in the trailer by the indigenous character.

To sum up, the management of heterolanguage in the Mexican trailer (Y) concealed the centrality of heterolanguage and non-translation in the film. The British trailer (Z) minimises this centrality and camouflages non-translation precisely by translating all dialogues, including Chauk's line. Trailer X, the most widely deployed trailer in the transnational trajectory of the film, prepared all audiences for a viewing experience in which heterolanguage would play a significant role.

The management of heterolanguage in the trailers surveyed in this section implies important choices and negotiations. In what follows, I flesh out some of the implications and possible explanations for them.

Financing and Production Schemes

Zona Sur was financed independently of any film funds⁹; and it was produced by Cinenómada, Valdivia's own production company. In an interview with the Mexican magazine *OcioDF*, Valdivia states:

“[*Zona Sur*] is a risky film, and I knew I would have to make it in an independent manner. It is sometimes necessary to protect creativity by making a film in a certain intimacy, without opening up the process too much. When you make a film, sometimes because it is costly, you have to open up the process to a lot of people. This time I did not want to make a film in that way.” (my translation)

⁹ Valdivia was sponsored by Entel, Bolivia's main telecom company, to make the film. In exchange, he directed a series of commercials for the company (“Valdivia”).

For this reason, Valdivia says in an interview with the Bolivian show *La mala palabra* that he decided to make the film with a significantly smaller budget than his previous films, to be able to do it just the way he wanted without making concessions on his envisioned project. He also stated that he did not think about ticket sales when making it, but that he would like to at least recuperate the film's production cost.

La jaula de oro, on the other hand, seems to be at the exact opposite of the production-financing spectrum for transnational Latin American cinema. It was an Ibermedia co-production between Spain and Mexico, with tax incentives for private investments in Mexican cinema providing the bulk of the Mexican portion of the film's \$2.5 million total budget. The director, Diego Quemada-Díez, received Screenplay Development funds in 2008 from the French Ciné-Sud Promotion; and in 2010, he received one of the Cinéfondation awards to participate in *L'atelier* at the Cannes Film Festival.

It is intriguing to me that Valdivia's *Zona Sur*, the self-financed indie film project "without concessions," ended up having such an all-or-nothing approach vis-à-vis heterolanguage: Spanish-language trailers and film—no subtitles; non-Spanish-language trailers and film—subtitles. In his interview with *La mala palabra*, Valdivia indicates that he expected that Aymara would constitute heterolanguage for the majority of Bolivians who would see his film. By not providing subtitles, he sought to generate heterolanguage, mainly, as he explains, to highlight the reversal of the linguistic privilege I mentioned before. Heterolanguage for Valdivia serves to illustrate the erosion of Euro-Bolivian privilege as the balance of power shifted under Evo Morales's government. He also

explains that the deployment of untranslated Aymara operates to privilege the knowledge of those who can understand the language. Later in the interview, Valdivia is asked why he decided to provide subtitles for the trailers (and the film) in English, to which he responds: “I think that a spectator from another country needs a bit more information” (*La mala palabra*). His professed rationale is interesting for two main reasons: 1) the information provided by the subtitles is actually not particularly vital for context; and 2) the Spanish-language version was distributed not only in Bolivia. This means that all (non-Aymara-speaking) Spanish speakers, Bolivian or not, found themselves in the same situation vis-à-vis the untranslated Aymara dialogues. Valdivia had a great deal of freedom with his project: financially and production-wise (the film was produced by his own production company). It seems like he did not have to convince anybody but himself. He probably did not take the decision to deploy heterolanguage across all trailers and film versions of *Zona Sur* because he seemed to envision his political project for doing so as nationally specific (despite the transnational circulation of the Spanish-language version).

From a global marketing point of view, it seems that *La jaula de oro*, a typical co-production with countless mediators and stake-holders, was able, conversely, to opt for what seems like a riskier marketing strategy: heterolanguage was foregrounded and maintained across the vast majority of trailers and across all film versions.

Narrative dimension

From a textual point of view, *Zona Sur*'s characters all share the ability to communicate in one common language, i.e. Spanish. Aymara is used only in scenes where Wilson and Marcelina, the *empleados*, speak among themselves or in the presence of Andrés, the little boy. Contrastingly, in *La jaula de oro*, the characters do not have any language in common. Quemada-Díez auditioned actors to play Chauk in Chiapas to find an actor with no "real life" knowledge of Spanish. In the case of *Zona Sur*, as soon as subtitles are introduced heterolanguage as plot point is almost completely diluted, except from Andrés' numerous and insistent "Y qué te dijo?" remarks when Wilson and Marcelina speak Aymara in his presence. In the case of *La jaula de oro*, with the main protagonists not sharing a language in common, the film is more significantly constructed around heterolanguage and its thematisation, in a way that cannot easily be diluted, even with subtitles. Heterolanguage is central to *La jaula de oro*; it is entirely embedded in its narrative. This might help explain why editing it out of the film's trailers did not seem a viable option to the film's distributors (with the notable exception of Peccadillo Pictures—UK version). In contrast, heterolanguage is not as fused with the *mise-en-scène* and the narrative development of *Zona Sur*. Editing it out of the trailers was therefore much simpler. In addition, once edited out of the film (through the addition of subtitles), it makes little sense to have the trailer foreground an element that the viewer will no longer find in the actual film.

Genre and Marketability

La jaula de oro has been interpreted as a road movie-thriller, immigration drama-thriller, tragicomedia migratoria, among other genres. According to *Variety*'s chief international correspondent John Hopewell, the film "like the films of a growing new breed of filmmakers in Latin America, rather than hard-core arthouse, leverage[s] a crossover style that mixes more mainstream Hollywood tropes with the social and political sub-texts that have traditionally distinguished international Latin American filmmaking" ("Jaula"). As for *Zona Sur*, the absence of such "crossover style" and of easy genre categorisation, coupled with Valdivia's expressed desire or necessity to at least recover his investment in the film's production, may help explain markedly dissimilar national and global marketing strategies. As a result, *Zona Sur*'s Spanish-language trailers (and film) offer a radically different proposal than the subsequent subtitled versions, precisely due to the management of heterolanguage.

Heterolanguage—National and Global Marketability

La jaula de oro's trailers suggest an overall willingness on the part of its international distributors not to conceal the centrality of heterolanguage in the film. A majority of the trailers framed, with various degrees of emphasis, the non-translation dimension at the same time as they foregrounded Chauk's narrative significance and the mestizo racism that affects his journey in particular. The trailer-as-paratext focuses our attention on how the film was "presented in a specific form, which is affected by historically and socially determined modes of production and reception" (Birke and Christ 66). It is thus possible

to conclude that most of *La jaula de oro*'s international distributors did not believe heterolanguage would hinder the film's global appeal. This is consistent with the film's affiliation with the category of global art cinema and its infrastructures (i.e. its financing, production, and distribution modes), a cinema whose niche audience is considered to seek out and/or appreciate the challenges offered by heterolanguage and other disorienting stylistic features.

The success of *La jaula de oro* in its own national market (Mexico) tells a different story. The film was released in Mexican theatres a year after its premiere at Cannes and after a year of touring the film festival circuit and European theatres. It is somewhat striking to me that the Mexican trailer makes no reference whatsoever to the important awards garnered by the film in the year it toured the global film festival circuit before its theatrical release in Mexico. *La jaula de oro* is the most awarded film (nationally *and* internationally) in the history of Mexican cinema ("Premiada cinta"). The Mexican trailer's lack of attention to this dimension is an intriguing countertrend considering 1) how other paratexts (i.e. posters and trailers) interpreted the film and 2) how internationally successful art cinema films are typically marketed to domestic audiences. This intriguing detail, coupled with the Mexican theatrical poster's unspecific and marginal use of the phrase "La película que ha cautivado a la crítica mundial," seems to suggest that Cinépolis did not want to emphasise the film's previous reception as art cinema across the globe. This aligns quite well with the trailer's concealment of the centrality of heterolanguage and non-translation to the film, features which are most

likely to be associated with art cinema modes of narration and, more generally, what Falicov has called a “globalised art-house film aesthetic” (260).

In Mexico, the film sold 250, 000 tickets, and it grossed \$1 million US (Hopewell, “Morelia”; Gutiérrez). To provide a point of comparison, this is 25 times more than Carlos Reygadas’s critically-acclaimed *Post Tenebras Lux* (Marín). According to *Variety*, the film’s success (for a Mexican feature) even convinced Cinépolis to take an interest in theatrically releasing 4 to 5 Mexican films a year (Hopewell, “Morelia”). As the Mexican trailer suggests, Cinépolis did not seem to believe in the national marketability of Chauk’s untranslated Tzotzil. The film, however, did attract a significant audience in Mexican commercial theaters. The film also sold the most tickets at the Cineteca, Mexico City’s main arthouse theater, which is partly dedicated to showing Mexican productions (IMCINE). Fans’ and critics’ reception of the film in Mexico emphasises this success against the negative perception of yet another film about immigration (cf. Miquirray, for instance). To transcend this saturation and become a national and international success, *La jaula de oro* offered other appeals. The film’s management of heterolanguage and the use of non-actors are two devices that likely supported the film’s “sobering bedrock realism” (Hopewell, “Jaula de oro”).

Conclusion

When it comes to approaching the impact of transnational circulation on the poetics and politics of heterolanguage, the paratextual analysis of film trailers offers an important window into the complex negotiations such circulation entails. Trailers promote and

interpret the meanings of a film for different audiences *before* they even see the film. Their analysis is crucial because they have, so to speak, first say in shaping and framing the significance of a film's prominent deployment of heterolanguage. Such analysis also brings out the assumptions made about the expectations, knowledge, and desires of different audiences. Heterolanguage in a film text is part of an important nexus of elements: its presence or absence, its high or low profile are always negotiated in relation to other crucial elements about the film. These include its modes of financing, its production schemes, its distribution scales and channels, its narrative, its style, its genre categorisation, and so on.

By analysing the trailer as a framing paratext, this chapter has highlighted different scales and forms of transnational Latin American cinema. Through *Zona Sur* and *La jaula de oro*, I have examined how the cultural and language politics, as well as the thematic, stylistic, and institutional specificities of the region's cinema influence its management of heterolanguage and vice versa. The differences explored by looking at emblematic yet dissimilar case studies foreground a conceptualisation of the mediating processes that shape transnational circulation as multidirectional (not necessarily oriented from the national to the global) and multifactored.

In recent years, there have been various calls to develop the paradigm of transnational cinema in the direction of research inquiries centred on language and language politics (Mamula and Patti 6; Higbee and Lim 17-9; Shaw and de la Garza 4). As film and media scholars more actively pursue this promising agenda, paratextual analysis is likely to further its methodological value in the field. Heterolanguage, in turn, can

provide for a fruitful entry point into important questions about the inward/outward mode of address of transnational Latin American cinema, among others.

Chapter 2

“Francophone” Sub-Saharan African Cinema as Global Art Cinema: Heterolanguage and “Utopian Spectatorship”

In a residential courtyard in Bamako, Mali, citizens have taken proceedings against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. A trial is taking place. One after the other, witnesses vent their anger on the jury, expose a global economic scheme, point the finger at international financial institutions for perpetuating Africa’s debt crisis.

You already know. Such things only happen in movies.

This film is *Bamako*. It was directed by Mauritanian-Malian director Abderrahmane Sissako. It premiered at Cannes in 2006. Early in the trial and in the film, Zegué Bamba, a peasant from Southern Mali, comes up to the stand to address the jury. In French, the jury asks him to uncover his head, only to immediately dismiss him, saying his turn to talk will come. The court interpreter translates the jury’s words to the man in Bambara. Back and forth. Back and forth. The subtitle tells me that Bamba says: “My words remain within me,” before he goes back to his seat in the audience. The trial goes on. The witnesses speak to power in French, or their Bambara statements are translated into French by the Malian court interpreter. An hour and a half into the film and several days into the trial, the silenced man still has not been summoned back to the stand by the jury. Suddenly, a chant emerges from the assembly. Zegué Bamba, the silenced man, bursts into words, chanting vigorously as he proceeds to take his place on the stand once

again. The pain in his voice, palpable. Shivering reproaches in his tone, discernible. Close-ups on the faces of those around him: deeply moved eyes, compassionate traits, astonished expressions. Nobody dares interrupt him. Not the jury. Not the guard. Not the lawyers. Nobody. In the audience, in the nearby homes, in the street, people are listening. The man's voice eventually vanishes, absorbed by the surrounding silence. The afternoon resumes. Life in the courtyard presses forward.

The most poignant scene of the film in untranslated Senufo.
Before a Bambara-speaking courtyard audience.
Before a French-speaking jury.
Before your eyes and your ears.

If you had been sitting in the screening room at Cannes when *Bamako* premiered, you would likely have been part of the majority of the audience for whom the importance of this scene was underscored by the fact that it constituted heterolanguage to them. That it was inaccessible to them. To the French-speaking jury. To the Bambara-speaking courtyard audience.

Alongside many institutional struggles to exist, thematically and stylistically, the work of Sub-Saharan African filmmakers like Abderrahmane Sissako brings to the fore, as this scene from *Bamako* illustrates, a preoccupation with language, representation, and the ability to speak and to be heard. The prominent deployment and thematisation of heterolanguage is one of the ways in which this preoccupation has been brought to the screen by Sub-Saharan African filmmakers. But what films like *Bamako* are also drawing our attention to is another very important set of questions: Who is speaking and who is listening? Who is the audiospectator on the reception side of Sub-Saharan African cinema? What does it mean that the culmination of a film like *Bamako* is to be found in a

scene that will seldom engage the ears of those who can understand it? On a symbolic level, how does *Bamako*, a film that poses the acute structural problems of African countries in the context of a global economy, also provide us with a particularly apt window into these structural issues as they affect the political economy of Sub-Saharan African cinema?

In this chapter, I examine these crucial questions in relation to the category of global art cinema and its infrastructures (i.e. its financing, production, and distribution modes). Specifically, I consider how global art cinema, as it mediates the transnational circulation of Sub-Saharan African films, shapes the politics of heterolanguage in films like *Bamako*. This film is a low-budget Malian-French-American co-production that was premiered at a major film festival (Cannes), and whose success on the film festival scene secured its subsequent distribution in the West. As such, *Bamako* is emblematic of the trajectory of many Sub-Saharan African films that circulate as art cinema, mainly outside of Africa. As Galt and Schoonover indicate in *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories* (2010), “for most countries, art cinema provides the only institutional context in which films can find audiences abroad,” mostly through the global film festival and art-house circuits (7). Nowhere is the dependency on the art cinema infrastructure more staggering than in the context of Francophone Sub-Saharan African cinema (a category I define later).

After contextualising Francophone Sub-Saharan African cinema and its relationship to the category of global art cinema, I analyse a specific filmic example: Sarah Bouyain’s *Notre étrangère* (2010, Burkina Faso/France). The stylistically grounded

thematization of heterolanguage and the direct deployment of heterolanguage (in the form of untranslated Dioula) are central to this film in ways that are rarely seen. As the example of *Bamako* already suggests, *Notre étrangère* is emblematic of a broader, historically prominent tendency to draw attention to language and the politics of representation through heterolanguage in Francophone Sub-Saharan African cinema. I am interested in asking how global art cinema, at the same time as its infrastructure enables the circulation of films like *Notre étrangère*, shapes their use of heterolanguage? What does thinking about this film from the point of view of circulation allow us to understand about the politics of heterolanguage in this context. What kind of cultural texts do films like *Notre étrangère* become when viewed by speakers of the untranslated African languages they prominently deploy? What happens when we add to this equation the fact that this so seldom happens? Overall, this chapter shows that the deployment of heterolanguage, on the one hand, facilitates the global circulation of *Notre étrangère* as “art cinema.” On the other hand, it also constitutes a radical gesture by which the filmmaker (Bouyain) constructs a “utopian spectatorship.”

I

Utopian Spectatorship

As noted by film theorist Philip Rosen in “Notes on Art Cinema and the Emergence of Sub-Saharan Film” (2010), “the lack of an African distribution-exhibition network that would feed back capital into local production” and the challenges faced by initiatives to

“establish nationally supported film industries or regional production cooperatives” has caused most African films to “achieve limited distribution, often in international festivals and specialty exhibition house circuits outside of Africa” (257). Thus, the Francophone Sub-Saharan African films that do circulate today generally depend on global art cinema’s infrastructure and audience. Due to these structural circumstances, the relative lack of an African audience has been a fundamental problem for many filmmakers, and especially for those committed to addressing the political and social issues of Africa. As Rosen further indicates:

in combination with the desire for connection to the people, implanted in African cinema at its emergence, this may suggest something about some of the textual distinctiveness of [African] films. The filmmakers have had to make films for an international audience in the art cinema tradition, while simultaneously aiming at an African audience. That split means a film would be addressed to a spectator who is not there, but is much desired: an African spectator open to a film’s interrogation of African life, history, and subjects, and also to narrative innovations supposedly rooted in African history and culture. (260)

For Rosen, the negotiation of a “utopian spectatorship” has therefore been a defining feature of Francophone Sub-Saharan African cinema to this day.

In this chapter, I consider the role that heterolanguage plays in the negotiation of this “utopian spectatorship” by analysing *Notre étrangère*. Before doing this, however, I situate the postcolonial African cinematic context that has made this film possible.

A Note on “Francophone” Sub-Saharan Africa

This chapter focuses on the cinematic context that pertains to “Francophone Sub-Saharan African” cinema (henceforth FSSA cinema). It is important to note that the term has more socio-cultural than linguistic valence. Indeed, despite its status as an official language in

about twenty African countries, French is far from being the most commonly spoken language in the majority of these countries. In fact, a brief survey of available data from the *World Factbook* and the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* reveals that approximately 15 to 40% of the population in most FSSA countries can speak French.

The term FSSA cinema, the most internationally recognised African cinema, thus encompasses the cinemas of African nations that share, to a certain extent, a common historical and sociopolitical heritage due to their status as former French colonies. To cite but one example, most of these nations still struggle with the colonial legacy of arbitrarily established borders and its far-reaching consequences on their societies' ethnic (and linguistic) composition. In addition, the history of FSSA films shares some commonalities, in part due to the influence of French (financing) policy, in part because the countries face similar conditions of production, distribution, and exhibition (Rosen 257). Finally, as the prominence of heterolanguage in FSSA films suggests, a "regional logic" is also discernible at the level of style and genres (Hoefert de Turégano, "Featuring"). In this chapter, I use FSSA cinema as a socio-cultural label.

Multilingualism, Colonialism, Diglossia

Colonial domination because it is total and tends to oversimplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, by the banishment of the natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society, by expropriation, and by the systematic enslaving of men and women.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

As many postcolonial studies scholars have illustrated, language and language hierarchies are among the elements of the cultural life of a conquered people that colonial domination, in Fanon's words, "very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion." (236) Under French colonial rule, the French language became the African colonies' language of politics, administration, education, commerce, and so on. This imposition had the effect of conferring a lot of prestige or "symbolic power," as Bourdieu terms it, on the language of the coloniser (103). As a result, the colonised people were required to adopt and/or adjust to the coloniser's language for purposes of social organisation and mobility, without the reverse occurring. Colonialism has thus historically been one of the most important vectors of diglossia within the linguistic domains in which it has erupted. Diglossia exists when two (or more) languages coexist in a speech community, and where domains of linguistic behaviour are parcelled out and (generally) hierarchically ranked. Diglossia can involve two languages that are recognised as related, but it can also involve two different or unrelated linguistic codes that coexist in a speech community (Edwards, "Sociolinguistics" 81).

In a process thoroughly described by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986), under colonialism, the colonised's languages are devalued, progressively relegated to limited spheres of human life, and sometimes even outwardly prohibited. In any case, these languages are generally quickly dissociated from social prestige and prospects of upward mobility. The coloniser's language, on the contrary, comes to dominate many areas of the public sphere (eventually

seeping into the private) and quickly becomes “the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom” (Ngũgĩ 439).

Once established, the kind of linguistic compartmentalisation that diglossia supposes generally persists long *after* colonialism, especially as many decolonised nations around the world have as their official (or de facto) language(s) the language(s) of their former coloniser(s). This is certainly the case in FSSA countries today. Therefore, not only are FSSA countries thoroughly multilingual because of their diverse ethnic composition, but the diglossia introduced through colonialism adds yet another layer of linguistic complexity to the everyday life of their citizens. As a result, most speakers “exist in a constant linguistic flux, creating an everyday awareness of the historicity of language” (Armes 9).

Decolonisation and the Emergence of FSSA Cinema

FSSA realities are indeed multilingual and diglossic, and this has often been reflected in the region’s cinema. FSSA cinema was born out of the struggle for independence, which most FSSA countries obtained in 1960, and the ensuing decolonisation and nation-building momentum. In 1955, while colonial administrations and the Décret Laval of 1934¹⁰ still did not allow Africans to shoot images in the colonies, the first Black African

¹⁰ In “Sub-Saharan African Cinemas: The French Connection” (2005), Teresa Hoefert de Turégano indicates that an examination of the decree (available at the Archives nationales d’outre mer, Aix-en-Provence, France) reveals that this “well-known aspect of France’s film policy in its colonies [...] legislated French control over all films shown in the colonies, imposing the requirement to obtain an authorisation from the Lieutenant-Governor of the colony for any filming carried out in the territory. In practical terms, it prevented Africans in the French territories of Africa from filming there” (72).

film, *Afrique sur Seine*, was shot in Paris by Beninese film pioneer Paulin Soumanou Vieyra (Barlet).

Paulin Soumanou Vieyra (1925-1987) was born in Porto Novo, Benin (former Dahomey) when it was still a French colony. He was the first African to graduate from the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris, 1954. He then went on to direct, with a collective of African students, *Afrique-sur-Seine*. With *Afrique-sur-Seine* and his graduation film, *C'était il y a quatre ans* (1954), Vieyra established a thematic foundation for African cinema, raising themes such as the cultural identity of Africans living in France, (post)colonial alienation, and the complexities of African modernity. These themes would later become a crucial nexus in much of African cinema, making Vieyra both a technical and topical pioneer. In 1956, even before Senegal obtained its independence from France (1960), Léopold Sédar Senghor, who would become the country's first president, sent for Vieyra and made him the head of the Actualités sénégalaises. This film institute was in charge of making, receiving and preserving the visual memory of much of the decolonisation period. Vieyra also became the first director of the Senegalese Office for Radio Broadcasting and Television (ORTS) and the Science & Information Technology Research Centre (CESTI), laying the foundation for Senegalese television and initiating the training of the first generation of African filmmakers. A close friend of Ousmane Sembène, known as “the father of African cinema,” Vieyra gave him the camera and film stock that would make his first short, *Borom Sarret* (1963), possible (Vieyra, *Afrique-sur-Seine*, 1955). *Borom Sarret* is also the first film shot in Sub-Saharan

Africa, marking a crucial step in the re-appropriation of cinematic representations of Africans by Africans themselves.

The anti-colonial movements in Africa and the subsequent era of decolonisation thus shaped a nascent FSSA cinema. Many African artists and intellectuals were eager to take Fanon up on his words when he discussed, in his 1959 address to the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Rome, the responsibility of Africans vis-à-vis the struggle for liberation. For Fanon, national liberation opens up the possibility for the nation “to play its part on the stage of history,” a hard-won sovereignty that intellectuals and artists have a responsibility to help consolidate, primarily in the cultural realm.

For Fanon, the struggle for liberation is an elaborate cultural phenomenon that involves “the breakup of the old strata of culture, a shattering which becomes increasingly fundamental,” and that leads to “the renewing of forms of expression and the rebirth of the imagination” (245). The struggle for freedom will not restore the national culture to “its former values and shapes” because “it aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men” (Fanon 246). The immediate consequence for culture, as the most elaborate “expression of national consciousness,” is the necessity of its renewal: “a new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism” (Fanon 246). Not only is it the case for Fanon that national liberation from colonialism “supplies the maximum of conditions necessary for the development and aims of culture,” but the consequences of a failed cultural renaissance are also very profound: “Every independent nation in Africa where colonialism is still entrenched is an encircled nation, a nation which is fragile and in permanent danger” (246-7).

Subsequently, the most urgent task awaiting the African (intellectual/artist) at the time was “to build up his nation” (Fanon 247). The colonial situation left African “national” cultures deprived of both national and state support. Decolonisation therefore had deep cultural ramifications and “true” nation building was thought to be rooted in the renaissance and support of a national culture that under colonialism had been suppressed, overlooked, dismissed, and/or simply given no support. The history of postcolonial Africa would unfortunately somewhat confirm Fanon’s fears of a failed (or impossible?) cultural renaissance, but his was nonetheless a powerful message that was echoed in a variety of circles at the time, with very concrete consequences for an emerging FSSA cinema.

A Postcolonial Cinema

As Philip Rosen indicates, for many FSSA filmmakers “the processes and promises of independence included a genuinely African culture for a modern age” (253). Film history up to the era of decolonisation had coincided with the high tide of colonialism. This meant that Africans had been excluded as subjects of filmmaking for its entire history, and had only been the objects of colonising and racialising representations. With independence, as Rosen notes, “a common response among diverse cultural critics and practitioners across the continent was to envision a cinema whose aesthetic proclivities not only reflected realities of African life, culture, and history, but also drew on African cultural and social practices as opposed to those of the former colonizers” (253).

As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o reminds us, a crucial feature of life under the various powers that colonised the African continent (with the exception of today's Ethiopia) was the systematic suppression of national languages and the concurrent (and institutionally reinforced) elevation of the coloniser's language (439). What Ngũgĩ describes is the lasting and acutely felt psychological violence of colonialism inflicted on the colonised subjects as they are progressively taken "further and further from [themselves] to other selves, from [their] world to other worlds" (439). While the process of colonial education is directly invoked by Ngũgĩ as a prime vector of "colonial alienation," any colonial mechanism involving the destruction or deliberate undervaluing of the colonised language and culture also reinforces this alienation (442-3).

In sum, FSSA cinema can be envisioned as a cinema concerned with constructing renewed cultures for new nations; a cinema concerned with decolonising African minds by generating self-images; "a cinema whose aesthetic proclivities not only reflected realities of African life, culture, and history, but also drew on African cultural and social practices as opposed to those of the former colonizers" (Rosen 253). Linguistic anthropologists have long discovered that people's awareness of the language ideologies that make up their environment vary according to contextual factors (Kroskrity 18). FSSA cinema has thus been concerned with representing (multilingual, diglossic) African realities, where the lingering effects of colonialism mean that "language use always carries complex implications" (Armes 9).

Distribution Factors and Stylistic Trends—FSSA as Art Cinema

Stylistically, FSSA cinema has also been shaped by the various norms and institutions that have influenced its circulation since its inception. Fanonian themes are echoed and explicitly referenced throughout “Towards a Third Cinema” (1969), an essay by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino and one that would rapidly become the defining manifesto of “third cinema” as a revolutionary cinematic mode:

The anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the Third World and of their equivalents inside the imperialist countries constitutes today the axis of the world revolution. Third cinema is, in our opinion, the cinema that recognizes in that struggle the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting point—in a word, the decolonization of culture (47).

As has already been established, FSSA cinema emerged as a postcolonial endeavour. The films of the first generations of FSSA filmmakers (especially during the 1960s and 1970s) were very much aligned with the call to decolonise culture. In addition, FSSA films that would ideologically, thematically, and at times stylistically qualify as third cinema are far from being exclusive to these early decades. “Given this schema,” as Rosen writes, “African cinema should have emerged as a third cinema” (256). Nevertheless, as Rosen is quick to note, infrastructurally-speaking, African cinema has mostly circulated as second cinema, or art cinema (256).

Stylistic Features: “Authenticity,” “Africanness,” and “Strong Cultural Identity”

This art cinema infrastructure is well-known to have channelled FSSA films into a “cultural, non-commercial stream,” while at the same time fostering a *cinéma d’auteur*: a film culture based on auteurism (Hoefert de Turégano, “Sub-Saharan African Cinemas”

73).¹¹ Moreover, FSSA cinema's dependence on an international audience and "the reality of a financially and geographically displaced system of production" have contributed to shape the way in which this cinema has been defined and approached (Hoefert de Turégano, "Featuring" 17). The expectation of "authentically African" style/content is one crucial consequence of FSSA cinema's conditions of production and exhibition. This expectation profoundly affects the ways in which FSSA films negotiate how they address their audience, and heterolanguage is a crucial and complex yet often overlooked dimension in this process. "African filmmakers are generally expected to be Africans first and not simply filmmakers as such" (Hoefert de Turégano, "Featuring" 18). The tensions generated by the expectation of "African authenticity," which is itself dependent on the elusive notion of a perceived "Africanness," is further reinforced by a variety of supporting institutions and their policies on FSSA cinema.

The Cinema Bureau¹² is probably the most influential of all such institutions. Created shortly after FSSA nations gained their independence, this institution alone, through a variety of channels, has helped produce an average of ten films every two years since 1963 in the 14 Francophone West African nations (Hoefert de Turégano, "The New

¹¹ French attention to film as a marker of cultural identity with respect to FSSA cinema (and other cinemas) is inextricably related to France's own strategies in the global film market. The crux of France's approach in this regard consists in the cultivation of "quality art cinema," the notion of *cinéma d'auteur*, and the encouragement of strong national cinemas as means to strengthen niche markets and sustain its own advantageous position within them, mostly through financing co-productions that demand collaboration with at least one French producer and, sometimes, the requirement that funds be spent primarily in France. A thorough account of these crucial dimensions is provided in Hoefert de Turégano's *African Cinema and Europe: Close-up on Burkina Faso* (2004) and Anne Jäckel's "The Inter/Nationalism of French Film Policy" (2007).

¹² The Cinema Bureau (Bureau de la coopération cinématographique) was a division of France's Ministry of Cooperation and Development until 1999. As of this 2015, the Ministry became a division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the new title of Direction générale de la Coopération internationale et du Développement –DGCID. The Cinema Bureau is now a part for the Direction de l'audiovisuel extérieur et des techniques de Communication, a branch in the DGCID's hierarchy (Hoefert de Turégano 2005 74).

Politics” 23). Since its creation, the Cinema Bureau’s cinematographic cooperation policy has aimed to develop collaboration with directors from the South and to encourage the production of films with a strong cultural identity component (France Diplomatie; my translation).

The FESPACO is another historically crucial institution; it was initiated in 1969 as a means to provide a specifically pan-African entry into the global film festival circuit. It is the world’s most important film festival on African cinema, taking place biennially in Burkina Faso’s capital city, Ouagadougou. Although it has recently revised its own definition of Africanness,¹³ the FESPACO employs a language very similar to the Cinema Bureau to describe its main criteria for selecting the winning film, i.e. the film that receives the Yennenga Stallion prize (and many of the festival’s other prizes and distinctions):

The Yennenga Stallion is the symbol of supreme consecration for the best cinematographic production of the official selection. It is represented by a woman warrior, seated on a rearing horse and holding a spear. This trophy derives its meaning from the founding myth of the empire of the Mossés, the largest ethnic group in Burkina Faso. Beyond the value of the prize in itself, *the Yennenga Stallion symbolizes African cultural identity, whose vitality filmmakers should contribute to maintain through their creations* (“Étalon de Yennenga,” my translation; my emphasis).

This echoing rhetoric confirms that two of the most vital institutions for FSSA cinema help produce, circulate, and reward films that display “strong African identities” (with the “authenticity” factor being at least *implied* in this defining criterion).

¹³ As of the 2015 edition of the festival, the directors of the films selected for the official competition no longer need to be of an African nationality. This essentially enables directors from the African diaspora to participate in the official competition.

FSSA is thus a cinema that has important socio-cultural and historical reasons to reflect its multilingual, diglossic realities. At the same time, it is a cinema that is rewarded for “authentically” displaying the specificities of its cultural identities. The use of African languages in FSSA cinema can thus crucially support both these “incentives.” In this context, it might seem illogical that FSSA cinema would first emerge in the French language, and that, to this day, so much French is still spoken in films set in FSSA countries, where only a small percentage of the people use French daily.

Borom Sarret (Ousmane Sembène, 1963), the first film to be made in Sub-Saharan Africa, is a case in point here. The film follows a cart driver from the poor outskirts of Dakar as he goes through a day of labour across the city. The voice-over narration is in French, which is odd because it is in the first-person. As the cart driver comments on his encounters with people of different classes and occupations, he obliquely comments on the complexities of a postcolonial context that has solved nothing of his everyday struggles. It is unlikely that the cart driver would have spoken French, as it is implied that he did not receive a formal education.

Paulin Soumanou Vieyra’s *Sindiély* (1964) is the first African short to be made in an African language (Wolof). *Mandabi* (1968), Ousmane Sembène’s fourth film, was the first African feature to be shot in an African language (also Wolof). Moreover, it is the first film to use diglossia as a plot point, to illustrate the disenfranchisement of its protagonist vis-à-vis a corrupt French-speaking Senegalese bureaucracy. That being said, Sembène’s (French) producer imposed the condition of a French version, so the film ended up being shot simultaneously in French, with two final versions released, one in Wolof and French

and the other completely in French (Sanaker 119). This brings us to the financial and technical factors that explain why FSSA films are seldom shot completely in an African language.

Financial and Technical Factors

As noted earlier, FSSA cinema is heavily dependent on international sources of financing, most of which still trace their origins to France via a variety of channels. Historically, most of France's funding has come from the Cinema Bureau and has been allocated to a film director through a French producer (Hoefert de Turégano, "Sub-Saharan African Cinemas" 73). This has contributed to making the co-production model, involving at least one French producer, the most typical mode of production for FSSA cinema. As will be discussed in the second part of this chapter, Bouyain's film also depended on this co-production model. It does not appear as though the Cinema Bureau ever had an explicit French language policy that would prevent FSSA directors from shooting in African national languages. What is certain is that no such rule exists under the Cinema Bureau's current major cinematographic cooperation fund (L'aide aux cinémas du monde, or the World Cinema Fund). What does exist is the requirement that all scripts submitted for application to the fund be available in French (France Diplomatie). That said, since 1999, the Cinema Bureau's policies in support of FSSA cinema have changed to put more emphasis on post-production, with more support for distribution and exhibition. This has translated into more funds being available to sponsored directors for the dubbing or

subtitling of their films, including in languages other than French (Hoefert de Turégano, “Sub-Saharan African Cinemas” 75).

The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), through its Fonds Image de la Francophonie (Francophone Image Fund), has also been a strong financial supporter of FSSA cinema. This fund requires that a sponsored film be shot in French or in any of the African national languages, provided French subtitles are available. The OIF also requires that most of the film be shot in an FSSA country and that the script be available in French (OIF).

Another important source of financial aid for FSSA cinema, one intended for films with a movie theatre release in France, comes from the Centre National du Cinéma et de l’Image Animée (CNC). This fund consists of a pre-production advance of funds, and it can only be granted to a French director or producer for a film whose original version is largely in French. Here again, all the application materials (script, synopsis, director’s notes) have to be submitted in French (CNC).

In sum, while they do not constitute a specific language requirement, the co-production model and the requirement of a French script do constitute a language incentive. Moreover, the cast, crew, or producer of a film may not be willing or have the competency to deal with the shooting and production of a film in one or more African languages. Given the commitment required on many sides (director, producer, actors, crew, etc.), the use of African languages in FSSA cinema thus invariably implicates a purposeful choice, one whose formal and political implications deserve careful attention.

II

Notre étrangère and Global Art Cinema

Notre étrangère, like *Bamako*, exemplifies FSSA cinema as global art cinema. In their widely acclaimed anthology *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories* (2010), Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover map “art cinema” (the industrial, generic, and aesthetic discourses that underpin this category) globally.¹⁴ The editors understand global art cinema as “the critical category best placed to engage pressing contemporary questions of globalization, world culture, and how the economics of cinema’s transnational flows might intersect with trajectories of film form” (3). Art cinema is an “elastically hybrid category” that has long connected the aesthetic (cinema) and the geopolitical (world), while at the same time sustaining “an astonishing discursive currency in contemporary film culture” (3). This elastic and unreliable critical category, essentially a contradictorily constructed set of discourses, is what the editors frame as a paradigm to support their exploration of crucial questions in contemporary global film cultures. Galt and Schoonover embrace the inconvenient truth of art cinema’s “lack of strict parameters” instead of sweeping it under the carpet (6). A lack of specificity is precisely the defining specificity of art cinema and “a positive way of delineating its discursive space” (6). The slippery categorisation of this impure label is “as productive to film culture as it is frustrating to taxonomy” (6). Global art cinema as “a resolutely

¹⁴ Well, almost. As is common in volumes that consider world cinema or global art cinema, American cinema (e.g. independent filmmaking à la John Sayles) is omitted from the otherwise worldly scope of the collection.

international category, often a code from foreign film” (7) is a crucial concept when it comes to understanding exemplary films of the FSSA corpus, like *Notre étrangère* (2010). As previously mentioned, in many countries art cinema is the only institutional channel through which films can be made and circulated. The aesthetic features of art films are closely influenced by their production, financing, and distribution structures (i.e. they are made to circulate as art cinema). In turn, by travelling the globe through the channels of art cinema, films like *Notre étrangère* are further associated with this category.

Notre étrangère is a low-budget (1 million euro) film tied to the “cultural mode of production” that characterises many European cinemas, “as distinct from the industrial mode of Hollywood” (Crofts 28). The film was financed mostly (2/3) through French public funds and partially (about 1/3) through private funds (Canal +, France’s pay-TV network). It also received a small (20,000 euro) grant from the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs because of the filmmaker’s Burkinabé heritage.

Aesthetically speaking, following the Bordwellian model of art-cinema narration, many of the film’s formal traits—disorientation, *devoidness*, fragmented plot and sparsely infused story, documentary-style shooting, minimalism, abrupt transitions (e.g. lack of establishing shots to reinforce a sense of dislocation and displacement)—further contribute to the discursive categorisation of the film as an example of “art cinema” (Bordwell 42).

Notre étrangère’s circulation and distribution patterns further connect the film to global art cinema. The film is a prime example of the 85 per cent of films shown at film festivals that never get distributed beyond the festival circuit (Chaudhuri 6). It was

premiered at the Venice Film Festival in September 2010, then presented at the Toronto International Film Festival (also in September 2010). It was also shown at festivals in Amiens (France), where it won best prize for a feature-length film, Chicago, Tübingen (Germany), Namur (Belgium), Tessaloniki (Greece), at FESPACO, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, where it won the European Union Prize, and in the *Vues d'Afrique* film festival in Montreal.

In February 2011, the film was released in theatres in France (independent and specialised ones mostly). Critics have received the film well, but the lack of publicity and efforts on the part of the distributor have led to very limited outreach to French audiences. In August 2011, the film was released in a few theaters in Burkina Faso. The DVD has been released in France by Colifilms (the distributor) but without the consent of the Burkinabé and French production companies—legal procedures have been initiated. No DVD is legally available in Burkina Faso, and Bouyain does not know if it has been pirated. The film has had an interesting afterlife at various film festivals, symposia and other smaller-scale events around the world. Its rights have also been bought by the Institut Français, which plays the film in its Alliance Française locations around the world.

III

Amy lived in Burkina Faso until she was eight, to then be taken away from her Burkinabé mother to live in France, with her French father and his family. When her father dies, Amy decides to go back to Burkina, to search for her mother. Upon arrival, she only finds her aunt Acita and her maid Kadiatou living in the now empty house she used to inhabit as a child. Her aunt Acita only speaks Dioula and does not understand French. Amy forgot Dioula and only speaks French. In the meantime, it is made implicit that Amy's mother, Mariam, has left for France years ago in search for her daughter. While in France, Mariam, a quiet and lonely figure, finally finds a friend in the person of Esther, a French woman to whom she teaches the very language that her daughter now crucially lacks.

Synopsis, *Notre étrangère* (The Place in Between) (2010)

Setting the Stage

Before I discuss *Notre étrangère's* deployment of heterolanguage and how global art cinema contributes to shaping its political significance, I believe it is important to share some background information about the filmmaker: her rich personal experience and perspective cannot be dissociated from the film's linguistic texture. Sarah Bouyain is a writer and filmmaker from France and Burkina Faso. After studying filmmaking at the Louis Lumière School of Cinematography in France, Bouyain worked as a camera assistant for several French and African film production companies. She then wrote and directed *Les enfants du blanc* (The Children of the White Man), a documentary that was released in the year 2000. In this documentary, Bouyain's desire to make sense of her personal mixed-race story leads her to interrogate and uncover an important page of

Africa's violent colonial history and its traumatic legacies. This documentary tells the singular destiny of the mixed-race children who were born of the often non-consensual relations between African mothers and French soldiers in former French West Africa. Bouyain's grand-mother was born in those circumstances. Bouyain's father is Burkinabé and her mother is French. This double heritage of biraciality has profoundly marked her work as a filmmaker and writer.

In *Notre étrangère*, Bouyain furthers her exploration of the tensions involved in biraciality and cultural hybridity by specifically focusing on questions of displacement, belonging, and language. Through the character of Amy, a young mixed-race woman from France and Burkina, who returns to Burkina Faso to find her mother, *Notre étrangère* explores the experience of being a stranger to one's own heritage and eventually to oneself. A year after her French father died, Amy goes back to her country of birth, where she lived until she was eight. It is this return to her origins, in search for her Burkinabé mother, without having access to her mother tongue (Dioula), which leads to the thematisation of the film's title through the deployment of heterolanguage. "Notre étrangère" (literally *our stranger* or *foreigner*) simultaneously suggests the closeness of belonging and the distance of estrangement, an antithetical experience of impossible situatedness and inbetweenness which the English translation of the title, "The Place in Between," conveys more directly. The plot of the entire film hinges on language(s): the marker of lack and the tool for access. Multilingualism, in fact, is not only omnipresent and central to the narrative development of the film, but its varied mediations are what

most vividly and effectively allow the audiospectator to experience inbetweenness with the film's characters.

The film's deployment of heterolanguage replicates the process of language learning. For years, Bouyain has grappled with learning Dioula, the language of her father; and she has said that *Notre étrangère* was initially supposed to be purely about the learning of Dioula. When her father passed away, Bouyain felt a pressing need to learn Dioula so that people would recognise her connection to Burkina Faso, despite her phenotypically white appearance. This served as the main stream of inspiration for *Notre étrangère*'s first script, which was about "learning a language to be recognised by one's family and country" (Bouyain, *Thessaloniki Film Festival*). As Bouyain indicates, the film's main theme eventually "drifted and drifted [to become] more about family, but language is still important" (*Thessaloniki Film Festival*).

The Film's Style

The shunning of translation means that, for most audiospectators, Dioula constitutes heterolanguage. Yet the film's aesthetics and how they affect the experience of the audiospectator are also crucial elements to consider. The film's style makes the film a metaphor for the experience of language learning. In other words, *Notre étrangère* stylistically thematises heterolanguage, even before it is directly created for non-Dioula speakers, through the shunning of translation. The film presents itself to the audiospectator *as* heterolanguage. Indeed, an audiospectator who approaches *Notre étrangère* for the first time is bound to experience the film in the same way she would

experience approaching a language that is inaccessible at first, but then becomes more familiar, yet is never completely *heimlich*. Many of the film's formal traits reproduce the disorientation and unsituatedness one experiences in the face of language learning: the film's recurrent wordlessness, sparse and fragmented plot, minimalism, abrupt transitions, and lack of establishing shots instil in the audiospectator's experience a deep sense of displacement and lack of bearings.

These stylistic elements are crucial to the immediate politics of Bouyain's project, i.e. the exploration of postcolonial alienation through the inaccessibility of language and the negotiation of a biracial identity in the context of the legacy of French colonialism in Africa. At the same time, these stylistic traits are also characteristic of the Bordwellian model of art-cinema narration discussed earlier. As such, they have contributed to the financing, production, and classification of *Notre étrangère* as art cinema, which in turn has facilitated the film's transnational circulation through the channels of art cinema as well as its reception by an art cinema audience mainly located outside of Africa.

In addition, due to those formal features, the film's narration (how the plot distributes information about the story) forecloses all possibility for transparent access to information. In gaining access to the plot (all that is visibly and audibly present in the film) the range and depth of information that the audiospectator can access about the story (all the film narrative's events and information, either presented or inferrable) remain very limited. Narration itself is unrestricted: the audiospectator knows more about the story than any other character. Yet, the "who," "what," "when," "how," "where," and "why" questions that the plot initially and progressively raises about the story either

remain unanswered or their answers arrive in a fragmented and destabilising manner. A concrete example of this can be found in the film's opening scene.

The range of information the audiospectator gains from this scene is very limited: a woman (probably African, based on phenotype and dress) works (at night or very early in the morning) as a cleaning lady in an office building. There are two parallel focalisations and spatial contexts in *Notre étrangère*: one on Mariam, in France (Paris); the other on Amy, in Burkina Faso (Bobo Dioulasso). The film mostly alternates between these two characters (mother and daughter) and spaces. It is therefore significant that the film's very first scene (which conventionally provides a wider range of information than is the case here) does not attempt to situate the audiospectator vis-à-vis the character and the location. In fact, we only learn the woman's name (Mariam) a good thirty minutes into the film, and (if very attentive) we know that she is Amy's mother only more than half way into the film. Space-wise, visual cues that the initial action occurs in or around Paris (e.g. a long establishing shot of the city or the inclusion of a typical street sign in a shot's composition) are absent. This information is visually hinted at later when Mariam takes a train with the "Transilien" sign on it (Paris' suburban train), and it is confirmed in the dialogue of the film's penultimate scene.

While the audiospectator's knowledge surpasses largely that of any of the characters in the film, the limited range of information (degree of knowledge) available remains unsettling. The extremely limited depth of information (how deeply the character's psychology is explored) available to the audiospectator reinforces the feeling of inbetweenness generated in encountering the film. It also makes identification

troubled and complex. Identification in film refers to the affective relationship that is established between the audiospectator and the protagonist(s) of a film (Allen 237). As Ien Ang reminds us, “identification does not take place in a vacuum [...] identification with a character only becomes possible within the framework of the whole structure of the narrative” (qtd. in van Beneden). Consequently, we tend to identify more with the characters whose personality is brought out in relation to others, who are, generally, also the ones we spend the most screen time with (Ang qtd. in van Beneden).

Notre étrangère plays a lot with this crucial aspect of the filmic experience, a feature which, once again, further contributes to accommodate the film in the category of art cinema. The audiospectator is likely to identify with the characters that the narrative focalises on: Amy and Mariam. Yet, here, the range of our knowledge of what occurs in the story world and within the characters themselves disrupts that expectation. As scholars of identification theory have argued, when the audiospectator identifies with a character, she may feel sympathy or empathy. To identify with a character in a way that stirs empathy (sharing of emotion), one must be in a position to identify the character’s emotional state correctly, whereas one can still respond sympathetically to what one understands to be the mental state of the character (Allen 237). In the absence of information about the character’s mental state, identification expectations can be momentarily thwarted: estranged from the characters that are meant to be the closest to her, the ones she identifies with, it is now the audiospectator’s turn to come to occupy the place in between. A scene that fruitfully illustrates how that takes place in *Notre étrangère*

is the one in which Amy, who has just arrived to Burkina Faso, goes back to her mother's house.

At this point in the film, the audience is not yet acquainted with Acita (Amy's aunt) and Kadiatou (the maid). The audiospectator knows of Amy's intention to go to Burkina Faso to see her mother and it can be inferred that this is why she goes to this particular house. But once again, we are left speculating, in a way that affects the extent of our identification with the character's pathos. In the absence of means to plunge into Amy's mental subjectivity (the narration does not make use of voiceover, no monologue is captured, no flashback or inner images are inserted, etc.), *mise-en-scène* (Amy's facial expression and silence) cues us to surmise that something is wrong: we may feel sympathy for her, that is, we may identify vaguely with her ostensible inner agitation and bewilderment. But this is literally all we know. A couple of scenes later, as we overhear Amy speaking on the phone with her French mother, we learn that the house is where she used to live with her mother, that she recognised her aunt, but that her aunt did not recognise her, and that she intends to return to the house again the next day. The scene that follows makes our identification with Amy even more complex.

The scene begins with a point-of-view shot of the street. This is what Amy sees through the windshield of the taxi whose back seat she occupies. A point-of-view shot aligns the audiospectator visually with Amy's subjectivity. A reverse shot then shows Amy, sitting in the middle, *the place in between* this exchange of words she cannot understand. Via sound mixing, the volume of the dialogue track is toned down. As the sound of the women's voices decreases, the music track receives almost all of the

audiospectator's acoustic attention. We do not share Amy's auditory point of view (because she cannot hear the non-diegetic music), but at this moment all audiospectators (including Dioula-speaking ones) find themselves in Amy's linguistic situation, unable to seize words. A medium close-up of Amy emphasises her sad, dazzled facial expression. The music's rhythm is intimate yet agitated, reinforcing our perception of Amy's inner agitation. The pace of the next shots quickens, along with Amy's hasty walking pace, as we follow her to her hotel room. There, a more distant camera presents a twenty-second medium long shot of Amy, moved, breathless, apparently relieved to be alone, in the silence that fills the room. This distance creates a rather unbalanced shot, with Amy occupying the right side, as far as possible from the camera. This scene initially offers the audiospectator more (if subtle) means to sympathise with Amy's emotional state, more closeness, followed quickly by a deep sensation of how distant we are from her actual emotions.

Thus, even before the linguistic dimension of the film is brought into the equation, *Notre étrangère's* form is already experienced by the audiospectator, whatever his or her language abilities are, as a metaphor for the initial inaccessibility, increasing familiarity, and yet ongoing *unheimlich* quality of heterolanguage. The distribution of the information throughout the narrative makes access difficult, and it shapes the character identification experience in unsettling and unconventional ways. The lack of transitions and (for the most part) the absence of establishing shots between the scenes that take place in France and those in Burkina Faso further contribute to a sense of unsituatedness. On the aesthetic level, *Notre étrangère* offers itself up to the audiospectator as an

experience of inbetweenness, reproducing the gradual yet never completed acquisition of bearings which infuses the process of language learning.

Furthermore, the film “opts out of language” as much as possible, taking a very clear stance towards a meticulous dosing of speech and the limited ability of language to communicate. The dialogue, in fact, intentionally does not explain most situations (Bouyain, *Personal Interview*). Bouyain’s film consistently gives precedence to the formal elements of film that allow it to communicate experience beyond speech. Given that characters sometimes no longer share a language in common, the spoken word does not transmit the articulatable content of what is communicated. Dialogues, in Bouyain’s own words, “convey no more than music” (Bouyain, *Venice Film Festival*).

This has two immediate consequences. First, the wordlessness and silence that permeate the film make actual dialogue stand out more: it heightens the importance of moments of language exchange, many of which happen via translation. Second, as Thomas Elsaesser notes, when the importance of speech diminishes, *mise-en-scène* elements such as lighting, composition, visual rhythm, decor, costume, style of acting, and gesture “increase their semantic and syntactic contribution to the aesthetic effect. They become functional and integral elements in the construction of meaning” (52). Nowell-Smith’s analysis of the melodrama form and its emotional economy also cues us to consider a more affective dimension, beyond the interpretive emphasis taken by Elsaesser: emotion that is not or that cannot (because of linguistic reasons, for instance) be discharged in a film is often expressed in the music and the *mise-en-scène* (and I would also add the montage). These elements “do not just augment the emotionality of

an element of the action: to some extent they substitute for it” (Nowell-Smith 117). This substitution, because it stands for the interiority of the characters, forces the audiospectator into translating-mise-en-scène.¹⁵ The scene where Amy goes back to her hotel provides an excellent example of translating mise-en-scène, as it often functions in *Notre étrangère*. Facial expressions and bodily postures become crucial keys in making sense of *Notre étrangère*’s diffuse plot and mostly unrevealed story. The looks that the characters give each other are extremely significant in this regard: they enable the viewer to access a range of possible emotional situations and stakes.

By boldly forcing the audiospectator into translating mise-en-scène, *Notre étrangère* conveys the inbetweenness that its English title alludes to, complicating the notion of foreignness. This is apparent in the scene where Amy is harassed by men she initially thinks can lead her to find more information about her mother. Distraught, Amy once again goes back to her room. The sequence of actions terminates with Amy’s abrupt change of clothes, from her African dress to her traditional Western clothes. This suggests more than words would about her experience of feeling completely foreign in her native land and language. Once again, as a result of the sparse use of dialogue (or any other device that would increase the depth of information about Amy’s internal subjectivity), the audiospectator is left with translating mise-en-scène.

¹⁵ When linguistic translation is not directly provided, (covert) translation still happens. In these instances, the audiospectator can rely on the context provided by the mise-en-scène (translating mise-en-scène) and paralanguage (prosody and body language) to actively decode a non-translated sequence.

Opting out of language and subsequently resorting to mise-en-scène, music, and montage are thus crucial parts of the film's style. Because this form of estrangement is not instilled by language per se, all audiospectators, regardless of their linguistic abilities, are in the same situation vis-à-vis these stylistic elements. I now turn to the form and the politics of the film's marked deployment of untranslated Dioula. This is a specific dimension of the film's style that is likely to affect audiences very differently, depending on whether Dioula constitutes a heterolanguage for them.

Heterolanguage in *Notre étrangère*

Films make use of a variety of translation devices, including subtitling, translational narrating voice-over (TNV¹⁶), translating mise-en-scène, and diegetic interpreting. The most commonly encountered strategy in multilingual cinema is the subtitling of the parts of the dialogue that are deemed to constitute heterolanguage to the film's target audience. In the original version of *Notre étrangère*, subtitling is used very little and only in three instances: during Mariam's Dioula lessons to Esther, when Acita visits Mariam's old friend, and in the few exchanges Acita and Kadiatou have in the absence of Amy. Whenever Amy is present in a scene, the audiospectator shares her linguistic perspective through the use of translating mise-en-scène or diegetic interpreting.

¹⁶ TNV is not used in *Notre étrangère*, but it involves the use of a voice-over commentary (oral statements, conveying any portion of a narrative) in a language other than that of the diegesis. It is often used to frame or replace diegetic heterolanguage to increase accessibility for the target audience (O'Sullivan 96).

Whenever heterolanguage is present in dialogue, the non-intervention of linguistic translation leads to translating *mise-en-scène*, as it has been discussed previously. The difference here is that the audiospectator can count on prosody and body language as well as *mise-en-scène* to try to make sense of the entire sequence. Shunning linguistic translation, makes translating *mise-en-scène* the only resource the audiospectator can rely on to approach heterolanguage. Diegetic interpreting is also often performed by Kadiatou (the maid) and at times quite reluctantly.

Translating *mise-en-scène* and diegetic interpreting, the two forms of audiovisual translation prominent in *Notre étrangère*, make it impossible for the non-Dioula-speaking audiospectator to be oblivious to the presence of heterolanguage and the correlative need for constant active translation. Those are the principal means by which the film constitutes itself so boldly as what Nornes calls “an experience of translation” (177). For Nornes, audiovisual translation should not only call attention to itself, it should disavow conventional regulations whose goal is to convert everything into easily consumable meaning (185). He specifically discusses extra-diegetic translation (subtitling and dubbing) as it occurs when a foreign film is translated for a target audience that has (presumably) no knowledge of the foreign language. (Nornes is an expert on Japanese cinema and this is mostly where his examples come from.) Yet his analysis also has implications for translation as it occurs in *Notre étrangère*. Nornes insists that instead of bringing the audience closer to the film experience, as if it emerged from their language and cultural realm, translation would bring the audience “exceedingly close” to the source text. In so doing, it would not smooth out the rough cultural and linguistic hedges the

audience would encounter if it were approaching it with the perspectives suggested by the source text itself. As the first real encounter between Amy and her aunt suggests, the absence of linguistic translation here boldly brings the source text and *only* that to the audience.

The lack of linguistic translation in the scene leaves the audiospectator facing her own responsibility of translation, via translating *mise-en-scène*, while repelling any illusions of transparency and fluency. This also paradoxically confers a visibility on translation that goes against the conventions of both film and translation, which brings me to my last point. The extensive use of diegetic interpreting in *Notre étrangère* brings visibility to translation and the translator herself: the effects of the roles she performs and her responsibility. Moreover, Kadiatou (the acting translator) mediates exchanges, not between two distant foreigners, but between relatives who have ultimately more than heterolanguage as a shared condition.

Conclusion

Notre étrangère's thematisation and direct deployment of heterolanguage is expressed in various significant ways that connect the film to a trend in FSSA cinema as postcolonial cinema. The shunning of translation contributes to the reversal of the diglossic hierarchy that commonly and cinematically exists between French and Dioula. Due to French colonialism, Dioula, a major West African language spoken by more than 12.5 million people, has been less present and visible in West African and Burkinabé cultural productions than the French language (Lewis et al.). Using it prominently in a film

destined to international circulation is thus extremely significant. The prominent use of Dioula in a film produced and financed mostly by French institutions, although essential to the film's plot and narrative arc, has nevertheless required a strong commitment on Bouyain's part.

When considered in the context of *Notre étrangère*'s circulation as art cinema, mainly outside of the Dioula-speaking context in which it is set, the language politics of the film take on additional significance. The shunning of translation and the subsequent creation of heterolanguage in part contribute to accommodating the film for a global art cinema audience. However, these crucial elements cannot merely be considered stylistic choices aimed at challenging an art cinema audience that is already understood as the kind of audience that seeks and/or appreciates such challenges. By presenting itself as heterolanguage (thematically and directly), in the context of its circulation mainly outside of Africa, a film like *Notre étrangère* becomes a powerful reminder that life does not come with subtitles and that translation is at work at every step. In the age of Google Translate, the film disrupts the invisibility of translation and of the translator, and it makes the notion of access to language not a given, but a very real, tangible, and reciprocal process. *Notre étrangère* is also a poignant experience of language acquisition as erasure and retrieval, a condition that often accompanies contemporary mobilities. The condition of being a stranger to one's own heritage because the thin thread of the mother tongue has vanished is both potentially universally resonant and unique to Amy.

Ultimately, by situating the film in its global art cinema context, this chapter sheds further substantial light on the politics of its deployment of heterolanguage. In its original

and subsequent versions, the film offers lengthy and numerous scenes in untranslated Dioula. In a crucial way, thus, the film invariably privileges a Dioula-speaking audience, the only audience for whom the language does not constitute heterolanguage. Yet, by virtue of the structural conditions outlined in this chapter, this privileged audience is also the one that is less likely to have access to *Notre étrangère*. The film therefore addresses (quite literally) a Dioula-speaking, West African audiospectator “who is not there, but is much desired” (Rosen 260).

The film’s negotiation of FSSA cinema’s utopian spectatorship goes further. *Notre étrangère*’s heterolanguage, as it circulates from screen to screen, across various locations the world over, can also be read as a powerful commentary on the split address that has characterised FSSA cinema from its inception. This “African spectator” who is “open to a film’s interrogation of African life, history, and subjects, and also to narrative innovations supposedly rooted in African history and culture” might not see this film, yet she is already *in* the film (Rosen 260). In « Propos sur le cinéma africain, » a 1978 interview at the Journées cinématographiques de Carthage, Paulin Soumanou Vieyra, the first African to make a film and a pioneering figure of African cinema history, noted that:

The problem that emerges for us [Africans] is that language is a cultural fact. [...] Those who put the commercial aspect first make a mistake. [...] I think that it is in his own language that the filmmaker can make a movie. In the name of the cultural, aesthetic, and artistic aspects, filmmakers can make an effort, especially since we have this orality that allows us to reach people more directly and more deeply; something which literature has not managed to achieve because it must go through the channel of a foreign language, such as French, Portuguese, Spanish, or English.... African cinema can transcend these languages.” (Vieyra and Haffner 44; my translation)

African cinema *can* indeed transcend the linguistic problems of African literature, which have been thoroughly explored by figures like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. But the problem goes beyond the important issue of language “choice.” Even when the linguistic composition of a film like *Notre étrangère* clearly privileges a Dioula-speaking audiospectator, the structural conditions under which this crucial address is made severely diminish its chances of reaching the ears of that audiospectator. In the same interview, Vieyra further describes how in FSSA cinema the visual comes second and “first comes the ear” (Vieyra and Haffner 45; my translation). *Notre étrangère*, like *Bamako* and many other FSSA films, thus substantially engages the ear of the African audiospectator it endeavours to speak to. Through heterolanguage, FSSA cinema acknowledges its structural condition as global art cinema while, at the same time, transcending this condition. Like Zegué Bamba’s chanting in *Bamako*, FSSA cinema momentarily disrupts the very conditions of its reception. No longer awaiting to be called to the stand, it takes a stand.

Chapter 3

Remaking Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)

What we [authors] do might be done in solitude and with great desperation, but it tends to produce exactly the opposite. It tends to produce community...

—Junot Díaz qtd. in *Triangulations*

The text I turn to in this chapter, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (henceforth *Oscar Wao*), was published by Dominican-American author Junot Díaz in 2007. This famous work of twenty-first-century U.S. literature is not only a quirky, multilingual *Bildungsroman* that has changed how many readers think of Latino/a literature, it is also one of the most well-known literary experiments in heterolanguage. *Oscar Wao* uses language that constantly and fluidly generates moments of inaccessibility for different communities of readers. The text mobilises multiple languages and codes, each one of which is likely to constitute heterolanguage (i.e. to be partially or fully inaccessible) for at least one category of reader. Although *Oscar Wao* centres on and privileges the Dominican-American community, heterolanguage also operates in such a way that, ultimately, no one reader (Dominican-American or otherwise) is positioned to be completely at home within the novel's linguistic and cultural universe. The equalising effect of a shared and fluctuating insider-ness *and* outsider-ness explains, in no small part, how Díaz's writing "produces community."

Oscar Wao is a linguistically-layered text written in what can be broadly understood as untranslated and uncushioned¹⁷ Spanglish, and where references to Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's "The Watcher" (from the *Fantastic Four* comics) stand alongside allusions to Édouard Glissant, no explanation provided. The novel is one of the first markedly Spanglish texts to be published by a mainstream U.S. press and certainly the first unapologetically code-switching novel to win the Pulitzer Prize. With *Oscar Wao*, Díaz shows how language and intertexts can be used not merely as devices that call attention to themselves and the socially-expected/respected "flavours of latinidad,"¹⁸ but also as means of providing the narrative with significant and complex layers of meaning, even at the expense of his readers' smooth engagement with the text. As Christopher González notes in his recent monograph *Reading Junot Díaz* (2015), these defining traits and the success of Díaz's experiment have several important implications for Latino/a literature:

To begin with, it shows what many Latino/a authors have argued all along; that is, that readers, and, in this case, *willing* readers, will find that a sprinkling of untranslated Spanish will not hinder them. Historically, authors make concessions to publishers no matter their heritage or identity. But Latino/a writers have often been forced to make many more concessions in their writings, and those concessions often have to do with language and how writers use it. The success of Díaz's writings is proof that readers are far more capable than many publishers

¹⁷ "Cushioning" is described by Lourdes Torres in her article "In the Contact Zone: Code-Switching Strategies by Latino/a Writers" (2007). Code-switching texts, whose target audience is presumed to be monolingual, typically leave terms untranslated if they are "cushioned" by the text or if their meaning is transparent. A term is not translated since the author has provided enough cushioning in the text (context, synonyms, and so on) to cue the monolingual reader as to its possible meaning (Torres, "In the Contact Zone" 79-81).

¹⁸ As Cuban-born writer and scholar, Gustavo Pérez-Firmat laments in *Tongues Ties* (2003), "[i]f someone were to attempt to learn Spanish from Latino literature, he'd be able to do little else but cuss, pray, make love, and order lunch. Dictated less by the needs of the story than by the desire to give non-Hispanic readers a taste of the foreign flavors they came for, Latino literature's Hispanicisms turn many of these works into formula fiction, novels and memoirs written *for* rather than written *by*" (142).

give them credit for. It is also evidence of a burgeoning audience that is hungry for sophisticated fiction by and about Latinos. (11)

Despite the undeniable significance of these developments, the story of *Oscar Wao* does not end here. The novel has also been widely circulated outside its initial cultural context. Translation thereby became a crucial mediating process in the transnational circulation of Díaz's work. In this chapter, I focus specifically on the impact of this form of mediation on the radical potential of Díaz's marked deployment of heterolanguage. The novel's broad circulation certainly brings to the fore the issue of translatability and its political stakes.

Yet, given the definite challenges associated with the translation of a multilingual literary work that is later translated into one of the languages that make up its story world (Grutman, "Multilingualism and Translation"; García Vizcaíno; Stratford), *Oscar Wao*'s transnational trajectory begs a more specific question: How exactly do you translate Díaz's Spanglish for a global Hispanic audience, and what are the deeper implications of this endeavour? By examining this question through the conceptual lens offered by heterolanguage, this chapter brings into sharp focus the substance and politics of Díaz's exercise in "assertive non-translation" (Ch'ien 209). The Dominican-American historical framework and the Afro-Latino consciousness that underpin the bi-cultural and transnational identity of Díaz's characters are artfully shown in what Díaz calls the "linguistic simultaneity" of *Oscar Wao* (Cresci, "Junot Díaz"). Readers' ability to experience this linguistic simultaneity and its partial inaccessibility are thus crucial to Díaz's craft and the heritage it advances. What does translating such a text mean? In

particular, what does it mean to translate a text that so purposefully shuns translation in the first place?

I argue that the category of the remake, widely used in film and media studies to refer to “a new version of an earlier film,” offers a fruitful way to grapple with these important questions (Kuhn and Westwell). In fact, I will demonstrate how *Oscar Wao* in Spanish is not “only” a translation: because of the centrality of heterolanguage to Díaz’s initial ideological project, *Oscar Wao* in Spanish translation becomes a wholesale *remake* of the earlier U.S. version.

A remake is a specific kind of adaptation that generally pertains to the same medium. As an act of reinvention (a re-interpretation) of an existing text, a remake unavoidably registers differences from the text it uses as its source material, opening up a dialogue with other (probably new) texts, as it is circulated over time and space (Kuhn and Westwell; Yau 499). In particular, as scholars of transnational film remakes have recently aptly illuminated, the transnational analysis of the remake has the potential to shift the focus from a critical discourse mainly engaged in pointing at the inferiority and derivativeness of the remake (after all, a form of textual repetition) to one most concerned with the complexity of the process, the politics underpinning it, and the broader social and cultural issues it raises (Smith and Verevis 2).

La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao, as I will demonstrate, functions as a de-hybridised and Dominicanised (i.e. re-nationalised) remake of the earlier U.S. version. If the fictional rendition of Afro-Latino *Bildungen* was one of Díaz’s core projects with *Oscar Wao*, then I am interested in asking how we should be reading subsequent versions of his

work, especially given how instrumental heterolanguage is to this project. In this chapter, I argue that thinking of *Oscar Wao*'s Spanish translation as a (transnational) remake creates the possibility of giving recognition to the social and political project that is at the heart of *Oscar Wao* while also acknowledging the inherent multivalence of texts across contexts. By effacing the source version's sustained deployment of heterolanguage, the Spanish remake carries a different ideological project, one that in fact re-accommodates Díaz's subversive language in a nationalised, unitary, monolingual vision of language and community. At the same time, it is made to perform other roles for new contexts and new audiences. The remake acknowledges its ties to a previous text, while also allowing for new constellations of reception.

I

The Novel

Díaz's début novel is certainly a complex text, and one that has been studied from a wide range of perspectives: linguistic innovation, decolonial diasporic history, ethnic American *Bildungsroman*, genre hybridity, and so on. Critics tend to emphasise the multifaceted nature of *Oscar Wao* as a sort of literary UFO. They often signal the text's commingling of genres, languages, high-low intertextual allusions, here-and-there cultural references. Saldívar, for instance, has described the narrative structure as an "odd amalgam of historical novel, bildungsroman, postmagical realism, sci-fi, fantasy, and super-hero comic romance" (585). In A. O. Scott's characterisation, *Oscar Wao*'s "unruly multitude of styles and genres" contribute to the "wild, capacious spirit" of the book's elastic universe.

According to Scott, Oscar's coming-of-age story functions somewhat as a pretext to anchor "a multigenerational immigrant family chronicle that dabbles in tropical magic realism, punk-rock feminism, hip-hop machismo, post-postmodern pyrotechnics and enough polymorphous multiculturalism to fill up an Introduction to Cultural Studies syllabus." In my view, it is precisely the novel's UFO quality that anchors Díaz's rendering of his protagonists' *Bildungen* in a language and form that foreground a diasporic Afro-Latino consciousness.

Oscar Wao as Bildungsroman

The term *Bildungsroman* has traditionally designated a genre of the novel which focuses on the psychological and moral development of the protagonist from childhood to adulthood. As pointed out by Bakhtin, while most other types of novels provide a ready-made image of the protagonist, the *Bildungsroman* typically specialises in portraying the individual in the process of becoming ("The Bildungsroman" 21). As development towards maturity unfolds, the changes that take place in the protagonist's nature and views acquire plot significance (Bakhtin, "The Bildungsroman" 21). Since its origins in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1796), the novel (*roman*) of formation (*Bildung*, plural: *Bildungen*) has depicted the world surrounding the protagonist (*Bildungsheld*) as a site of apprenticeship. To grow up, the protagonist must pass through a series of experiences in the form of encounters, opportunities, obstacles, and so on.

The evolution of the *Bildungsroman* is a fascinating one. Initially focused on the teleological development and the social opportunities of a white male protagonist, the genre now portrays identity formation from a diversity of positionalities and as a contingent, performative, and less-than-definitive process influenced by existing and emerging categories, norms, and power relations. The contemporary *Bildungsroman* has become a de-centred and globalised genre.¹⁹

In U.S. literature of the past decades, the diversification of the *Bildungsroman* has made it function as “the most salient genre for the literature of social outsiders, primarily women and minority groups” (Avendaño 67). With its focus on cultural and societal structures, the process of illusionment/disillusionment that drives self-apprenticeship, and the empowerment opportunities offered by individual “choice” and/or collective action, the *Bildungsroman* has the potential to carry the identity and adjustment negotiations of Americans who find themselves disenfranchised vis-à-vis the dominant culture. This aptitude has endowed the genre with important literary social functions. In particular, since around the 1960s, numerous authors have adopted the *Bildungsroman* as

¹⁹ An important consequence of this diversification has been the increasingly numerous representations of *Bildung* across languages. The impact that linguistic diversity and language ideologies have on the ways in which present-day stories of *Bildung* are told, received, and passed on has yet to be examined in a sustained fashion. After all, the *Bildungsroman* emerged as a literary genre contemporaneously with the advent of European modernity. As such, the genre has reflected the historical conjuncture that gave rise to the centripetal and exclusionary construction of the nation-state, buttressed by a unitary vision of the subject and her language, among other markers of identity. At the genre’s origins, thus, is a monolingual, unitary, and nationalistic vision of language, one that has traditionally informed and carried representations of *Bildung*. In a world where our post-monolingual condition (to mobilise Yasemin Yildiz’s keen insights) is increasingly recognised, and where hybridity and various forms of displacement are rendering untenable the posited unity between language and nation, linguistic diversity has come to shape the *Bildungsroman* genre conventions in important ways. The diversifying scholarship on narratives of *Bildung* is certainly well-situated to productively grapple with the paradigm shift effected by the “multilingual turn.” While such a task is beyond the immediate scope of this chapter, my analysis of the remaking of *Oscar Wao* nonetheless provides insights into the ways in which multilingualism and the cultural politics of “minor” language communities shape the genre conventions of contemporary stories of *Bildung* across versions and contexts.

a central narrative strategy to focus on the coming of age of Latino/a characters, more often than not in relation to Latin American settings, historical situations, or events, but with a distinct focus on Latino/a history and culture in the United States. The generation of the 1960s-1970s often employed the *Bildungsroman* and so-called “ghetto fiction” to document in autobiographical, social realist modes their resistance to racialisation and protests for social justice in the wake of the civil rights movement and the farmworker struggles of the 1950s-1960s (Vázquez, “Novel” 300-2). Emblematic in this regard is Puerto Rican Piri Thomas’s *Down These Mean Streets* (1967), which details the coming of age in Spanish Harlem of a dark-skinned Puerto Rican protagonist named Piri. Exactly forty years later, Díaz published his now famous *Oscar Wao* and established his presence in the American literary canon (by among other things winning the Pulitzer). Díaz’s novel recalls Piri Thomas’s legacy by aligning African diasporic identities with those of Latino/as in the United States in *Bildungsroman* form.²⁰

This alignment helps explain why Díaz has been hailed as one of the main representatives of new-millennial Latino/a literature, a movement that often experiments with postmodern narrative strategies such as genre-mixing, shifts in time, and pastiche, while reconnecting with the social and political justice projects of previous generations (Vázquez, “Novel” 308). The poetics and politics of *Oscar Wao* make it a perfect example of this new-millennial trend in Latino/a fiction, and I am most invested in probing the

²⁰ Díaz has signalled the seminal influence of Thomas on his work. “Thomas was one of my most important influences. [...] He was the first Latino Caribbean writer I encountered who wove the U.S. Latino experience into a larger American conversation that engaged both white supremacy and the African American experience” (Woo).

role that language accomplishes in this regard.²¹ But, first, let me further situate *Oscar Wao*'s formal and narrative ties to the *Bildungsroman* genre.

***Bildung* on the Surface—"The First Latino Nerd"**

The novel's ostensible central concern is a mock-epic journey of Oscar to lose his virginity.

—David J. Vázquez, "Novel"

With its heroic undertone and its emphasis on the central character's nickname, the title of Díaz's novel (*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*) evokes an individual-centred *Bildungsroman* tradition. The title certainly also echoes that of Ernest Hemingway's short story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (1938), an intertextual wink at the story's abrupt, tragicomic, and self-discovery-oriented finale. On the surface, *Oscar Wao* is the coming-of-age story of Oscar de León, an overweight "ghetto nerd" (as Díaz puts it) of Dominican descent who grows up in Paterson, New Jersey. While Díaz was still working on his novel, he described Oscar as "the most atypical Dominican kid you can imagine" (Esdaille 41). An aspiring sci-fi/fantasy writer, Oscar declares, after his first suicide attempt, "I'm going to be the Dominican Tolkien" (Díaz 192). The novel chronicles the misfortunes of "the first Latino nerd" as he goes from childhood to adulthood, perpetually falling *in* and failing *at* love (González 54). Oscar eventually decides to leave

²¹ In an interview, Díaz was asked to think of readings that had been instrumental in his decision to become a writer. His answer not only reveals Thomas's influence, but also alludes to the role that language use played as part of this influence: "I had a powerful reaction to two books I read when I was in college. Side by side, I read Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* and Toni Morrison's *The Song of Solomon*, and it was all over. They just opened my mind to the power of words" (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 900).

on a trip to the Dominican Republic in his attempt to find “true love.” Instead, he becomes another victim of the *fukú*, a curse that has for generations afflicted his family.

Before and After Oscar—Fukú

The novel’s structure effectively envelops Oscar’s Afro-Latino *Bildung* in the *fukú*: before the reader even gets to meet Oscar, she is presented with an untitled prologue about what Díaz humorously calls the *fukú americanus*, a curse that phonetically alludes to a more mundane curse (“fuck you”), as Oscar accidentally discovers upon “roll[ing] the word experimentally in his mouth” (Díaz 304). “They say it came first from Africa, carried in the screams of the enslaved,” writes Díaz in the book’s inaugural sentence, “that it was the death bane of the Tainos, uttered just as one world perished and another began” (1). This mythical invocation of a curse originating in an African diaspora propelled by slavery and the concurrent demise of the Indigenous, as the narrator later explains, haunts the lives of all of those living in the Americas:

Fukú americanus, or more colloquially, *fukú*—generally a curse or a doom of some kind; specifically the Curse and the Doom of the New World. Also called the *fukú* of the Admiral because the Admiral was both its midwife and one of its great European victims; despite “discovering” the New World the Admiral died miserable and syphilitic, hearing (dique) divine voices. [...] No matter what its name or provenance, it is believed that the arrival of Europeans on Hispaniola unleashed the *fukú* on the world, and we’ve all been in the shit ever since. (Díaz 1)

With its direct mention of the New World and Christopher Columbus’s “discovery,” this early passage narratively anchors Oscar’s brief and wondrous life in the broader context of a hemispheric curse. With his “colonial Original Sin,” the Admiral transformed “Santo Domingo, the Land He Loved Best” into “what Oscar, at the end, would call the Ground

Zero of the New World [...] fukú's Kilometer Zero, its port of entry" (Deresiewicz 37; Díaz 1-2). Although "we are all of us [fukú's] children, whether we know it or not" ("Because no matter what you believe, fukú believes in you"), the narrator makes it clear that the destiny of the Dominican Republic and its inhabitants (including Oscar's family) is all the more entangled with fukú (Díaz 2, 5). "But in those elder days, fukú had it good; it even had a hypeman of sorts, a high priest, you could say. Our then dictator-for-life Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina. No one knows whether Trujillo was the Curse's servant or its master, its agent or its principal, but it was clear he and it had an understanding, that them two was *tight*" (Díaz 2-3). In the opening prologue, the reader quickly discovers that fukú is intimately tied to the Trujillo regime that paralysed Dominican political and social life from 1930 to 1961 (and well beyond), eventually generating the conditions that led to the Dominican diaspora. Fukú is not only evoked as the narrator sets the stage for a novel that is ostensibly about Oscar's *Bildung* process; fukú (and thus the shadow of the Trujillo dictatorship) follows all members of Oscar's family well into the diaspora.

In the book's last pages, we learn that the narrator-writer has kept all of Oscar's writings (in four refrigerators in his basement) for Isis, Oscar's niece and the person for whom the narrator is (at least in part) writing the novel. "And maybe, just maybe, if she's as smart and brave as I'm expecting she'll be," writes the narrator, "she'll take all we've done and all we've learned and add her own insights and she'll put an end to it" (Díaz 330-1). The narrator here refers to fukú, the curse he hopes will be eradicated by the family's new generation, which Isis embodies. The novel's closure is thus marked by a sense of futurity and hope as well as the narrator's revelation that the book Oscar had

been writing (about fukú and his family) during his last days in the Dominican Republic never arrived in the mail (as Oscar had promised in his last letter to the narrator). Hope regarding the end of fukú and the narrator's suspicion that it will never vanish ambivalently looms over *Oscar Wao's* finale.

Oscar Wao as Bildungschronica

Fukú, or as Deresiewicz reformulates it, "this idea of an inescapable history on a grand scale," is the element that narratively "justifies" a *Bildungsroman* which deemphasises the individual story of Oscar in favour of a larger focus on his family's story (37). *Oscar Wao* is structured somewhat like a traditional *Bildungsroman*, with the initial chapters focusing on Oscar's early childhood years and the last chapters narrating his mid-twenties. However, only half of the novel's eight chapters are partially focused on Oscar's *Bildung*. In fact, *Oscar Wao* is a novel of many *Bildungen*, a sort of *Bildungschronica* that blends elements of the traditional (individualised) *Bildungsroman* with an important genre of Latin American fiction: the *crónica familiar*.²² The novel polyphonically chronicles how *fukú* came to plague the life of all the members of the de León family. One chapter is a first-person narration of the coming of age of Lola (Oscar's sister). Two other interweaved chapters narrate the *Bildung* of Beli, Oscar and Lola's mother, as she grows up in the Dominican Republic. And another chapter examines the demise of Abelard (Oscar and Lola's grandfather) under the Trujillo regime.

²² Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* (1967) would be an emblematic example of the *crónica familiar*, as would Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espíritus* (1982).

But there is yet another layer to this *Bildungscrónica*: all the chapters except one are narrated from the point of view of Yunior, the narrator and sometime protagonist who appears in most of Díaz's published fiction to date.²³ Yunior is a young Dominican-American who also lives in New Jersey, and who becomes Oscar's roommate at Rutgers University, mostly in an attempt to get into his sister's pants. He is the popular, confident, player counterpoint that serves to contrast Oscar's *Bildung* with Dominican-American norms and stereotypes, especially as they pertain to hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Of course, Yunior is in no way a unidimensional character-narrator. Yunior's complexity is progressively revealed through a non-omniscient narration that often discloses more about the storyteller and his worldview than about what can no longer be recuperated or inferred about Oscar and his family. Yunior's narratorial perspective informs the vast majority of the novel's interweaved *Bildung* stories. After the force of love pulls Oscar back to the Dominican Republic, and he ends up getting killed in a cane field because of it, he leaves his story behind. This story haunts Yunior for a decade (from 1995 to 2005, approximately) before he finally decides to write it. But as the "fukú prologue" I have discussed above already signals, in Yunior's hands, *Oscar Wao* becomes a misleadingly eponymous novel, a wide, multi-generational portrait that is ultimately less about Oscar's own story than it is about "the story of how Oscar came to be" (Carpio 274).

²³ This includes *Drown* (1996), Díaz's first short story collection, *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012), another compendium of short stories, and "Monstro," a short story first published on June 4, 2012, in the *New Yorker's* science fiction issue. "Monstro" is said to be part of Díaz's novel in progress (González 133).

Yunior is the reason Oscar's story involves, to a large extent, recovering and activating the "páginas en blanco" of a Black heritage, across the characters and the narrator's hyphenated identities (Díaz 78, 90, 149). As he pieces together prequels and sequels to Oscar's story, Yunior is intent upon marking the specificities of Beli's, Lola's, and Oscar's struggles as Afro-Latino/as, thus highlighting a fervently denied part of Dominican (and U.S.) culture. Through Yunior's voice, Díaz's novel depicts blackness and gives recognition to the African heritage of most Dominicans and Dominican-Americans. Yunior often dwells on this legacy by highlighting a deeply rooted history of racism and negrophobic tendencies in the regime and legacy of Trujillo—whom he illustratively starts describing as a "portly, sadistic, pig-eyed mulato who bleached his skin" (Díaz 2). In sum, Yunior narrates Afrolatinidad in a powerful way: as an Afro-Latino writer-narrator he chooses the lives of other Afro-Latino/as as his narrative focus (González 58).

Beli, Oscar and Lola's mother, is the thread to Yunior's narration of Afrolatinidad with Dominican-American specificities. She is the character who initiates the North Jersey twist to the story—Yunior calls her "the Queen of Diaspora": "Before there was an American Story, before Paterson spread before Oscar and Lola like a dream, or the trumpets from the Island of our eviction had even sounded, there was their mother, Hypatía Belicia Cabral" (Díaz 261, 77). Beli is the last surviving member of the wealthy and well-respected Cabrals, "members of the Fortunate People" who passed for white (213, 248). Beli's blackness is understood within the story world as an undeniable part of her family's fukú, unleashed upon them purportedly after Abelard was sent "to prison for saying the Bad Thing about Trujillo" (Díaz 256):

The family claims the first sign was that Abelard's third and final daughter, given the light early in her father's capsulization, was born black. And not just any kind of black. But *black* black—kongoblack, shangoblack, kaliblack, zapoteblack, rekhablack—and no amount of fancy Dominican racial legerdemain was going to obscure the fact. That's the kind of culture I belong to: people took their child's black complexion as an ill omen. (Díaz 248)

Beli's skin is black, a fact that Yunior never lets the readers forget. While a "generic," Trujillo-instilled fukú decimates her family, Yunior emphasises Beli's subsequent struggle to survive as one that is systematically marked by her blackness. She is not even two-months old when her mother passes, yet "she was so dark no one on Abelard's side of the family would take her" (Díaz 252). Beli is eventually sold to become "a criada, a restavek" to a family of what Yunior's "moms calls salvajes" (Díaz 253). Beli is nine when she is finally rescued by La Inca, the relative who becomes her mother, the first person to treat her humanly. Sent to school for the first time, Beli feels "utterly exposed" and discriminated against. Even Wei, the only Chinese girl in school, herself the victim of racial hatred, "had some choice words for Beli. You black, she said, fingering Beli's thin forearm. *Black-black*" (Díaz 84). From early adolescence, Beli's body is oversexualised and objectified—including through the male gaze, recuperative pleasure, and machista perspective of Yunior's narration (Díaz 91-4, 100). Beli eventually has to flee the country after being beaten up "like she was a slave" and left to die in a cane field for unknowingly having an affair with the husband of Trujillo's sister (Díaz 147). From infancy to childhood to adulthood, Beli's fukú is incessantly connected with her racialization.

In this sense, Beli's blackness is not illuminated merely to be essentialised. Instead, it allows Yunior to signal her tribulations as part of a Black diasporic history marked by

slavery and its legacy, and among other things the negation and annihilation of black (female) bodies whose options are severely limited:

Beli had the inchoate longings of nearly every adolescent escapist, of an entire generation, but I ask you: So fucking what? No amount of wishful thinking was changing the cold fact that she was a teenager girl living in the Dominican Republic of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina, the Dictatingest Dictator who ever Dictated. This was a country, a society, that had been designed to be virtually escape-proof. Alcatraz of the Antilles. There weren't any Houdini holes in that Plátano Curtain. Options as rare as Tainos and for irascible darkskinned flacas of modest means they were rarer still. (Díaz 80)

Yunior's narration of Afro-Latino *Bildungen* (including, and crucially so, Beli's) is thus motivated by his desire to situate "historically discarded figures" who are typically "unintegrated into the Dominican national story" (Hanna 91). Díaz creates a writer-narrator who obliquely endeavours to mend this elision by writing "particularized renditions of Afrolatinidad" by inscribing significant diasporic Afro-Latino representations in U.S. fiction (González 58).

Moreover, by letting the *Bildungen* of fictional Afro-Latino/as be written into existence by Yunior (i.e. by another Afro-Latino), Díaz pushes for new (unexpected) *Bildungsroman* configurations of which, I argue, language is a cornerstone. Yunior is, after all, the reason most of the novel is narrated in a language that "embraces the particularities of the speaker": the playful, contemporary language of a Dominican-American man who uses Spanglish and African American English (Carpio 278). Díaz's narrator is also the reason so much nerd lingo makes up *Oscar Wao's* lyrical prose.

Oscar Wao is thus a linguistically diverse text on many levels. In what follows, I examine this important dimension while connecting it to the substance and politics of Díaz's deployment of heterolanguage in the novel.

II

In sum, then, there are certain things to be said about a poem as poem; and there are certain things to be said about it as an example of language in general.

—Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*

In this section, I explore the most salient features of linguistic simultaneity in *Oscar Wao*, focusing first on Spanglish, then African American English, and finally Nerdish. Given that each of these elements participates in Díaz's exercise in assertive non-translation, each has the potential to constitute heterolanguage (to be partially or fully inaccessible) for different communities of readers.

On Spanglish in General

As an in-group language practice characterised by Spanish-English alternation, Spanglish captures an experience that is part of the linguistic and cultural repertoire of many Latino/a bilinguals. This experience evokes “the contested and contradictory status of Spanish in the United States,” the present-day fact of Spanish’s “exceptional position in the cultural life of the US, as simultaneously the most widely studied and the most abjected language system other than English” (Hansen Esplin 176; Silva Gruesz 19).²⁴ While nationalistic views of language are in no way restricted to the United States, there is something specific about the ways in which such views have developed historically and

²⁴ This is the case even though, as sociolinguists Eva Rodríguez-González and M. Carmen Parafita-Couto indicate, the “situation presented by Spanish in the United States is very similar to other language contact settings in which there exists unequal bilingualism, such as Dutch in Pennsylvania” (465). However, they specify that the “main differences between Spanish and other languages in the United States are the large number of Spanish speakers and the continuous increase in immigration” (465).

how they continue to operate in present-day U.S. society. As anthro-political linguist Ana Celia Zentella explains:

Both the repudiation of bilingualism except as elite enrichment and the stigmatization of nonnative English are rooted in notions of the nation's indivisible link to one language. [...] In the US, the view that "real Americans" speak English-only has established English as a badge of American identity and anything less than fluency is perceived as a threat to national security and national identity.²⁵ [...] [Spanish] has become a proxy for "nonwhite" and conjures up all the negative attributes that are the legacy of a history of white privilege and black enslavement in the US. [...] Language plays a major role because racialization based on the body has been remapped onto language. (18-9)

While Spanish in the US is often racialised and perceived as a form of national trespassing that upsets Anglo-centric monolingual norms, Spanglish further constitutes a form of linguistic trespassing that disturbs widespread conventions of linguistic purity and unity. Debates surrounding Spanglish, its nature, its meaning, and its scope have thus caused much ink to flow, especially since the turn of the twenty-first century.²⁶ Understanding how and why people claim or disclaim it is important.

Many, like Lourdes Torres, recognise (1) that Spanglish resonates with many as a creative phenomenon and (2) that it is becoming more widespread in informal language use in the United States and beyond ("Spanglish" 5). It is also becoming more common in literature, music, advertisements, the mass media, and the web. Spanglish is gaining more visibility as contact between Spanish and English increases in the United States and abroad (Torres, "Spanglish" 5). Ilan Stavans, author of an early 2000 dictionary/essay

²⁵ How English came to be "Americanised" and considered *the* U.S. language (to the detriment of other languages) is a topic aptly covered by Vicente L. Rafael in "Translation, American English, and the National Insecurities of Empire" (2009, my footnote).

²⁶ Probably not coincidentally, as of 2003 Latino/as officially became the most numerous minority group in the U.S. (Zentella 17). According to the latest census data, in 2010 the Hispanic population constituted 16.3% of the total population in the United States (Rodríguez-González and Parafita-Couto 462).

publication titled *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language* and (in)famously the translator of the first chapter of *Don Quijote* to Spanglish (see Stavans 251-8), is an obvious supporter of the recognition of Spanglish as an important cultural and linguistic phenomenon (6).

Others, like Domnita Dumitrescu, a member of the ANLE (Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española), claim that “we are not witnessing the birth of a new language” and that what most people refer to as Spanglish is actually code-switching (“Spanglish” n. p.). When Dumitrescu allows herself to use the term, it is only to “facilitate understanding” by preserving “the popular name of [English-Spanish] code-switching” (“English-Spanish Code-Switching” 357). Many of Spanglish’s detractors, as exemplified by Ricardo Otheguy’s chapter “El llamado espanglish” in the Cervantes Institute’s *Enciclopedia del español en los Estados Unidos* (2009), believe that Spanglish should be discarded as a term because it can be associated with derogatory and misleading ideas about the nature of Spanish as it is used by Hispano-American speakers (222). In a subsequent article, Otheguy suggests that the term Spanglish be replaced by Spanish, or “if more specifics are required, popular Spanish of the USA,” consistent with the parallel terms that exist throughout the Spanish-speaking world (Otheguy and Stern 86).

Scholars like Ana Celia Zentella have retorted that to categorise Spanglish as the same as other popular varieties of Spanish ignores the role of linguistic oppression in the experience of U.S. Spanish speakers (29-30). In addition, Zentella argues that “insisting that the label Spanglish is out of place and needs to be eliminated ignores the fact that

‘Spanglish’ is no more or less real than ‘English’ or ‘Spanish’” (29). These labels “are all ideological constructs at least as much (if not more than) they are linguistic categories” (Zentella 29). As an ideological construct, Spanglish at least has the merit “of disrupting the hegemonic status of languages associated with nation-states” (Zentella 29).

On a linguistic level, while no fixed definition of the term exists, Spanglish is identified with “language mixing or the use of English and Spanish in a single utterance or text” (Torres, “Spanglish” 3). The linguistic processes most characteristic of Spanglish are borrowing (integrated forms, like *switchear* and *updatear*, or direct forms like *amigo* and *fiesta*), calquing (*llamar para atrás* and *what a barbarity*), and code-switching (Lipski qtd. in Arrieta 106-9).²⁷ These processes are very common across many situations of language contact. Code-switching is certainly the most widely studied and the most complex of these processes, since it involves practices as simple as inserting a word in Spanish in an English sentence and vice versa, and as intricate as the sustained alternation of codes within the same utterance. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* indicates that code-switching practices generally fall into four categories: tag switching (Oye, where the hell have you been? Dejaste mis llaves en la mesa, right?); inter-sentential switching (I don’t know if I should tell her, pero bueno acá estamos. I haven’t seen Betty in years! Ojalá me reconozca...); intra-sentential switching (What on earth es esto? Pobrecita, you

²⁷ Code-mixing and code-switching are two sociolinguistic terms that characterise language (oral or written) that draws on a minimum of two codes combined in different ways and to varied extents. As a linguistic unit, a *code* can be a language (English vs. Spanish), a language variety (Peninsular Spanish vs. Argentinean Spanish), or a style (a religious sermon vs. a street corner altercation). Code-mixing and code-switching are often used interchangeably, although *mixing* emphasises hybridisation, while *switching* stresses the act of alternating languages and the performative elements attached to it (McArthur).

don't even know por dónde empezar.); and intra-word switching (northamericana, tal-and-tal).

Many overlaps in categories obviously exist as well as alternate labels for the processes involved in Spanglish as a form of language mixing. Translation studies and literary scholars have chosen terms such as Spanglish (Arrieta; Boyden and Goethals; Carpio; Postma), radical bilingualism (Torres, "In the Contact Zone"), language fusion (Derrick), radical code-switching (Casielles-Suárez), English-Spanish code-switching (Jiménez Carra; Cresci, "Simultaneidad lingüística"; Dumitrescu, "English-Spanish Code-Switching"), and English-and-Spanish (Hansen Esplin) to refer to the prominent presence of Spanish-English alternation in literary texts. In sum, while not everyone agrees with the fact that this "Spanish-English language alternation is commonly labeled as Spanglish," what is certain is that various literary manifestations of this linguistic phenomenon do exist (Rodríguez-González and Parafita-Couto 462).

In my analysis of Díaz's *Oscar Wao*, I use the term Spanglish for a variety of reasons. As the next section supports in more detail, the politics of using the term seems to me highly consistent with Díaz's own conscious attempt to work against the myth of linguistic purity and nationalistic notions of language within and outside his prose (Booksmag; Cresci, "Simultaneidad lingüística" 2; Celayo and Shook 14). By "politics," I mean, with Zentella, that which is at stake in a term that "forces us to confront the way language is used as a smokescreen to impose national and cultural boundaries and to disguise racial and ethnic prejudice," a label that "invites us to discuss the specific sociohistoric, cultural, economic, and racial contexts that give rise to Spanglish" (29).

To be sure, as Jonathan Rosa makes clear in “From Mock Spanish to Inverted Spanglish,” it would be erroneous simply to displace the ideology of “one people, one language” onto *all* Latino/as, to claim Spanglish as a unifying force among *all* Latino/as (67). Where sustained contact between “Spanish” and “English” occurs, Spanglish becomes possible, something that is indeed most prevalent among Latino/a communities. Yet Spanglish is not *the* Latino/a language. Even among the Latino/as who do use Spanglish, how and why they do it will vary across contexts. As an umbrella term Spanglish is indeed guilty of obscuring the range and specificity of the Spanish-English language contact phenomena that exist in U.S. Latino/a communities and beyond. This is, however, also the case with Spanish and alternate designations (Fagan 2008). Using the term Spanglish in no way forecloses the possibility, especially in the context of sustained cultural analysis, of recognising appropriate nuances down the line.

Despite the necessary limitations of the term, it is important to me that the majority of people who say Spanglish is a part of their linguistic and cultural repertoire feel positive or neutral about the use of the term (Zentella 30). I am fully cognizant of the fact that the labels given to language varieties that are perceived as non-standard and hybrid rarely emerge as compliments, or from a celebratory place. Identification with such labels is thereby a complicated and conflicted process. Yet it does not mean that a term like Spanglish cannot be re-claimed by those it started out disparaging, to potentially highly empowering effects, if we consider what happened to terms like Queer

and Black.²⁸ Refraining from using the term or favouring less charged alternatives mostly seems to serve monolingual imperialisms. Such a choice also seems to privilege the interests of an elite that is ultimately more preoccupied with upholding the pristine prestige of a language whose future it understands to reside en los Estados Unidos de América than with giving recognition to the lived experience and evolving needs of speakers (Caffarel Serra 19).

Although not all Latino/as use Spanglish or identify with the experiences it approximates, many (especially members of the second generation) are proud of “speaking and being both,” and many adopt and/or respect the term that represents that complexity (Zentella 30). For me, Spanglish is an explicit way to fluidly perform and/or to give recognition to the performance of the non-monolingual identity that is part and parcel of the existence of many Latino/as.

²⁸ The word Spanglish (“espanglish”) first appeared on 28 October 1948 in *El Diario de Puerto Rico*, in an article written by Salvador Tió, who then served as the president of the Puerto Rican chapter of the *Real Academia Española* (*Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española*). The opening lines of “Teoría del Espanglish” make it clear that Tió was not intent on paying homage to the phenomenon he described: “No creo ni en el latín ni en el bilingüismo. El latín es una lengua muerta y el bilingüismo, dos lenguas muertas” [*I don’t believe in either Latin or bilingualism. Latin is a dead language and bilingualism, two dead languages*] (5). The stigmata and themes that run through Tió’s article (domination, capitulation, confusion, ignorance, multilingualism as combined semi-lingualisms, and so on) are still very much prevalent even in non-derogatory descriptions of Spanglish to this day.

On Díaz's Spanglish

Díaz is not content to leave his intuitions about divided identity—about an American story everywhere shadowed by a Dominican one—at the levels of plot, structure and theme. The same perceptions interfuse his every sentence. For what is most striking about his writing is his voice, and what is most striking about his voice is the audacity, bounce and brio of its bilingualism.

—William Deresiewicz, “Fukú Americanus”

While *Oscar Wao*'s hybrid character has fascinated readers and critics alike, the intense merging of Spanish and English is certainly the novel's most noted linguistic and stylistic feature. As the epigraph above and the following quote about Oscar illustrate, this merging powerfully anchors the bi-cultural *Bildung* of the novel's Dominican-American protagonists while distinctively supporting the spirit and signature of Díaz's style:

Everybody noticed his lack of game and because they were Dominican everybody talked about it. His tío Rudolfo (only recently released from his last and final bid in the Justice and now living in their house on Main Street) was especially generous in his tutelage. Listen, palomo: you have to grab a muchacha, y metéselo. That will take care of *everything*. Start with a fea. Coje that fea y metéselo! Tío Rudolfo had four kids with three different women so the nigger was without doubt the family's resident metéselo expert. His mother's only comment? You need to worry about your grades. And in more introspective moments: Just be glad you didn't get my luck, hijo [...] His abuela, La Inca? Hijo, you're the most buenmoso man I know. (Díaz 24)

After being “something of a Casanova” in his childhood, Oscar's teenage is marked by the fact that “except for [this] one period early in his life, dude never had much luck with the females (how *very* un-Dominican of him)” (Díaz 11). This passage shows the differing perceptions (and influences) of various family members on Oscar's non-normative, “*very* un-Dominican” masculine *Bildung*. The quote also signals that as a “GhettoNerd at the End of the World,” growing up in New Jersey/New York's 1970s-1980s transforming

context (“before Washington Heights was Washington Heights, before the Bergenline became a straight shot of Spanish for almost a hundred blocks”), Oscar’s formation happens as a young Dominican-American man at the confluence of cultures and languages. The important presence of Spanglish in *Oscar Wao* primarily signals Díaz’s desire to immerse his reader in an environment marked by this confluence.

On a formal level, this immersion is supported by the novel’s prominent, omnipresent, and intense Spanish-English alternation. Díaz’s text involves all forms of language mixing: some integrated borrowings (“What in carajo is the matter with you?”), many direct borrowings (“La Inca fished around blindly for her chancletas), a few calques (“Abelard’s third and final daughter, given the light early in...”), and countless instances of code-switching (Díaz 22, 79, 248). The last is no doubt the novel’s most widely deployed form of Spanish-English alternation. From tag switching (“Muchacha, I think he should have stabbed *you*,” “She cried out each time they struck her but she did not cry, *entiendes?*”), to inter-sentential switching (“And that was all it took: a *Beli le salió el lobo*,” “Un hombre muy serio, muy educado y muy bien plantado. You can already see where this is headed”), to intra-sentential switching (“As the *viejos* say, *clavo saca clavo*,” “from *princesa* to *mesera*—what is happening to the world?”) to intra-word switching (“infatuations that would reduce your average *northamericana* to cinders,” “chipped at her reservation with cool aplomb and unself-conscious *cursí-ness*”), the novel makes use of the entire typology of code-switching techniques (Díaz 117, 146, 115, 211, 124, 107, 88, 124). However, *Oscar Wao*’s Spanglish poetics amounts to more than a series of checked boxes. What could rapidly become a self-involved, prowess-oriented textbook case of code-switching never loses stylistic verisimilitude, narrative purpose, and political resonance.

Beyond Typologies—Assertive Non-Translation

I was trying to see how far I could push English to the edge of disintegration, but still be, for the large part, entirely coherent. In other words, could I make the unintelligibility gap for any one reader as wide as I could, but still have it hold together, still be able to communicate the experience?

—Junot Díaz, “In Darkness We Meet”

One of the most striking aspects of *Oscar Wao* as a novel that so seamlessly weaves two languages together is that it is devoid of self-translation. In Latino/a texts where Spanish is prominently used, self-translations are often provided to accommodate monolingual readers (Fagan 211; Hansen Esplin 181). For example, in Sandra Cisneros’s *Caramelo* (2002), a multigenerational *Bildungsroman* that shares many similarities with Díaz’s *Oscar Wao*, self-translations are provided through narrator commentary (“—I have *siete hijos*, Father begins, bragging about his seven ‘sons’”) or woven into the narrative through repetition (“—*Un recuerdo*, the photographer says.—A lovely souvenir ready for you....”) (80, 81). In *Caramelo*, the child-narrator also at times draws attention to and “clarifies” the speech patterns that seem unfamiliar to her (and perhaps to some of her readers): “—*Seño, seño*, the divers shout, not saying *señora* nor *señorita* but something halfway” (80).

These typical self-translation strategies are in stark contrast to what happens in *Oscar Wao*. As Evelyn Ch’ien writes in *Weird English* (2004), a seminal intervention in the study of Díaz’s language politics, “Díaz engages in the art of assertive nontranslation, placing Spanish words side by side with English words without calling attention to them, without contextualizing them or grammatically indicating that Spanish is other” (209). As

Ch'ien was quick to discern in Díaz's early career (he had not yet published *Oscar Wao* at the time she wrote her chapter), "[a] political, not purely aesthetic agenda defines Díaz's use of language" (209). Expanding on Ch'ien's insights, I would signal that Díaz's desire "to write to his own people" seems to be a crucial part of his artistic and political agenda:

I feel I'm not a voyeur nor am I a native informer. I don't explain cultural things, with italics or with exclamation or with side bars or asides. I was aggressive about that because I had so many negative models, so many Latinos and black writers who are writing to white audiences, who are not writing to their own people. If you are not writing to your own people, I'm disturbed because of what that says about your relationship to the community you are in one way or another indebted to. You are only there to loot them of ideas, and words, and images so that you can coon them to the dominant group. That disturbs me tremendously. (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 900)

Knowing what he did not want for himself as a writer, Díaz found the counter-inspiration he needed in Toni Morrison. In "Same Trip, Different Ships," he says:

If I had to single out the one author who had the most profound influence on my artistic and political development, I'd have to pull out Toni Morrison. Morrison fundamentally altered my entire vision of writing. She writes specifically for an African Diasporic community. *Anyone who can read and get a hold of her books is welcome, but let's not kid ourselves folks; we people of African descent are her privileged audience ... the ones she is most centrally trying to dialogue with. Morrison is not attempting to translate black American culture, for a white audience, she is no guide, no native informant. That in itself is revolutionary.* (Esdaille 40; my emphasis)

In this sense, Díaz's Morrisonian vision of writing, his ethical and political commitment "to write to his own people," motivates the assertive non-translation stance he clearly instilled in *Oscar Wao*.

And because Díaz chooses to write Spanish and English together at a level rarely encountered before, his Morrisonian ideal generates an important layer of heterolanguage for the portion of his audience for whom Spanish is partially or fully inaccessible. At the

same time, Díaz's "people" includes but is not limited to the Latino/a community: "I have absolutely no problem with being Latino as long as it doesn't eliminate the fact that I'm also Dominican, and African diasporic, and from New Jersey" (Díaz qtd. in Cresci, "Junot Díaz"). Moreover, the Latino/a community itself is not a monolithic entity. The multiplicity and complexity of "the people" Díaz "is most centrally trying to dialogue with" thus create a rich and multilayered context for heterolanguage in the novel (Esdaille 40). I nonetheless return, for now, to Díaz's prominent use of Spanish-English alternation in *Oscar Wao*.

In the novel, the reader is immersed in an environment where Spanish is not a foreign language. As the following passage suggests, in keeping with Díaz's Morrisonian ideal, Yunior does not translate or teach Spanish, he uses it—*punto*:

Oscar went home morose. [...] What's wrong with you? his mother asked. [...] When Oscar whimpered, Girls, Moms de León nearly exploded. Tú ta llorando por una muchacha? She hauled Oscar to his feet by his ear. Mami, stop it, his sister cried, stop it! She threw him to the floor. Dale un galletazo, she panted, then see if the little puta respects you. If he'd been a different nigger he might have considered the galletazo. It wasn't just that he didn't have no kind of father to show him the masculines ropes, he simply lacked all aggressive and martial tendencies (14-5).

As the scene unfolds, Yunior is not trying to guide his narratees through Beli's less than sympathetic reaction to the plight of her seven-year-old. That his mother responds with physical violence to Oscar's display of emotions is clear enough. But Yunior neither translates her assertions, nor does he attempt to cushion her elision (i.e. "Tú ta" for "Tú estás"). This moment is also not developed into a footnote or a glossary entry to comment on the frequent loss of s's and intervocalic d's (e.g. la'o for lado; na' for nada) in spoken

Dominican (and Caribbean) Spanish.²⁹ In the absence of any such accommodations, this passage is likely to remain partially inaccessible to readers unfamiliar with Beli's Spanish. Galletazo, the augmentative of the word galleta (the word for "cookie," which, as is the case here, can also mean a slap in the face) is rarely covered in your average Intro to Spanish class. This passage is thus likely to be disorienting for many readers, who will certainly have to pause and work out for themselves the violent implications of Beli's teachings to her son. While Beli's exact words are not translated, an attentive and willing reader can still piece together their connotations, since later in the passage Oscar's inability to seriously consider the "galletazo option" is correlated with his lack of "properly" aggressive manly tendencies.

There are very few instances in the novel where Spanish is explicitly contextualised. And when it is, it becomes a way for Díaz to thwart readers' possible expectations vis-à-vis his position as a "native informant." As the citation below demonstrates, it also serves to reinforce the in-group effect of the aspect of language under de/contextualisation. In this passage, Yuniór dwells on the peculiarities of Beli's verbal flourishes, highlighting in this way her increasing self-assertion, her coming-to-voice. As a blooming teenager who has just quit school, Beli is relishing her newfound independence while waitressing in a Chinese restaurant in Baní:

It must have dismayed La Inca to see how drastically her "daughter" was changing, for Beli, the girl who never used to speak in public, who could be still as Noh, displayed at Palacio Peking a raconteur's gift for palaver that delighted a great

²⁹ The novel does not even contextualise how, in college, Oscar got the "Oscar Wao" nickname of the novel's title. Oscar dresses up as Doctor Who for Halloween, which Yuniór thinks makes him look "like that fat homo Oscar Wilde," which his friend Melvin repeats, in Dominican-American pronunciation, as Oscar Wao: "Oscar Wao, quién es Oscar Wao, and that was it, all of us started calling him that: Hey, Wao, what you doing? Wao, you want to get your feet off my chair?" (Díaz 180).

many of the all-male clientele. Those of you who have stood at the corner of 142nd and Broadway can guess what it was she spoke: the blunt, irreverent cant of the pueblo that gives all dominicanos cultos nightmares on their 400-thread-count sheets and that La Inca had assumed had perished along with Beli's first life in Outer Azua, but here it was so alive, it was like it had never left: Oye, parigüayo, y qué pasó con esa esposa tuya? Gordo, no me digas que tú todavía tienes hambre? Eventually there came a moment when she'd pause at La Inca's table: Do you want anything else? Only that you would return to school, mi'ja. Sorry. Beli picked up her taza and wiped the table in one perfunctory motion. We stopped serving pendejada last week. (Díaz 108)

The core of Beli's language (i.e. her attitude) will remain inaccessible to a reader unfamiliar with Spanish. Yet by singling out, from among his narratees the ones who "have stood at the corner of 142nd and Broadway," Yunió establishes through language a privileged connection between the Dominican York experience he shares with many of his narratees and Beli's Dominican, pre-diasporic experience. Being in on "the blunt, irreverent cant of the pueblo" is precisely what cuts across time and diaspora, across Beli's early-1960s Dominicaness and Yunió's early-2000s Dominican-Americaness.

Beyond Assertive Non-Translation—Integration

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao interrupts a linear English and Spanish—standard languages that have yet to catch up with the Latined being's existence.

—Claudia Milian, "Latino/a Deracination"

Another element that quickly stands out when confronted with *Oscar Wao*'s prose is the extent to which Díaz integrates Spanish words into his text, many of which will by far surpass the expected familiarity of non-Spanish-speaking readers. As Díaz explains in the

following quote, he is intent on lexicalising Spanish words that have not yet been adopted as English words:

Look for instance at dictionaries and their way of adopting foreign words. When does a “loaned word” become an English word? Is *hacienda* a word in Spanish or English? You know what I’m saying? The point is I’m pushing the dates on a lot of these words. I decided I don’t need 100 years for the *Oxford English Dictionary* to tell me that it’s o.k. to adopt this or that word as part of our normal vocabulary. I feel that’s what we always should do. We should be pushing the dates on words. It’s like being a saint. You have to wait something like 500 years to be canonized. I am saying, let’s not wait. Let’s get there now. (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 904)

Pushing that endeavour to the next level, Díaz refuses to typographically mark Spanish in the novel as foreign or non-normative in any way:

For me, allowing the Spanish to exist in my text without the benefit of italics or quotations marks a very important political move. Spanish is not a minority language. Not in this hemisphere, not in the United States, not in the world inside my head. So why treat it like one? Why “other” it? Why de-normalize it? By keeping the Spanish as normative in a predominantly English text, I wanted to remind readers of the fluidity of languages, the mutability of languages. And to mark how steadily English is transforming Spanish and Spanish is transforming English. (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 904)

Díaz’s pioneering lexicalisation of Spanish and his refusal of traditional cushioning techniques (italics, self-translations, glossaries, footnotes) are often emphasised as cornerstones of his forceful language politics. In a quote I commented on earlier, Díaz himself reinforces this forcefulness: “I don’t explain cultural things, with italics or with exclamation or with side bars or asides. I was aggressive about that...” (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 900). At the heart of Díaz’s rapport with language is a consciousness of its violence, a violence his writing narratively foregrounds and poetically animates:

When I learned English in the States, this was a violent enterprise. And by forcing Spanish back onto English, forcing it to deal with the language it tried to exterminate in me, I’ve tried to represent a mirror-image of that violence on the page. Call it my revenge on English. (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 904)

In the context of the U.S., the mirror-image of that violence is likely to be most shockingly felt by readers of the dominant culture, that is, white, monolingual Anglo readers who are constantly being reassured in their comfortable, unmarked position as prime addressees.

That being said, in contrast with this overemphasised dimension of Díaz's work, other equally subversive yet softer mechanisms in linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation have been much less scrutinised. In a novel that intrudes on the perceived linearity and unity of Spanish and English in such an unapologetic way, another element quickly acquires significance for the reader: the level of integration of the two languages and the extent to which this fusing, in turn, fuses with the reading experience. This cohesiveness contributes to immerse the reader in a story world where Spanish and English are blended so deeply and extensively as to sometimes blur the perceived individuality of the two languages.

Consider, for instance, what occurs in this passage: "what every single Dominican, from the richest jabao in Mao to the poorest güey in El Buey, from the oldest anciano sanmacorisano to the littlest carajito in San Francisco, knew..." (Díaz 3). In this excerpt, Spanish-English entanglement propels the fast-paced, syncopated cadence of Yunior's "improvisational" voice: Spanish-only and English-only are lost in the amplified sonic register of such a playfully quilted Spanglish sentence (Díaz 3).

The informal and dynamic tone of the narration, unfalteringly sustained throughout the novel, also contributes to the purposeful oneness of Yunior's language. For example, in the subsequent passage, the expressions "colmado superstar," "her

darkskinned media-campesina ass,” and “the regime’s top ladronazos” all work towards the contrapuntal characterisation of Beli as out of place in her new school milieu:

the girl was still crazy rough around the edges. Had all the upper-class arrogance you could want, but she also had the mouth of a colmado superstar. Would chew anybody out for anything. (Her years in Outer Azua to blame.) Putting her darkskinned media-campesina ass in a tony school where the majority of the pupils were the whiteskinned children of the regime’s top ladronazos turned out to be a better idea in theory than in practice. (Díaz 82-3)

Díaz’s combinatory craft infuses this passage. Yuniór deploys his irreverent, edgeless language to reveal that despite her “upper-class arrogance,” Beli betrays her humble origins because her language resembles that of a “colmado superstar” (i.e. someone—a working-class person—who excels at the art of selling the items found in a convenient corner store/mini-bazaar). In her new educational environment, Beli’s racialised, classed, and provincialised body (“her darkskinned media-campesina ass”) is utterly marked vis-à-vis a particularly acute form of white privilege. Given the mixture of corruption, nepotism, and clientelism that thrived under the Trujillo dictatorship, the families of Beli’s racially-favoured counterparts can mobilise their ties to the regime to further their economically and racially-privileged position in Dominican society. The parents of Beli’s classmates are thus augmentatively qualified by Yuniór as “the regime’s top ladronazos,” or the regime’s top “mega-thieves” (from *ladrón*: thief). As this passage exemplifies, in Díaz’s integrated prose, Spanish words are rarely numerically dominant. Yet, at the same, they often qualify (as adjectives) or modify (as nouns) an entire string of words, the full meaning of which is then to be found neither in Spanish nor in English, but in Spanglish.

In addition, in *Oscar Wao*, the fusing of Spanish and English serves Díaz's "conscious attempt to make English his own, to make it bear the burden of Dominican-American experience" (Celayo and Shook 14). This is most tellingly seen in the towering presence of Spanglish neologisms in certain passages. For instance, after laying out in his blunt and unsentimental lyricism the relationship between politics and sex (sexual violence to be more exact) under the Trujillo dictatorship, Yunior ends the passage by saying, "if the procurement of ass had been any more central to the Trujillato, the regime would have been the world's first culocracy (and maybe, in fact, it was)" (Díaz 217). The neologism culocracy is not merely an instance of intra-word switching, it is Yunior's way of deploying the evocative power of two languages to encapsulate how the abuse of political power under the Trujillo regime was tied to the will to reign over women's bodies. A similar explanatory power resides in the neologism contained in this sentence:

In 1937, for example, while the Friends of the Dominican Republic were perejiling Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans and Haitian-looking Dominicans to death, while genocide was, in fact, in the making, Abelard kept his head, eyes, and nose safely tucked into his books (let his wife take care of hiding his servants, didn't ask her nothing about it) and when survivors staggered into his surgery with unspeakable machete wounds, he fixed them up as best as he could without making any comments as to the ghastliness of their wounds. (Díaz 215)

Here the reader is confronted with a neologism which can easily be mistaken for a form of integrated borrowing from Spanish. Except that "to perejil someone to death" does not technically exist as a verb in Spanish. It is Yunior's way to distil, in his Spanglish creation, a crucial aspect of this traumatic event of Dominican and Haitian history. The massacre he alludes to is often referred to as the Masacre del Perejil (lit. the Parsley Massacre). Under Trujillo's orders, the Dominican army killed an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people

who lived on the border with Haiti. To distinguish (more so to discriminate) between Dominicans and Haitians, army officers used the shibboleth “perejil,” whose “r” sound they assumed Creole-speaking Haitian would mispronounce (Turits 2, 28). Yunió’s neologism alludes to the conjoined myth of racial and linguistic purity as a catalyst to a violent Dominican history. Moreover, by mobilising the noun “perejil” and by turning it into a verb in the gerund (“perejiling”), the deadly action “in the making,” as Yunió reinforces, is powerfully juxtaposed to Abelard’s emphasised and disconcerting inaction.

Spanglish neologisms illustrate how Díaz mobilises an important dimension of his artistic-linguistic vision to communicate a Dominican-American experience. This vision is fleshed out by Díaz in the interview “In Darkness We Meet,” where he explains that in his view, “language is a funny thing to attempt to nationalize or to put a stamp on. Language eludes any attempt anyone has to corral it. So, it’s always weird when people feel that there’s this sense of ownership in a language and that people use it to victimize other people, because language just doesn’t work that way” (Celayo and Shook 14). Díaz contrasts this nationalistic-possessive notion of language with “the way young people in any neighborhood or particular spot will immediately work the language to their experience, to their little anecdotes” (Celayo and Shook 14). He proceeds to describe how childhood friends who evolve in close proximity to one another will eventually “create this entire language”: “you have your own goddamn idiom [...] in some ways it holds you together. [...] So, you’re able to hang out with people and say one thing and they all just start laughing” (Celayo and Shook 14). For Díaz, this idiomatic particularism and the malleability of language have important currency in the arts:

in an artistic enterprise, the same way that we use language to forge a reality among our youthful friends, we're going to attempt to use it to try to particularize that experience, because there's no exchange rate of language-to-experience that ever holds steady. Every experience of every moment seems to require some new way of saying it, and every artist seems to provoke an attempt to say something that might even be mundane, say, in an original way. So that's a long way of saying that to begin with, we're in *that*, we're in this mechanism, that language is already plastic in ways that I think are exceptional, that are far better and far more fungible than anyone would like to give it credit for. (Celayo and Shook 14)

Thus, for Díaz, "language is already plastic," and the writer works this plasticity to accommodate an experience, not the opposite. One of the crucial ways Díaz brings this philosophy to the page is by crafting expressions like *culocracy*, to *perejil*, to be *fukú'd* (i.e. to suffer the Curse and Doom of the New World), to *zafa* (i.e. to escape a curse, to "counterspell": from the Spanish *zafarse*, to get out of or to get away with), *Truji-líos* (i.e. Truji-troubles, as in "problems with Trujillo"), and so on. As these innovative Spanglish concepts illustrate, Díaz molds language into a reflection of his protagonists' complex heritage. He does not limit himself to existing and sanctioned words to tell the Dominican-American experience he wants to tell. His novel creates this entire language; and we readers, with varying degrees of efforts and challenges, can partake in the linguistic particularism it generates, in the idiomatic community it produces.

The Novel's Entire Universe—Spanglish Generalised

While Spanish-English alternation in *Oscar Wao* is complex and profoundly integrated to the reading experience, it is also widespread, something that is not common in mainstream Latino/a literature. Typically, the incorporation of Spanish or Spanglish pertains mainly to the dialogues, or it is restricted to one or more aspects of what Bakhtin

calls the “character zone” (“Discourse” 316). It also tends to typify the speech patterns of certain characters more than others (e.g. la abuela). The idea is to recreate, with Spanish-inflected language, an image of language that conveys to the reader the impression that that particular character would “normally” speak Spanish.

In *Oscar Wao*, however, Spanglish is not restricted to the character zones; it pertains to the novel’s entire universe. Narratively speaking, this is made plausible because the voice that grounds *Oscar Wao* as a *Bildungscrónica* belongs, for the most part, to Yunior. This allows Díaz to call attention to the worldview, experience, positionality, and expressivity that uniquely characterise Yunior as a storyteller, including Spanglish, even when he is narrating a pre-diasporic Dominican past. This is convincingly conveyed in the following passage, where Yunior describes the climate of terror and surveillance that paralysed the Dominican people under the Trujillo regime:

It was widely believed that at any one time between forty-two and eighty-seven percent of the Dominican population was on the Secret Police’s payroll. Your own fucking neighbors could acabar con you just because you had something they coveted or because you cut in front of them at the colmado. Mad folks went out in that manner, betrayed by those they considered their panas, by members of their own families, by slips of the tongue. One day you were a law-abiding citizen, cracking nuts on your galería, the next day you were in the Cuarenta, getting *your* nuts cracked. Shit was so tight that many people actually believed that Trujillo had supernatural powers! (Díaz 225-6)

While this description pertains to pre-1961 Dominican history, Yunior narrates it in a Spanglish that never lets the reader forget his narrative present (i.e. the early 2000s) and the contemporary resonance of his expressions. Through language, Yunior’s, Oscar’s, Lola’s, and Beli’s hyphenated *Bildungen* remain constantly at the centre of *Oscar Wao*. In particular, Yunior’s storytelling incessantly “pulls the reader out into the frame of the

story and back to the United States,” back to the future of a twenty-first-century Dominican York experience he and his unabashed language bring to life (Carpio 278).

Spanglish Incorporated—Metatextual Implications

That Spanish-English alternation so markedly and distinctively permeates *Oscar Wao* certainly sets the text apart on a formal level. To be sure, the vast majority of Latino/a texts mix Spanish and English to some degree, and this has been a feature of Latino/a literature for a long time. However, marked linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation have not been central to bestsellers and high school “must-read” books such as Julia Álvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* (1991), Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street* (1984), or even *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989), the first Pulitzer-winning novel by a Latino author, Oscar Hijuelos. As a mainstream novel, Díaz’s *Oscar Wao* marks a shift in this previous trend.

Of course, *Oscar Wao* is far from being the first Latino/a text to so deeply integrate Spanish and English. Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Giannina Braschi’s *Yo-Yo Boing* (1998), and Susana Chávez-Silverman’s *Killer Crónicas* (2004) are but a few examples of works that employ sustained code-switching and that predate the publication of Díaz’s novel. Yet it is extremely significant that unlike such previous bold literary experiments with the merging of Spanish and

English in prose, Díaz's *Oscar Wao* was published by a mainstream U.S. publisher (Riverhead Books).³⁰

In 2007, a few months before the publication of *Oscar Wao*, Lourdes Torres speculated that “as the number and power of Latino/as in the United States increases, it will be interesting to see if Spanish continues to muscle its way into what have been exclusively English language arenas” (“In the Contact Zone” 92). Torres suggested that if “radical bilingual literary texts” (a category in which she includes *Yo-Yo Boing* and *Killer Crónicas*, and in which she would likely have included *Oscar Wao*), “prove to be viable in the market place, it is conceivable that in the coming years Spanish will appropriate more and more textual space in Latino/a fiction published by mainstream presses” (92). The publication of *Oscar Wao* by a mainstream publishing house and its ensuing critical and commercial success certainly made Torres’s conjecture even more “conceivable.”

In April 2008, Díaz won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. It was the first time that the prestigious distinction was awarded to a writer born outside the United States (Jiménez Carra 166). Although substantial in and of itself, this change acquires increased significance when it is considered that the prize is given for a fiction book “preferably dealing with American life” (“The 2008 Pulitzer”). *Oscar Wao*’s protagonists are all of Dominican origin, the work narrates a story and a history that takes place across two countries, and Spanglish is central to the novel’s poetics and politics. That Díaz won the Pulitzer for *Oscar Wao* gives institutional recognition to the cultural and linguistic

³⁰ *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza* was published by Aunt Lute, a non-profit multicultural feminist press based in San Francisco, California. *Yo-Yo Boing* was published by the Latin American Literary Review Press, a press specialising in the translation and diffusion of Latin American literature. *Killer Crónicas* was published by the University of Wisconsin Press.

phenomena that distinguish the novel as a work of contemporary U.S. fiction (Jiménez Carra 166).

Díaz also received numerous other prestigious honours, including being named #1 Fiction Book of the Year by *Time* magazine and winning the National Book Critic's Circle Award, the PEN/Malamud Award, the PEN/O. Henry Prize, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, and the Anisfield-Wolf Award (“This Is How”). In 2015, BBC Culture proclaimed *Oscar Wao* the best novel of the twenty-first century, using a poll of several dozen U.S. critics (Flood).³¹

In addition, the novel enjoyed commercial success. *Publishers Weekly* (using data from Bookscan) established that before winning the Pulitzer, *Oscar Wao* had already sold 60,000 copies in U.S. sales only, despite being available only in hardcover edition (Habash). In 2012, upon the release of *This Is How You Lose Her* (Díaz’s most recent short story collection), Riverhead Books claimed that *Oscar Wao* had “spent more than 100 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, establishing itself—with more than a million copies in print—as a modern classic” (“This Is How”). As of April 2012, according again to *Publishers Weekly*, the book had sold a total of 657,000 copies in the United States alone since its publication (Habash). Whatever the actual up-dated sale figures, *Oscar Wao* can be considered commercially successful by most standards.

³¹ BBC Culture consulted experts from papers including the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsday*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *Booklist*. From this consultation, they compiled a list of 156 novels, which they then submitted to U.S. critics. *Oscar Wao* was top of the list of most of the critics (Flood).

As Pierre Bourdieu puts it in *Language and Symbolic Power*, writers like Díaz “play their part in constructing the legitimate language by selecting, from among the products on offer, those which seem to them worthy of being consecrated and incorporated into the legitimate competence” (58). That Díaz chose to make Spanish-English alternation and assertive non-translation central features of his work is therefore crucial to a political reading of his novel. Díaz, however, had little control over the reception of his work and its language politics.

From an institutional perspective, the publication of this markedly linguistically-hybrid work of fiction by a mainstream publishing house and its ensuing critical and commercial success are signs of and contributions to the increasingly legitimised presence of Spanish and Spanglish in U.S. literature and beyond. *Oscar Wao*’s unprecedented mainstream U.S. trajectory suggests that Díaz’s Spanglish was likely to constitute heterolanguage to a significant portion of its audience. This, however, did not prevent many people from buying the book, and it does not seem to have significantly hindered the generally positive reception of the novel. Therefore, by examining *Oscar Wao* from a broader cultural (and sociolinguistic) perspective, it is possible to argue that its protagonists’ *Bildungen* exist in a mutually reinforcing relationship with the *Bildung* of Spanglish itself as a linguistic phenomenon. Metatextually speaking, *Oscar Wao* is as much about the coming of age of its Afro-Latino/a protagonists as it is about the coming of age of Spanglish itself.

And while Spanish-English alternation is crucial to the politics of *Oscar Wao*, it is also important to signal that it is only one aspect of Díaz's generalised style of mixture. *Oscar Wao*'s evocative range includes a variety of languages and codes, including but not limited to Spanglish. These idioms all support the narrative, the spontaneous and familiar register of the narration, and they are all deployed by Yunior as if they were deeply proximate to his narratees. In this sense, Spanish-English alternation does not call attention to itself, and not merely because Díaz shuns translation or italics. Spanglish is but one part of Díaz's overall linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation project; with other languages and codes, it participates in the novel's blazing take-it-or-leave-it mode of address.

African American English—Languaging Afro-Latino Consciousness

Community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist. [...] It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. *For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.*

—Audrey Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never..."

As previously mentioned, one of the most salient aspects of *Oscar Wao*'s linguistic simultaneity is the use of African American English alongside Spanglish (covered above) and Nerdish (soon to be addressed). It is highly significant that Yunior, the novel's narrator-character, is a young Afro-Latino who conjures up the *Bildung* stories of other Afro-Latino/as using, among other linguistic resources, African American English.

Indeed, in “It Was a Black City” (2016), Django Paris explains that one of the linguistic outcomes of changing urban communities in the United States (and of the continued residential and educational segregation of racialised communities) is that, in many contexts, African American English has “become a common language used within and across ethnicities” (247). Across the United States, Latino/as are becoming the largest community in many neighbourhoods and schools that were once predominantly African American. As a result, African American English is often learned and used across ethnic boundaries as part of language socialisation (242, 248). As many Latino youths share social spaces, institutions, cultural practices, and relationships with their African American peers, they often also share African American English as “a sort of lingua franca set against the backdrop of the [Dominant American English] demanded of [them] for access and opportunity in school and the broader society” (247).

In the urban North Jersey context where Yunior grew up (which is also the context he narrates in many chapters), the language socialisation patterns that Paris examines are highly plausible and indeed prevalent (Bailey 557). However, this process is often more intricate for Latino/as who are of African descent, as is the case for approximately 90% of Dominican-Americans, including Yunior, Beli, Lola, and Oscar (Esdaille 40). As alluded to many times in *Oscar Wao*, in the Dominican Republic, a non-binary conceptualisation of racial phenotypes organises social life, and most people do not think of themselves as black or “*of significant African descent*” (Bailey 556; my emphasis). Contrastingly, in the United States, the black and white phenotypical binary significantly shapes the social world, and many Dominican-Americans are routinely ascribed black phenotypes that

most people associate with an African American ethnicity. As noted by Bailey, “everyday enactment of a Dominican American identity thus involves negotiating disparities between self-ascription and other-ascription of identity, and resisting phenotype-racial categorization” (556).

In this context, language (specifically the use of Spanish) becomes a crucial way to enact Dominican-American identity. This linguistic performance may implicate the negation of an Afro diasporic heritage and, by extension, of shared cultural roots with the African American community. At the same time, among Dominican-American youth,

many identify strongly with African American peers, with whom they share a political economic position characterized by low income, segregated neighborhoods, substandard schools, and non-White/African-descent phenotype. Many in the second generation extensively adopt forms from African American English, which serves Dominican Americans as a language of resistance to disparagement by dominant US groups, just as it does many African Americans. (Bailey 557)

In this sense, Díaz’s conscious decision to deploy African American English in *Oscar Wao* can be correlated to his Morrisonian vision of writing. Indeed, Díaz chooses to prioritise an American English that is unassociated with the white audience he does not specifically endeavour to write to or translate for. Simultaneously, given the language socialisation tendencies highlighted above, Yunior’s choice of an American English many Dominican-Americans identify with and embrace (often as a form of resistance to the dominant language and culture) reinforces his privileged address to Dominican-American narratees *of significant African descent* (among others).

As explained in my earlier discussion of the racialised dimensions of “fukú,” Díaz’s *Oscar Wao* stands out against the backdrop of a Dominican culture and history that downplay or deny the significance of blackness. Díaz’s narrative and historical emphasis on Dominican-American characters who are made to be *of significant African descent* marks a crucial political gesture. Yunior’s deployment of African American English poetically supports this gesture. By embracing African American expressive culture, Yunior situates himself and at least some of his narratees within an Afro-American and African diasporic context.

To theorise African American English in *Oscar Wao*, I delineate two layers of its deployment in the text: 1) *expressions or language practices originating in African American English* and 2) *usages that constitute marked ways of invoking an Afro-descending affiliation through language*. While I understand that the calculated profanity of *Oscar Wao*’s prose provides for many examples of semi-hardcore-to-hardcore “ghetto slang” expressions that “can be interpreted as typical instances of African American English” (Deresiewicz 39; Boyden and Goethals 25), I also think it would be unfair to confine an entire language variety only to its most stigmatised and/or vulgar features. This is especially the case given that white Americans can so easily draw on many of these expressions, while never bearing the stigma attached to speaking a language widely associated with profanity (pardon *their* French, not *my* French). This is not a privilege afforded to the African American community.

The first layer I consider here refers to expressions or language practices that grammatically or lexically originate in African American English. Examples include uninflected verbal constructions such as “I bet it don’t hurt now” and “them two was *tight*” (in addition to the use of “they” for “these” or “those”), numerous double negations such as “he wasn’t no home-run hitter,” “He didn’t care about nada that night,” “I didn’t have no medical,” “He didn’t have no couple of decades,” “he wasn’t fucking no Island girls,” “no Lola, no me, no nothing,” as well as the frequent use of words like “baller,” “brother,” “sister,” “cats,” “dude,” “homeboy,” “homegirl,” “homes,” and so on—many of which have now crossed over into mainstream colloquial American English (Díaz 250, 3, 11, 47, 167, 227, 279, 325). The omnipresent use of the verbal construction “ain’t” also contributes to the informal style of Díaz’s writing, although it is a feature that does not originate in African American English, and that also pertains to many other “non-standard” Englishes.

The second layer consists of usages whose deployment unambiguously creates an in-group effect among the Afro-American community. In *Oscar Wao*, commonly deployed examples include the generic use of the word “nigger” in place of terms like person, man, or guy (“If he’d been a different nigger he might have considered the galletazo”), anyone or anybody else (“Any other nigger would have pulled a Scooby-Doo double take”), people or folks (“he used a lot of huge-sounding nerd words like *indefatigable* and *ubiquitous* when talking to niggers who would barely graduate high school”), the one or the person (“the first nigger to learn the perrito and the one who danced it any chance he got”), he, the man, or the guy (“The nigger stuck with it and lost

close on twenty pounds! A milagro!”), and somebody or someone (“Not bad for a nigger who’d never even shot an air rifle”) (Díaz 15, 291, 22, 11, 270-1, 27-8).³²

The vocative use of the word “nigger” or “Negro” also helps Yuniors construct his address to some of his narratees. The “you” and the “we” summoned in the text fluctuate throughout the novel, revealing a lot about the communities Yuniors belongs to and writes to. The narrator-character sometimes addresses incredulous Dominican-Americans like him: “we Third World people” (Díaz 225), “Ask any of your elders and they will tell you. Trujillo might have been a Dictator, but he was a Dominican Dictator” (Díaz 216), “It’s all true, plataneros” (Díaz 155), “we postmodern plátanos” (Díaz 144), “True Believers” (Díaz 141, 148), and so on. At other moments, Yuniors appeals to narratees familiar with the genres, specifically those who know the Watchers—from Stan Lee and Jack Kirby’s the *Fantastic Four* comics—as a species that is dedicated to observing and compiling knowledge about the universe. Yuniors considers his storytelling responsibility vis-à-vis his narratees to be akin to that of the Watchers: he often refers to himself as “your humble Watcher” (Díaz 4, 92) or simply “your Watcher” (Díaz 149, 329). In Chapter 8, or “The End of the Story,” Yuniors confirms this by saying: “It’s almost done. Almost over. Only some final things to show you before your Watcher fulfills his cosmic duty and retires at last to the Blue Area of the Moon, not to be heard again until the Last Days” (Díaz 329).

³² Díaz never seems to use the word “nigger” to refer to women, but he “compensates” with the generic use of terms like “blackgirl,” “chickie,” “whitegirl,” “homegirl,” and with Spanish terms like “negra,” “negrita,” “flaca,” and “gordita.” While Yuniors often uses the word “nigger” as a term of endearment and affiliation towards Oscar (alongside other epithets like “O, Oscar, homeboy” and “dude”: “Of course the nigger was entertaining mad fantasies inside his head,” or “Homeboy was, for the first time in ten years, feeling resurgent”), he opts for less loaded terms to refer to Beli, calling her “our Beli,” “the girl,” “our girl,” and “sister” (Díaz 283, 271).

In one instance in the text, Yunior directly addresses “future generations of de Leóns and Cabrals” (Díaz 115). He also winks at graduate students when talking about a man (Jesús de Galíndez) who in real life was “disappeared” and assassinated for writing a dissertation that was critical of the Trujillo regime: “when he came out of his chloroform nap he found himself naked, dangling from his feet over a cauldron of *boiling oil*, El Jefe [Trujillo] standing nearby with a copy of the offending dissertation in hand. (And you thought *your* committee was rough)” (Díaz 97). At one point, Yunior also instructs fellow philanderers: “Players: never never *never* fuck with a bitch named Awilda. Because when she awildas out on your ass you’ll know pain for real” (Díaz 175).

Although Yunior addresses multiple narratees throughout the novel, the Afro-diasporic community is the one he hails the most. While the abundant generic use of words that signal shared racial affiliations certainly functions in this regard, Yunior’s sporadic vocative use of “nigger” or “Negro” further reinforces his interpellation of an Afro-American narratee: “I mean, Negro, *please*” (Díaz 4), “Negro, please—this ain’t a fucking comic book!” (Díaz 138), “us niggers” (Díaz 182), “Nigger, please” (Díaz 247), “Negro, please,” (Díaz 264), “I know what Negroes are going to say” (Díaz 284). Very early in the novel, in the prologue about fukú, Yunior sets the tone of his narratorial address by using what becomes a vocative signature of his text:

Who killed JFK? Let me, your humble Watcher, reveal once and for all the God’s Honest Truth: It wasn’t the mob or LBJ or the ghost of Marilyn Fucking Monroe. It wasn’t aliens or the KGB or a lone gunman. It wasn’t the Hunt Brothers of Texas or Lee Harvey or the Trilateral Commission. It was Trujillo; it was fukú. Where in coñazo do you think the so-called Curse of the Kennedys comes from? How about Vietnam? Why do you think the greatest power in the world lost its first war to a Third World country like Vietnam? I mean, Negro, *please*. (Díaz 4)

While this tactic is deployed to anticipate his narratees' skepticism, to dissipate their doubts, and to bolster his credibility and reliability as a storyteller, this passage's final interjection is also typically spoken by African Americans to other African Americans when doubting the veracity of a claim. By using it early in the novel, Yuniors grounds his (unreliable, non-omniscient) narration in one of *Oscar Wao's* most important solidarity-enhancing mechanisms towards Afro-American readers: the use of language that is simply "off-limits" to any other social group.

This leads us back to heterolanguage. Discursively, the incorporation of these layers of African American English in the novel functions, as noted by Rachel Norman, in a cognate way to the Spanish-English alternation previously discussed in this chapter by situating the Dominican-American narrator and characters within certain language communities (40). However, while the deployment of African American English in the novel supports the linguistic simultaneity of Díaz's project, it partakes less straightforwardly in his corollary enterprise in assertive non-translation. For most speakers of "standard" American English, the intelligibility gap between Spanish and English is likely to be wider than it is between "standard" American English and African American English. While in encountering *Oscar Wao*, many passages are likely to constitute heterolanguage to a non-Spanish-speaker, African American English utterances, although potentially de-familiarising, are unlikely to be inaccessible to most speakers of "standard" American English. There is, nonetheless, an impressive radical potential in Díaz's deployment of African American English as *another* language (lit. hetero-language). Indeed, to partake in the experience of the novel, the reader must

confront her own outsidership, her otherness vis-à-vis a language variety that may often be out of reach or off-limits for important racial and sociohistorical reasons. In this sense, the potential othering effect of African American English as heterolanguage hinges more on *access* (i.e. ability, right, or permission to approach or use; admittance) than on *accessibility* (i.e. attainability through knowledge).

Overall, given *Oscar Wao*'s linguistic flip-flopping (i.e. the combination of Spanglish with forms of African American English), the prominent use of uncushioned Spanglish can hardly be considered a means to disclaim blackness or *significant African descent*, as Bailey indicates is not rare among Dominican-Americans (556). On the contrary, by casting Yunior, a proficient linguistic flip-flopper, in the role of the storyteller, Díaz grounds the *Bildungen* of his Dominican-American protagonists in the consciousness of their complex and fluid processes of ethnic and racial identifications. In other words, linguistic simultaneity becomes a way to envision and negotiate multiple belongings; it is key to Díaz's "linguaging" of an Afro-Latino consciousness (Alim 7). Through language, Díaz produces a community, a Black-Latino alliance, that, as Audre Lorde remarked, takes differences and makes them strengths. By linguaging an Afro-Latino consciousness, Díaz shapes a tool that might well start dismantling the master's house: a hegemonic (English-only) American language—a dominant language that is always, already, unmarkedly, and oppressively White.

Nerdish—Of Nerds and Many Lingos

...how in the world to describe the extreme experience of being an immigrant in the United States, the extreme experience of coming from the Third World and suddenly appearing in New Jersey. [...] Every language that I was deploying, every language system, fell apart. [...] But science fiction, fantasy, and comic books are meant to do this kind of stupid stuff, they're meant to talk about these extreme, ludicrous transformations, and so I really wanted to use them. I felt a great kinship to these narratives, which served as a backbone for so much of what we call "America" but are completely ostracized; it felt like the history of the immigrant, the minority, the woman. I was like, Yo, we're friends. In darkness we meet. Let us do work.

—Junot Díaz, "In Darkness We Meet"

In addition to Spanglish and African American English, Nerdish is also prominently deployed in *Oscar Wao*, crucially participating in the novel's dual project of linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation. Nerdish, or nerd talk, although not a language in the linguistic sense, is an umbrella term I use in my analysis to encompass a variety of discursive threads, technical speeches, and intertextual networks that run through *Oscar Wao*. While Spanglish and African American English support the novel's omnipresent linguistic code-switching, Nerdish operates as a form of discursive code-switching.

It is important to situate Nerdish in the context of the overall semiotic and cultural challenge posed by *Oscar Wao* to its readers. The cultural indexes of a reader who is not familiar with both the Dominican and the U.S. contexts are already stretched by Díaz's constant bi-cultural referencing. For example, when Lola casually describes a man she met when she lived in Santo Domingo as a teenager, she says: "He was one of those vain políticos, a peledista, had his own big air-conditioned jípetá" (Díaz 206). Even for a reader

familiar with Lola's Spanish, to understand that the man she is talking about is a politician who is a member of the Partido de Liberación Dominicana (PLD—thus the noun “peledista” or “peledeísta”), one would need to have more than a familiarity with Spanish, or even colloquial Dominican Spanish. In fact, this unfootnoted reference and its connotations are likely to be lost on readers not culturally acquainted with political life in the Dominican Republic. In turn, on the U.S. side of *Oscar Wao's* cultural horizon, Yunior's subsequent allusion to former South Carolina Senator James Strom Thurmond is likely to resonate only with a reader who is familiar with U.S. (political) scandals of the early 2000s:

... until the day a teacher [...] surprised the undercover couple in flagrante delicto in a broom closet. [...] The scandal! Remember the time and the place: Bani in the late fifties. Factor in the Jack Pujols was the number-one son of the Blessed B—í clan, one of Bani's most venerable (and filthy rich) families. Factor in that he'd been caught not with one of his own class (though that might have also been a problem) but with the scholarship girl, una prieta to boot. (The fucking of poor prietas was considered standard operating procedure for elites just as long as it was kept on the do-lo, what is elsewhere called the Strom Thurmond Maneuver.) (Díaz 100)³³

The reader does not need to know about Strom Thurmond to understand this passage. Nevertheless, this allusion brings into sharp focus the institution of slavery and the commodification and sexual objectification of black (especially female) bodies that it has crystallised. Yunior's critique of sexual politics under conditions of post-slavery acquires the diasporic dimensions he gives to the scandal he narrates only *if* the reader is in on the “manoeuvre” he alludes to.

³³ After his death in 2003, Thurmond (a staunch segregationist who made his name and political reputation denying African Americans their basic civil and human rights) was revealed to have had a mixed-race daughter he knew about and “supported,” but never publicly recognised. Essie Mae Washington-Williams was born when her African American mother, Carrie Butler, was sixteen. Thurmond was twenty-two. Butler worked as a maid for Thurmond's family (Curtis).

Like *Oscar Wao*'s significant and complex cross-cultural allusions, Nerdish functions to draw on certain communities of readers while challenging others. Nerdish in *Oscar Wao* is mostly derived from American and British comic, fantasy, and science fiction culture, as well as Japanese anime and manga. It is a discursive universe Yunion keenly draws upon.

Although it is treated in the same uncushioned manner as Spanglish, not all Nerdish is likely to constitute heterolanguage for Díaz's non-genre-acquainted audience. Sentences such as "Hiding your doe-eyed, large-breasted daughter from Trujillo, however, was anything but easy. (Like keeping the Ring from Sauron)," or "Neither of his daughters had any idea, were carefree as Hobbits" exemplify Yunion's frequent deployment of "soft" Nerdish metaphors and similes grounded in *The Lord of the Rings* (Díaz 217, 219). In recent years, the Tolkien universe has become less specific to epic fantasy nerds by crossing over into mainstream popular culture, mainly through Peter Jackson's high-deployment film series. While these "soft" Nerdish references bolster the creative and stylistic range of Díaz's prose, they are not cumbersome or vital for meaning. Even a reader who does know about Middle-earth will not be disoriented by a passage that reads: "In a better world I would have kissed her over the ice trays and that would have been the end of all our troubles. But you know exactly what kind of world we live in. It ain't no fucking Middle-earth. I just nodded my head, said, See you around, Lola, and drove home" (Díaz 194).

There are, however, many moments in the novel where obscure intertextual references are much more central to meaning-making. In such moments, the reader must either accept her own unhomelikeness, or decide to make herself at home by disrupting her reading and obtaining the necessary knowledge to make sense of certain passages. At times, Yuniór almost dares you to get a map and find your way back into clarity. In Chapter 4 (aptly entitled “Sentimental Education,” after Gustave Flaubert’s famous *Bildungsroman*), Yuniór initiates an abrupt shift in what had been his narrative focus thus far in the chapter. Suddenly, in a rather taunting manner, he introduces a character the readers had never heard of until this point:

You ever seen that Sargent portrait, *Madame X*? Of course you have. Oscar had that one up on his wall—along with a Robotech poster and the original *Akira* one-sheet, the one with Tetsuo on it and the words NEO TOKYO IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE. She was drop-dead like that. But she was also fucking crazy. (Díaz 181)

This is how, having no idea who she is, we eventually get introduced to Jenni Muñoz a.k.a. La Jablesse, a Puerto Rican Goth whom Oscar ends up falling madly in love with in college. Instead of actually being about Jenni, this passage—the literary equivalent to an establishing shot—becomes a meticulously disorienting Nerdish description of Oscar’s nerdy wall.

This is, in fact, how a vast portion of the novel’s Nerdish functions: to qualify or illustrate Oscar’s nerdiness in contrast to his immediate environment. Early in the first chapter, Yuniór informs us that Oscar “[c]ouldn’t play sports for shit, or dominoes, was beyond uncoordinated, threw a ball like a girl. Had no knack for music or business or dance, no hustle, no rap, no G. And most damning of all: no looks” (Díaz 20). Instead of

being focused on cultivating these socio-culturally valued skills (and potentially life-saving assets, for a young “Ghetto Nerd”), we learn that Oscar:

Could write in Elvish, could speak Chakobsa, could differentiate between a Slan, a Dorsai, and a Lensman in acute detail, knew more about the Marvel Universe than Stan Lee, and was a role-playing game fanatic. (If only he’d been good at videogames it would have been a slam dunk but despite owning an Atari and an Intellivision he didn’t have the reflexes for it.) Perhaps if like me he’d been able to hide his otakuness maybe shit would have been easier for him, but he couldn’t. Dude wore his nerdiness like a Jedi wore his light saber or a Lensman her lens. Couldn’t have passed for Normal if he’d wanted to. (Díaz 21)

The uncushioned Nerdish in this passage presents Oscar as “the most atypical Dominican kid you can imagine” (Díaz qtd. in Esdaille 41). Yet at the same, the nerd lingo used to situate Oscar’s estrangement vis-à-vis his community is, in turn, likely to be estranging to many non-initiated readers. Did you know that otaku is a Japanese word that refers to people who, like Oscar, have an outsized love of genre? If you did not, do not count on the novel to contextualise or translate that for you. Such passages are thus likely to constitute heterolanguage to the non-genre-aficionados among Díaz’s readers.

In addition, Nerdish in *Oscar Wao* serves to unravel stereotypes and thwart socio-cultural expectations: through it, Díaz highlights the not-so-*un*Dominican nature of nerdiness after all. Yunior is a nerd too. The guy who seems content to pass for a jock (“I mean, shit, I was a *weight lifter*, picked up bigger fucking piles than him [Oscar] every damn day”) and who is half-jokingly, half-dismayedly invested in preserving his spot in the pantheon of hyper-masculine Dominican womanisers (“What I should have done was check myself into Bootie-Rehab. But if you thought I was going to do that, then you don’t know Dominican men”); yes, that Yunior is fairly nerdy too (Díaz 171, 175). As the following example illustrates, as he narrates Oscar’s nerdiness, the superficial varnish of

Yunior's coolness very often cracks, revealing the inconvenient truth of his own nerdiness: "Do you know what sign fool put up on our dorm door? *Speak, friend, and enter*. In fucking Elvish! (Please don't ask me how I knew this. Please.) When I saw that I said: De León, you gotta be kidding. Elvish? Actually, he coughed, it's Sindarin" (Díaz 172). Nerdish brings Yunior and Oscar together more than it sets them apart. Through Nerdish, their appearance as two social extremes is unraveled.

In contrast, as the epigraph with which I started this section suggests, Díaz's interest in deploying Nerdish also derives from its ability to describe the *truly* extreme. This evocative power is clearly illustrated when, in Chapter 5, Yunior creates a several-page-long allegory of life in Santo Domingo under Trujillo based on a particularly dreadful *Twilight Zone* episode he had watched with Oscar. As Yunior struggles to narrate the surreal and yet very real character of a dictator like Trujillo and the trauma he and his regime inflicted on the Dominican people, the vast expressivity of his Nerdish repertoire becomes incredibly appropriate:

Trujillo (also known as El Jefe, the Failed Cattle Thief, and Fuckface) came to control nearly every aspect of the DR's political, cultural, social, and economic life through a potent (and familiar) mixture of violence, intimidation, massacre, rape, co-optation, and terror, treated the country like it was a plantation and he was the master. At first glance, he was just your prototypical Latin American caudillo, but his power was terminal in ways that few historians or writers have ever truly captured or, I would argue, imagine. He was our Sauron, our Arawn, our Darkseid, our Once and Future Dictator, a personaje so outlandish, so perverse, so dreadful that not even a sci-fi writer could have made his ass up. (Díaz 2)

Yunior resorts to four dark lord figures (Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings*, Arawn from Lloyd Alexander's *The Chronicles of Prydain*, Jack Kirby's Darkseid, and T.H. White's dystopic King Arthur) to evoke the horrific dictator that Trujillo was in real life,

concluding that even the imaginative powers of science fiction would not have sufficed to create a character like Trujillo. In examples such as this one, even if the reader is unacquainted with the entire range of references mobilised, the accumulation of Nerdish nonetheless contributes to heightening the semantic force of the accessible content.

For less initiated readers, Díaz's Nerdish often does not convey direct imagery or meaning. Instead, it contributes to recreate the effect of extreme transformations like those entailed in the process of immigration. By making Nerdish an important part of his novel's enterprise in linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation, Díaz further instils in the reading experience of a significant portion of his audience the feelings of dislocation and disorientation that often accompany migration. Nerdish-as-heterolanguage means that, in encountering *Oscar Wao*, many readers are thrown into a new universe, one whose basic codes they are likely to be unfamiliar with. As is the case when inhabiting a new cultural context and/or learning a new language, it is impossible to be uncompromising: one simply must accept the experience of not knowing and not understanding everything. More than anything, like Díaz's reader, one must be willing to do the work that learning to know entails.

All in all, Nerdish further ensures the unhomelikeness of *Oscar Wao* across communities of readers. Beyond the purely linguistic and cultural, Nerdish adds a discursive layer of heterolanguage for many readers. As Díaz explains, it effectively completes the equalising effect of a shared outsider-ness:

I always thought I have a number of readers, I knew that I would have that from the beginning. I was going to have a black readership because one of the people who was reading my work and who I was writing to was AfAm [African American], and I knew I was going to have a Latino readership, and I knew there was going to

be a readership that only read English. So it was good that there was going to be unintelligibility for each group. A lot of my Dominican friends always flip out because they get the book and they get the stuff, but they're always like, yo, the shit that's other for them is the intellectual language. It was really fun to have these different registers going on and *to force communities*—it's not to say that the intellectual language is exclusively for a certain group, but I knew a lot of the Dominican kids I grew up with weren't going to know who the fuck Foucault was—but I thought it was nice to put all these people together in one room and to see if they could speak to each other. (Ch'ien 202-3; my emphasis)

To polish his community generating project further, “to force communities” as he puts it, Díaz toys with Nerdish that pertains to all kinds of nerderies, all kinds of nerd communities. Including that of literature graduate students. At the beginning of the novel, Yuniór tells us about zafa, the counterspell to fukú, specifying that “[i]t used to be more popular in the old days, bigger, so to speak, in Macondo³⁴ than in McOndo,” going on to explain where his tío Miguel in the Bronx stands on zafa (Díaz 7). Next to tío Miguel's layperson knowledge is an academic wink to the Macondo/McOndo debate and symbolism: this is what “forcing communities” can look like.

At the end of the novel, when Oscar gets beaten up in a cane field, Yuniór specifies that “[i]t was the Götterdämmerung of beatdowns, a beatdown so cruel and relentless that even Camden, the City of the Ultimate Beatdown, would have been proud. (Yes sir, nothing like getting smashed in the face with those patented Pachmayr Presentation Grips.)” (Díaz 298-9). As you are (at least as *I* was) trying to wrap your head around what Pachmayr Presentation Grips might be, Yuniór continues: “He tried to drag himself into the cane, but they pulled him back! It was like one of those nightmare eight-a.m. MLA

³⁴ Macondo is the fictitious Colombian town where Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* takes place. McOndo refers to a Latin American literary movement that emerged in the 1990s around the publication of an eponymous short story collection. Against the magical realist and exotic narrative mode “expected” of Latin American writers since the Boom, the pun counter-proposes a high modern and postmodern vision of the subcontinent, which a generation of writers sought to explore in their writings.

panels: *endless*” (Díaz 299). In this passage, two (and many more) unlikely references collide in the span of a few sentences, each representing a form of “specialised” knowledge. By weaving all kinds of knowledges and nerderies seamlessly together, Díaz’s equalising communal effect also neutralises commonly held epistemological hierarchies. All readers are posited to be nerds of some kind, revealed as specialists of something as they partake in the experience of *Oscar Wao*. At the same time, no one reader can feel completely at home within the novel’s universe. *In darkness we meet*, indeed.

III

Díaz’s *Oscar Wao* is a multilayered text in which linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-translation are poetically and politically significant. As I have shown in the previous section, uncushioned Spanish-English alternation anchors the bi-cultural *Bildungen* of the Dominican-American protagonists at the same time as it metatextually contributes to Spanglish’s own “coming-of-age” (i.e. its own coming-into-being as a significant and increasingly legitimised cultural and linguistic phenomenon). In addition, the use of African American English in *Oscar Wao* supports Díaz’s decision to create a *Bildungscrónica* that narratively aligns African diasporic identities with those of Latino/as. An Afro-Latino consciousness emerges from the story’s emphasis on the life and heritage of Dominican-American characters of significant African descent. Such consciousness is powerfully supported by a linguistic flip-flopping that is heavily influenced by African American expressive culture. Finally, the heavy presence of

uncushioned Nerdish furthers the novel's mission to bring together different communities of readers based on their shared unhomelikeness vis-à-vis the text's linguistic, cultural, and/or discursive universe. With Spanglish, African American English, and a notable refusal to accommodate or translate, Díaz makes clear that *Oscar Wao* centres on and privileges the Dominican-American community. Yet, through the novel's dense, multifaceted Nerdish, heterolanguage becomes even more central to the reading experience of *all* communities of readers. The experience of linguistic simultaneity and partial inaccessibility is thus key to Díaz's project and the heritage it embraces.

Given that so many of the text's stylistic and political specificities revolve around linguistic (and paratextual) choices, *Oscar Wao*, it should be noted, would be hard for anyone to translate for a global Spanish-speaking audience. Its stylistic and political specificities (among which heterolanguage is central) are rendered particularly vulnerable by the text's renegotiation in transnational circulation. Translation, as a crucial mediating influence in this renegotiation, becomes extremely impactful. In what follows, I analyse the priorities that oriented the translation of *Oscar Wao* for a global Spanish-speaking audience, as well as the effects such priorities had on Díaz's initial project.

Translating *Oscar Wao* into Spanish—Context

When I first read *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, my friend Junot Díaz's novel about growing up nerdy and haunted by Third World curses and dictatorship, I was giddy, crazy proud of the guy. And I immediately thought, pity the poor sucker who has to translate that!

—Achy Obejas, "Translating Junot"

Little did she know how quickly her pity would transform into self-pity! Cuban-American writer, translator, and journalist Achy Obejas ended up with the arduous task of translating *Oscar Wao* into Spanish. Obejas is the author of three novels, two short-story collections, one book of poetry, and several journalistic articles. She is also a translator from Spanish to English and English to Spanish (a rare combination for a professional literary translator). She has long supported literary exchanges between the Cuban-American and Cuban communities. Obejas also translated Díaz's *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012; *Así es como la pierdes*).³⁵

While only one Spanish translation of *Oscar Wao* exists, it has been used across two Spanish-language editions: one by Vintage Español (Random House), for the North American market, and the other by Mondadori (also Random House), for the international (i.e. Latin American and Spanish) market. There are four main differences between the two Spanish-language editions. For copyright reasons, the North American version was titled *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*, while the international version's title reads *La maravillosa vida breve de Óscar Wao* (Boyden and Goethals 31). In addition, an inserted paratext (i.e. a brief translator's note) was included in the North American edition only: "Nuestras notas al pie de página se encuentran entre corchetes [] para distinguirlas de las del autor. También, se ha tratado de preservar el español del texto original lo más posible" (*Our footnotes are between square brackets [] to distinguish*

³⁵ Achy Obejas was born in Havana. At the age of six, she came to the United States, growing up in the Midwest. As a translator, notable accomplishments include the English translation of Ena Lucía Portela's *Cien botellas en una pared* (2002) and Wendy Guerra's *Todos se van* (2006). Her Spanish translation of Díaz's novel was a finalist for Spain's Esther Benítez Translation Prize, and her translation into English of *Papi* by Rita Indiana was listed among *World Literature Today's* 75 Notable Translations of 2016. As a writer, most notable works include the short story collection *We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?* (1994) and the novel *Days of Awe* (2001).

them from the author's footnotes. The original Spanish was preserved as much as possible).

This leads us to the third and most important difference between the two editions: the North American version has an extensive translator's footnote apparatus (a total of 164 footnotes) that the international version does not have.³⁶ Finally, there are several minor textual differences between the two editions, probably attributable to dissimilar editorial proofreading guidelines. *Unless otherwise noted, when I refer to the Spanish translation of Oscar Wao, I mean the North American version.*

In "Translating Junot" (2012), an article she wrote for the *Chicago Tribune*, and in a lecture she gave at Duke University on March 28, 2017, Obejas highlights one key contextualising element for the Spanish translation of *Oscar Wao*: Díaz's previous issues with Spanish translations of his work made him very anxious vis-à-vis the translation of *Oscar Wao* to Spanish. When *Drown* (1996), his first short story collection, was first translated into Spanish (under the title *Los boys*), Díaz was utterly disappointed by a Peninsular Spanish translation that made "his New Jersey homeboys sound like ... well, Toni Morrison characters speaking Irish brogue, or a Cockney accent. It was that dissonant" (Obejas, "Translating Junot"). Díaz was able to get a second translation of the text published for the North American market (under the title *Negocios*). In an interview with Cresci, Díaz described the translation used in *Negocios* as "muy neutral," which Obejas took to mean that it "varnished off much of the Caribbean feel of the original" (Cresci, "Junot Díaz"; Obejas, "Translating Junot"). According to Díaz, in *Oscar Wao*, it

³⁶ Obejas seems to be under the impression that the only edition that does not have the footnotes is Mondadori's Peninsular Spanish text ("Translating Fiction"). However, upon verification, it does seem that the Latin American edition of the text, published in Mexico, also does not have the translator's footnotes.

was different: Yunior's voice is so strong, so forceful that trying to neutralise it would have been pointless. This gave him and Obejas more freedom with the translation (Cresci, "Junot Díaz"). According to Obejas, with *Oscar Wao*, Díaz "wanted the translation to sound Dominican—Caribbean, yes, but leaning toward a more Dominican sound" ("Translating Junot").

The translation process reflected this preoccupation. Obejas immersed herself in everyday and colloquial Dominican Spanish as much as she could. She would finish drafting the translation of three or four sections, then send them to Díaz, who would in turn send them to sixteen of his closest Dominican friends. They would send back notes, and the author and the translator would discuss them. "From the beginning, though, Junot made it clear I had final say," writes Obejas. Obejas also consulted with María Teresa Ortega, a renowned Cuban translator, at every step of the task. She then had Moira Pujols, the Dominican-born editor of *Contratiempo* (a Chicago literary magazine) read the penultimate draft and "excise[] any unnecessary Cubanisms (and fix[] a few Dominicanisms [she] hadn't quite mastered" (Obejas, "Translating Junot"). Her mother, a former Spanish-language teacher, proofread the final manuscript.

In sum, as the next section examines in more detail, a clear priority for those involved in the process of translating *Oscar Wao* to Spanish, including the "recognised" translator herself, was to make it unambiguously Dominican.

The Task and Its Difficulties—Spanglish

How the devil do you translate this into Spanish? The main difficulty was in capturing the terrific mixture of both languages that Junot employed, about which he himself commented in an interview: “The question is how much English can the Spanish put up with and how much Spanish can the English put up with, before it sounds forced...” [...] Now imagine how difficult that must have been to translate! That is the feat accomplished by Achy Obejas. An excellent writer herself, she knew how to find a Spanish equivalent for Junot’s English. And what kind of Spanish is that? Its principal characteristics, I would venture to say, are that it is a Caribbean Spanish, fresh, irreverent, multisensory, multi- or polysemous, multi many things.

—José Manuel Prieto, “A Conversation with Junot Díaz”

La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao is written in colloquial Dominican Spanish. Lexical choices are the main way in which the novel’s Spanish is Dominicanised and Caribbeanised. Examples include *yola* for *barco* (boat), *pana* for *amigo*, *guagua* for *autobús* (bus), *colmado* for *bodega/tienda* (shop), *vaina* for *cosa* (thing), and so on.

Although she does not play with syntax to the extent that the source text does (e.g. incomplete sentences, omitted punctuation, double negatives), Obejas incorporates the uninverted verb/subject interrogative structure that is very common in Caribbean Spanish: for example, *¿Y adónde tú vas?* for *¿Y adónde vas (tú)?* (Where are you going?), or *¿Qué tú esperas?* for *¿Qué esperas (tú)?* (What are you waiting for?).

The translation also reflects many phonetic features of Caribbean and Dominican Spanish. Examples include many omitted intervocalic d’s as in *arruinao* for *arruinado* (ruined) or *afeminao* for *afeminado* (effeminate). Other common phonetic echoes include *pa* for *para* (for/to), *na* for *nada* (nothing), *to* for *todo* (all, everything), *rapar* for *raspar*

(to fuck), *namá* for *nada más* (just/only, that's all, nothing else), *jodío* for *jodido* (screwed, messed up), *pari* for *party*, *verdá* for *verdad* (truth, right?) and so on.

At the level of register, the translation does, for the most part, endeavour to maintain the informality of Díaz's language. Yet, as the following example signals, the translation sometimes neutralises some of the source text's emphatic vulgarity: "*Supongo que no debí haberme enojado. Debí haber sido más paciente con el novato. Pero estaba encabronao. En fin, yo me había molestado en tratar de ayudar a este fokin idiota de mierda y él me estaba echando en cara. Me afectó de una manera verdaderamente personal*" (*I guess I shouldn't have gotten mad. Should have been patient with the herb. But I was pissed. Here I was, going the fuck out of my way to help this fucking idiot out, and he was pissing it back in my face. Took this shit real personal*) (Obejas 189³⁷; Díaz 178). While the bluntness and profanity of Yuniór's language (who like Beli's friend Constantina in the novel "could curse the black off a crow") might be hard to translate into Spanish, expressions like "*yo me había molestado*" ("I took the trouble" or "I made the effort" for "[I] was going the fuck out of my way") and "*me afectó de una manera verdaderamente personal*" (lit. "it affected me in a truly personal way" for "took this shit real personal") fail to capture the emphatic tone of Yuniór's colourful language.

As the passage above illustrates, Obejas's translation is also sprinkled with Hispanicised English expressions like "*fokin*" and "*bróder*." There are also a few instances—especially considering the source text's intense use of Spanglish—of English

³⁷ I reference *Oscar Wao*'s North American Spanish translation simply with Obejas's surname in brackets in the text.

interferences, and even fewer instances of untranslated English interferences. These generally pertain to vulgar expressions like Fuckface (Obejas 2), devil-bitch (Obejas 58), fuck (Obejas 182), bitch (Obejas 187), “¡Holy Shit!” (Obejas 294) or to grade 1 ESL class dialogues like “ella le dijo, Good morning, Mr. de León, en inglés. ¿How are you? I am well, contestó. ¿And you? Ella sonrió. I am well, thank you” (Obejas 295). Most of the English interferences in the text are not likely to constitute heterolanguage to a non-English-speaking audience. In fact, Obejas has indicated that because of the immense popularity of Hollywood westerns and action movies across Latin America, she was able to assume her audience’s familiarity with certain words and concepts: “What the fuck, Óscar, le dije por teléfono. ¿Te dejo solo un par de días y por poco te matan? [...] Holy shit, Óscar. Holy fokin shit” (Obejas 321). As an example, let us consider, in the following passage from *Oscar Wao*, how functional and prominent Díaz’s Spanish insertions are:

Let’s just say their first contact was not promising. How about I buy you a drink? he said, and when she turned away **como una ruda**, he grabbed her arm, hard, and said, Where are you going, **morena**? And that was all it took: **a Beli le salió el lobo**. First, she didn’t like to be touched. Not at all, not ever. Second, she was not a **morena** (even the car dealer knew better, called her **india**). And, third, there was that temper of hers. When baller twisted her arm, she went from zero to violence in under .2 seconds. Shrieked: **No. Me. Toques**. Threw her drink, her glass, and then her purse at him—if there had been a baby nearby she would have thrown that too. (Díaz 115; *my emphasis*)

As you can see in the translated passage below, there is only one word of English, and it is indeed one that is likely to be part of anyone’s Hollywood glossary:

Digamos tan sólo que el primer encuentro no fue prometedor. ¿Qué te parece si te compro un trago?, le preguntó, y cuando ella le dio la espalda como una ruda, él le agarró el brazo, con fuerza, y le dijo, ¿Y adónde tú vas, morena? Y eso fue todo lo que hizo falta: a Beli le salió el lobo. Primero, no le gustaba que la tocaran. Para nada y nunca. En segundo lugar, no era morena (hasta el **dealer** del Fiat se había dado cuenta de que era mejor llamarla india). Y, tercero, tenía ese genio suyo.

Cuando el tipo le torció el brazo, pasó de cero a la violencia en menos de 0,2 segundos. Chirrió: No. Me. Toques. Le lanzó su trago, su vaso y después su cartera—si hubiera habido un bebé cerca, se lo habría lanzado también.” (Obejas 123-124; *my emphasis*)

In addition, when first introduced in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*, many words are translated and contextualised in the translator’s footnotes: “nerd” (mentecato, ganso, pendejo, también estudioso) (Obejas 6); “old school” (de las viejas tradiciones) (Obejas 7); “fly” (pronunciado *fla-i*: chévere, volao, bárbaro, macanudo, estupendo) (Obejas 11); “goth” (los goths son muchachos que siguen modas basadas en la cultura gótica) (Obejas 62); and so on. As the following example demonstrates, most untranslated expressions are also well-cushioned by the surrounding text:

Estaba harto del asunto. Dije, sin pensarlo: Vete pal carajo, Lola. ¿Que me vaya pal carajo? Silencio sepulchral. Fuck you, Yunior. Jamás me dirijas la palabra otra vez. Saluda a tu fiancé de mi parte, dije, tratando de burlarme de ella, pero ya me había colgado. *El coño de su madre*, grité, lanzando el teléfono. (Obejas 190)

Tired of the whole thing. I said, without thinking, Oh, fuck off, Lola. Fuck off? The silence of Death. Fuck you, Yunior. Don’t ever speak to me again. Say hi to your fiancé for me, I tried to jeer, but she’d already hung up. *Motherfucker*, I screamed, throwing the phone into the closet. (Díaz 179)

[...]

As Obejas revealed in her recent guest lecture at Duke University, halfway into the translation of the novel, the editor she and Díaz were working with, “a Puerto Rican who got what we were doing” quit her position and was replaced by a Spaniard. “He looked at the text, and he freaked.” He edited the text back to Peninsular Spanish, with a note about “who do we think we are and what do we think we’re doing.” Obejas confessed that she considered simply jumping off a building somewhere. She says: “Junot went in and ... I don’t know what happened ... but ... there was a letter of apology somewhere in there and

we were able to do what we were doing, we were able to keep it” (Obejas, “Translating Fiction”).

Clearly, the conviction that *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* needed to be the way it is, i.e. a colloquial Dominican Spanish translation (with a few cushioned Anglo elements), was important to both Díaz and Obejas. Most texts that are translated into Spanish for a global Hispanic audience are translated into Peninsular Spanish or “neutralised” (as much as “possible”) so as not to connote any particular regional inflection—everyone’s Spanish, no one’s Spanish. It is indeed highly significant that Díaz was able to keep colloquial Dominican Spanish, a non-hegemonic Spanish, as the language of the novel. We do not know what happened in that editor’s office before Obejas received the letter of apology, and Díaz has (to my knowledge) never clarified that. But I suspect that securing the Dominicaness of the translation may have involved a significant trade-off. It might help explain why, judging by the translation, preserving the intense code-switching of *Oscar Wao* was not a priority, and why the novel’s assertive non-translation stance did not translate into *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*.

To be sure, it would not have been easy to maintain the important presence of Spanglish and heterolanguage in the Spanish translation of *Oscar Wao*. But it was most certainly doable, and especially for a translator as skilled as Obejas. It is possible that for editorial reasons, that is because of the assumptions made by the publisher about the marketability and saleability of a novel that would present such characteristics, this was not the way the publisher wanted Obejas to exercise her skills. Whether it was for editorial, authorial, or translational reasons, or for a combination of these, what my

analysis of *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* reveals is that both Spanglish and heterolanguage were not priorities in orienting the translation of *Oscar Wao* for a global Spanish-speaking audience.

Surprisingly, in an interview with Cresci, Díaz notes that “Achy [Obejas] took one look at this [*Oscar Wao*] and knew that what was important about this was maintaining the code-switching, the presence of both languages, the bilinguality, or better said, ‘linguistic simultaneity.’ I also understood it clearly” (Cresci, “Junot Díaz”). On the one hand, Díaz’s statement does signal a professed desire to maintain the linguistic simultaneity of *Oscar Wao* in translation. Obejas, on the other hand, seems to have had a different idea of how the linguistic composition of *Oscar Wao* was supposed to orient (or not) her translation. As she indicated during the Q&A session of her guest lecture:

The Caribbean people in this book [*Oscar Wao*] are immigrants to the United States so they speak English. English is actually the language in which they are talking most of the time. I love it when people say that *Oscar Wao* is a Spanglish novel. It is not. It’s a fucking English novel, you know. It’s an American novel. About 18% of the text occurs in Spanish. I had to do this calculation because I was tired of people telling me about this. “Oh, it must have been so easy to translate that as so much already happens in Spanish...” No, motherfucker! It wasn’t! (“Translating Fiction”)

Obejas’s comment is extremely significant. First, she does not consider *Oscar Wao* to have been *significantly* written in Spanglish on potentially two main grounds: 1) Quantitatively, according to Obejas’s calculation, Spanish constitutes only 18% of the novel, and 2) she seems to posit that the Americanness of the novel somehow means that, of course, “it’s a fucking English novel.” I absolutely agree that it must be an extreme frustration for the translator that people would consider the translation of a multilingual text like *Oscar Wao* a piece of cake. However, as my previous analysis of the substance

and politics of Díaz's deployment of Spanglish in *Oscar Wao* clearly signals, I do not think that the importance of Díaz's Spanglish should be measured in quantitative terms, and I certainly question the assumption that the text should somehow respond to the monolingual, nationalistic equation between Englishness and Americanness.

Obejas's stance on the language of *Oscar Wao* makes me highly doubtful of Díaz's statement that she "knew that what was important about this was maintaining the code-switching" (Cresci, "Junot Díaz"). Obejas's comments (and my own analysis of the translation) do not convince me that that was a priority of hers as she translated the novel. Moreover, while *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* does somewhat maintain "the presence of both languages," that presence is very mild, cushioned, Hispanicised, and non-disruptive compared to the source text. I think that Obejas's desire to see *Oscar Wao* as "a fucking English novel" made it easier for her to see her task as a translator as that of transposing one clearly circumscribed, monolingual, nation-bound language (American English) to another (Dominican Spanish). In other words, it made it easier for her to concentrate her attention and labour on disrupting some language ideologies (i.e. that *Oscar Wao*'s translation should be in a hegemonic or neutral Spanish) while maintaining others (i.e. the unitary, monolingual, nationalistic vision of language that *Oscar Wao* challenges through linguistic simultaneity and heterolanguage).

Despite the professed importance of maintaining the code-switching, no compensatory efforts are truly discernible in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*. As Obejas herself remarks, "[t]he Caribbean people in this book are immigrants to the United States so they speak English. English is actually the language in which they are

talking most of the time” (“Translating Fiction”). If a priority of the translation had been to recreate the fluid multilingualism that characterises Yuniór’s Spanglish voice, Obejas could have reintroduced English elements more prominently in the translation. Virtually any part of Yuniór’s narration could constitute a plausible opportunity in this regard. As Obejas notes, Díaz’s Dominican-American characters (especially Oscar and Lola), even though they code-switch a lot, use English in many contexts in the United States. If an important goal of her translation had been to reflect this reality, she could have plausibly compensated the Spanish of the source text with English in the target text in several passages. A few “fokin” here and a few “bróder” there do convey a certain linguistic heterogeneity, but they do not compensate for the highly functional Spanglish of the source text or the assertive non-translation stance that so crucially characterises *Oscar Wao*.

To give an example, one important missed opportunity for compensation can be found in Oscar’s recurrent assertion of his Dominican identity, because language is key to his performative counterclaim. When Oscar moves to New Brunswick (New Jersey) to start college at Rutgers University, the long-standing issue of his supposed un-Dominicanness resurfaces: “The white kids looked at his black skin and his afro and treated him with inhuman cheeriness. The kids of color, upon hearing him speak and seeing him move his body, shook their heads. You’re not Dominican. And he said, over and over again, But I am. Soy dominicano. Dominicano soy” (Díaz 49). That Oscar attempts to claim his Dominicanness in Spanish, twice, is significant. In the translation, this scene reads: “Los blancos miraban su piel negra y su afro y lo trataban con jovialidad

inhumana. Los muchachos de color, cuando lo oían hablar o lo veían moverse, sacudían la cabeza. Tú no eres dominicano. Y él contestaba, una y otra vez, Claro que sí lo soy. Soy dominicano. Dominicano soy” (Obejas 53). As it is, the Spanish translation offers no evidence of the code-switching that is instrumental in Oscar’s identity performance. To reflect this important moment in the source text, the target text could, for instance, have kept the sceptical statement of Oscar’s interlocutors in English and directly attributed the Spanish to Oscar’s response: “You’re not Dominican. Y él contestaba, en español, una y otra vez, Claro que sí lo soy. Soy dominicano. Dominicano soy.”

In a mirroring incident later in the novel, Oscar responds in English to another attack, this time directed to him in Spanish: “Harold would say, Tú no eres nada de dominicano, but Oscar would insist unhappily, I am Dominican, I am. It didn’t matter what he said. Who the hell, I ask you, had ever seen a Domo like him?” (Díaz 180). In *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*, this passage goes: “Harold comentaba, Tú no eres na dominicano, pero Óscar insistía con tristeza, Soy dominicano, dominicano soy. No importaba lo que dijera. ¿Quién coñazo, les pregunto, había visto un domo como él?” (Obejas 191). It is substantial that across those incidents (in what is, after all, a bi-cultural *Bildungsroman*), linguistic flip-flopping (i.e. Spanglish) is ultimately Oscar’s strategy to negotiate his claims of belonging. For this reason, this passage also presents an important opportunity for translation. The target text could have, for instance, directly attributed Spanish to Harold (another Dominican-American)’s statement and kept Oscar’s English response: “Harold comentaba, en español, Tú no eres na dominicano, pero Óscar insistía con tristeza, I am Dominican, I am.”

Overall, as these examples (and the many more I could have examined³⁸) demonstrate, despite the professed importance of maintaining the code-switching and the linguistic simultaneity of *Oscar Wao* in translation, *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* does not actually corroborate this acknowledgement. Instead, what was indeed maintained was not the code-switching, but as Obejas's translator's note to the North American edition specifies, it is the Spanish of the original that was preserved as much as possible.

Displacing Solidarity—African American English

In *Oscar Wao*, the deployment of African American English supports the narrative emphasis on Dominican-American characters *of significant African descent*, helping Díaz claim an Afro-Latino consciousness through Yunior's racially-inflected voice. In addition, the deployment of language that is off-limits to non-Afro-descent social groups functions as an important solidarity mechanism. African American English significantly allows for the enactment of racial affiliations across ethnic boundaries.

As previously mentioned, in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*, the word “bróder” is often deployed, and it often serves to replace the generic use of the word “nigger,” or alternate terms that originate in African American English (e.g. homeboy, baller, brother, and dude). The presence of the term “bróder” can help maintain in

³⁸ The passage where Oscar and his family return to Santo Domingo after years of absence is certainly one such significant example: “It really was astonishing how much he’d forgotten about the DR: the little lizards that were everywhere, and the roosters in the morning, followed shortly by the cries of the plataneros and the bacalao guy. [...] But what he had forgotten most of all was how incredibly beautiful Dominican women were. Duh, Lola said. On the rides he took those first couple of days he almost threw his neck out. I’m in Heaven, he wrote in his journal. Heaven? His cousin Pedro Pablo sucked his teeth with exaggerated disdain. Esto aquí es un maldito *infierno*” (Díaz 275).

Spanish some of the racial affiliations it connotes in English. However, this link could have been further reinforced using one of the many translator's footnotes to contextualise its significance, especially given that the generic use of words that situate the narrator and the narratee racially is mostly absent from the translation. In addition, when elements that speak directly to the systemic violence (verbal, physical, sexual, or moral) against racialised people in the U.S.—Black people, in particular—are foregrounded in the text, their significance is also not the subject of contextualising footnotes, with the notable exception of the Strom Thurmond Manoeuvre discussed earlier (Obejas 72, 107, 301).

Importantly, the privileged address to racially marked subjects through the vocative use of the word “nigger” or “Negro” does not completely disappear in translation. Yunior's sporadic interpellations of an Afro-American narratee are translated as follows: “I mean, Negro, *please*”—“*Por Dios, mi gente, por Dios*” (Díaz 4; Obejas 4); “Negro, please—this ain't a fucking comic book!”—“*Por favor, negro, por favor: éste no es un fokin cómic*” (Díaz 138; Obejas 147); “us niggers”—“*los bróders*” (Díaz 182; Obejas 192); “Nigger, please”—“Negro, *por favor*” (Díaz 247; Obejas 261); “Negro, please,”—“Negro, *por favor*” (Díaz 264; Obejas 277); “I know what Negroes are going to say”—“*Yo sé lo que van a decir ustedes*” (Díaz 284; Obejas 299). As can be seen, this marked address is maintained in many cases.

As previously mentioned, the narration in *Oscar Wao* often employs “you” to address the narratee. As argued by Boyden and Goethals, the privileging of the plural “you” (“ustedes”) in Spanish has an important effect on Yunior's address: it transfers the

solidarity mechanism onto the Dominican people in general (38). In the first few pages of *Oscar Wao*, in the prologue about fukú, Yunior sets the tone for his narratorial address by using what becomes a vocative signature of his text: “I mean, Negro, *please*” (Díaz 4). In the Spanish translation, this becomes “Por Dios, mi gente, *por Dios*” (Obejas 4). The narrative function of the prologue is to focus on the place of the Dominican Republic and the Dominican people vis-à-vis fukú and a cursed hemispheric history. The frequent use of expressions like “mi pueblo” [my people] or “mi gente” [my people or my folks] in this tone-setting portion of the text reinforces the idea that the “ustedes” (the plural “you”) addressed later throughout the text is to be understood as the Dominican people in general. This cornerstone of the in-group effect is arguably displaced from the Afro-American community onto the Dominican people (Boyden and Goethals 34).

Overall, in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*, language no longer prominently supports the narrative emphasis on Dominican-Americans *of significant African descent*, and it no longer directly anchors the Afro-Latino consciousness that is invoked in *Oscar Wao*.

Cushioned Nerdish, or the End of Heterolanguage

Shortly before he finished writing *Oscar Wao*, Díaz read Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Texaco* in translation. Inspired by the impressive translator’s footnote apparatus, he excitedly encouraged Obejas also to make use of such footnotes in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*. This is how much of the nerd talk, cultural references (U.S. and Dominican), some Dominican terms, and the relatively few cases of untranslated English eventually

found themselves cushioned by the 164 translator's footnotes of the North American Spanish-language edition. This choice was not replicated in the Mondadori edition destined to the international (i.e. Latin American and Spanish) market. This situation seems peculiar for two reasons. First, the North American Spanish-language edition has as its primary audience a Latino readership interested in reading the book in Spanish. Through the irony of editorial choices, the translator's footnotes thus end up translating back to a Latino audience an array of Nerdish and cultural elements that they are more likely to be familiar with than the Latin America and Spanish audiences who ended up without them. Second, as noted by Cresci, the translator's footnotes are informative, explicative, and lack any sense of irony ("Simultaneidad lingüística" 14). This is in complete dissonance with the footnote apparatus that exists in *Oscar Wao*, which Díaz essentially uses to thwart expectations about his status as a native informant, or to convey the impossibility of historical objectivity.

However odd or dissonant it is, the footnote apparatus in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* further reinforces the observation that Obejas did not seek to uphold *Oscar Wao*'s assertive non-translation stance in her Spanish translation. Unlike in the source text and the Mondadori Spanish-language edition, Nerdish in the North American Spanish-language edition is no longer likely to constitute heterolanguage to a non-genre-aficionado audience.

Remaking Language, Remaking *Bildung*

Writers like Díaz have allowed for the expansion of the rubric of the contemporary *Bildungsroman* as a genre and for the redefinition, from an Afro-Latino perspective, of what it means to grow up as Afro-Latino in the United States. *Oscar Wao*'s art, the art of showing, in language, "what it means to be black, Latino, and immigrant in the United States," is significantly remade in the Spanish version (Carpio 260). Spanglish is not only "Spanish-ised" (as might be expected), it is also Dominicanised. In other words, it is re-nationalised. In addition, African American English no longer grounds Yunior's address to a proximate Dominican-American narratee. In the remake, the powerful Black-Latino alliance constructed in *Oscar Wao* is somewhat maintained through the narrative emphasis of the novel, but it is no longer supported by the linguistic flip-flopping and in-group deployment of language. By effacing *Oscar Wao*'s sustained deployment of heterolanguage (through the use of footnotes and other cushioning devices) the Spanish remake carries a different ideological project, one that in fact re-accommodates Díaz's subversive language in a nationalised, unitary, monolingual vision of language and community.

As Stella Bolaki has argued in *Unsettling the Bildungsroman* (2011), the genre's "ongoing relevance and extended capacity of representation in an ethnic American and postcolonial context can be explained by the fact that, more than a story of private formation or a typologically consistent category, the *Bildungsroman* is," as Susan Fraiman has argued, "the story of a cultural moment, its uncertainties and desires ... and thus a genre with important literary social function" (247). In *Oscar Wao*, a crucial part of this literary social function is inscribed in the linguistic simultaneity and assertive non-

translation that sustain Díaz's Morrisonian vision of writing. It is because this crucial aspect was virtually effaced in translation that I argue that we should instead consider the Spanish version a remake. As my analysis of the translation shows, *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* functions as a de-hybridised and Dominicanised (i.e. re-nationalised) remake of the U.S. version.

In this remake, the vibrancy of Díaz's layered language no longer creates a habitat that serves to multiply the sites of identification and address. It no longer constitutes a place from where Afro-Latino protagonists like Oscar, Yunior, Lola, and Beli can claim a more inclusive and potentially empowering subject position. Language in *Oscar Wao* helps locate, like no other resource, the sites of belonging of the protagonists, the cultural moorings of a heritage and a futurity, the multiple real and imaginary communities that Díaz constructs. To remake language, in this sense, is to remake *Bildung*. In Spanish, Oscar can still register as "the first Latino nerd," Yunior's address as a narrator-protagonist can still seem irreverently playful, and Lola can still ask us to try to imagine the difficulties of being an Afro-Latina Goth in Paterson, New Jersey one day and a Dominican York in a preppy Santo Domingo private school the next (Díaz 71; Obejas 76). The narrative elements of *Bildung* remain, but the social and political significance of a "becoming with the world" in a language that is also emerging with this world vanishes.

That being said, although the remake carries a different ideological project, one that in fact re-accommodates Díaz's subversive language in a nationalised, unitary, monolingual vision of language and community, it is nonetheless made to perform other important roles for new contexts and new audiences. The remake allows for new constellations.

New Constellations

My research around the socio-cultural life of *Oscar Wao* in Spanish suggests that as Hispanic readers interact with the remake, the genres that provide them with grids of legibility differ quite a lot from those of the source text. Reception data indicate that the remake is somewhat incorporated into canonical genres of Latin American fiction, such as the multi-generational *saga familiar* (*Cien años de soledad*, *La casa de los espíritus*) and the *novela del dictador* (*Yo el supremo*, *El otoño del patriarca*, *La fiesta del chivo*). To readers of the Spanish version, *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* becomes a relatable example of the Latin American magical realist family saga or is elevated as the “funky” and more popular counterpart of Nobel-winning Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa’s *La fiesta del chivo* (2000). The mild linguistic hybridity in the Spanish version and its easy incorporation into pre-existing and common generic categories of Latin American fiction set the stage for the remake to become a somewhat normalised and, arguably, “less Latino” addition to the canon of Hispanic literature. The “remaking” of *Oscar Wao*, while diminishing the possibilities for global networks of affiliation around the deployment of *heterolanguage*, instead, strengthened and shaped new forms of affiliation.

In addition, as noted by Torres-Saillant, the field of Dominican-American literature functions mainly “along a two-language track: a Spanish production conversing largely with Dominican and Latin American literatures and an Anglophone corpus generally in conversation with the larger field of American literature” (434). In this context, the publication of *Oscar Wao* for a Hispanophone readership and the translation of the novel into Dominican Spanish can significantly contribute to connect Dominican

literature across the diaspora by generating a “closer conversation among writers across the linguistic divide” (Torres-Saillant 435).

Conclusion—Ethics of Disjuncture and Compatibility

Junot Díaz explores the possibilities for linguistic disjuncture and compatibility in his work by including a variety of communities in his fictive universes. To read their interactions is to experience the ways in which communities grow proximate to and distant from one another through language.

—Evelyn Ch'ien, *Weird English*

The multilayered performance of heterolanguage in Díaz's *Oscar Wao* constantly plunges the reader into an ethical confrontation with difference, a difference that uniquely advances an Afro-Latino heritage and a Dominican-American experience at the same time as it refuses to accommodate a monolingual, unitary, and nationalistic conception of language. Language (mainly Spanglish and African American English) and discourse (various kinds of uncushioned Nerdish) both carry the potential to crucially expose *Oscar Wao*'s readers to “not knowing.” Referring to Díaz's constant semiotic game in the novel, Rachel Norman notes that “[t]he average reader is not merely positioned as an outsider to the text; rather, the intertextual allusions and the linguistic registers allow Díaz to reorient readers into multiple outsider perspectives simultaneously” (44). In outsidership we meet, reassessing certainties, norms, judgements: What do *I* know? What *do* I know?

Of course, *every* confrontation with difference is an ethical one. When the perception of an otherness inaugurates a situation in which a *relation* to something new must be negotiated, we enter the realm of the ethical. When difference enters one's world, the first thing that is exposed is one's prior ignorance of it. Each moment of confrontation with *otherness*, therefore, is also an

opportunity for *self*-examination and provides the chance for an ethical rearticulation of our habits of understanding that is responsive to that otherness. It is this ethical imperative, which emerges out of the encounter with difference. (Johnson González 5)

Such an encounter with difference and the possibilities for ethical response that it generates are what is ultimately remade in *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*. In particular, the ethics of disjuncture and compatibility that Díaz delineates by incorporating African American expressive culture into his Spanglish and through assertive non-translation are refracted and renegotiated in translation and, as we have seen, somewhat differently across the Spanish editions.

The translation of *Oscar Wao* has facilitated its incorporation into the canon of Hispanic literature. Its translation into colloquial Dominican Spanish has also disrupted the persisting hegemony of Peninsular Spanish and so-called “neutral Spanish” over the global Hispanic literary market. And it will continue help bridge the linguistic (Spanish/English) divide within contemporary Dominican literature. At the same time, the virtual effacement of heterolanguage in the translation has redirected the politics of *Oscar Wao* away from the Latino specificities of its protagonists’ *Bildungen*, and it has toned down the novel’s alignment with African diasporic identities. *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao* effectively functions as a new version of *Oscar Wao*.

Preamble

Canada: The Story of Us

It is a regular Wednesday morning. Coffee is served, and I sit down to work. As always, a podcast version of one of my favourite Radio-Canada programs is playing in the background. *Grounding moments in my expat's morning routine. Moments of feeling called, of being hailed.* I am about to turn off *Médium large*, Radio-Canada's main culture and society program, when the anchorwoman's hook suspends my gesture:

—Good morning, this is Catherine Perrin with you, pleased to meet again for another full program this morning, with, among other things, well, listen up, we'll address this great historical series that's presented by the CBC³⁹ in honour of the 150th anniversary: *Canada: The Story of Us*. But is it really the story of *all* of us? There are those who are very much doubting that's the case. We'll talk to the historian Laurent Turcot, who's not very pleased with this series, of what it presents, including the vision of Francophones that it projects.

I keep forgetting that 2017 marks the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

I fast-forward to this segment of the show.

**See Appendix 1 (pp. 269-274)
for a translated transcript of the segment**

³⁹ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the English equivalent of Radio-Canada.

The interview ends, and I am simply stunned. Amusingly stunned. I feel as though I have just been handed Canada on a silver platter. Look no further, this is Canada for you! The Anglo producer of the show even has the most fitting name you could ever dream of: John English! *Grounding moments in my expat's morning routine. Moments of feeling called, of being hailed.* My amusement slowly turns into a more disquieting feeling. And then, maybe because I have been thinking so much about this chapter, I cannot brush off the thoughts emerging around what I have just heard and carry on with, well, writing this chapter.

I worry that I have heard this story before.

The foundational national myth, the two solitudes, reified once again. The Anglo side dominating the narrative, content with addressing itself. The Anglo side extracting just enough “bi-cultural” essence and self-definition from its relationship with a reluctant Francophone partner to know it is not quite American. The Franco side feeling wronged, dispossessed, and distorted once again. The Franco side using the two solitudes to its consolidating advantage, to nurture a subtractive if stabilising sense of pride. *Grounding moments in my expat's morning routine. Moments of feeling called, of being hailed.* And, then, maybe because I have been thinking so much about this chapter, I cannot brush off this thought.

I worry that this story has been told *to me* countless times before.

Yes, the interview raised important issues about the representation of First Nations. Yes, the segment did pretend to ground its critique in “our point of view as Francophones.” It even went as far as to directly mention the “poor Acadians.” How else was their absence from the national docudrama supposed to be signalled? Did the two Québécois interlocutors bother even to mention how the polemic is unfolding in Acadie, or across other Francophone communities in the country? Did the conversation ever seek to mend the national docudrama’s oversights? *L’Acadie Nouvelle* (New-Brunswick), the *Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse*, and *La Voix acadienne* (Prince Edward Island) certainly had a lot to say about the omission of Canada’s first Euro settlements actually taking place in Acadie, and about the complete omission of Le Grand Dérangement and the ensuing Deportation of the Acadian people by the British Crown. Certainly, like John English, Catherine Perrin and Laurent Turcot would likely object: “we did not have time to talk about everything, we could not talk about it all.”

But still, as Catherine Perrin herself said, “it is a matter of choice.”

I cannot help but think that these choices and the decision to create a dialogue about the controversy exclusively among Québécois had the exact same effect of effacing the Acadians once again.

Burnt bridges.

Médium large's studio is located in Radio-Canada's headquarters in Montreal, but the programme is broadcast across Canada for all Francophone communities. After decades of budget cuts, only two daily regionally-specific radio programmes still exist to address and reflect the realities of Francophones outside Quebec. This was neither Catherine Perrin's choice, nor Laurent Turcot's. But in this nationally broadcast programme, I wonder why they (two Québécois) were the only ones to speak? Catherine Perrin is known for her vibrant roundtable discussions, and Radio-Canada gets experts from everywhere on the planet to share perspectives on all sorts of breaking news and current topics of interest. This segment *could* actually have been about "our point of view as Francophones."

But it wasn't.

Unsettling moments in my expat's morning routine.

The luxury of feeling called, of being hailed.

My coffee is nearing its end, and I keep thinking. On the 150th anniversary of the idea of national unity in Canada, this story about *The Story of Us* reveals more about Canadian culture and society than the docudrama's actual content. This segment of *Médium large* is exactly *the story of us*. Us the Euro-settlers, us the two solitudes, comfortable in our roles as the protagonists and the usurpers of protagonism. I drink the last sip of my coffee. These moments have become more and more common. It must be this chapter.

Not one day goes by without a new sign that the two solitudes are comfortably sitting on top of genealogies and voices they maladroitly ignore or simply fail to recognise and include. And I am somewhere in there, my ears and my voice privileged by this myth. This has everything to do with this chapter. With the linguistic and cultural-institutional marginalisation it seeks to address. With the trajectories and bridges it wants to make visible. With the Acadian culture it aims to speak nearby.

Chapter 4

From Canada to ... Canada? “Sub-dubbing” Chiac in France Daigle’s *Pour sûr* (2011)

That no language actually exists empirically does not mean that people do not behave as if it does.

—Robert J.C. Young
“That Which Is Casually Called a Language”

Je ne doute pas non plus que de telles « exclusions » viennent laisser leur marque sur cette appartenance ou non-appartenance de la langue, sur cette affiliation à la langue, sur cette assignation à ce qu'on appelle tranquillement une langue. Mais qui la possède, au juste ? Et qui possède-t-elle ? Est-elle jamais en possession, la langue, une possession possédante ou possédée ? Possédée ou possédant en propre, comme un bien propre ? Quoi de cet être-chez-soi dans la langue vers lequel nous ne cesserons de faire retour ?

—Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*

Depuis aussi longtemps que je me souviens, j'ai eu l'impression de ne pas parler français comme il le fallait.

—Annette Boudreau, *À l'ombre de la langue légitime*

In *Translation Effects: The Shaping of Modern Canadian Culture* (2014), translation studies scholars Kathy Mezei, Sherry Simon, and Luise von Flotow highlight key events in Canadian culture, such as the diffusion of the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) Manifesto, the first production of a Québécois play in Yiddish for the Montreal stage, and the ruling of the Supreme Court on the legal status of First Nations stories in land claim trials. The authors examine the reverberations of these events, revealing the invisible (yet omnipresent) role of translation in shaping them. Their anthology recasts pivotal

moments in Canadian cultural history as *translation events*. In so doing, the volume pinpoints moments at which cultural productions or concepts entered the life of Canadian culture; it draws attention to the translation, the trend, or the movement that these productions or ideas shaped; and it highlights moments in their life as translated cultural artefacts (Mezei, Simon, and von Flotow 8). In this chapter, I examine one such translation event: the novel *Pour sûr/For Sure*, published in 2011 by France Daigle and translated to English in 2013 by writer-translator Robert Majzels.

France Daigle is an Acadian novelist and playwright and a towering figure in contemporary Canadian literature. *Pour sûr* is Daigle's fourth novel to be written in Chiac,⁴⁰ a language that is intimately tied to the identity of the Francophone minority in Southeastern New Brunswick.⁴¹ The novel is the author's boldest literary experiment with Chiac to date. *Pour sûr* received numerous distinctions, including the 2012 Governor General's Literary Award, Canada's most prestigious literary recognition.⁴² In translating *Pour sûr* into English, Robert Majzels (Daigle's long-time translator) used various strategies to resist the normalising drives of conventional translation practices. He went as far as inventing a non-normative English derived from Newfoundlandese and Cape Breton Industrial, to reflect Daigle's radical illustration, defense, and re-invention of Chiac.

⁴⁰ Chiac is spoken in the South-East of New Brunswick, Canada's only officially bilingual province. It is often said to be distinct from Acadian French because of the linguistic cross between English and French that characterises it (Laurendeau 2016).

⁴¹ According to Statistics Canada's 2011 census, Francophones make up 31.6% of the population of New Brunswick. In the Moncton area they constitute 34.5% (31.3% in the city of Moncton and 72.4% in Dieppe, Moncton's main Francophone suburb).

⁴² *Pour sûr* also received the prestigious Prix Champlain, an award that recognises the excellence of a work produced by a Francophone author from outside Quebec, as well as the Prix Antonine Maillet-Acadie Vie, awarded annually to an Acadian author whose work contributes to the international recognition of Acadie.

Inspired by the structure and methodology of *Translation Effects: The Shaping of Modern Canadian Culture*, this chapter focuses on *Pour sûr/For Sure* as a translation event: I explore its context and history, explain its significance as a translation, and analyse its effects on Canadian cultural history. First, I trace *Pour sûr/For Sure*'s archive. In other words, I highlight key discursive events that have contributed to anchor *Pour sûr/For Sure* in the world in specific ways. By situating this chapter within a cultural history of Chiac representations, I examine such texts as Michel Brault's *Éloge du chiac* (1969) and Marie Cadieux's *Éloge du chiac, Part Two* (2009), and I contrast these with the dominant public discourse on Chiac in the (Franco)Canadian sphere. I later turn specifically to Daigle's deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage in *Pour sûr* and then analyse some of Majzels's strategies and motivations to preserve and extend the radical potential of this deployment in his translation. I argue that Majzels's translation constitutes a "sub-dubbing" of Chiac (i.e. a re-voicing that leaves key traces of the source text in place). Such an innovative gesture not only enables the (trans)national circulation of the novel, it also makes possible an awareness and recognition of the source text's linguistic specificities and politics across languages and across the Canadian cultural scene.

I

Éloge du chiac

Vous venez de Montréal, vous ? Nous comprenez-vous ?
—Liliane Melanson, *Éloge du chiac*

In May 1968, at the height of Quebec's Quiet Revolution,⁴³ Michel Brault, a pioneer of direct cinema, shot *Éloge du chiac*. The documentary takes place in Moncton, New Brunswick, at the Beauséjour middle school. It features conversations between teacher Rosanna Leblanc and her students (including young France Daigle herself). Emblematic of an emerging hand-held camera aesthetic, the film pushes the premise of Frederick Wiseman's *High School* (1968) to explore a very local concern: asymmetrical bilingualism and the varieties of French spoken in Southeastern New Brunswick. During the late 1960s, Brault lived in New Brunswick to shoot *L'Acadie, l'Acadie* (1971), a documentary about the University of Moncton's student movements and the ensuing call for social change and increased institutional recognition for Francophones in the province. While *L'Acadie, l'Acadie* sought to emphasise the struggle of Acadian youth to obtain a more egalitarian bilingualism, Brault nonetheless became increasingly interested in the linguistically layered situation of the Francophones he met during the shooting of the film. His curiosity turned into a separate project: *Éloge du chiac*.

⁴³ The Quiet Revolution (*Révolution tranquille*) was a time of rapid change experienced in Quebec during the 1960s. It involved and affected all sectors of Québécois society. Even the self-designation "Québécois" (replacing "French Canadian") is a legacy of that period. The Quiet Revolution marks the secularisation of Quebec, the creation of a welfare state, and the self-affirmation of Francophones. The rapid and intense change in government institutions and the growing presence of the state in Quebec's economic, social, and cultural life had major consequences: the role of the Catholic Church in society diminished, access to education and prosperity for Francophones grew, and a nationalist consciousness expanded (Durocher).

Brault met Rosanna Leblanc by accident and told her about the problem he was facing at the time: he wanted to film evidence of everyday speech in Acadie,⁴⁴ but time and again his project had failed. He told her that as soon as people saw the camera, they either became quiet or significantly altered their register (Cadieux). How could *Éloge du chiac* exist at all without Chiac and people willing to spontaneously discuss its place in the community? This is when Leblanc told Brault about her profession. She was intrigued: « Huh, j'aimerais bien voir ça dans le corridor de l'école Beauséjour. »⁴⁵ (*"Huh, I'd very much like to see this happen in the hallway of the Beauséjour school."*) Brault was quick to recognise the opening he had been waiting for: "See you in school next Monday," he said to her. This is how *Éloge du chiac* was born.

In the documentary Brault represents selected conversations using the "fly-on-the-wall" style that became emblematic of direct cinema: he exercised minimal disruption of the profilmic event, and his presence is never directly manifested on screen. These strategies, however, cannot obscure the fact that Brault's framing presence had a decisive impact on the documentary. In the eyes of the students and the teacher, Brault remains "the guy from Montreal," a place they repeatedly associate with "le bon français" or "proper" French. In addition, Brault's outsider status deeply influenced his ability to shed light on the Acadian linguascape. Language preservation and cultural resistance have indeed been foundational social facts in Acadie, ever since British colonisation (1713), the

⁴⁴ I use the term Acadie throughout to signify its thriving contemporary existence as a cultural region. In English, Acadia most often refers to the colony of New France that was established in 1604 and conquered by the British in 1713. The term Acadia thus mainly emphasises the past and is often used to refer to a dead culture (Leclerc, "Between French and English" 182).

⁴⁵ Unless otherwise noted, translations are mine.

Grand Dérangement, and the Deportation.⁴⁶ Yet Brault's perspective remains an outsider's take on the lived experience of Acadians in Moncton's layered linguistic context.

Brault made *Éloge du chiac* amid the revival and revalorisation of Joulal, Quebec's vernacular, a crucial component of the Quiet Revolution. This undoubtedly shaped the questions (mainly undisclosed) with which he prompted his interlocutors' responses, as well as the selection he made of their performances. At the same time, as an overview of the class's discussion can demonstrate, the documentary does present voices that articulate the debates surrounding Chiac in Acadian terms:

—Charles Leblanc : Mais le français c'est autant « chiac » que le chiac lui-même, parce que le français c'est composé avec du latin et du grec. [...] Ça fait que, tu ouèras pas un Français dire, « ben euh j'vas essayer de parler latin parce que, ben, le français c'est un mélange des deux sô j'vas parler *une* langue ». [...] Y va dire j'vas parler mon français parce que chu fier. Pis moi j'vas dire j'vas parler chiac.⁴⁷

—Pierre Cadieux : Ben oui mais Charles, va-t'en à Montréal pis parle chiac ! Y vont dire : « d'youèsqu'y sort lui, d'une taverne » ?! [...] C'est juste qu'on a eu de l'influence de l'extérieur, faut ... faut l'enlever c't'influence-là, puis se dire: « on a notre langue, faut la garder ».⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The Deportation of the Acadian people is a crucial part of Acadie's history and of Canada's colonial past. It took place from 1755 to 1764, affecting all of Acadie's 14,000 inhabitants. Approximately seventy-five percent of them were deported to England, to the British colonies in America, or to France. The rest managed to flee to French territory (towards today's Quebec) or to hide out. Following the expulsion, an unknown number of Acadians perished from hunger, disease, or at sea (Landry; Marsh). The euphemism "Grand Dérangement" (the Great Upheaval) and the term "Deportation" are often used interchangeably to designate the turmoil surrounding the expulsion of the Acadians. Nevertheless, historians' recent reconsideration of documents from the time (especially those created by the deportees themselves) reveals that the Grand Dérangement extended over a longer period (1749 up until as late as 1820). As such, it encompasses the instabilities and severe living conditions that plagued the Acadian people before and after their expulsion (« 1755: L'Histoire et les histoires »).

⁴⁷ —Charles: But French is as "Chiac" as Chiac itself, because it is made of Latin and Greek. [...] So you won't see a Frenchman say, "Well, I'll try to speak Latin because, well, French is a mix of the two so I'll speak *one* language." [...] He'll say I'll speak my French because I'm proud. And I'll say I'll speak Chiac.

⁴⁸ —Pierre: But, Charles, just go to Montreal and speak Chiac! They'll say, "Where's this guy coming from, a tavern?!" ... It's just that we've had outside influence, we must ... we must get rid of that influence and tell ourselves, "We have our language, we must keep it."

—Marielle Michaud : Y a tellement ... y a trop d'anglais ! [...] Si on fait tout en anglais, comment qu'on peut apprendre le français du jour au lendemain ? [...] Un autre problème : les Anglais ont pas l'air tout à fait d'accord de nous laisser notre langue. On a bien de la misère pour avoir n'importe quoi. Est-ce que les Anglais vont nous laisser avoir notre langue ? Faudrait insister beaucoup plus.⁴⁹

—Carole Bourgeois : Si quand on va chez nous et qu'on commence à parler le français comme on l'apprend à l'école, nos parents nous comprendront pas.⁵⁰

—Liliane Melanson : Oh ... j'aimerais pas non plus parler le bon français.

—Pierre Cadieux : Pourquoi pas ?!

—Liliane Melanson : Ça serait pour mieux parler avec les Anglais après ?? [...] J'aime lorsque je vais à l'assemblée pouvoir parler le français. Lorsque je vais à la maison, si de la compagnie arrive, y sont Français [francophones], de leur exprimer que je suis Française [francophone] et je puis le parler. Lorsque je suis avec des Anglais, pouvoir parler l'anglais, d'être fière de pouvoir parler l'anglais *aussi*, de leur montrer que suis pas mal smarte de pouvoir parler l'anglais, le français et m'accorder avec le chiac.⁵¹

—France Daigle : J'comprends q'vous êtes fiers de votre dialecte, mais quand même là, si on va trop loin avec le chiac, ben ça viendra qu'y aura pu la langue française ici en Acadie. C'est pas ça qu'on veut, faut quand même l'améliorer.⁵²

The vibrancy and local resonance of the debate these young people so powerfully articulate should not, however, obscure the context in which it takes place. The students speak while addressing (or in the presence of) a figure of authority (their French teacher) who guides the discussion, and who raises questions at least partly determined by Brault's purpose. Their interaction also takes place in the presence of an outsider (two, including

⁴⁹ —Marielle: There's so much ... there's too much English! [...] If we do everything in English, how are we supposed to suddenly learn French? [...] Another issue: Anglophones don't quite seem to agree to leave us our language. We're already struggling to hardly get anything. Will Anglophones let us have our language? We'd have to be much more insistent.

⁵⁰ —Carole: If when we go home and start speaking French the way we learn it in school, our parents won't understand us

⁵¹ —Liliane: Oh ... I wouldn't want to speak proper French either. —Pierre: Why not ?! — Liliane: To better speak with Anglophones?? [...] I like that when I go to an assembly, I can speak French. When I go home, if people arrive and they're French [Francophones], to let them know that I'm French [Francophone], that I can speak it. When I'm with Anglophones, to be able to speak English, to be proud to also speak English, to show them that I'm quite smart to be able to speak English, French, and to blend in well with Chiac.

⁵² —France: I get that you're proud of your dialect, but still, if we go too far with Chiac, time will come when the French language no longer exists in Acadie. That's not what we want, we still need to improve it.

the cameraman) whom the students and the teacher perceive as linguistically more privileged. The symbolic violence exerted by such a power dynamic has significant implications: for all the direct cinema apparatus, the documentary does not provide unmediated access to the voices of middle-grade Acadian students.

In addition, the timing of Brault's documentary effectively means that his interlocutors' statements resonate in the shadow of another (more widely represented) community's cultural revival. The extent to which this resonance intervenes in the film's content is most crucially revealed in the documentary's last scene. The school day is over and the students leave the Beauséjour middle school. From their playful chatter emerges the film's last lines:

—Charles Leblanc : Vive le chiac libre ! ⁵³
—Liliane Melanson : Vive le chiac !

Together these lines distil the meaning of the film's performance: who praises Chiac, why, and for whom? In answering these questions, it is impossible to circumvent the (dominant) Québécois perspective that gave rise to the identification of Chiac as commensurable with Joul and the desire to represent it in a way that would both resonate with and extend Quebec's (Francophone) cultural revival. But the film's performance also undeniably adheres to an Acadian context, one where the Francophone

⁵³ On 24 July 1967, during a state visit to Expo '67, General Charles de Gaulle, then president of France, delivered a brief speech from the balcony of Montreal's City Hall. His concluding words would make history: « J'emporte de cette réunion inouïe de Montréal, un souvenir inoubliable. La France entière sait, voit, entend ce qui se passe ici et je puis vous dire qu'elle en vaudra mieux: Vive Montréal! Vive le Québec! Vive le Québec libre! Vive le Canada français et vive la France! » (*I will bring back from this incredible Montreal meeting, an unforgettable memory. All France knows, sees, and hears what is happening here; and I can tell you, she is better for it. Long live Montreal! Long live Quebec! Long live free Quebec! Long live French Canada and long live France!*) De Gaulle's now famous « Vive le Québec libre », proclaimed at a time of emerging Francophone nationalism, sparked a diplomatic crisis with the Canadian Federal government and galvanised Quebec's sovereigntist movement (Radio-Canada, « Vive »).

minority became increasingly militant, and where just a year later, in 1969, the Official Languages Act would recognise equal status, rights, and privileges to English and French. As a discursive event, the meaning of *Éloge du chiac* can thus be situated somewhere in-between Liliane's praise and Charles's echo of the *other* Charles (De Gaulle, « Vive le Québec libre! »).

Brault's endeavour hence epitomises the tension I broached in my preamble to this chapter: within Canadian culture, the everyday ramifications of the myth of the two solitudes means that the recognition and the inclusion of Franco-Canadians outside Quebec (including the Acadians) and First Nations is constantly deferred. In this context, marginalised voices, if/when represented, tend to be filtered through the same dominant channels and perspectives that typically spell their oblivion and exclusion. Nevertheless, two years before Antonine Maillet's foundational play *La Sagouine* (1971)⁵⁴ marked the passage of the Acadian vernacular from the purely oral to the artistic and written sphere, *Éloge du chiac* contributed to the enunciation and broader reception of Chiac. As noted by Acadian sociolinguist Annette Boudreau:

En somme, *Éloge du chiac* a suscité le tout premier débat sur le chiac et a donné vie à cette variété sur la place publique en la nommant, lui assignant du même coup une existence, un statut privilégié, que l'on soit d'accord ou non. Depuis, on n'a pas cessé de parler du chiac ; il est devenu une partie d'un « nous » collectif qui

⁵⁴ Antonine Maillet (b. 1929) is the grande dame of Acadian literature. Following the international success of *La Sagouine* (1971) and the novel *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (1979), she has been the most well-known and awarded figure in contemporary Acadian literature. As noted by Bolduc, "Maillet's renown coincides with an Acadian cultural revival: *La Sagouine*, as well as being a genuine literary success, appeared at the right moment to give voice to a renewed sense of Acadian cultural distinctiveness and pride."

désigne une identité plurielle dans les années 2000, désignation qui aurait été tout simplement impensable dans les années 1960 et 1970 (227).⁵⁵

In this sense, Brault's *Éloge du chiac* is a foundational part of the archive of contemporary representations of Chiac, including the novel examined in this chapter. *Éloge du chiac* has continued to have repercussions in the Canadian sociocultural and linguistic realm, within and outside Acadie.

***Éloge du chiac, Part Two*—Fast-Forward to the Present**

Comment parler de notre différence, nous qui sommes nés de l'excuse, essayant vainement de rattraper le cours du temps, tandis que d'autres s'enferment dans leurs privilèges...

—Herménégilde Chiasson, *Conversations*

In 2009, forty years after Brault released *Éloge du chiac*, Marie Cadieux, an Acadian author, filmmaker, and head of a Moncton publishing house, directed *Éloge du chiac, Part Two*, also with the financial and technical support of the National Film Board of Canada. Cadieux's documentary is a crucial part of *Pour sûr's* archive. It highlights the increasingly visible existence of an artistic movement focused on expressing Acadie's (late) modernity and contemporary identities beyond folklore in a gesture that incorporates Chiac. In her sequel, Cadieux does more than pick up the linguistic and sociocultural discussion where Brault left it: her documentary's point of view is decisively anchored in the reality of contemporary Acadie. Cadieux does not propose an exploration of the stakes of Chiac for

⁵⁵ In sum, *Éloge du chiac* sparked the very first debate about Chiac, and it gave life to this variety in the public eye by naming it, thereby giving it an existence, a privileged status, whether one agreed or not. Chiac has been talked about incessantly ever since; it has become part of a collective "we" that designates a plural identity in the 2000s, a designation that would have been simply unthinkable in the 1960s-1970s.

the benefit of and through the dominant Québécois perspective. More importantly, Cadieux's film emerges at a time of great effervescence in Acadian culture, a time of increasing recognition, representation, and revalorisation of Chiac by the artistic community and among speakers of the language.⁵⁶

Éloge du chiac, Part Two registers and contributes to this trend: Dano Leblanc, the creator of *Acadieman: le First Superhero acadien (ouëlle sort of)*, a Chiac comic, animated TV series, and film, is the documentary's lead character. When Cadieux's documentary was shot, *Acadieman's* controversial yet undeniable success in New Brunswick (notably among teenagers) was a widely debated phenomenon in Acadie. Cadieux's premise for the sequel was the reunion, forty years later, of the teacher and the students who participated in *Éloge du chiac* (including, again, France Daigle herself). Yet it is their viewing of an *Acadieman* episode, in Dano Leblanc's presence, that frames their renewed conversation around Chiac in the documentary.

Cadieux's present-day and Acadie-centred approach is significant: it marks a shift from the dominant discourse on Chiac in the (Franco)Canadian sphere. Indeed, the spectre of assimilation and impurity has loomed large in discourses about Chiac ever since it emerged as a recognisable linguistic phenomenon.⁵⁷ *Éloge du chiac, Part Two* diverges from this tradition, at the same time as it does not attempt to smooth over the

⁵⁶ The electro hip-hop group Radio Radio, the folk-rock singer-songwriter and banjoist Lisa LeBlanc, and the indie folk trio The Hay Babies have recently energised the Acadian music scene and contributed to the visibility of Chiac (and other varieties of Acadian French). Besides the *Acadieman* comic/animé phenomenon, a lot has been happening in the field of film and media as well, notably around web-TV, the Moncton-based FICFA (Festival international du cinéma francophone en Acadie), and film production initiatives such as *L'Acadie suit son court* and *C'est right short*. In the literary field France Daigle, Gérard LeBlanc, and Jean Babineau have prominently exemplified and dealt with Chiac in their works.

⁵⁷ In fact, Annette Boudreau traces the public discourse on Moncton's anglicised French back to the early twentieth century, before the phenomenon even had a name (131).

stakes of language evolution in Acadie. As its code-switching title and the *Acadieman* quote⁵⁸ on its DVD cover suggest, the documentary adopts a more embracing and less alarmist point of view than the perspective that has dominated public and intellectual discourses on Acadians and Chiac into the twenty-first century.

To fully grasp the significance of the shift that Cadieux's documentary represents in this regard, it is important to briefly situate the discursive tendency it departs from. According to this perspective, which is mainly fuelled and projected by an overrepresented Québécois discourse, the linguistic hybridity that is perceived in Chiac illustrates the point of no return on the language assimilation spectrum. The cautionary tale spun by countless Québécois journalists on the backs of Chiac speakers and artistic manifestations starts and ends with the premise that this language is but a sign of assimilation to English and Anglo(American) culture.

In the 1960s, as Quebec consolidated its state and institutions as new tools for Francophone civil action, it also catalysed the French Canadian identity discourse around itself. In 1967, the province was recognised as the national territory of French Canada. As noted by scholars Mélanie LeBlanc and Annette Boudreau, French Canada was now being redefined as Quebec, and French Canadians as Québécois, leaving the rest of Franco-Canadians without a national identity (94). Many perceived this “as Quebec's abandonment of French Canada and of Francophones outside its territory: as the fragmentation of the French Canadian identity” (LeBlanc and Boudreau 94). Beyond this disintegration and desertion, I would argue that this historical moment also marks the

⁵⁸ Well, à cause que le français a pas fini d'EXPLODER. [*Ben, 'cause French's not done EXPLOSING.*]

beginning of the instrumentalisation of Franco-Canadians in public discourse about the French language in Quebec and beyond. Franco-Canadian communities outside Quebec, including most prominently the Acadian community, when mentioned at all, have become, in the mouths and editorials of many, a mere trope.

This tendency could be traced over time and illustrated through a myriad of examples. It certainly consistently serves to demonstrate the supposedly advanced state of deterioration of French in minority contexts as a result of assimilation, anglicisation, and, most prominently in this century, Americanisation. This rhetoric is generally coupled with powerful pleas for more or “better” language policies in Quebec and/or for Québécois institutions to apply a very narrow definition of what counts as legitimate cultural and artistic expression.

A recent and crucial example of such alarmist instrumentalisation occurred in October 2012, when the Acadian group Radio Radio won best hip-hop album of the year and Acadian singer Lisa LeBlanc won revelation of the year at the ADISQ ceremony.⁵⁹ Christian Rioux, a conservative columnist at *Le Devoir*—a major left-leaning, nationalist, and intelligentsia-oriented Quebec newspaper—was among the journalists who instrumentalised his negative reaction to Radio Radio’s award: « Radio Radio se complaît dans la sous-langue d’êtres handicapés en voie d’assimilation ». (*“Radio Radio wallows in the sub-language of nearly assimilated handicapped people.”*) Rioux initiates his reactionary piece by questioning the legitimacy of Radio Radio’s language: « ... cette

⁵⁹ L’ADISQ is the Association québécoise de l’industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo. Its mission is to support the music industry in Quebec. Since 1979, l’ADISQ has held an annual awards ceremony. The Félix, the award given, honours the late Québécois singer-songwriter Félix Leclerc.

déconstruction totale de la langue ? En fait, on pourrait se demander s'il s'agit encore d'un langage. Les spécialistes des langues mortes nous l'apprendront peut-être un jour ». (*“... this total deconstruction of language? One might wonder if this is still a language. Experts in dead languages might tell us one day.”*)

The journalist goes on to swiftly establish a parallel between Radio Radio's success in Quebec and the increasing code-switching habits he perceives in young Montrealers. Rioux then takes his rhetoric one step further: « C'est à Radio Radio que j'ai pensé en prenant connaissance des statistiques publiées mercredi sur le déclin confirmé du français dans la grande région de Montréal ». (*“I was reminded of Radio Radio as I took note of the statistics published on Wednesday about the confirmed decline of French in the Montreal Metropolitan Area.”*) The columnist chooses to interpret the data indicating that the proportion of Montrealers who speak mainly French at home has diminished (according to Statistics Canada's 2011 census) as a sign of French's “confirmed decline.”⁶⁰

Rioux eventually broaches Bill 101. Bill 101, or Charte de la langue française, was passed in Quebec in 1977. Among many other things, it made primary and secondary education in French mandatory for everyone, except for Indigenous children living on reservations, and for those children with at least one parent who had been primarily

⁶⁰ Like many « chevaliers de l'apocalypse linguistique », Rioux did not feel the need to put the data into broader perspective, by signalling, for instance, that Montreal has the highest concentration of trilingual citizens in North America (Cassivi 85). The decline of French monolingualism in Quebec does not necessarily mean that French fluency is declining overall. Rioux also chose to ignore the fact that those Anglophones who, after two referenda on independence, have chosen to remain in Quebec are now far more likely to speak French than ever before: 61% and rising of Anglo-Québécois now consider themselves to be functional in French, up from 36% in 1971 (Thompson 37). Functional bilinguals among the Anglo-Québécois population make up 79.3% of the younger generation—ages 15 to 24—almost a third of whom are now choosing to be schooled in French (Bagnall; Marin).

schooled in English in Canada.⁶¹ Bill 101 effectively reverted the previous tendency, among newcomers (i.e. Quebec's demographic future), to markedly integrate into the English education system. Despite the law's contribution (with this and other measures) to establish French as the main language of civic life in Quebec, insecurities about the future of French and Francophone culture remain. And in commentators like Rioux, this insecurity fosters an all-or-nothing mentality and fuels an obsessive suspicion against anything and everyone bilingual.

In his article, Rioux decries that Bill 101 has supposedly mostly fabricated bilingual Canadians and not, as he and others would have hoped, « des Québécois de culture française ». An appreciation for hybridity is rare among nationalist conservatives, let alone the possibility of multiple allegiances. Despite their Francophone education, the new generations (« les enfants de la loi 101 »), and especially those whose parents were born outside Quebec, still manage in great numbers to learn both of Canada's official languages. For Rioux's taste, Quebec's youth is simply too bilingual (multilingual, in fact).

Be that as it may, it is the construction of Rioux's insular and purist rhetoric that I primarily seek to highlight here. To alert readers to what he believes they should understand as the declining status of French in Montreal, Rioux uses Radio Radio's language as a trope for assimilation:

Au Québec, l'anglicisation est un processus insidieux qui passe d'abord par la bilinguisation intégrale des nouveaux arrivants. On pourrait parler d'une sorte d'acadianisation dont Radio Radio nous offre un exemple extrême. [...] Quand

⁶¹ This means that when Rioux wrote his article, there were six times more Allophone children schooled in French than before Bill 101 was passed: 89% in 2015, up from 15% in 1971. Today, according to the Office Québécois de la langue française, 90% of all Québécois children are schooled in French (OQLF 2015 Report qtd. in Marin).

j'écoute Radio Radio, j'entends les rats qui quittent le navire, pressés qu'ils sont de sombrer dans le globish ambiant pour enfin tout oublier.⁶²

Rioux's alarmist splash sparked, once again, a polemic in Quebec and across Canadian Francophonie,⁶³ probably confirming the effectiveness of Rioux's exercise in condescension. Rioux's reflection on the 2011 census data, by way of Radio Radio, in no way required the reductive equation he constructs around Acadianisation. But the fact that he chose to base his entire article on it does illustrate the instrumentalisation of Acadian culture that I have attempted to signal.

Rioux is far from being the only public intellectual to make use of this strategy. Only a few days after Rioux's article was published, the columnist Antoine Robitaille, also at *Le Devoir*, echoed his colleague's contempt and Big Bad Wolf tale spinning. Poets and singers, according to Robitaille, used to express and crucially reinforce attachment to the French language, fostering, with demography and sound policymaking, the survival and prosperity of French in North America. And now...

Concédonc toutefois que le chiac de Lisa LeBlanc, le franglais extrême de Radio Radio, par exemple, ont quelque chose de déprimant. [...] Malgré leur je-ne-sais-quoi d'indiscutablement inventif et créatif, ces textes semblent être empreints des pires stigmates du statut minoritaire. Rendus étrangement « cool », aux yeux de plusieurs, en cette ère du globish.⁶⁴

⁶² In Quebec, anglicisation is an insidious process that starts with the integral bilingualisation of newcomers. There is an Acadianisation of a sort, of which Radio Radio offers us an extreme example. [...] When I listen to Radio Radio, I hear the rats leaving the ship, rushed as they are to sink into the surrounding Globish and finally forget everything.

⁶³ Cf., for instance: Martin LeBlanc Rioux's « La langue Radio Radio ? Réponse d'un être handicapé en voie d'assimilation », Rémi Léger's « Traîner la culture acadienne dans la boue », and Marc Cassivi's « Lettre à Christian Rioux ».

⁶⁴ Let us admit that Lisa LeBlanc's Chiac, Radio Radio's extreme franglais, for instance, are somewhat depressing. [...] Despite their undeniably inventive and creative je-ne-sais-quoi, these lyrics seem to bear the worst minority status stigmata. Made strangely "cool," in the eyes of many in this Globish era.

The journalist also uses Radio Radio and Lisa LeBlanc as proxies, to construct his appeal around « [l']obsédant mais passionnant sujet de la survie de la langue française au Québec, donc en Amérique » (“*the obsessive but fascinating topic of the survival of French in Quebec and, by extension, in America*”) (Robitaille).⁶⁵

The scope of the Acadianisation trope in the public discourse on French in Quebec goes beyond the single question of anglicisation. It also insinuates itself into the frequent debates about Joul in cultural productions. For instance, in 2014, a « querelle du joul 2.0 »⁶⁶ broke around Xavier Dolan’s *Mommy*. The film was very well received in Quebec and abroad (especially in France, where Dolan is particularly idolised), but many Québécois critics worried that the language of the film was too “caricatural,” “vulgar,” “anglicised,” and so on.⁶⁷ In « *Mommy*: un grand film, oui, mais », Paul Warren spends his entire article praising the film’s stylistic and narrative qualities, to conclude with a paragraph on the “disquieting language” of the characters:

Mais il y a un « mais » ! Les « crise de tabarnak », pis les « hostie d’ciboire » qui secouent la parlure de notre dialecte québécois d’un bout à l’autre des formats carrés de *Mommy* (« quand y pète une fiouse, tasse toé de d’là, parc’que ça joue rough ») m’inquiètent. Xavier Dolan n’y voit pas de problème. On n’a qu’à sous-titrer le film en langue française pour les spectateurs qui parlent français ... et à s’exprimer en anglais lors des conférences à Cannes.*⁶⁸ Et le tour est joué ! Un

⁶⁵ Controversies around the topic and especially French/English friction emerge sporadically in Quebec’s public discourse. The mainstreaming of Québécois hip-hop in the 2010s (known for its code-mixing, including but not limited to French and English), has sparked the latest major polemic in this regard. For a brief overview of the public discourse generated around this question, see Radio-Canada’s compilation « Polémique renouvelée sur le ‘franglais’ ». For scholarly context on language mixing in Québécois hip-hop, see Sarkar’s « ‘Ousqu’on chill à soir?’ » and Low et al.’s « ‘Chus mon propre Bescherelle’ ».

⁶⁶ Between 1960 and 1975 in Quebec, opinions clashed on the subject of Joul. This cultural-historical moment, known as the Joul dispute (*la querelle du joul*), was prominently featured in debates about language, letters, and public instruction.

⁶⁷ C.f., for instance: Christian Dufour’s « La langue de *Mommy* », Marc-André Lussier’s « Honte de la langue de *Mommy*? Vraiment? », Christian Rioux’s « L’enfant roi ».

*⁶⁸ Dolan is bilingual. He takes the questions of the English-language press in English. That year at Cannes, Dolan gave a portion of his speech, addressed to New Zealand director Jane Campion, in English.

drôle de tour, qui fait peur. *Mommy*, qui connaît un succès monstre au Québec et dans le monde, va convaincre encore davantage nos jeunes réalisateurs (ceux qui ne sont pas passés à Hollywood) que c'est drôlement payant de sacrer au grand écran et que notre cinéma doit continuer, plus que jamais, à parler le québécois de la rue et à manger les mots de notre langue. *Et c'est comme ça qu'on est en train de s'acadianiser de plus belle*. Pour embarquer nos immigrants dans la langue anglaise. (my emphasis)⁶⁹

As this excerpt from Warren's article suggests, the instrumentalisation of Acadie in the Québécois context also often operates in the complete absence of anything Acadian.

As should now appear more clearly, *Éloge du chiac, Part Two* widely contrasts with the dominant approach to Chiac in the (Franco)Canadian sphere. Discourses that portray Chiac as a threat to established norms of purity are powerful and overrepresented. It would be delusional to contend that they have not widely influenced the (self)perceptions of Acadians. Nevertheless, a documentary like *Éloge du chiac, Part Two* exemplifies the existence and expression of more nuanced, alternative discourses about Chiac. Such discourses (1) acknowledge its importance as part of the Acadian linguascape; (2) foreground its crucial role as a marker of identity for the Francophone minority in Southeastern New Brunswick; (3) emphasise the need for relevant communication and self-expression over the constructed need for linguistic normativity; and (4) stress the language's potential as an alternative, a mode of inhabiting a minority context, between an attachment for French and the necessity of English. As one of the teenagers in the film

⁶⁹ That's all well and good but ...! The [curses] that shake the speaking of our Québécois dialect from one end to the other of *Mommy*'s sequences ("when he loses it big time, move it 'cause it plays rough") worry me. Xavier Dolan sees no problem with this. It's just a matter of subtitling the film in French for those spectators who speak French ... and of speaking English during Cannes's press conferences. * And it's done! Done in a scary way. *Mommy*'s enormous success in Quebec and abroad will convince even more of our young directors (those who have not already left for Hollywood) that it really pays to swear on the big screen and that our cinema should, more than ever, continue to speak street Québécois and to devour the words of our language. And this is how we are Acadianising with ever more intensity. So that our immigrants can get on board with the English language.

puts it: « Le chiac est une des raisons pourquoisse que ... c'est une des choses qui nous a gardé de parler complètement anglais : c'est à nous autres, pis on est fiers de ça : c'est pas le français, mais c'est quand même pas de l'anglais ».70

In contrast with the instrumentalising tendency I previously traced, the views presented in *Éloge du chiac, Part Two* are decisively *about* Acadie. As a discursive event, the documentary thus crucially turns towards the cultural vitality of a contemporary, urban Acadie, where Chiac is recognised as part and parcel of many people's reality. Overall, the film illustrates how, since the turn of the century, Acadians have increasingly taken the matter in their own hands to generate important counter-discourses to the alarmist, folklorising (and purely self-serving) rhetoric of many of their Québécois counterparts.

The need to actualise Acadian culture and to transcend folklore is nothing new: it was already powerfully articulated in Herménégilde Chiasson's poetry of the mid-1970s, notably with *Mourir à Scoudouc* (1974). In the 1980s and 1990s, Chiasson spearheaded a movement that sought to empower artists to break with a purely folkloric and *misérabiliste* vision of Acadie. This mold had largely been imposed by the federal and Québécois institutions responsible for financing and distributing Acadian cultural productions (A. Boudreau 248-51). As Annette Boudreau notes:

La réappropriation d'un discours sur l'Acadie d'ici a entraîné des changements importants dans tous les domaines d'activités liés à la production culturelle. Il a fallu d'abord se doter d'outils matériels, ce qui comprenait la mise en place de troupes de théâtre avec des productions locales et régionales, des maisons de production cinématographique, des maisons d'édition et un festival international

⁷⁰ Chiac is one of the reasons why ... it's one of the things that has kept us from speaking English completely: it's ours, and we're proud of that. It's not proper French ("le français"), but it's still not English.

de films francophones avec la projection des films réalisés en région (FICFA). Selon Chiasson, pour s'approprier une réalité il faut pouvoir la raconter soi-même et ne pas se contenter de faire partie du récit en tant que simple figurant. (250-1)⁷¹

While efforts towards greater institutional freedom did not always meet with success, Chiasson's vision for Acadie's leading role in its own artistic and cultural production has on the whole been negotiated and achieved in the 2000s onwards.

And while the desire to actualise Acadian culture and to transcend folklore is not new in and of itself, the incorporation of Chiac in this movement is much more recent. This is something that *Acadieman*, the phenomenon around which *Éloge du chiac, Part Two* is articulated, crucially brings to the fore. Indeed, Dano Leblanc's prime motivation in creating the comic was also to reflect the contemporariness of Acadian culture: « *Acadieman a commencé au secondaire. C'est une idée que moi et un de mes amis on a eue. On voulait créer un personnage qui était contemporain parce que souvent dans la culture acadienne on parle toujours du passé* » (*"Acadieman started in high school. It's an idea my friend and I had. We wanted to create a character that would be contemporary because often in Acadian culture we constantly talk about the "past"*) (TV5Monde). Very quickly, as with all Acadian cultural productions, the issue of language choice came to the fore: « On est pris comme artiste ici à créer en anglais, en français et c'est un peu schizophrène comme artiste. Moi j'étais comme, oké : j'ai quelque chose à dire, j'le dis tu en français ? j'le dis tu en anglais? » (*"We're stuck here as artists between creating in*

⁷¹ The re-appropriation of an endogenous discourse about Acadie has led to important changes in all sectors of cultural production. First, it was necessary to secure material tools, which included setting up theatre companies with local and regional productions, film and media production companies, publishing houses, and an international Francophone film festival that would showcase our regional cinema (FICFA). According to Chiasson, to claim a reality you must tell it yourself: being an extra in one's own story is simply not enough.

English, in French: as an artist I find it a bit schizophrenic. I was like, OK: I have something to say, do I say it in French, do I say it in English?”) (TV5Monde). This is when Leblanc was reminded of his teenage inspiration of *Acadieman* as a Chiac-speaking Acadian superhero: « [Ç]a m’a libéré complètement. J’ai pu créer en anglais, en français et en chiac, et j’ai plus eu besoin de m’inquiéter de cette question ... linguistique. [...] C’est vraiment je pense une des premières fois à la télé où est ce que les gens entendent le chiac contemporain... » (“*It completely freed me. I was able to create in English, in French, and in Chiac, and I have not needed to worry about this ... linguistic issue anymore. [...] I really think this is one of the first times people have heard contemporary Chiac on TV...*”) (TV5Monde).

The increasingly legitimised and liberating use of Chiac in cultural productions such as *Acadieman* (and, more importantly, the novel this chapter focuses on) is thus a significant contemporary trend in Acadian culture. It represents a continuation of and an innovation vis-à-vis the work initiated by artists like Chiasson, and it is also a movement that responds and further contributes to a broader ideological shift. The increased visibility of Chiac in Acadian cultural productions is also, and crucially so, tied to a global political economic context. The increasing multilingualism and language contact that have accompanied globalisation are contributing to the legitimisation of language varieties which, like Chiac, are often defined in relation to their perceived hybridity. As many cracks in the edifice of our clustering of language, nation, and culture are becoming apparent, “minor” languages are increasingly freed from their stigma and imbued with “a certain appeal” (Leclerc, “Between French and English” 165). As Monica Heller notes in her introduction to *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity* (1999), “linguistic minorities are

suddenly fashionable icons of the new hybridity” (15). “Long accustomed to making bridges among worlds, and resolving tensions and contradictions among them,” their knowledge and practices now resonate far beyond the periphery as “more and more people share the minority condition of multiple identities and constant border crossings” (Heller 16).

Moreover, as Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller indicate in *Language and Late Capitalism* (2012), to write in a non-official language variety can be a distinctive strategy in a postmodern period where discourse finds new spaces of expression, new niches that are no longer controlled by those voices of authority that traditionally had been the monopoly of legitimate discourses (9, 16). In a global context where uniformity and diversity are constantly and concurrently competing trends, “minor” languages like Chiac can function as an authenticating and distinctive seal, a kind of literary AOC (« appellation d’origine contrôlée »). In this sense, the market serves to confer a newfound legitimacy onto voices previously deemed illegitimate. In so doing, it also asserts a certain degree of control over them. While the cultural logic of late capitalism pushes the “uprootedness” of a certain linguistic Taylorism —the treatment of language as a purely technical, reproducible, and standardisable skill—it simultaneously thrives on “rootedness,” on the capacity to harness distinction as added value. The power of “authenticating” identity symbols like language to differentiate goods and markets is thus contributing to the broader visibility of “minor” languages like Chiac (Duchêne and Heller 8, 12). Increasingly in the twenty-first century, cultural producers who choose, like France Daigle, to write in “minor” language varieties, must negotiate this space between pride and profit.

II

France Daigle—From Silence to Chiac

Je n'essaie pas de vendre le chiac. [...] Mais c'est une langue. Elle a sa propre grammaire. Elle devrait pouvoir exister sur papier. Les Acadiens, surtout ceux du sud-est du Nouveau-Brunswick, ont été pendant des décennies gênés de parler. On leur a dit qu'ils parlaient mal. Ils ne voulaient ni aller à radio, ni à la télé. Il faut sortir de ça.

—France Daigle, « *Pour sûr* de France Daigle »

The deployment of Chiac in Daigle's recent novels marks a radical shift in her trajectory as a writer. Daigle's literary production (thirteen novels and five plays) can be separated into two phases (Doyon-Gosselin 101-3). Her early period is characterised by emphatic postmodernism: very short novels where silence (blank spaces), the absence of dialogues, self-referentiality, intertextuality, and a certain distance from reality are key features.

Differently, Daigle's second literary phase, initiated with *1953: Chronique d'une naissance annoncée* (1995), marks "a return to narrative and referential reality" (Bourque). This contemporary reality is grounded in Moncton as a city connected with the world, where Acadians are at the forefront of the economic and cultural effervescence of the new century. Besides grounding her stories in the everyday life of contemporary urban Acadian characters, Daigle's actualisation of Acadian culture also crucially includes her use of Chiac. *Pour sûr*, like Daigle's three most recent novels,⁷² places Chiac-speaking characters at its centre. In fact, since the publication of the tetralogy's first volume in 1998, each of Daigle's novels has included more and more Chiac. Asked to comment on

⁷² *Pas pire* (1998), *Un fin passage* (2001), *Petites difficultés d'existence* (2002).

the evolution of her own thoughts on Chiac over time, Daigle reveals an unsettling process that has in fact determined her entire journey as a writer:

J'ai été élevée en apprenant, comme bien d'autres, que la vraie langue, c'est le français. Le chiac, c'est un accident ou une négligence ou une paresse ou une défaillance, mais ce n'est pas la langue à promouvoir. C'est un sous-produit du français dans ce contexte-ci, dans cette région-ci. Donc, c'était négatif. Je ne me dirigeais pas vers l'écriture en chiac, pas du tout. [...] Ça m'a pris un, deux, trois . . . je ne sais pas combien de livres. J'en ai écrit six ou sept livres sans dialogue. C'était le blocage total, et je savais que je n'écrivais pas de dialogue parce que j'avais ce problème avec la langue à employer dans le dialogue. Pour moi, ça n'avait aucun sens de faire du dialogue en français standard, sauf quand ça pouvait s'appliquer. Mais faire parler les gens d'ici en français tout à fait correct, standard, c'était insensé. (Cabajsky)⁷³

What, then, made this « blocage total » go away? As Daigle explains in *Éloge du chiac, Part Two*, « J'veux dire, c'est sûr que comme j'ai été élevée, le but c'était pas d'écrire en chiac ! J'veux dire, j'me l'interdisais moi-même, par respect. C'est bien beau le respect, mais si tu regardes la réalité [...] je pense qu'à un moment donné, si on veut avoir une voix, quelle qu'elle soit [...] faut dealer avec la langue ». (*"I mean, given the way I was raised, of course the goal was not to write in Chiac! I mean, I refrained from it, by respect. Sure, respect's all well and good but if you consider reality ... I think that at some point, if one wants to have a voice, however that voice might be expressed [...] one has to deal with language."*) It was theatre that eventually eased Daigle's transition. Writing for the stage progressively helped her conquer a voice for her Acadian characters:

⁷³ "I was raised, like many others, to think that French was the real language. As for Chiac, it was an accident, or a product of negligence or laziness or failure. But it was not to be promoted. It was a sub-product of French in this particular context, in this region. So, it was something negative. I wasn't working towards writing in Chiac—not at all. [...] In the end, it took me one, two, three—I don't know how many books; I wrote six or seven without dialogue. I couldn't write dialogue, and I knew it was because I couldn't decide which language to write it in. For me, it didn't make any sense to write dialogue in standard French, except where it might be applicable. But to make people from here speak in proper, standard French was senseless" (*Cabajsky's translation*).

Un moment donné, on m’a invitée à faire des pièces de théâtre. J’en ai fait, donc là, j’ai glissé, parce que pour moi, le théâtre, ce n’est pas sérieux. Le théâtre, on s’amuse une soirée. Alors là, je me permettais de mettre du chiac—pas nécessairement du gros chiac—, mais je me suis comme apaisée par rapport à toute cette question-là petit à petit. [...] Mais, bref, tout ça est sorti dans *Pour sûr*. Parce que, finalement, je me suis rendu compte parallèlement que le chiac, ce n’est pas juste une langue, c’est une mentalité. Mais la langue et la mentalité vont ensemble. Je ne pouvais pas séparer les deux. (Cabajsky)⁷⁴

Alongside changing attitudes towards linguistic hybridity and its increasing cultural marketability, the transposition of the appealing freedom of theatrical expression to the literary realm also crucially contributed to untie Daigle’s tongue. This multi-factor and gradual process made a novel like *Pour sûr* imaginable and publishable.⁷⁵

The Novel and Heterolanguage in Context

Pour sûr is the fourth novel of Daigle’s tetralogy to centre on the Thibodeau-Després family: Terry, Carmen, their son Étienne, and their daughter Marianne. Keen to give herself a challenge, Daigle decided to structure her 752-page novel—the longest in the history of Acadian literature—around the exponential of 12³: 1728 fragments, divided into 144 different sections, each consisting of 12 “entries,” all organised in 12 chapters (Brun del Re 251). The author justified her choice saying, “When I first read that the number 12 was the symbol of plenitude, I was amused” (Daigle qtd. in Cabajsky). Most of *Pour sûr*’s fragments are either dialogues that provide the narrative content of the book, or side

⁷⁴ “A while back, I was invited to write plays. I did so and was able to coast along, because, for me, theatre isn’t serious. With theatre, you’re entertained for a night. So I permitted myself to throw in some Chiac—not necessarily a lot of Chiac—but, little by little, I was able to relax a bit when it came to Chiac. [...] In short, all of that emerged in *Pour sûr* because I finally realized that Chiac is not just a language, it’s a mindset. But language and mindset go hand-in-hand. I couldn’t separate the two” (*Cabajsky’s translation*).

⁷⁵ Annette Boudreau also notes that, having established her French competence with her early works, Daigle might no longer have felt the same pressure to refrain from using Chiac in her later works (239).

information, commentaries, and reflections on language (Chiac and other languages). Each fragment is identified in the margins and indexed at the end of the novel. The relationship between the fragments is often left to the interpretation of the reader, and they are not presented in chronological order. Chiac dialogues constantly appear side by side with a narration in “standard” Canadian French.⁷⁶ A novel *in* and *about* Chiac, *Pour sûr* as a whole is a mise-en-abyme of Chiac as a stigmatised language variety.

The presence of Chiac—a language characterised by intense French/English code-switching—and “standard” French in *Pour sûr* creates a context for linguistic diversity. However, it is the institutional context of enunciation that turns Chiac into heterolanguage (i.e. a language that is at least partially inaccessible to part or all of a text’s intended audience). The Éditions d’Acadie, the first and most important Acadian publishing house, and a crucial launching pad for many major Acadian literary figures like Daigle, faced bankruptcy in 2000 (LeBrun 70). With only a few Acadian publishing houses⁷⁷ operating in New Brunswick, many writers, like Daigle, are published in Quebec (or elsewhere), where the Francophone market is denser and publishing more subsidised.⁷⁸ As Acadian literature scholar Raoul Boudreau indicates:

⁷⁶ While the dialogues clearly mirror the communicative context of southeastern New Brunswick, most of the narration is in “standard international French.” Such striving for a “neutral” register, coupled with the occasional use of Franco-Canadian words and expressions like « toutou » (281), « petites colles » (305), « jaser un peu » (326), « achaler » (327), « une crème glacée » (335), « galette à la farine d’avoine » (339), « casse-croûte » (339), « enjôler » (339), and so on, typify “standard” Canadian French. What is certain is that Daigle’s narrator does not prioritise the kind of “hexagonal” (“Frenchifying”) language that to this day dominates the international Francophone market, making people in France the unmarked, dominant addressees.

⁷⁷ These currently include Les éditions Perce-neige, Les éditions Marévi, Les éditions Boutons d’or d’Acadie, Les éditions de la Grande Marée, Les éditions de la francophonie, and the University of Moncton Press.

⁷⁸ There are approximately 300,000 Acadians, of which 250,000 live in the province of New Brunswick. By comparison, Quebec’s Francophone market consists of over 7 million people (R. Boudreau, 35, 41).

En raison de ressources démographiques limitées qui conditionnent les moyens politiques, économiques, médiatiques, etc., l'institution littéraire acadienne doit se reposer sur l'institution littéraire québécoise—dont le développement, soutenu massivement par l'État québécois, est phénoménal—pour combler ses nombreuses lacunes. (41)⁷⁹

This context might help explain why, beginning with *Un fin passage* (2001), Daigle's novels have been published by Boréal, a mainstream Montreal press with a strong distribution network in France. In any case, this creates the conditions for *Pour sûr*'s prominent use of uncushioned Chiac to constitute heterolanguage for a significant portion of its readership. While actual sale figures are difficult to ascertain, there are probably more readers with little or no familiarity with Chiac who have read Daigle's most recent works, including *Pour sûr*, than before, when they were published in Acadie.

Before I turn to analysing the deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage in the novel, I would like to address an important risk: overstating the linguistic distance between “standard” French and Chiac. My dissertation grinds out the conceptual lens offered by heterolanguage, seeking to offer a novel way to apprehend language and linguistic alterity in relation to contemporary “minor” language creations. The radical potential I discern in the deployment of heterolanguage is in no small part inscribed in its power to highlight language politics and disrupt established language hierarchies. How, then, is emphasising distance—by arguing that Chiac in the context of Daigle's novel operates as heterolanguage—consistent with my overall intervention? Does the distance between

⁷⁹ Limited demographic resources condition the Acadian literary institution's capabilities in political, economic, and media-infrastructure terms. To make up for such limitations, it must rely on the Québécois literary institution, whose development, massively supported by the Québécois state, has been phenomenal.

Metropolitan French and Chiac really warrant the use of the term? What about Québécois French and Chiac?

In her review of the novel, Ariane Brun del Re indicates that *Pour sûr* is characterised by the author's use of diverse strategies to subvert the values typically attributed to Chiac as "a hybrid language" (253). As my discussion of Daigle's endeavour in the next section will illustrate, one crucial strategy in this regard is the simultaneous assertion of similarity *and* difference between "standard" French and Chiac. Signalling *just the right distance* is precisely what allows Daigle to eventually assert the compatibility of these language varieties, as well as the legitimacy and literary credence of Chiac. Therein resides the purchase of reading *Pour sûr* through the lens of heterolanguage. As I examine passages from the novel, I will explain how they support my point.

As for the question of distance in relation to language varieties that ultimately converge more than they diverge, my goal is in no way to ascribe an inherent opacity to Chiac, to make it *by definition* the inscrutable distant cousin of that which is casually called "French." According to Raoul Boudreau, Acadie's Francophone status is doubly peripheral, in relation to France and to Quebec (33). This situation does translate into unequal cultural transfers and, eventually, access: few French people are likely to be exposed to Acadian culture and to Chiac. The opposite is hardly true. For Chiac speakers, the opportunities for ignoring or not seeking to know "standard" French are scarcer and the ensuing social cost of doing so much higher than that of ignoring or not seeking to know Chiac for speakers of "standard" French.

A Québécois audience, in turn, is likely to be more acquainted with Chiac than a Metropolitan French audience. Québécois French and Acadian French are often categorised as “archaic” vis-à-vis Metropolitan French. Canada’s colonial history contributed to the conservation, in both varieties, of traits associated with sixteenth-seventeenth century French. This temporal-historical connection helps explain why Québécois French and Acadian French are for the most part mutually intelligible, even though the French people who settled in the territories of Québec and Acadie brought with them varieties from different regions of France. The two varieties diverge the most in the dissimilar Indigenous vocabulary they have integrated, the kinds of neologisms they have coined, and the way they have incorporated English.

This latter point is crucial when it comes to Chiac, a variety of Acadian French that tends to accommodate more calques from English and code-switching than its “standard” counterpart. While this is not a feature that necessarily sets Chiac apart from Québécois French or Metropolitan French (they also incorporate English in their own ways, with varied degrees of social acceptability and prestige), when it comes to oral communication, the decisively English pronunciation of English words by Chiac speakers creates the impression of a broader distance. Chiac has evolved in an environment where the Francophones who speak it are also (for the most part) highly functional bilinguals. Traditionally, this has been the case in neither Quebec nor France. Beyond pronunciation, Chiac is a language variety that syntactically and semantically registers the solid multilingual competency of its speakers. Chiac’s potential and partial inaccessibility to a Francophone audience thus largely rests on this audience’s degree of familiarity with English and the specificities of Acadian French, as well as its overall receptivity to non-normative French.

***Pour sûr*, a Novel of Love—Invigoration over Alienation**

Towards the very end of *Pour sûr*, Daigle writes the following erratum: « Correction: peut-être que ce roman en est un d’amour après tout ». (“Correction: maybe this novel is one of love after all”) (PS 697; FS 688).⁸⁰ The ultimate love-object of Daigle’s novel is the Chiac language and how it gives recognition to the people who speak it. Such belated acknowledgement that *Pour sûr* is a novel of love mirrors Daigle’s own process of negotiating Acadianité’s linguistic quandaries. As French/English literary f(r)iction specialist Catherine Leclerc notes, “invigorating as it may be, the [Acadian] minority condition is also alienating” (“Between French and English” 169). In *Éloge du chiac*, Part Two, Charles Leblanc powerfully articulates the alienation side of the equation, as he explains to his former classmates why he has refrained from passing on his language and Acadian identity to his children:

Peut-être que l’Acadie peut devenir une prison. Ça l’est devenue pour moi. [...] Tout mon tournant nationaliste, que j’ai par la suite rejeté, mais qui m’a vraiment poussé à explorer toute cette question de c’est quoi être acadien, ça venait de ce mal, de ce mal de base qui pendant deux cents ans s’est enraciné dans nos veines, dans nos muscles, dans nos os. Les acadiens, surtout les acadiens du sud-est, portent cette marque avec eux partout. Pis une des choses que je voulais m’assurer, c’est que mes enfants ne portent pas cette marque, parce que moi ça m’a hanté, ça m’a réduit comme humain, ça m’a fâché.⁸¹

Daigle, who was already well into her writing of *Pour sûr* at the time the documentary was shot, offers a response to Leblanc’s statement that prioritises invigoration over the

⁸⁰ In-text citations are henceforth marked *PS* for France Daigle’s *Pour sûr* and *FS* for Robert Majzels’s English translation *For Sure*.

⁸¹ Acadie can actually become a prison. It became one for me. [...] My entire nationalist phase, which I later rejected, but which really pushed me to explore this whole question of what it means to be Acadian, it came from this suffering, this fundamental suffering which for two hundred years has taken root in our veins, in our muscles, in our bones. Acadians, southeastern Acadians in particular, bear this mark with them everywhere [they go]. And one thing I wanted to be sure of was that my children would not bear this mark, because it has haunted me, it has reduced me as a human, it has made me angry.

alienation he expresses: « Ça fait longtemps à se battre.... Je dis pas qu'y faut abandonner, mais je dis juste qu'y faut [...] s'aimer comme on est aussi, pis parler chiac si ça nous dit, pis savoir juste faire la part des choses ». (“*That’s a long time fighting.... I’m not saying we should give up, I’m just saying we should also love what we are, and speak Chiac if we feel like it, and know how to be nuanced about it.*”) Daigle is clearly cognisant of the alienation that Acadianité as a minority condition implies. But her response, personally and as an artist, is to also focus on the flip side: to turn Acadianité into an invigorating position. As a novel, *Pour sûr* functions as a blueprint for the invigorating power of Acadianité, of Chiac, and of all the accompanying nuances. Daigle’s illustration of Chiac is a crucial step towards the elaboration of this blueprint.

Chiac in *Pour sûr*—An Illustration

Maman, commensque je m’appelle en anglais, moi ?
—Le petit Étienne, *Pour sûr*

From the very first pages of *Pour sûr*, Chiac is defined, circumscribed, historicised, and its status situated for the reader:

Chiac (PS 24-5)

Salmigondis de français du XVII^e siècle et de français moderne, de mots anglais prononcés à l’anglaise, de mots anglais francisés et d’un mélange syntaxique empruntant aux deux langues, le chiac est surtout l’apanage des Acadiens du sud-est du Nouveau-Brunswick. En dépit de sa résonance autochtone (Shédiac, Kouchibougouac, Tabusintac) rien n’est certain quant à l’origine du mot chiac. Et parler le chiac appelle encore aujourd’hui un certain déshonneur.⁸²

⁸² *Chiac* (FS 16): A hodge-podge of seventeenth century and modern French, of English words pronounced in an English accent, English words pronounced in a French accent, and a syntactical mix drawn from both languages, Chiac is predominantly the lingua franca of the Acadians of southeastern New Brunswick. In spite of its echos of First Nation speech (Shédiac, Kouchibougouac, Tabusintac) nothing is less certain than the origin of the word Chiac. And still today, to speak Chiac evokes a kind of dishonour.

Sections titled « Chiac », « Détails utiles » [*Useful details*], « Chiac détail »⁸³ (*Chiac lesson*), « Le détail dans le détail » (*The Detail Within the Detail*), and so on, also emphasise and pursue the novel's meticulous encyclopedic gesture by elaborating on the nature of the novel's complex love-object and by mapping its specificities:

Chiac (PS 44)

Puisque le français acadien regorge de mots anciens et de tournures désuètes, c'est sans doute la forte et souvent insidieuse présence de l'anglais qui donne au chiac son caractère propre, et la prononciation tout à fait anglaise de ces mots pèse lourdement dans la balance. Un Français peut bien dire « parquigne », l'Acadien, lui, aura l'impression de faire du théâtre s'il doit en dire autant. Il prononcera donc tout naturellement « parking », comme il l'entend de la bouche des milliers d'anglophones qui l'entourent. On a affaire ici à une rupture d'ordre musical, rythmique, esthétique. Souvent le mélange des deux langues passe presque inaperçu, mais souvent il blesse tant l'oreille que l'entendement. Tout est question d'équilibre. Par exemple, la phrase *Je vas aouère besoin d'un troque ou d'une vãn pour haler mon botte ennewé* donne au moins l'impression de tenir dans un seul registre sonore. Par contre, une menace sourde couve dans la phrase *Si que je swïtch la lïght bãck òn pis que la maison ãxplode, ãxpect pas d'ouère ëver ãgain d'autres outils pour Father's Day*.⁸⁴

⁸³ In French "Chiac détail" suggests a pun on "chaque détail," alluding to the meticulous undertone of the expression "each and every detail."

⁸⁴ *Chiac* (FS 36): Because Acadian French is replete with old words and archaic expressions, it is perhaps the strong and often insidious presence of English that lends Chiac its particular character, and especially the clearly English pronunciation of these words. Someone from France can say they've put their car in the *parquigne* without a second thought, but an Acadian would feel like a showoff pronouncing it that way. Acadians quite naturally say "parking" exactly as they've heard it hundreds of times from the mouths of the Anglophones that surround them.

We are dealing here with a musical, rhythmic, and aesthetic rupture. Often this mix of two languages is unnoticed, but equally often it offends the ear and defies understanding. It's all a question of balance. For example, take the phrase "je vas aouère besoin d'un troque ou d'une vãn pour haler mon botte ennewé (Least ways, I'll be needin' me some dody's truck or van to haul me boat)." Here at least the sentence seems to maintain a consistent sonic register. On the other hand, a vague menace lurks beneath the surface of the sentence: "*si que je swïtch la lïght bãck òn pis que la maison ãxplode, ãxpect pas d'ouère ëver ãgain d'autres outils pour Father's Day* (if I goes to switch on de light and de whole house blows up, don't you expect no more o' dem tools fer Fadder's Day)."

Pour sûr contains several extensive “entries” of informative inclination which, like the quote above, provide an approximation to Chiac in context, a roadmap of sorts, and a way to assert Chiac as heterolanguage, i.e. as *another* language, distinct from “standard” French.

The text is also sprinkled with many shorter, matter-of-fact commentaries that qualify and illuminate fragments of the Chiac mosaic for the reader. For instance, Daigle notes in the « Détails utiles » section that « L’usage fréquent du *ça* amplifie la résonance archaïque du chiac. Il ne va pas non plus sans l’infantiliser ». (“*The frequent use of ça (or dat) amplifies the archaic resonance of Chiac. It also has the effect of infantilizing it*”) (PS 332; FS 329). In this sense, *Pour sûr* could be seen as a high-resolution image of Chiac aimed at a wide Francophone audience: the text is not directed towards an explicit or implicit reader. The Acadian reader (especially of the southeastern region) is likely to find in *Pour sûr* echoes of her lived reality. The non-Acadian reader, in turn, will find herself on much less familiar territory, and Daigle’s encyclopedic “entries” will provide for helpful landmarks on her journey. However, while Daigle illustrates Chiac, she does “translate” it: Chiac-as-heterolanguage is maintained throughout.

Beyond the semi-pedagogical components that punctuate the novel’s plot, Daigle’s detailed illustration of Chiac is also achieved through various fictional yet authentic communicative situations and presented through a vast array of monologues and dialogues that showcase the texture and workings of the language. These are mostly developed in sections such as « Le Babar » (*The Babar*), « Monologues non identifiés » (*Unidentified Monologues*), « Une place pour le monde » (*A Place for Everyone*),

« Dialogues en vrac » (*Overheard Conversations*), « Moncton », and so on. These sections' conversational substance can all be traced back to Le Babar, a bistro-pub owned by Carmen and her friend Josse, where Chiac is the local crowd's lingua franca:

Moncton (PS 697)

— Moi, ça que j'aime, c'est tous les petits bîps de mon corps, toutes les petites twîches qu'on n'a pas de contrôle dessus. Des fois je me couche ben tranquille juste pour les fiiler.

— !

— ...

— C'est ça, la vie, je crois ben. Une bûnch de petits twîches que t'as pas de contrôle dessus.

— ...

— ...

— J'ai-tu dit *twîch* au masculin?

— Me semble que oui...

— Hmm...

— Ben, je m'assirais pas sus le rond des crêpes âbout ît.

— C'est wêird parce que dans ma tête *twîch* est féminin. Une twîch.

— ...

— Des fois je crois que le français rentre dans nous autres pis qu'on le réalize pas.⁸⁵

As the quote above suggests, Daigle's mapping of Chiac also occurs in communicative context, thus crucially including those who speak it. As part of Daigle's later and increasingly Acadie-centred literary phase, *Pour sûr* largely exceeds the boundaries of a disembodied encyclopedic exercise. Mundane yet dense reflections on Moncton's layered linguistic environment occupy a central place in the novel. Chiac is also vividly disputed: the characters' zones offer a vibrant fictional platform for credible, "real-life" debates about Chiac. In zeroing in on a wide array of speakers and language uses, Daigle

⁸⁵ *Moncton* (FS 688-9): "Me, wot I likes are all de wee *bips* in me body, all de little *twitches* you doesn't have the least bit o' control over. Sometimes I lies down still, just to be feelin' dem." ! ... "Dat's life, I suppose. A bunch o' wee *twitches* you doesn't have no control over." ... "Did I say *twitch* in de masculin?" "Seems to me you did..." "Hmm..." "Well, I wouldn't sit me arse down on top o' de stove about it." "Dat's some strange, on account of in me head de word *twitch* is feminine. *Une twitch*." ... "Der's times I tinks French gets inside us an' we doesn't even know it."

emphasises Chiac as a shared collective phenomenon. In this sense, the author's picturing of Chiac resembles a family portrait more than a selfie.

The young Thibodeau-Després family generates the most dialogues in the novel, all of which are in uncushioned Chiac. Terry, Carmen, and the children's discussions generate various implicit and explicit commentaries on Chiac, its status, and the alienation the family members experience in relation to the language friction that is a cornerstone of their existence. Daigle vividly foregrounds her characters' "surconscience linguistique" (Gauvin) and their perceived linguistic inadequacies. This leads to a substantial thematisation in *Pour sûr*, as in the rest of the tetralogy, of the implications of linguistic insecurity in the characters' everyday lives. In *Petites difficultés d'existence* (2002), the series' third book, Carmen and Terry become parents, and they start to actively reflect on the language they want to pass on to their children. Daigle's characters decide that their linguistic legacy will include as much French (Acadian French and "standard" French) as possible. *Pour sûr* highlights the everyday implications of the characters' acting upon their vow, now that both their children can speak.

As the omniscient narrator reveals, language is constantly on Terry's and Carmen's minds. The novel contains dozens of examples in this regard. Some emphasise the characters' perceived linguistic inadequacy vis-à-vis "standard" French:

Carmen envia à Terry le mot rechute, remarqua que son vocabulaire tendait à s'enrichir ces derniers temps. (*Carmen envied Terry's use of the French word rechute for "relapse" rather than slipping into the English, as he might have done. His vocabulary seemed to be improving lately.*) (PS 50; FS 42)

Terry pensa qu'il lui faudrait enrichir son vocabulaire technique en français. Il se demanda aussi comment il se faisait que cette fille—femme?—connût aussi bien les pincés. (*Terry thought he'd better start improving his technical vocabulary in*

French. He was also wondering how come this girl—woman?—knew so much about pliers.) (PS 213; FS 211)

Others signal their negative perception of the omnipresence of English words in their life:

— Hôw côme que c'est pas l'histoire du lapin Pascal, denne ?
L'anglais fit tiquer Terry. Carmen avait tendance à le blâmer pour le chiac des enfants. (*"How come den it's not a story 'bout Pascal de rabbit?" Étienne had used the expression How come in English, which made Terry wince. Carmen often blamed him for the children's use of Chiac.*) (PS 61; FS 54)

Comme d'habitude, quand Terry évoquait son passé, les mots anglais se glissaient naturellement dans son parler. Carmen savait que ce n'était pas le moment de le lui faire remarquer. (*As usual, when Terry evoked his past, the English words had slid naturally into his speech. Carmen knew this was not the time to point it out.*) (PS 233; FS 231)

And yet other instances highlight the place of Chiac as a *habitus* in Terry and Carmen's daily life:

— C'était peut-être de la ... mēntal âlienation, comme y disent.
Même si elle croyait au bon français, Carmen non plus n'avait pas toujours les mots en tête. (*"Could 'ave been ... wot dey call mental alienation." Carmen used the English term. Even though she believed firmly in proper French, even she did not always have the right word on the tip of her tongue.*) (PS 235; FS 233)

À l'occasion, histoire de ne pas perdre la main, Carmen se laissait aller à jouer, elle aussi, au mélange du français et de l'anglais.

— Pis fôr yôur înformation, c'est pour ça qu'on a des reins, pour clēaner le sang. (*Carmen, too, let herself slip into a mixture of French and English. "An fer yer information, dat's why we've a pair of kidneys, to clean out de blood."*) (PS 238; FS 236)

La position de Carmen au sujet de la langue n'a rien de reposant, et ce, pour elle-même en premier lieu. Elle a beau vouloir que les enfants apprennent un français correct, elle ne peut s'empêcher de sourire parfois devant certaines tournures chiac. (*Carmen's position on the subject of language is not particularly easy to bear, least of all for her. As much as she would like her children to learn proper French, there are times when she can't help but smile at some particularly pretty Chiac phrase.*) (PS 76; FS 68)

Terry and Carmen's constant preoccupation with language is not only uncovered by the narrator, it also clearly appears through the novel's dialogues. In chapters three and four, the couple decides to let five-year-old Étienne and two-year-old Marianne participate in the shooting, in Moncton, of the documentary *Children par yeux-mêmes*. "The filmmaker was hoping to demonstrate that small children will naturally find a healthy equilibrium in an environment free of constraints or coercion" (FS 139). Unfortunately for Terry and Carmen, the context quickly becomes conducive to an osmosis of a different kind:

Le film (PS 166-7)

Carmen ne réussissait pas à s'endormir, pensait au lendemain :

— Je suis pas sûre que c'était une bonne idée d'envoyer les enfants faire ce film-là. T'aurais dû entendre Étienne après le souper. C'était des cândés par-icitte, des pûddles d'eau par-là, qu'y avont mis du cément dedans, qu'était awesome, pis là y a annoncé qui voulait une skâteboard pour sa fête.

Terry commençait lui aussi à s'inquiéter du langage de son fils.

— Je sais ...

— C'en est décourageant ...

— Dis-toi qu'y reste yinque deux jours ...

— Hun! Ça commence juste ! C'est supposé qu'une fois qu'y mettent les pieds à l'école, c'est fini !

Terry trouva Carmen plutôt défaitiste.

— Prends pas cecitte mal, ben vas-tu être menstruée avant longtemps ?⁸⁶

A day/page or two later, even Terry starts worrying about the unintended linguistic consequences of the unmediated interaction among Moncton children for the documentary:

⁸⁶*The Movie (FS 163-4)*: Carmen couldn't sleep, thinking about the morrow: "I'm thinkin' 'twasn't such a bright idea sendin' the wee ones to make that film. You should've heard Étienne after supper. Tossin' English all over the place. Candy over here an' puddles over there, and dey put cement in it, and that was awesome, and now the boy wants a skateboard fer his birt'day." Terry, too, was beginning to worry about his son's language: "I knows it." "The whole thing's discouraging." "Well, jus' tell yerself der's naught but two days to go ..." "Luh! 'Tis only gettin' started! Folks say, once they set foot inside the schoolhouse, you can ferget it, it's over!" Terry thought Carmen was being overly defeatist. "Don't go takin' it so hard, girl. Is it yer period yer expectin' sometime soon?"

Le film (PS 169)

Quelques temps plus tard, Terry regretta un peu d'avoir insinué que les fluctuations hormonales de Carmen affectaient sa perception du français monctonien.

— Ein, Marianne ? On dit *sauter*, pas *jũmper*, *sauter*.

Marianne regardait Terry, n'était pas certaine de comprendre à quoi son père voulait en venir.

— Auter ?

— C'est ça, sauter.

Et Marianne leva les bras en sautant :

— Auter !

— C'est ça, Marianne, sauter. Oké, on embarque dans l'auto asteure.

Mais le papa était disposé à attendre que Marianne ait sauté un petit moment.

— Oké, Marianne, c'est fini. Viens dans l'auto asteure.

Marianne arrêta finalement de sauter et laissa Terry l'installer dans son siège.

— Papa ! La *trũnk* est pas fermée !

— La *valise*, Étienne, on dit *valise*.

— Beaucoup de monde disent *trũnk*.

— Peut-être, ben nous autres, on dit *valise*. Compris ?

Quelques temps plus tard :

— Papa, je sais qu'on dit *sauter* pour *jũmper*, ben commensqu'on dit *trĩppér*, comme quante on veut trĩppér quelqu'un pour le faire tomber ?⁸⁷

Until one day, le petit Étienne also gets caught up in the webs of the family's obsession, increasingly cognisant of the rules of the game. In chapter six, Daigle further reveals the extent of the Thibodeau-Després's linguistic negotiation by having Terry and Carmen take the family on a vacation to the mainly French-speaking northeast with the money made from the kids' participation in the film. The family drives up the coast of New Brunswick on their way to Caraquet, the capital of Acadie. Terry and Carmen praise the

⁸⁷ *The Movie (FS 165-6)*: Later, Terry regretted having insinuated that Carmen's hormonal fluctuations had influenced her perception of Monctonian French. "Hey der. Marianne? In French, we says *sauté*, not *jumpé*." Marianne looked at Terry, not entirely sure what her dad was getting at. "*Sauté*?" "Dat's it, *sauté*." And Marianne threw her arms up over her head and jumped: "*Sauté*!" "Dat's it, Marianne, *sauté*. Alright den, now we all gets in de car." But her dad was willing to bide his time while Marianne did a bit more jumping. "Alright, Marianne, dat's it, den. All aboard, now." Finally, Marianne stopped jumping and let Terry strap her into her seat. "Dad, de *trunk*'s not closed!" "*La valise*, Étienne, we says *la valise*." "Lots of folks says *trunk*." "Dat may be, but we say *valise*. Get it?" A little while later: "Dad. I know we say *sauté* fer *jumpé*, so how come we say *trippé* when we wants to make someone fall down?"

city, saying, « Tout le monde parle français à Caraquet ». (*"In Caraquet, everybody speaks French"*) (PS 333; FS 330). In the car, Terry explains to the children how when they get there they will make fire-baked potatoes and toast marshmallows:

En route (PS 333-4)

[...] Pis b̃y th̃e time que t'as fini de la manger, t'as les mains pis la face ben nouères.

— Papa ! T'as encore dit un mot anglais !

De temps à autre—cela relevait d'un calcul intuitif—, Terry glissait un mot ou une expression anglaise dans son parler parce que malgré tout cette forme de transgression faisait également partie de son identité.

— Oups...

Carmen et Terry échangèrent un coup d'œil de complicité.

— Commensque tu dis ça en français encore ?

Étienne pensa, puis :

— Faut dire quante. Quante que t'as fini de manger...

— C'est vrai. J'aurais dû savoir ça.

Carmen croisa le regard d'Étienne dans le rétroviseur, lui fit un clin d'œil.

Et Terry de conclure :

— Pis à la place de se coucher, quante y va faire noir on va s'assire dehors autour du feu pis on va regarder les étoiles. Ça, c'est après qu'on aura fini de faire cuire toutte le sac de mārshma... oups !

— Gimauves, Papa ! Des mārshmallows, c'est des gimauves !

Étienne pensa un moment à tous ces plaisirs qui l'attendaient puis déclara :

— Ça fait rien, Papa. Je t'aiderai à Caraquet si y comprennent pas tes mots anglais.⁸⁸

Through le petit Étienne's earnest appropriation of his milieu's obsession, we see how the author's endeavour goes beyond the mapping of Chiac as a mere linguistic fact. Daigle is also involved in critically fleshing out Chiac as a comprehensive sociolinguistic phenomenon.

⁸⁸ *On the road (FS 331)*: "An' by de time youse finished eatin' dem yer face is all black wid soot." Terry's by de time in English had not gone unnoticed. "Dad! You went an used an English word again!" From time to time—the result of an intuitive calculation—Terry slipped an English word or expression into his speech because, after all, this transgressive act was also part of his identity. "Oops ..." Carmen and Terry exchanged a complicitous glance. "Well den, 'ow do you say it in French?" Étienne thought a bit, then: "You gotta say 'when's.' When's yer done eatin'..." "Dat's right. I ought to have knowed it." Carmen caught Étienne's eye in the rear-view mirror and winked. Terry concluded: "An' instead of goin' off to bed when it gets dark, we'll sit ourselves 'round de fire an' look at de stars. Dat's after we's roasted a whole bag o' marshmallows ... oops! "Gimauves, Dad! Marshmallows is gimauves in French!" Étienne reflected a moment on all these pleasures to come and declared: "It doesn't matter, Dad. I'll be der to help in Caraquet, if dey don't understand yer English words."

Chiac in *Pour sûr*—An Essay

— Hõw cõme que Marianne a jamais besoin de s’excuser, yelle ?
— On dit pas *hõw cõme*. On dit *pourquoi* ?
— Pourquoi, denne?

—Le petit Étienne et Carmen, *Pour sûr*

Daigle’s endeavour is also an essayistic gesture, one that involves abundant metadiscourse on Chiac, the regulation of language, language ideologies, and linguistic hierarchies. As an example, Daigle weaves in numerous dialogues that playfully comment on the contingencies of language evolution and standardisation, as it pertains to the Acadian context specifically:

Virages (PS 420)

— Je me souviens qu’on disait *tirette* chez nous, à la place de *tiroir*. Ben vraiment, on disait *tiroué*.
— Ĩ wõnder si c’était plusse ça le vrai mot.
— Asteure on dit juste *tiroir*, comme tout le monde.
— Y en a qui sont contre ça.
— Contre quoi ?
— Qu’on laisse aller le chiac.
— Ouelle ! Qu’y mākiont ũp leu’ mĩnd !⁸⁹

Through dialogues that are often unrelated to *Pour sûr*’s main narrative thread, Daigle insinuates into her reader’s mind a vast reflection on the nature of language codification and legitimisation. These dialogues also serve to introduce the nuances Daigle called for in her response to Charles Leblanc (see the above section “*Pour sûr*, a Novel of Love”). In this sense, her essayistic gesture is constantly supported with examples that illustrate the fabricated-ness of language:

⁸⁹ *Shifts (FS 416)*: “I remember we used to call a drawer *une tirette* instead of *un tiroir* in our house. Doh, really de way we said it sounded more like *tiroué*.” “I wonders if dat was actually de right word in old French.” “Now, we says *tiroir*, like everybody else.” “Der some folks’re against dat.” “Against wot?” “Losing our Chiac.” “Well, is dat right? Ask me, dey oughtta make up der mind!”

Techniques (PS 435)

— Y a des mots qui s'écrivent comme qu'y s'écrivent pour des raisons purement techniques.

— ...

— Comme *huître*. Au commencement ça venait du grec pis là ç'a viré au latin, pis après ça au français, pis à la fin ç'a donné *uistre*, *u-i-s-t-r-e*, avec pas de *h*.

— ...

— Le *h* a yinque été mis parce que le monde preniont le *u* pour un *v*, qui fait qu'y lisiont *vistre* — de la *vitre*, probablement—à la place de *uitre*. Je sais pas si l'imprimerie était sitant ... comme ... prîmitive, que les lettres étiont dures à vouère ou quoi. En tout cas, bōttom lîne, c'est une épellation inventée pour pas que le monde se trompe. C'est ça que je veux dire par technique, ç'a pas affaire avec la racine du mot ni rien.

— ...

— Je te tanne pas trop, Ì hōpe ?

— ...

— ...

— Disons que je me fie pas de jouer trop souvent avec toi quante que je serai meilleur.

— Hahaha ! C'est ça que j'aime avec toi, on sait yoûsqu'on stând.⁹⁰

The critical stance underlying this dialogue highlights the perceived authority of French orthography at the same time as it reminds the reader not to take the process of linguistic legitimisation (and where it has left Chiac) for granted. Assertions such as the following also serve to put the mutability of language hierarchies into perspective: « À l'époque où dominait le latin, la langue française était une langue vulgaire, c'est-à-dire une langue parlée par le peuple ». (*“Long ago, when Latin was the dominant language, French was considered a vulgar language, that is a language spoken by the common people”*) (PS 492;

⁹⁰ *Techniques* (FS 430-1): “Some words’re spelled de way dey are purely fer technical reasons.” ... “Take, fer example, de word fer “oyster”: *huître*. In de beginnin’ it came from de Greek, den it went into de Latin, an’ afterwards into French spelled *uistre*, *u-i-s-t-r-e*, wid no *h*.” ... “De *h* was only der on account of folks was confusin’ de *u* wid a *v*, so dat dey was reading *vistre* — which is almost *vitre* or “glass”—instead of *uitre*. Could be printing was too ... like ... primitive at de time, so de letters was not so clear. Anyhow, bottom line, de spelling wid an *h* was invented so folks wouldn’t confuse an oyster wid a piece o’ glass. Dat’s wot I means by technical, wot’s got nuttin’ to do wid the roots of de word.” ... “I hope I isn’t borin’ you too much?” ... “Let’s just say dat I doesn’t figure I’ll be playin’ wid you all dat often once I gets better at de game.” “Hahaha! Dat’s wot I likes about you, a person always knows where you stand.”

FS 489). Passages like this one suggest important grounds for comparability between “standard” French and Chiac.

In addition, at the same time as Terry and Carmen are shown to invest countless efforts in acting upon their vow to expose Étienne and Marianne to as much French as possible, the novel oscillates between the cautious celebration of the couple’s decision and the exposition of its socially constructed (and verging on neurotic) nature.⁹¹ This back-and-forth motion serves to revalorise Acadian culture through the relativisation of Chiac’s stigmatised status. Daigle’s attempt to put into a broader perspective its most contentious anglicised elements play a key role in this regard:

Peurs (PS 656-7)

— Moi, j’ai peur d’avoir été bräinwashée.

— À quel sujet ?

— Au sujet du français.

— D’accord. Et qu’est-ce que cette peur éveille en toi ?

— De la rage.

— Est-ce que tu peux expliquer ?

— L’autre jour, j’ai charché le mot *snoro* dans les dictionnaires acadiens, ben y était pas là. Sõ là j’ai pensé de ’garder dans le *Robert*, ïn cãse que c’aurait été un vrai mot français. Sus la page 2099 du dictionnaire, yoûsque le mot *snoro* aurait dû être si ç’avait été un bon mot, y avait quarante z-autres mots. Pis gũess whãt? La moitié de ces mots-là étiont anglais ! Je vas vous les dire, oké ?

— !

— *Slip* (plusse y avait *string* en nouère dans la définition), *slogan*, *slow*, *smart*, *smash* (pis *smasher*), *smithsonite* (celui-là j’étais pas sûre), *smocks*, *smog*, *smoking*, *smolt*, *smurf*, *snack* (pis *snack-bar*, avec *fast-food* en nouère dans la définition), *sniff* (pis *sniffer*), *sniper*, *snob*, *snober*, *snobinard* pis *snobisme*, *snowboard*, *snowboot* pis *soap-opéra*. Exactement la moitié des mots de la page veniont de l’anglais. Plusse, y avait pas mal de mots qui veniont de l’arabe pis de l’italien, pis du Denmark pis de la Hollande pis d’autres places de même. En toutte, y avait à peu près cinq mots qu’on peut dire qu’y veniont vraiment du français. Ça, c’est cinq sus quarante.

⁹¹ Through many passages of the « *Peurs* » (*Fears*), « *Obsessions* », and « *Freud par la bande* » (*Freud Circuitously*) sections, Daigle establishes a triangular connection between language, religion, and Freud’s concept of (collective) neurosis as he elaborates it in *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilisation and its Discontents*.

— ...?!
 — !...??...!
 — ?...!!...?
 — !?
 —
 — Sõ là j'ai farmé le dictionnaire, j'avais à moitché peur de tchèquer les autres pages.⁹²

Through Carmen's outburst (probably at the psychologist), we see that anglicisation becomes a way to bring Chiac and "standard" French onto the same level. We also see that *Pour sûr's* essayistic gesture does not consist in tackling language ideologies along academic lines. For example, Daigle does not endeavour to critically deconstruct the notion of the native speaker, the way Rey Chow does in *Not Like a Native Speaker* (2014). Neither does she propose a sustained historical analysis of the development of Chiac as a linguistic phenomenon, the way Ilan Stavans does in *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language* (2003). *Pour sûr's* playground is elsewhere. As the preceding quote suggests, *Pour sûr* illustrates the real-life consequences of language ideologies through credible fictional scenarios.

By highlighting the arbitrariness and erratic nature of « le bon français » her characters so revere, Daigle also creates a space where discussing Chiac's own "inconsistencies" does not, in comparison, diminish the legitimacy of her task:

⁹² *Fears* (FS 649-50): "Me, I's afraid of havin' bin brainswashed." "About what?" "About French." "Alright. And what does this fear make you feel?" "Rage." "Can you explain?" "De udder day, I's searchin' fer the word snoro in the Acadian dictionaries, only 'twasn't there. So den I thought to look in de *Robert* dictionary, in case it turned out to be a real French word. On page 2099 of dat dictionary, where the word snoro would have been if it were a real word, der were forty udder words. An guess wot. Half o' dose words was English! Let me list dem fer you, OK?" ! "*Slip* (plus der was *string* in bold in de definition), *slogan*, *slow*, *smart*, *smash* (an' *smasher*), *smithsonite* (wasn't sure 'bout dat one), *smocks*, *smog*, *smoking*, *smolt*, *smurf*, *snack* (an' *snack-bar*, wid *fast-food* in bold in de definition), *sniff* (an' *sniffer*), *sniper*, *snob*, *snober*, *snobinard* an' *snobisme*, *snowboard*, *snow-boot* an' *soap-opéra*. Exactly half de words on de page came from English. Not to mention der were a few words dat came from Arab an' Italian, and from Denmark an' Holland, an' udder places like dat. All in all, der was maybe five words you could say come from French. Dat's five outta forty." ...?! !...??...! ?...!!...? !? ... "Well, so den I closed de dictionary, I's half afeared to check de udder pages."

Chiac détail (PS 37)

Le chiac n'est pas exempt de glissements qui sont en fait des erreurs. Par exemple, d'où vendrait le *tu* de *Y en a-tu assez pour toi ?* si ce n'est de la confusion créée par la question qui s'adresse à une deuxième personne du singulier ? Si ce *tu* semble justifié, alors qu'il faudrait dire *Y en a-t-y assez pour toi ?* l'erreur se répète dans *Y en a-tu mangé ôr whât !* qui devrait se dire *Y en a-t-y mangé ôr whât !*⁹³

Here Daigle playfully signals the “slippery mistake” of using *tu* instead of the personal pronoun *y*, wittingly leaving unmentioned the blatant code-switch “ôr whât.” After all, once we juxtapose this last quote with the preceding passage about *Le Robert*'s anglicised content, does it not diminish the stakes of a few English words here and there, ôr whât...?

In *Pour sûr*, Daigle creates numerous opportunities for such associative relativisation as she weaves in numerous reflections that undermine the notion of unitary language:

Langues (PS 504)

Mais où commence, où finit une langue ? Quand une langue devient-elle une autre langue ? Toute parole n'est-elle pas qu'une interprétation de la réalité, donc une sorte de traduction, de tentative fugace de langage, une lalangue ? Et puis, que le français soit ancien ou actuel ou standard ou hybride, la langue, comme la vie, n'est-elle pas qu'un long processus d'hybridation ininterrompu ?⁹⁴

The theme and the structure of Daigle's novel facilitate analogic connections in the mind of the reader. Yet the author's careful editing often does not leave them up to the reader: many juxtaposed fragments act as clear essayistic counterpoints. Daigle's montage is

⁹³ *Chiac Lesson (FS 29)*: Chiac is not exempt from slip-ups, which are in fact errors. For example, the sentence “Have you got enough there” is often translated in French as “*Y en a-tu assez pour toi ?*” as though we were saying: “Have you got enough for you there?” The *tu* here should be an *il* (*Y en a-t-il assez pour toi ?*). The error is most likely linked to the fact that the question addresses a second person singular. If one is speaking proper Chiac, one must say: “*Y en a-t-y assez pour toi ?*” just as in a particular English, one would say: “Have ya had yer fill, then?” The same applies to the exclamation “*Y en a-tu mangé ôr what !*” which ought to be “*Y en a-t-y mangé ôr what !*” in Chiac, or “*Il en a certainement mangé sa part*” in Parisian. In non-standard English, one might say, “Did he scoff his fill or wot!”

⁹⁴ *Langues (FS 500)*: But where does a language begin, where does it end? When does a language become a different language? Isn't all speech an interpretation of reality, hence a kind of translation, a fleeting attempt of language, a lalangue? And whether French is old or contemporary or standard or hybrid, isn't language, like life, nothing more than a long process of uninterrupted hybridization?

crucial in this regard: it becomes impossible for the reader not to engage with this deliberate juxtaposition. Through contrapuntal metacommentary, one passage becomes the key to interpreting the next. And an argument is created. The following example is particularly telling in this regard:

Grammaire (PS 396)

Une autre section intéressante de la grammaire Bescherelle porte sur la nouvelle orthographe : l'Académie française ne tient plus à l'accent circonflexe sur le *i* et le *u*, sauf dans le cas des terminaisons des verbes (*nous rendîmes*, *vous crûssiez*) et de quelques mots où l'accent circonflexe sert à distinguer des homonymes (*mur* et *mûr*, *du* et *dû*). *Île*, *maîtresse*, *coût*, *flûte*, *boîte* deviennent donc *ile*, *maitresse*, *cout*, *flute*, *boite*. On les croirait nus. Mais *drôle de tête* continuera de s'écrire *drôle de tête*. Allez comprendre.⁹⁵

With this fragment of the « Grammaire » section, Daigle emphasises the arbitrariness of the Académie française's prescriptive and top-down approach to sanctioning the French language's evolution. However, by placing this commentary right before the following narrative scene, Daigle provides a particular lens through which to re-interpret the seemingly trivial detail of some words' newfound nakedness without their *accent circonflexe*:

Virages (PS 397)

— Papa ! La lumière est rouge !

La veille, Chico avait expliqué à Étienne le fonctionnement des feux de circulation.

— Faut que t'attendes que ça tourne vert.

Terry lui expliqua donc le principe du virage à droite au feu rouge.

— Ben, comment longtemps qu'y faut que t'arrêtes ?

⁹⁵ *Grammar (FS 392-3)*: Another interesting section of the *Bescherelle* grammar book deals with new spelling rules: The French Academy no longer insists on the insertion of a circumflex accent above the *i* and the *u*, except in the case of verb endings (*nous rendîmes*, *vous crûssiez*) and of a few words where the circumflex serves to distinguish homonyms (*mur* meaning "wall" and *mûr* meaning "ripe," or *du* meaning "of" and *dû* meaning "due"). *Île*, *maîtresse*, *coût*, *flûte*, *boîte* have therefore become *ile*, *maitresse*, *cout*, *flute*, *boite*. They look naked. But the Academy has ruled that the phrase *drôle de tête*, meaning a "strange or funny look," will continue to be written *drôle de tête*. Go figure.

—Pas vraiment longtemps. Ās lõng que t'arrêtes pis que tu regardes comme y faut quoisie qui se passe. Après tu peux y aller si y a pas de char qui vient de cte côté-là. Parce que si y en a un qui vient, c'est moi qui faut que je le laisse passer.

— À cause ?

— Parce que c'est lui qui a le feu vert. Sti-là qu'a le feu vert peut passer nō mātter whāt. Y a pas même besoin d'arrêter.

— ...

—Avant on n'avait pas le droit de faire ça. La lumière était rouge ? T'arrêtais jusqu'à temps qu'a tourne vert. Ça fait pas si longtemps que ça qu'y avont changé la loi pour que ceuses-là qui veulent tourner à droite aïyont le droit d'avancer zeux aussi.

— ...

— Ça marche pas mal bien, je crois. Ça cause pas plusse d'accidents.

— ...

— ...

— Ben, pourquoisie qu'y avont décidé vert ?⁹⁶

In this context, le petit Étienne's questions and Terry's answers make the whole system of traffic regulation analogise certain kind of linguistic shifts. The Académie française's sanctioned stripping of some words appears as arbitrary as the meaning ascribed to a green light.

These combined passages exemplify how Daigle brings her essayistic gesture to the next level. At the same time as *Pour sûr* constantly retorts "says who" to power (i.e. to the structures and institutions that frame Chiac as the bad-object of Acadian culture), it offers, in many respects, a counter-proposal, a manifesto. If, as Acadian sociolinguist Annette Boudreau notes, « 'le vrai français' est [toujours] ailleurs » ("*real French*" is

⁹⁶ *Shifts* (FS 393): "Dad! De light's red!" The day before, Chico had explained to Étienne how traffic lights work. "You gotta wait 'til de light turns green." Terry explained about turning right on a red light. "Well, 'ow long does ya 'ave to stop, den?" "Not all dat long. So long as you stops an' look around to see wot's happenin'. Den' you can go right ahead, if der's no car crossin' in dat direction. On account of if der's one dat's comin', den I's de one dat has to let 'im go." "On account of?" "On account of ee's de one's got de green light. Whoever's got de green light can go right troo, no matter wot. Ee doesn't even 'ave to stop." ... "Used to be, we weren't allowed to do dat. Light was red? You stopped 'til she turned green. Hasn't been all dat long now, dey changed de law so dem dat wants to turn right are allowed to go as well." ... "It's workin' just fine, you ask me. Doesn't cause more accidents." ... "But, how come dey decided on green?"

(*always elsewhere*)” (122), and legitimate language is but a carefully engineered special effect of power, then why should Chiac speakers obey the red light? Is it not time to make new rules, time for Chiac to turn right on a red light? Daigle’s answer: *Pour sûr*.

Chiac in *Pour sûr*—A Manifesto

- Maman, on peut-y inventer des mots, nous autres ?
Carmen prit le temps d’y penser, commença :
- Oui ... ben tu peux pas forcer le monde à les utiliser.

—Le petit Étienne et Carmen, *Pour sûr*

A productive tension resides at the core of Daigle’s boldest literary experiment with Chiac to date. As a novel that is both an illustration and a defense of Chiac, *Pour sûr* crucially interrogates the construction of linguistic legitimacy at the same time as it generates its own legitimising discourses and modalities. This tension is most richly felt in moments when the novel takes on a militant and even prescriptive quality. Pieced together, in essay format, many of *Pour sûr*’s fragments could constitute a full-fledged manifesto, Daigle’s very own *Éloge du chiac*.

As many of the fragments from the appropriately titled section « Virages » (*Shifts*) indicate, not only does Daigle’s novel question the rules of the linguistic game, *Pour sûr* also calls for a radical *virage*, a radical change: « Vu le grand nombre de langues mortes ou mourantes, pourquoi ne pas reconnaître celles qui veulent vivre, leur donner une chance? Le chiac par exemple. Hérésie? » (“*Considering the large number of dead or dying languages, why not recognize those who want to survive, give them a chance? Chiac for example. Heresy?*”) (PS 602; FS 597). Daigle’s manifesto is not elaborated in a purely

abstract manner; it is also performed through a re-invention of Chiac. In other words, not only does Daigle implicitly argue that Chiac is similar yet different enough from “standard” French to constitute another language (heterolanguage), she explicitly performs her argument through her re-invention of Chiac.

With *Pour sûr*, the endeavour that Daigle started in the tetralogy’s first volume takes on concrete new directions. Her Chiac becomes radically playful and omnipresent, she invents a new way of spelling it (using tildes and accents), and she abandons the use of italics to mark the “English” words.⁹⁷ Daigle not only acts upon her call for change by effectively creating Chiac as a written language as she writes it, she also comments on her innovative performance:

Détails utiles (PS 438)

Le tilde sert à distinguer les mots prononcés en anglais des mots prononcés en français. Il latinise l’anglais. Quant à l’accent aigu sur la terminaison d’un verbe censé être prononcé en anglais, il indique que la fin du mot doit être francisée. Il s’agit d’une forme fréquente de chiaquisation.⁹⁸

Furthermore, as Daigle appropriates existing orthographical conventions to respond to the needs she identifies in the Acadian expressive context, she also comments on future possibilities and the agency these strategies could confer on Acadians:

Lettres (PS 531)

Beaucoup d’autres signes graphiques pourraient servir à identifier les mots proprement acadiens ou importés de l’anglais, les nouvelles lettres ã, ë, ï, õ, ù et ÿ ayant été le fruit d’un réflexe primaire. Pourquoi pas ˘ comme dans Ää ou ° comme dans Åå ou ˘ comme dans Aa ou encore Aa ou Åå Ää Ââ Ää Ää Ää ... les possibilités sont innombrables, l’univers regorge de signes et d’accents. Quitte à en inventer.

⁹⁷ This is a strategy she borrowed from her translator, Robert Majzels, who experimented with this new technique in *Petites difficultés d’existence* (2002), *Pour sûr*’s prequel.

⁹⁸ *Useful Details (FS 434)*: The tilde serves to distinguish words pronounced as in English from those pronounced as in French. Hence *jäck ôf äll trâdes* and *rättle*. It Latinizes English. As for the acute accent on the end of a verb pronounced as in English, it indicates that the end of the word should be pronounced as in French. Hence *tûrnér ôff*. This is a common form of Chiacification.

Ce serait amusant, tout de même. Qui n'a pas aimé découvrir la cédille et le tréma à l'école. Et qui sait, c'est peut-être en complexifiant, en « signant » notre français que nous le rendrons plus « significatif » pour nous. Hérésie?⁹⁹

Daigle's proposed "sign-ification" of Chiac extends beyond orthography into the realm of lexicalisation. Using pre-existing "authoritative" resources, she draws her reader's attention to the necessity of adapting language to the needs of speakers' changing reality:

Grammaire (PS 379)

Bédéesque. Ce néologisme renvoie à une section très intéressante du tome trois du Bescherelle, *La Grammaire pour tous*. Dans le chapitre « Mots grammaticaux et mots lexicaux », on apprend la différence entre les uns et les autres. Or, il est écrit noir sur blanc à l'article 300 que, qui que nous soyons, nous avons la possibilité de créer de nouveaux mots lexicaux pour répondre au besoin de notre société en constante évolution.¹⁰⁰

Taking her own sign-ification advice "seriously," Daigle added an entire « Fictionnaire » (*Fictionary*) to her novel. She *actually* signs, in this section, a dozen witty neologisms. Some words, like *hebdomadaire* (a weekend drunk) and *hypocritique* (a person who expresses negative feelings to everyone except to those who inspired such feelings), are simply an amusing play on words that gives Daigle the opportunity to parody the lexicalising effect of dictionaries (a word is recognised as a legitimate part of a language's

⁹⁹ *Letters* (FS 526-7): Many more graphic signs could be used to identify words as properly Acadian or imported from English; the new letters â, ê, î, ô, û, and ÿ are the fruit of an initial and tentative reflex. Why not use the ~ as in Åã or the ° as in Åå or the ˘ as in Å˘, or even Å˘ or Åå Åã Å˘ Åã Åã Å˘.... The possibilities are endless; the world is filled to overflowing with signs and accents. And nothing prevents us from inventing a few more. Which might be fun. Who didn't experience the thrill of discovering the cedilla and the dieresis in school? And who knows, perhaps by complicating French, by "signing" it ourselves, we might make it more "significant." Heresy?

¹⁰⁰ *Grammar* (FS 375): *Bédéesque*. One can argue that this French neologism meaning "cartoonish" or, to use an English neologism, *Simpsonesque*, is perfectly legitimate according to the authoritative *Bescherelle, La Grammaire pour tous*. In the third volume of the *Bescherelle*, in the chapter that explains the difference between grammatical words and lexical words, it is clearly stated in article 300 that anyone, regardless of their nationality or status, can legitimately create new lexical words in response to the needs of a constantly evolving society.

lexicon once it is added to *the* dictionary). Other expressions, in turn, are directly tied to the layered Acadian linguascape:

Fictionnaire (PS 179)

argothérapeute: n. — 2005. de argot et thérapie ◇ Spécialiste de l'argothérapie.
argothérapie : n. f. — 2005. 1. Traitement de troubles mentaux par rééducation à la déviance linguistique. 2. SPÉCIALT Intervention d'appoint pour les névroses et psychoses d'aliénation. « Révolue l'époque où les grammaturges conspuaient l'argothérapie. » (Daigle)¹⁰¹

Fictionnaire (PS 553)

frictionnaire: n. m. — 2005. 1. Recueil d'unités signifiantes résultant d'un phénomène de friction des langues. « Le fait d'avoir besoin d'un frictionnaire pour les comprendre confirmait leur exotisme. » (Daigle)¹⁰²

Pour sûr's manifesto quality is also revealed in Daigle's numerous calls to standardise and codify the Acadian language, yet another tactic to demarcate Chiac as (hetero)language: « *Yoù c'est, ayoù c'que*: autres formes de *yoùsque*. Nouvelles illustrations, si besoin était, de la nécessité de régler, de standardiser la langue acadienne ». (“*Yoù c'est, ayoù c'que*’ are other ways of writing ‘yoùsque.’ Yet more evidence, if it was required, of the need to regulate, standardize the Acadian language”) (PS 471; FS 467). In chapter eight, Daigle also anachronistically greets unidentified guests to a special gathering that had already started in chapter one. By the time the reader gets to chapter eight, she can appreciate this passage as a metaphor for Daigle's entire endeavour with *Pour sûr*:

¹⁰¹ *Fictionnaire* (FS 176): **SLANGOTHERAPIST**: n. — 2005; from slang and therapy ◇ Specialist in slangotherapy. **SLANGOTHERAPY**: n. — 2005 1. Treatment of mental problems via re-education in linguistic deviance. 2. SPECIALT secondary treatment of neuroses and psychoses of alienation. “Gone are the days when grammaturgs denigrated slangotherapy” (Daigle).

¹⁰² *Fictionnaire* (FS 548): **FRICTIONARY**: n. — 2005. 1. Collection of signifying units resulting from the phenomenon of friction between languages. “The need for a frictionary in order to understand them confirmed their exotic nature” (Daigle).

Virages (PS 442)

— Bonsoir, tout le monde. Merci d'être venus en si grand nombre. La tâche devant nous est d'envergure herculéenne, si j'ose dire, alors nous aurons besoin de toutes vos idées et de tous vos talents langagiers pour y parvenir. Et, avouons-le, nous aurons aussi besoin de systèmes nerveux à toute épreuve, car créer une langue acadienne moderne à partir de ses composantes actuelles ne sera pas de tout repos. Mais rien n'empêche que nous nous attelions à la tâche avec une ardeur joyeuse et un courage loufoque, puisque ...¹⁰³

The meeting may actually have taken place (in the novel's story world), among the members of the *GIRAFE*, the *Grande instance rastafarienne-acadienne pour un français éventuel*, a fictional entity Daigle introduces early in the novel and whose task it is to revise and regulate the spelling of Chiac words (PS 93).¹⁰⁴ The text is, however, ambiguous in this regard. Passages such as this one nevertheless provide the reader with a lens to interpret *Pour sûr*'s entire linguistic mission and Daigle's renewed invitation to her readers to be a part of it.

Daigle is utterly conscious of the productive tension that *Pour sûr* implies, of what it really means for her as a writer to call for and participate in the standardisation and regulation of Chiac. In the novel's « Ferveurs » (*Fervours*) and « La liberté » (*Freedom*) sections, Daigle includes many passages that render tangible the very fine line between

¹⁰³ *Shifts* (FS 438): "Good evening, everyone and thank you for coming in such great numbers. I dare say the task before us is of Herculean proportion, which is why we will need all your ideas and all your linguistic talents if we are to succeed. And, let's be frank, we will also need nerves of steel, because creating a modern Acadian language on the basis of its present-day components will be no picnic. But nothing prevents us from undertaking our task with joyful ardour and wacky courage, since ..."

¹⁰⁴ Towards the end of the novel, in another footnote, Daigle continues to parody her own standardisation impulse: "Comme *fiïlér*, de l'anglais *to feel*, l'écriture de *shoötér*, de l'anglais *to shoot*, est en instance de revision par la GIRAFE. Certains maintiennent que dans le cas de *shoötér*, la présence du *sh* pour le son *ch* est par elle-même indicatrice de l'origine anglaise du mot, ce qui rend le tréma redondant. Mais d'autres déplorent l'unité rompue avec d'autres mots comme *fiïlér*, *müütér*, *boöter öut*. ("Just as the word *fiïlér* from the English "to feel," the spelling of *shoötér* derived from the English "to shoot" is a case of revision by GIRAFE. There are those who claim that, in the case of *shooter*, the use of *sh* to represent the sound *ch* is sufficient indication of the word's English origin, which renders the dieresis over the *ö* redundant. Others, however, deplore the lack of consistency with other words such as *fiïlér*, *müütér*, and *boöter öut*") (PS 523; FS 519).

Chiac as a medium of freedom (the lively, unfixed code in a privileged position to renew and adapt a dominant, more ossified code) and Chiac as this language variety « la plupart du temps dénoncé comme modèle suprême de médiocrité, une déviation magistrale par rapport au français normatif, une forme langagière (...) supposée supérieure » (*“usually denounced as the epitome of mediocrity, a monumental deviation from normative French, a supposedly superior linguistic form”*) (PS 240; FS 238).

As this evocative passage reveals, *Pour sûr* evinces a fervent desire to emancipate its characters from their subalternity vis-à-vis a normative form that is, after all, the remnant construct of a colonial relationship: « Nul doute que nous ne voulions pas être que Français. Surtout si cela équivalait à se contenter du servage. Devenir cerf plutôt que serf, élan d’Amérique ». (*“No question that we do not want to be only French. Especially if that would mean being content with a kind of bondage. Become doe rather than docile, American eland”*) (PS 641; FS 635). This skillfully crafted play on homonyms and synonyms (*cerf*: deer/*serf*: serf — *élan*: elk/ *élan*: impetus, momentum) conjures up a clear image of the Acadian language Daigle envisions and deploys in *Pour sûr*: Chiac-as-heterolanguage is a distinct yet related specimen (of French), freed by its leap into the new world and the ensuing impetus of new realities. And with it, the necessity to adapt a language from the ground up, a language that would start from Daigle’s Acadie rather than deny it:

Ferveurs (PS 660)

Elle réfléchissait au départ des Français pour le Nouveau monde au XVII^e siècle. Comment ne pas s'attendre à ce que leur langue subisse les contre-coups d'un déménagement aussi radical ? Que pèsent quelques configurations dites hors-norme si l'on considère un océan de distance et 400 ans d'histoire sur un continent neuf ? Inverser le langage plutôt qu'inverser la traversée. Pourquoi les Parisiens en dentelle, qui aiment les sons en s, auraient-ils raison sur les défricheurs pénétrés du battement des tam-tam ? Pourquoi s'acharner sur une redondance alors que le mot lui-même compte deux d ?¹⁰⁵

Pour sûr not only achieves a demarcation between Chiac and “standard” French, it also exposes normative French as a myth, or as Étienne Zablonksi (one of the novel's characters) puts it, a story everyone believes even if it is not true, a necessary sort of story (PS 102). *Pour sûr* is categorical: not *that* myth. But how can a necessary story effectively be replaced by another, more suitable one? As Naoki Sakai writes, the unity (and by extension the posited normativity) of language is but a regulative idea that organises knowledge (73). It is not empirically verifiable, but the existence of the regulative idea gives me, you, and writers like Daigle a way to talk about it (Sakai 73). And most significantly in the context of *Pour sûr*, a way for Daigle to nuance the meaning of the cards she and her characters have been dealt in the linguistic game.

The novel is also a polyphonic space where questions and doubts are raised about Daigle's own drive towards the normalisation of an Acadian language:

Dialogues en vrac (PS 208)

— Pis quoisse qu'on ferait des *tche* par icitte pis des *dje* par là? Tchequ'un, tchai, djerre, djeule ? On va-t-y se remettre à parler de même asteure ?

— On parle déjà de même.

¹⁰⁵ *Ferveurs* (FS 653): She reflected on the departure of the French for the New World in the seventeenth century. How could one not expect their language to undergo the countershocks of such a radical displacement? What are a few so-called abnormal language configurations in the face of an ocean's distance and 400 years of history on a different continent? Invert the language rather than reverse the crossing. Why should the Parisians in their finery, who love the sound of s words, take precedence over the pioneers shot through with the beating of tam-tams? Why fret over a redundancy when the word itself contains two ds?

- Pas tout le monde.
- ...
- ...
- Faudrait-y pas qu'on parle toutte la même wé ?¹⁰⁶

Inquiétudes (PS 443)

- On va adopter des anglicismes ?
- Y a dit *adapter*, pas *adopter*. Adapter des anglicismes.
- Awh.¹⁰⁷

In trying to give Chiac a life of its own, Daigle ends up contributing to its codification. The refutation of one norm in favour of the creation of another (even if better suited to Acadian realities) is clearly not without risks, and Daigle's novel does not attempt to minimise these. Yet, *Pour sûr* also crucially acknowledges the consequences of continuing to strive for the current norm without necessary nuances. A powerful instance of that occurs in chapter four, when Terry and Carmen find out about the terrible fate of a young boy named Chico, whom their friends Zed and Élizabéth eventually decide to adopt. Terry's tirade is arguably the most compelling part of Daigle's manifesto. Unsettled by the injustice incumbent upon Chico, Terry dives into his most intense code-switching lines of the novel:

Meurtre (PS 239-40)

— C'est pour le petit que ça me bodre le plusse... Peux-tu ouère ? T'as six ans, ta mère s'a mōre òr lēss sauvée, a fücké ôff avec un autre homme, dans l'Ouest ôf âll plâces — je veux dire, c'est pas comme si qu'a plānnait de te ouère tous les wēek-ēnds... —, pis ton père est à la jâil parce qu'y a tué son òwn père, ton grand-père bỹ thē wāy, que tu vis avec depuis aussi longtemps que tu te rappelles, pas yinque mort, mûrduré ! C'est pas yinque une attaque de cœur, ça ! Pis par son òwn garçon encore de plusse, qui est ton père itou ! Pis t'as pas de fâvorite oncle ou tante pour toutte smōothér ça ôver, lēt alone t'adopter. Anyway, ēither wāy t'es stoque, parce

¹⁰⁶ *Overheard Conversations (FS 206)*: "An' wot would you 'ave us do wid all dose *tche* and *dje* soundin' words in Chiac? *Tchequ'un*, *djerre*, *djeule*, an' so on." Are we gonna start talkin' like dat, now? "We're already talkin' like dat." "Not all of us." ... "Well, oughtn't we all to talk de same way?"

¹⁰⁷ *Worries (FS 438-9)*: "We're gonna adopt anglicisms?" "Ee said adapt, not adopt. Adapt anglicisms." "Awh."

que c'est les deux hommes que tu rēlatais plusse à, ôbviously. Sô y te reste yinque ta grand-mère, whîch que son homme vient de mourir—mûrduré par son ôwn garçon à yelle itou, rēmber ?—bût y est rendu à la jâil asteure, qu'est pas à côté de chez vous non plus, mûst Ĩ ãdd, sô a fiîle pas trop ben ãbout toute l'affaire, pis alle a un petit gars de six ans sur les bras, qu'alle aime bût y avont comme soixante-dix ans de diffarence, pis a wôrry qu'y finira peut-être par être comme son père à lui, whô knôws ? Ein ? Peux-tu ouère ?

Carmen en resta abasourdie.

—Sôrry, bût faullait que ça sorte êxactly dans ctes mots-là.¹⁰⁸

Daigle's desire to infuse Chiac with legitimacy in *Pour sêr* is also an attempt to recognise a right to exist to the realm of "felt life" it expresses like no other code (Ahmad 252). Terry's outburst offers Daigle the opportunity to remind her readers that what Terry had to say is not separate from how he had to say it. Daigle's novel shows time and again that Chiac deserves to exist no less and no more than any of the already recognised codes Terry could have used to voice his emotional reaction *but did not*. This passage powerfully illustrates the notion Daigle finally came to terms with in her own trajectory as an Acadian writer: Chiac as a language and Chiac as a worldview are inseparable, and to deny one is to also deny the other. In the name of what should it not have a future beyond excuses, malaise, and (self)censorship?

¹⁰⁸ *Murder (FS 237)*: "Wot boddies me most is de little one.... Can you imagine? Yer six years old, yer mudder more or less took off, fucked off wid anudder guy, out West of all places—I mean it's not like she was plannin' to come by an' see you on de weekends, now is it...—an yer dad's in jail on account of ee killed 'is own fawder, yer granddad by de way, who you've been living wid fer as long as you can remember, an' not just dead, but murdered! Dat's not just a heart attack or de like! An' by his own boy on top of everything, who's yer dad as well! An' you got no favourite uncle or aunt to smood tings over, let alone adopt you. Anyways, yer up de creek eider way, on account of obviously dose were de two men you related most to, weren't dey? So, all youse got left is yer granny, whose husband only just died—murdered by her own boy, don't ferget. But ee's down in jail now, wot isn't exactly down de road eider, I gotta say, so she don't feel so good 'bout de whole mess, an' now she's got a little guy six years old to care fer, not dat she don't love 'im, but der's like 70 years difference betwixt 'em, an' she's gotta worry ee'll end up like his dad, who knows? Eh? Can you imagine?" Carmen sat in stunned silence. Terry knew he'd opened the English floodgates. "Sorry, but it 'ad to come out exactly in dose words."

A crucial portion of *Pour sûr* as manifesto is decisively turned towards the future. As the fragments of the section « L'avenir » (*The Future*) illustrate, for Daigle, Chiac is already an integral part of the future. How exactly Chiac can exist as a codified and regulated language remains a question. Daigle's own writing of Chiac-as-heterolanguage (rhetorically and performatively) sketches nonetheless a possible future for a recognisable-yet-to-be-recognised Acadian language. In an interview with Canadian literature scholar Andrea Cabajsky, Daigle crucially raises her and her characters' dilemma:

—On a là des gens intelligents, normalement intelligents, comme partout sur la terre, qui se promènent et qui ballottent entre deux langues et qui ne s'en font pas avec ça. Mais ils montrent que ça fonctionne. Et tout le temps dans l'esprit que, finalement, ils sont dans un trou par rapport à la langue, parce qu'ils n'ont pas une langue, ils en ont plusieurs.

—Avez-vous cherché, dans *Pour sûr*, à résoudre cette contradiction ?

—J'espérais la résoudre pour moi-même, mais je ne l'ai pas résolue. (Cabajsky)¹⁰⁹

In *Pour sûr*, Daigle uses Chiac-as-heterolanguage, that is she uses it as any *other* language, even if and precisely because it may not be fully accessible to a vast portion of her Francophone audience. In so doing, she shows that Chiac exists, how it exists, and just how much it can exist. She moreover provides Chiac speakers with a very tangible foundation to start digging themselves out of the hole they find themselves in for having not just one language. For having more than one. Heterolanguage in *Pour sûr* becomes a way for Daigle and her readers (even those readers who may feel like they belong to

¹⁰⁹ “—Daigle: Here we've got intelligent people, normally intelligent people who—like everywhere else in the world where people go about juggling two languages and not making much of it—show that it works. And yet, they can't shake the idea that, in the end, they have dug themselves into a hole with respect to language, because they don't have just one language, they have more than one. —Interviewer: Were you looking to resolve this dilemma in *Pour sûr*? —Daigle: Well, I was hoping to resolve it for myself, but I didn't. (Cabajsky's translation)

language and language belongs to them in the safest, soundest fashion) to have to grapple with the question I opened this chapter with (see epigraph): « Quoi de cet être-chez-soi dans la langue vers lequel nous ne cesserons de faire retour? » (Derrida 36). And for the time being, *Pour sûr* paves the way to a future for Chiac, one where *Acadieman* continues to be a cult series for Acadians and where grannies are urged to “talk Chiac.”

L’avenir (PS 694)

— Hallo. Quelqu’un m’a dit que vous vendiez toute la première série d’*Acadieman*?

— Y sont juste en arrière de toi...

— Gréât !¹¹⁰

L’avenir (PS 709)

— Mamie ! Parle chiac !¹¹¹

Chiac-as-Heterolanguage in *Pour sûr*

When considering Daigle’s project in its entirety, we see that her deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage contributes to Acadian culture’s vitality and visibility (especially on the Francophone scene) at the same time as it establishes Chiac’s legitimacy and (literary) credence.

For the first time in Daigle’s career, Chiac is omnipresent in her work. It is most prominent in the dialogues, where it functions as a means of communication. Yet, Chiac also operates as a concept that consolidates the narrative. While it is not strictly relegated to the characters’ zones, a relative distance is nonetheless achieved between Chiac and “standard” French, one that helps Daigle assert the compatibility of these language varieties. By Latinising English words with accents, tildes, diereses, and so on, Daigle

¹¹⁰ *The Future* (FS 686): “Hallo. Somebody told me you’ve got the whole first series of *Acadieman* for sale?” “Down in de corner, behind de yellow chair” “Great!”

¹¹¹ *The Future* (FS 700): “Granny! Talk Chiac!”

creates a new phonetic system for Chiac. Also, by opting not to emphasise the “Englishness” of words with italics, Daigle’s Chiac effectively absorbs English. This Latinisation and un-foreignising of English further contributes to the demarcation vis-à-vis “standard” French and to the consolidation of Chiac as *hetero-language*.

To be sure, *Pour sûr* draws less attention to code-switching and more to the inner workings (code or grammar) of Chiac as a distinct language. Instead of inviting a “cherry-picking” approach to language, Daigle re-signifies (or “signs” it, as she says) the perceived hybridity (and correlate impurity) of Chiac. Through Daigle’s linguistic innovation, French/English friction becomes *one* incorporated element of Chiac as a language, among others. Commenting on her evolving relationship with Chiac, Daigle further describes the “frictionary” attitude her endeavour requires:

Alors, comment manœuvrer dans ce bassin linguistique ? Le français devrait être un peu complet et fonctionnel et beau. Mais ça ne veut pas dire qu’il faut éliminer tous les mots anglais de notre culture quand même américaine et canadienne et anglophone. Alors, c’est un peu illusoire de penser qu’on peut vivre ici sans être touché par ... oui, cette langue anglaise. (Cabajsky)¹¹²

Consequently, Daigle’s de-hybridisation of Chiac in *Pour sûr* constitutes a strategy to counter such delusion and the stifling effects it has had on Acadians and Acadian culture, especially in Southeastern New Brunswick.

Overall, analysing *Pour sûr* through the prism of heterolanguage allows us to animate the radical potential of Daigle’s poetics as a reversal of multiple language hierarchies. Here, Chiac, a “minor” language variety, asserts its relative sovereignty (as

¹¹² Now, then, how to manoeuvre in this linguistic basin of Southeastern New Brunswick? French should be somewhat complete and functional and beautiful, but that doesn’t mean we have to eliminate English words from our culture, which is also American and Canadian and Anglophone. So, it’s a bit deluded to think that we can live here without being touched by ... ye s... this English language. (*Cabajsky’s translation*)

heterolanguage) over the French “standard”: they do not necessarily negate one another, they exist side by side. Chiac’s absorption of English is also highly meaningful and not simply a “classic” language evolution mechanism. In Acadie, Chiac, French, and English exist in a diglossic relationship—an atmosphere of diglossia the narrative does not attempt to mitigate. The dilution of the “standard,” most dominant language (English) into the non-standard, most marginalised one (Chiac) provides the latter with the possibility to assert sovereignty and compatibility vis-à-vis “standard” French while diminishing the stigma of linguistic and cultural assimilation that is often associated with Chiac.

Therein resides, in a Francophone context, the radical potential of *Pour sûr*’s prominent deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage. But as a cultural artefact that also quickly became a translation event within Canadian culture, *Pour sûr* soon acquired a new life in a new language and culture. The next section examines how the translation of the novel into English enabled the recognition and extension of Daigle’s crucial deployment of heterolanguage in *Pour sûr*.

III

From Canada to ... Canada—Majzels’s Task

In 2011, the publication of *Pour sûr* by Boréal, a mainstream Montreal press with a wide Francophone distribution network (within but mainly outside Acadie), created the conditions for the novel’s prominent use of uncushioned Chiac to constitute

heterolanguage for part of its target audience. As we have seen, the deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage helps Daigle assert its legitimacy and distinctiveness as a language. The novel thus allows for the illustration, defense, and re-invention of Chiac, poetically and through metacommentary, in the context of its stigmatisation and minoritisation, both in Canada and in the wider Francophone world.

In 2013, the novel was translated into English by Robert Majzels¹¹³ and published by the small Toronto-based House of Anansi Press, which is dedicated to the publication and national distribution of Canadian texts.¹¹⁴ Although *For Sure* has also been distributed on a small scale in the United States,¹¹⁵ it was mainly intended for an Anglo-Canadian audience. The paratextual elements found on the book's cover support this hypothesis: a translated accolade attributed to Radio-Canada; the Governor General's Literary Award's stamp-logo and an excerpt of the jury's praise of the novel; the description of the book as "a surprising, staggeringly original work that represents a corner of *our country*" (my emphasis). All three elements were carefully selected to resonate most directly with an Anglo-Canadian reader. In addition, while books sold in Canada but destined for wider distribution generally display a suggested retail price in Canadian dollars and in U.S. dollars (or other currencies), *For Sure*'s cover suggests only a Canadian price.

¹¹³ Robert Majzels is a novelist, playwright, poet and translator, who has lived in Montreal for most of his life. He is currently a professor of creative writing at the University of Calgary. As a writer, Majzels is most known for his first two novels, *Hellman's Scrapbook* (1992) and *City of Forgetting* (1997), and a play titled *This Night the Kapo*. Besides Daigle, he has also translated works by Anne Dandurand and Nicole Brossard. In 2000, Majzels won the Governor General's Award for *Just Fine*, his translation of Daigle's novel *Pas Pire*.

¹¹⁴ The press's operations are publicly funded through the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Government of Canada (House of Anansi).

¹¹⁵ House of Anansi is one of the independent publishers distributed in the U.S. by Publishers Group West.

Moreover, *For Sure* was published as part of Arachnide Editions, a line dedicated to publishing “an intriguing selection of writers from different regions of Canada, while celebrating the work that translators do to bring French voices into another language” (House of Anansi). Since House of Anansi’s foundation in 1967, it has published a variety of Franco-Canadian authors (mainly Québécois) in translation, including prominent figures like Roch Carrier, Marie-Claire Blais, Anne Hébert, and France Daigle. In sum, it is safe to say that this translation of *Pour sûr* (unlike that of *Oscar Wao*, for instance) was primarily meant to facilitate the novel’s circulation across the sub-national cultural and linguistic “borders” that exist between Franco- and Anglo-Canadian audiences.

In a country where the law mandates equality of English and French, and proposes to create a more level playing field, *Pour sûr*, even before it existed, was almost predestined to translation. First, because France Daigle is a major Franco-Canadian author. Second, because her five previous novels had been translated into English through a publisher (House of Anansi Press) that was already invested in publishing her work. *Pour sûr* was therefore likely to receive financial-institutional support for its translation and publication. Upon receiving the 2012 Governor General’s Literary Award, the novel was guaranteed the support of the Federal Government’s National Translation Program for Book Publishing. Given the existing institutional support for translation between Canada’s official languages,¹¹⁶ securing a life in translation for *Pour sûr* was relatively easy. Translating it, however, posed a widely different challenge.

¹¹⁶ Such institutional support only exists for the official languages (i.e., it excludes Indigenous and other languages). For a discussion of Canadian publishers’ dependence on governmental translation grants (which restricts publishers to Canadian authors and therefore almost exclusively to translation between French and English), cf. Hélène Buzelin’s “22 February 2001: *Les Allusifs* Enter the Publishing Scene” (2014).

Robert Majzels had already translated the three first volumes of the Thibodeau-Després series when he took up the translation of *Pour sûr*. While this could make it seem like his task would be relatively straightforward, nothing could be less certain. The evolution of Daigle's experimentation with the Chiac language in her prose instead presented Majzels with an increasingly difficult challenge, one that widely influenced his translation strategies. Majzels noted in an interview with Catherine Leclerc:

I think what's most striking is the evolution of France's work on Chiac, which has placed an increasing and changing imperative on my translation to reflect that work. At first, it was playful and transgressive. But by the time we get to *Pour sûr*, there's a highly complex encyclopaedic dissection and playfulness that goes beyond Yves Cormier's *Dictionnaire du français acadien*. [...] That has posed an enormous challenge to the translator.

In *Pour sûr*, Daigle went much further into Chiac than in any of her previous novels. Consequently, the texture of Majzels's translations has been shaped by Daigle's increasingly self-assured, abundant, and literarily-constituted Chiac. Prompted to comment on the evolution of Majzels's endeavour throughout the series, Daigle notes that it went from an almost mathematical reflection of the code-switching features of Chiac to the creation of an extra-ordinary English in *Pour sûr*:

Mais comme [dans les romans précédents], il n'y avait pas beaucoup de chiac, ça se faisait [ajouter des mots français dans la traduction]. Mais avec *Pour sûr*, il y en avait trop. Les Anglais peuvent en tolérer jusqu'à un certain point et ça se comprend. En tout cas, c'est le point de vue de l'éditeur, on va dire. Et moi, j'avais peur que s'il ne mettait pas assez de français, on oublierait que ça venait d'un milieu francophone. Mais finalement, en lisant la traduction, j'ai bien vu que le français est partout dans le livre. Il a fini par composer une espèce d'anglais un petit peu « Maritimer », mais pas trop, avec des verbes plus ou moins comme dans le chiac, tu sais « j'avions, j'étions » [...] c'était ça son défi à lui, de créer un anglais qui ne soit pas ordinaire. (Cabajsky)¹⁷

In her review of *For Sure* for the *National Post*, Medeine Tribinevicus wrote: “[Daigle’s] main concern is the creation and institutionalization of Chiac. At its core, *For Sure* is a novel about language—how it is made, learned, used, and politicized.” For this central concern to so clearly traverse the language and cultural barrier, Majzels had to address the challenge he and Daigle identified in *Pour sûr* with some dexterity, commitment, and coherence.¹¹⁸ Majzels did take extra-ordinary means to creatively live up to the challenge posed by *Pour sûr*: “I don’t subscribe to the conventional idea that a translation can never live up to the original. That you always have to give up something, either in form or content. I’m not saying that the translation can be a perfect mirror of the original, but it should not be a lesser version” (Leclerc and Majzels, “In Conversation”). In what follows, I examine Majzels’s translation strategies and motivations, arguing that his work constitutes an unconventional and non-normative form of translation akin to literary “sub-dubbing.”

¹¹⁷ But as there was not [in the previous novels] a lot of Chiac in the first place, it could be done [adding French words to the translation]. But then with *Pour sûr*, there was too much. English readers can only tolerate so much, and that’s understandable, but that’s also for the editor to decide, you might say. And then I was worried that if he didn’t put enough French in there, readers might forget that the book came from a Francophone milieu. But, finally, in reading the translation, I did indeed see that the French was everywhere. He ended up by composing a type of English that’s a bit “Maritimer,” but not too much, with the verbs conjugated more or less as they are in Chiac—you know, “j’avions, j’étions.” [...] that was his own challenge, to create an English that wasn’t ordinary (*Cabajsky’s translation*).

¹¹⁸ Despite *For Sure*’s limited reception, the quality of Majzels’s translation has been somewhat recognised. Majzels was one of five finalists for the Governor General’s Translation Award in 2013. In 2014, *For Sure* was among the nine Canadian novels nominated for the International Dublin Literary Award.

Audio-Visualising Literary Translation

As I see it, the re-conceptualisation of literary translation through an audiovisual lens allows me to think through and to more fully appreciate the innovative range of Majzels's retelling of *Pour sûr*.¹¹⁹ By audio-visualising literary translation, I seek to sketch a theoretical horizon that can better encompass the repertoire of Majzels's strategies. While such a horizon does not completely adhere to the context and specificities of literary translation in practice, it nonetheless offers the possibility to stretch our thinking around *Pour sûr/For Sure* as a translation event.

The normalising constraints within which mainstream literary translation operates make it function in ways that resemble dubbing in an audiovisual context. Both practices are supported by ideologies that foster the effacement of translation's traces, as well as the effacement of the translator's mediating role. In his article "Translation, American English, and the National Insecurities of Empire" (2009), Vicente Rafael notes that all forms of translation necessarily involve a movement of supersession. This is the necessary condition for translation to occur. Chosen signs from the target language come to *supersede* (to sit above or upon) those of the source language (Rafael 9). A second, precarious layer is grafted onto the source text. In *Cinema Babel*, Markus Nornes has termed "corrupt translation" a practice that "conforms the foreign to the framework of the target language and its cultural codes" at the same time as it feigns completeness and disavows the very violence of appropriation (176-8). Such oppressive translation goes well beyond necessary supersession to wallow in an additional movement: appropriative

¹¹⁹ I explain the significance of Majzels's translation as *retelling* later.

suppression. To *suppress* (to put down by force or authority) is to annihilate the very presence and influence of the source layer (Rafael 9). This double motion does not seek to bring the audience to *listen nearby* the source text.¹²⁰ Instead, it keeps its socio-cultural specificities and its political context at a distance, fostering in the audience a sense of seamless access.

In dubbing, the source dialogue-track (and sometimes the music track as well) is removed, and another one is synchronised and inserted in its stead. Dubbing operates subtractively. While this project is always already impossible, it nonetheless operates through now deeply engrained norms. In comparison, subtitling, dubbing's most common alternative in the realm of audiovisual translation, functions aggregatively: a supplemental translation is captioned, which then frames and filters how the (presumably inaccessible) source text is likely to be interpreted. The audience is given simultaneous access to the source dialogue and a supplementary translation/explanation as part of an audiovisual ensemble. At all times, translation's mediating process is right there in the audiospectator's face. Subtitling is not at all a guaranteed shield from the violence often associated with dubbing. Nevertheless, it simply cannot disavow mediation the way dubbing can and does.

¹²⁰ To listen nearby a text is to come close enough to it to perceive how its constitutive elements have a life of their own at the same time as they crucially refer to the world around them. To listen nearby is the reception equivalent to "speaking nearby," or « parler tout contre », an attentive and evocative ideal articulated by Trinh T. Minh-ha and Assia Djebar vis-à-vis the subjects (people and topics) their works have sought to recognise (Djebar 7; Trinh, "Speaking Nearby" 218). See also: Djebar's preface to *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (1980) and Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (1982), *Naked Spaces* (1985), and *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (1989).

For this very reason, dubbing is said to allow viewers to focus on the visuals without the distraction of a translation grafted upon the screen (Yau 493). The seamless immersion provided by dubbing is one that very often takes place without the conspicuous presence of the source culture and its linguascape. In this sense, an audiospectator's experience of dubbing can be similar to an all-inclusive, resort-type of travel experience, one that obviates the need to get out there and find your way into the local experience. This experience has been prepackaged for you, in your own terms, albeit in a different scenery. With dubbing, no direct access to the source text is provided: the source dialogues are literally re-voiced. In addition, the make-believe of lip synchronisation is often achieved at the expense of contextual accuracy and expressive specificity.

With subtitling, in turn, the immersion resembles a multilingual guided tour: the local guide provides a three-minute explanation in a language you likely have no access to, only to summarise her explanation in a *widely compressed* fifteen seconds in a language you do have access to. You still get to see for yourself and to confront a rich context, but if you have no access to the source language, your understanding largely depends on the guide's mediation, and you cannot fail to notice it.

Relinquishing the travel analogy, I now propose to envision a new form of translation called *sub-dubbing*, and to metaphorically transpose it to the written, literary domain. Sub-dubbing, as the name suggests, falls in between the categories of subtitling and dubbing. It is a re-voicing that leaves traces. Where sub-dubbing occurs, the audience can often quite literally hear and/or read the presence of the source text. Sub-

dubbing is best conceived as a spectrum: when practising sub-dubbing, the translator draws on a range of available strategies between and beyond these two poles.

A literary translation that opts to sub-dub makes it possible for the target text not to fully replace the source text's linguistic specificities and, thus, many of its political implications. Sub-dubbing allows for the retelling in an audible and visible manner of the source text's core elements for the benefit of the target audience *and* the subjects (people and topics) it recognises. The target audience is made to listen nearby the source text in a manner that enables an encounter with the core aspects of the source text and its cultural politics.

By core aspects, I mean elements that are constitutive of the realm of "felt life" of a person or community (Ahmad 252). Language is a vector of sensibilities, of affects, and a crucial means to attain the deepest forms of (self)knowledge. As Daigle writes in *Pour sûr*, "to speak Chiac evokes a kind of dishonour" (16). For Chiac speakers, their most proximate means of expression, what Aijaz Ahmad has called "the language of felt life," is one that is marked by perceived impurity, debasement, and inadmissibility to modern-day, educated life (Ahmad 272). For Chiac speakers, uninhibited expression is incessantly thwarted by the rules of the linguistic game. Language in theory annihilates language as practice. As a "minor" language community, the Acadian community is also deprived of the linguistic coexistence afforded to speakers of more dominant language varieties.¹²¹ At the same time, its doubly peripheral status (vis-à-vis France and Quebec) and its status as a regional and national linguistic minority further contribute to delegitimising and

¹²¹ I explain the notion of linguistic coexistence on pages 21-22 of my dissertation's introduction.

fragilising its language of identity.¹²² The insecurity and alienation derived from this marginalisation are core aspects of the Acadian community's cultural politics.

Majzels's mediation allows his Anglo-Canadian audience to recognise Daigle's illustration, defense, and re-invention of Chiac in *Pour sûr*. And because it performs a re-voicing that leaves important traces of these core elements, I argue that Majzels's *For Sure* is best conceptualised as a *retelling* achieved through literary sub-dubbing. I borrow the idea of retelling from Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi's emphasis on the Sanskrit word for translation (i.e. *anuvad*), which means "to say after or again," "to repeat by way of explanation" (9). Whereas the emphasis in the Latin-rooted "translation" (i.e. to carry across) is spatial, Bassnett and Trivedi remark that the underlying metaphor in the word *anuvad* is temporal (9). In what follows, I elaborate on Majzels's English, which while it performs important spatial connections, is best conceived of as a code elaborated specifically to repeat after Chiac's specificities.

"An English that Wasn't Ordinary"—Translation as Linguistic Innovation

According to France Daigle, Majzels's biggest challenge in translating *Pour sûr* was to "create an English that wasn't ordinary" (Cabajsky). Majzels, in turn, said that in translating the novel he felt "compelled to invent a non-normative English" (Leclerc and

¹²² Francophone communities across Canada (including the Acadian community) have had to defend the value of their language and culture in the context of Anglophone hegemony and linguistic prestige. Historically, the connection between political and linguistic rights and the perceived poor quality of the French language has often been made. As an example, in early 1968, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau (then Justice minister) coined the "lousy French" argument and came to epitomise the statement's underlying attitude in the minds of many Francophones. After declaring, in a TV interview, that some Quebec nationalists speak "awful French" and "want to impose this lousy French on the whole of Canada," Trudeau suggested, in a meeting with Quebec Premier Daniel Johnson, that Ottawa should withhold power from Quebec until it has shown the rest of Canada it can teach better French in its schools (Newman).

Majzels, “In Conversation). Why did Daigle and Majzels concur that linguistic innovation was so crucial to his translation endeavour?

In “Translation and Film” (2014), published in Sandra Berman and Catherine Porter’s *Companion to Translation Studies*, Wai-Ping Yau indicates that “it seems reasonable [...] to retain the use of dialect if it is *thematically important* in the original dialog” (494; my emphasis). Proceeding to reiterate a highly operative assumption in the practice of translation, Yau continues: “... but matching up dialects can be problematic. Dialects carry connotations and sometimes even a social stigma, and therefore a dialect-for-dialect translation may not be possible or desirable. Besides, a dialect may not be intelligible or acceptable to a wider audience” (494). Here one could easily replace the term “dialect” by vernacular, or non-standard language variety. As a necessary mediating process, translation always operates a change in context. However, what Yau’s commentary acutely reveals is that certain languages are perceived as more rooted in their context and (thus more difficult to uproot) than others. Their (hegemonic) status makes standard languages appear universal and more easily translatable, while a deficit in legitimacy makes non-standard languages like Chiac seem to have particularly sticky origins (Leclerc, “Between French and English” 174-5). The translation of vernaculars is not *inherently* problematic or difficult, even though it is certainly the work of specific language ideologies to make us believe that such is the case. Instead, the challenges associated with the translation of non-standard language varieties like Chiac reside not in their nature, but in the politics of translating across power differentials.

Indeed, the responsibilities and effects of translation only increase when it takes place “across the gaps of power” (Mezei et al. 7). And it is always already the case when one feels the need to classify a language variety as a “dialect,” as Yau does in her assertion. It thus seems reasonable to say that retaining the use of a language variety that is constructed as lacking in prestige or legitimacy is thematically *and* ethically important. Postcolonial theories have foregrounded the political aspects of translation, and they have especially heightened our awareness of the stakes of translating across “languages of unequal prestige or historically dissimilar experience” (Mezei et al. 10). It would be false to perpetuate the idea that Chiac is inherently more difficult to translate than any other language variety. Yet, as we have seen in previous chapters, with other “minor” languages and other mediating processes, the political ramifications of translating Chiac are immediately present: Daigle’s poetics cannot be separated from the cultural politics of the Acadian community it so crucially recognises. By deploying Chiac-as-heterolanguage, *Pour s’ûr* sought to give this language a life of its own. By illustrating it, defending it, and re-inventing it, Daigle conferred legitimacy to Chiac as a language and gave it literary credence. Retaining the use of a non-normative language variety that would share commonalities with Chiac was Majzels’s way of reflecting, in an Anglo-Canadian context, the crucial politics of Daigle’s deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage.

Pour s’ûr was largely based on linguistic innovation, a project that Majzels decided to mirror and augment in his translation. Commenting on his task, the translator notes: “And this problem, how to reflect the fact of Chiac’s stigmatized vernacular standing in English, came to a head in tackling *Pour s’ûr*” (Leclerc and Majzels, “In Conversation”). In

his previous translations, Majzels had mainly opted to introduce French in an English text to reflect Chiac's hybridity. But as we have seen, *Pour sûr* is more radical and comprehensive in its deployment of Chiac, and it actively endeavours to de-hybridise the language by absorbing English into Chiac. Majzels felt the need to adapt his strategies so that they would be coherent with Daigle's project:

In *Pour sûr* I couldn't go in that direction [i.e. increased hybridisation], because France Daigle had gone so much further into Chiac. I needed a more rigorous and structured language to translate her Chiac. But not a standard English, which would conceal the difference operating in French. I was compelled to invent a non-normative English. [...] I was resisting conventional translation practices in refusing to normalize the language, looking for ways to impact English itself, the way that France has impacted French. (Leclerc and Majzels, "In Conversation")

The introduction of marginalised uses of English in *For Sure* could have sufficed for Majzels to "impact English itself." Why, then, did Majzels opt to invent a new English?

Majzels is extremely conscious of the intervention his translation is making in the Canadian cultural context in terms of its unprecedentedness *and* its insertion in a pre-existing tradition. *For Sure* is, after all, the first translation of a major Acadian novel in which Chiac is so prominently deployed. Yet, concurrently, this translation event inserts itself in a cultural context that is permeated with the meanings and effects of previous translation events. There is a well-established tradition of Franco-Canadian literary translation into English. Majzels's understanding of this tradition and his perception of its effects have influenced his desire to move away from increased hybridisation as a translation strategy in *For Sure*:

I felt that if I simply increased the mix of French and English in my translation, I would produce an ugly English. The characters would seem less intelligent than they are in *Pour sûr*. Which is one of the problems with a great deal of English translations of Québécois, for example, in the past. English readers laugh at the

heavily accented and clumsy English of Francophone characters. It's one of the forms that Anglo-chauvinism takes in Canadian culture. So, I decided I couldn't simply toss more French words into the mix. (Leclerc and Majzels, "In Conversation")

In opting for the creation of a fictitious non-normative English inspired by Newfoundlandese and Cape Breton Industrial, Majzels again shows his awareness of the cultural sphere he is seeking to address and impact. Not only does he want to make legible and audible marginalised uses of English; he also wants to craft them into a language variety (1) capable of resonating with the Anglo-Canadian psyche and (2) able to connect with Acadie as a cultural territory of the Maritimes:

But I didn't want to simply translate Chiac into a recognized English minor language, the way for instance Tremblay has been translated into Scottish.¹²³ I couldn't allow the reader to forget that this was Chiac the characters were speaking. Because that's what this book is about, the culture and language of Acadia. Because the readers, if there were going to be any, would be Anglophones, and the book had to be seen in the context of the relationship of English to French in North America, and Canada in particular. But it also had to point to stigmatized versions of English, minor languages such as Newfoundlandese, Irish, Scottish, etc. all of which have the experience of colonial and imperial rule. (Leclerc and Majzels, "In Conversation")

¹²³ Amid an incipient « querelle du joual », Michel Tremblay, now a canonical Québécois playwright and novelist, produced *Les Belles-Soeurs* (1968), a play about Montreal working-class women that introduced Joual to the mainstream. With this play and subsequent works in Joual—notably the teleplay *En pièces détachées* (1970), the novel *C't'a ton tour, Laura Cadieux* (1973), and the film *Il était une fois dans l'est* (1974)—Tremblay became the leader of an artistic movement that would redefine the place of Joual within Québécois arts and culture (Laurendeau, « Joual »). *Les Belles-Soeurs* was first translated to standard Canadian English in 1974. Later translated into many other languages, the play has been especially popular in the Scots-English version Majzels refers to, as well as in its Yiddish and Italian versions (Lavoie and Fontaine).

With these criteria in mind, Majzels ended up fashioning a “minor” English of his own, one that could not easily be assimilated to an existing “minor” English. In so doing, Majzels’s sub-dubbing did not only create the possibilities for a greater readership: it turned itself into a performance of new Canadian connections.¹²⁴

In crafting a Maritime déclassé English to anchor *For Sure* in its new Anglo-Canadian context, Majzels contributes to making the characters as appealing and sharp as in *Pour sûr*, through a musicality that emulates Chiac’s. The broader effect of Majzels’s translation, nonetheless, is to “draw attention to the source language and to reaffirm its possibilities” in a new context (Mezei et al. 17). Majzels’s “fabricated” Maritime English effectively *explains* Daigle’s Chiac: linguistic innovation allows for the (trans)national retelling of *Pour sûr*. *For Sure* thus powerfully accentuates the potential of thinking translation as retelling.

Culture-Bound References

The crafting of a “minor” English is but one of the tactics used by Majzels in sub-dubbing *Pour sûr*. The translator also mobilised various strategies to adapt references that provide a crucial window into what *Pour sûr* is all about: “the culture and language of Acadia.” (Leclerc and Majzels, “In Conversation”). These range from the brief explicitation of culture-bound references to more extensive creative interferences that both recognise

¹²⁴ Majzels’s performance raises the interesting question of the realignment of Acadian literature within Atlantic-Canadian literature and the stakes of this performance vis-à-vis the linguistically divided institution of CanLit. On the category of Maritime literature and the (centre/periphery) politics of its reception in Canada and abroad, see *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne*’s special issue “Surf’s Up! The Rising Tide of Atlantic-Canadian Literature” (2008), especially Tony Tremblay’s “‘Lest on too close sight I miss the darling illusion’: The Politics of the Centre in ‘Reading Maritime.’”

and extend (transform) the source text. Minimal explicitations include the translation of « le Robert » (PS 656) as “de Robert dictionary” (FS 650), or the rendering of « ces traductions *hexagonalisent* inutilement un chef-d’oeuvre de la littérature étatsunienne » (PS 566; my emphasis) as “these translations unnecessarily *domesticate* this American masterpiece *for a French audience*” (FS 562; my emphasis). Although any Francophone reader would know *le Robert* to be a dictionary, the way an American knows that Merriam-Webster is a dictionary, Majzels here specifies that notion for his Anglo-Canadian audience. In a similar vein, when discussing a translation, a French-speaking reader will know that the neologism «hexagonaliser » (lit. “to hexagonalise”) does not literally mean to make hexagonal in shape. She will understand it means to tailor the translation to a Metropolitan French audience (*l’Hexagone* being a fixed expression that refers to the geographical shape of Metropolitan France).

In various instances, sustained creative interferences allow Majzels’s effective retelling of *Pour sûr*’s culturally-specific references. In one entry of the « Dialogues en vrac » (*Overheard Conversations*), an unknown character asks, « Sõ, la vraie question devrait être : faut-y parler comme qu’on écrit ou ben don écrire comme qu’on parle? » (“So, de real question is dis: should we be talkin’ like we write, or writin’ like we talk?”) (PS 206; FS 204). Throughout the novel, Daigle teases out this question by writing on multiple occasions the way her characters, especially children, think and absorb language.¹²⁵ This leads to a series of hilarious equivocations that also provide the reader

¹²⁵ This is an opportunity for the reader to reflect on language’s fundamental status as an activity separate from its institutionalisation. This is a notion favoured by (among others) Polish linguist Jan Baudouin de Courtenay’s 1907 essay “Towards a Critique of Artificial World Languages” (Young 1215-6).

with invaluable incursions into the minds of the younger Chiac-speaking characters as they encounter language and other institutionalised discourses and conventions that their adult counterparts have come to naturalise or take for granted.

In chapters seven and eight, Daigle thematises the intersections of language and religion (Catholicism in particular). Chico, the young boy adopted by Terry and Carmen's friends, recites the Lord's Prayer he learned in school, which makes a powerful impression on Étienne. Where the prayer reads « et ne nous soumetts pas à la tentation » (*and lead us not into temptation*), Étienne makes sense of what he hears as « et ne nous soumetts pas à la tante à Sion » (*and do not subject us to Sion's aunt*), which he later transforms into « la tante à Sillan » (*Sillan's aunt*) (PS 379). He later proceeds to find out more about this mysterious Sillan and his terrible aunt by asking various adults around him. He starts with his godfather, the artist Étienne Zablonksi:

La religion (PS 441-2)

—Connais-tu Sillan, toi ?

Le grand Zablonksi pensait que le petit Étienne faisait allusion à la couleur cyan.

— Oui, le cyan est une des trois couleurs primaires : le cyan, le jaune cadmium et le rouge magenta.

Zablonksi ramassa les bâtons de pastel qui s'approchaient le plus de ces trois couleurs et coloria avec chacun en répétant leur nom pour le bénéfice de son élève.

— Non, je veux dire un homme Sillan. C'est quelqu'un.

Étienne Zablonksi connaissait évidemment la colline de Jérusalem et le sionisme, mais doutait que c'était ce dont voulait parler son filleul.

— Quelqu'un ? Il y a un endroit qui s'appelle comme ça.

Étienne secoua la tête.

— C'est quelqu'un parce qu'y a une tante. La tante à Sillan.

Zablonksi ne voyait vraiment pas.

— Non, je ne connais pas d'homme Sian.

Majzels's translation for this challenging passage is an astute re-voicing that manages to preserve the synchronicity of the source text's verbal humour by transforming part of the thematic content around it:

Religion (FS 437-8)

"Do you know de tent nation?"

Le Grand Zablonki thought Étienne was perhaps alluding to tint saturation. He fetched a tube of solid red and one of white.

"Look at this bright red colour. Now I squeeze a bit of white and mix them, see how it changes to pink? We've created a lighter tint of red. Is that what you mean?"

"No, 'tisn't a colour, 'tis a place yer not supposed to go."

Étienne Zablonki thought perhaps the boy had been watching the news.

"You mean a refugee camp? Like in the news?"

Étienne shook his head.

"No, not in the news. In the prayer."

Zablonki really had no idea.

"No, I don't know any tent nation in a prayer."

The allusion to coloration remains, but Majzels creatively adapts the mention of Jerusalem and Zionism for one about refugee camps to accommodate the semantics and phonetics of the mysterious "tent nation." In addition, by bringing the context back to prayer, the translator connects (in chapter eight) Étienne's allusion to "tent nation" more directly to the prayer passage where it first appeared (chapter seven). In this sense, *For Sure* more than *Pour sûr* facilitates the reader's navigation of the fragmentary structure of the novel. Majzels's creative interference around the "tent nation" continues a few pages later, when Étienne asks his father if he is afraid of her (FS 443). Majzels's creative interference provides the reader with access to the humoristic and cultural essence of these passages by transforming its anchor in audible and visible ways. *La tentation* (temptation) pronounced *la tanteàsion*, becomes *la tante à Sillan* (rendered as tent

nation) and le petit Étienne's quest to appropriate a part of his cultural and religious heritage is thematised consistently across the source and target versions.

Multilingual Humour

Multilingual people have access to a broader expressive and humoristic repertoire than their monolingual counterparts. This is certainly the case in Moncton's layered linguistic context, a fact that influences *Pour sûr's* content in important ways. Daigle's playful novel takes full advantage of the creative range of its Acadian characters. Humour always presents important challenges for translation because it relies heavily on both linguistically-specific creativity *and* culture-bound references (Yau 494). Daigle's characteristically multilingual humour only made Majzels's task more complex. As the following example illustrates, in some cases, Majzels could rely on the presence of English in the source version to retell Daigle's jokes in the target text:

Excuses (PS 682)

— Quoisse tu crois qu'est plusse dur ? Gagner un mǎsters au tennis ou être soliste dans un opéra ?

— Quoi, ç'a-t-y vraiment été mesuré ?

— ...

— Je dirais gagner un mǎsters.

— Non. C'est être soliste.

— ...

— Parce qu'y connaissent déjà le scõre.

— ...

— Mĩnd-moi pas. J'asseye d'être créatif avec mon chiac.

Apologies (FS 673-4)

“Which does you tink is harder? Winnin' de Masters in tennis or singin' soloist in an opera?”

“Wot, are you tellin' me dey's really an' truly measured dat?”

...

“Alright, I'd say winnin' de Masters.”

“No. Singin’ soloist.”

...

“On account of dey already knows de *score*.”

...

“Don’t mind me. I’s only tryin’ to be creative wid me Chiac.”

In *For Sure*, Majzels refrained, for the most part, from italicising the English words of the source text, a choice that extends Daigle’s own de-hybridisation endeavour in translation. As the above passage confirms, he nonetheless selectively deployed this mechanism to reach determined effects. In Majzels’s version of the joke, the italicisation of the word “score” serves not to signal the origin of the word in the source text, but to emphasise its dual meaning as “result” and “musical soundtrack.” A Chiac joke (in French « score » only means “result”) can thus become an English-language one. At the same time, the preserved context (“Don’t mind me. I’s only tryin’ to be creative wid me Chiac.”) draws attention to Chiac and reaffirms its humoristic scope.

In the following example, Majzels also manages to preserve the witty multilingual context of the story through sub-dubbing:

Obsessions (PS 411)

—Moi, c’est flössér mes dents. Je sais pas comment dire *flössér* en français.

—Passer la soie dentaire ?

— Oui. Faut que je la passe ât lêast trois fois par jour, ôr êlse...

— Sinon quoi ?

— Sinon a croît qu’a va stârvér. Après toutte, c’est un repas en soi(e) !

(Rires)

— Classe, classe ! S’il vous plait !

— Excusez-moi, ben je voulais pas manquer ma chance. Pour une fois qu’une jôke fait plusse de sens en français qu’en anglais.

Obsessions (FS 406-7)

“Wid me, it’s *flossin’* me teet. Don’t know how to say *flossin’* in French ...”

“*Passer la soie dentaire?*”

“Dat’s it, *soie dentaire*. I gots to do it tree, four times a day, or else ...”

“Or else wot?”

“Or else she tinks she’s gonna starve. After all, it’s a meal all in *itself*.”
(Laughter greets the play of homonyms)
“I don’t get it.”
“*Soie dentaire* is dental floss and *soi* means itself. De floss is a meal in itself!”
“Class, Class! Please!”
“Sorry, Miss, I couldn’t help it. Fer once, a joke makes more sense in French dan it do in English.”

This joke is not simply dubbed or re-voiced by Majzels. Here, he increases the specifying role of the subtitle—(*Laughter greets the play of homonyms*)—to signal to an Anglophone audience the presence of an homonym, and he italicises “itself” to help the reader locate the pun in the passage. Because of synchronicity, if *For Sure* were a film, neither subtitling nor dubbing would have made it easy simply to add a character as Majzels does here. The addition of the character “who doesn’t get the joke” allows the translator to explain the comical reference more comprehensively than would be required in the source context, where laughter tout court greets the play on homonyms. This addition is cleverly deployed, given the unequal bilingualism that characterises Franco/Anglo relations in the Canadian (and, most crucially, Monctonian) context in which Majzels’s translation plays its mediating role. That said, Majzels’s added “character” has the effect of emphasising (overemphasising perhaps) the Chiac competency over the “standard” French one. In Daigle’s story, the student uses the Chiac “flössér mes dents” and asks the teacher or a classmate for the “standard” French expression. Once provided with it, everyone has the necessary competence to “get the joke,” which, for once, makes more sense in French than in English. Where Daigle draws some attention to the class’s linguistic insecurity and diglossic context, in her version the Francophones do get the joke, but Majzels opts

instead to cast someone who doesn't get it, to provide a more suitable version for the audience who would (presumably) not get the joke.

Majzels as *bonimenteur*

Majzels's retelling of *Pour sûr* for an Anglo-Canadian audience thus sometimes leads him to play a crucial aggregative role that resembles that of the *bonimenteur*. In *Le bonimenteur de vues animées : Le cinéma « muet » entre tradition et modernité* (2000), film historian Germain Lacasse uncovers the important role of this interpreter of cinema. In the early days of cinema, the *bonimenteur* mainly explained the succession of silent images for his audience. The *bonimenteur* later adapted through live commentary a film text that was visually present to the audience but partly or fully inaccessible (for literacy and/or linguistic reasons). In performing his role, the *bonimenteur* “reorganised locally the space of the narrative” according to the familiarity of his audience (Lacasse 195; my translation).

Majzels's role as a *bonimenteur* is particularly crucial regarding *Pour sûr*'s complex linguistic texture. Having chosen not to signal or reflect a vast portion of the source version's code-switching features, Majzels found alternative ways to help his Anglophone readers not forget (as Daigle feared) “that the book came from a Francophone milieu” (Cabajsky). As a *bonimenteur*, Majzels therefore often ends up attributing English or code-switching to the characters' context. For instance, when Terry meets the Anglophone driver who connects him to the filmmaker of the documentary *Children par eux-mêmes*, Daigle opts to italicise the English conversation that unfolds:

Un film (PS 141-142)
 —*That your daughter back there?*
 L'opérateur de la dépanneuse était plutôt jovial.
 [...]
 Terry commençait à croire le bonhomme.
 — *And it pays, you say?*
 [...]

No attribution, translation, or cushioning of an English conversation that spans two pages is provided in *Pour sûr*. In a literary context, it would have been easy for the translation to bypass the source text's diegesis and absorb the conversation's linguistic context into *For Sure*'s English universe. Instead, Majzels's commentaries attribute English to the conversation, thus leaving important traces of its original (diglossic) context:

A Movie (FS 137-138; my emphasis)
 "That your daughter back there?"
 The driver of the tow truck *was anglophone* and clearly in a jovial mood.
 [...]
 Terry was actually beginning to believe the man.
 "And it pays, you say?" *he asked in English.*

In a similar fashion and for analogous motivations, Majzels regularly attributes Chiac's code-switching patterns in *For Sure*.¹²⁶ For instance, following Terry's most intense code-switching lines of the novel (discussed earlier on pages 223-224), the narrator describes Carmen's reaction to her partner's soliloquy, indicating that "Carmen en resta abasourdie" (*PS* 240). The personal pronoun *en* leaves unspecified what it is exactly that inspired Carmen's reaction. Carmen and the Francophone reader will, by the time Terry's outburst occurs in the novel, know that he normally refrains from such spontaneous code-switching. *En* is thus more than enough context here. Majzels, however, feels his audience needs more to understand the source and implications of Carmen's reaction. He chooses

¹²⁶ Many instances of code-switching attributions can be found in the citations on pages 204-205.

to step into the shoes of the bonimenteur for a sentence: “Carmen sat in stunned silence. Terry knew he’d opened the English floodgates” (FS 237; my emphasis).

In this sense, Majzels-the-bonimenteur crucially acknowledges the source version’s core aspects. At the same time, his commentary and local reorganisation of the narrative space are markedly oriented by the (presumed) competence of his Anglo-Canadian audience. In chapter one, in a dialogue of the « Chiac détail » (*Chiac lesson*) section, one character comments on the expression *la langue de Molière*:

Chiac détail (PS 32)

— C’est supposé qu’y en avait du temps de Molière qui trouviot que son français était trop populaire, pas assez raffiné.

—Denne hōw cōme qu’y disont tout le temps *la langue de Molière*, comme si qu’y était le kīngpin du français ?

[...]

In his translation of this passage, Majzels adds a brief explicitation to situate this culture-bound reference:

Chiac Lesson (FS 24; my emphasis)

“Seems some folks way back ’round Molière’s time, complained his French was too colloquial-like, not refined enough, if ya please.”

“How come den, dey’re always sayin’ “*la langue de Molière*” *when dey’re meanin’ French*, like ee was de mucky-muck of de French language?”

[...]

Majzels’s next decision around *la langue de Molière* brings back his role as bonimenteur.

In chapter five, Daigle adds an entry to the « Agacements » (*Irritants*) section:

« Troisième agacement: utilisation à toutes les sauces de l’expression *la langue de Molière*» (PS 306). In *For Sure*, Majzels writes: “Third irritant: overuse of the phrase “*la langue de Molière*” **in French and “the King’s English” in the other language**” (FS 304; my bolding). This creative interference goes well beyond Majzels’s initial explicitation to

propose a “hypothetical equivalence” between the King’s English and *la langue de Molière* (Liu 131).¹²⁷ Majzels-the-bonimenteur thus creates “grounds of commensurability” or “tropes of equivalence” between phrases that allow his Anglophone audience to better approximate the ideological content and authoritative connotation of the expression in French (Liu 152, 137). Majzels actually takes his mediating role a step further by interpreting and explaining, in his audience’s words, why, in the source text’s Chiac-speaking environment, the overuse of the phrase *la langue de Molière* might warrant an entry into the “Irritants” section of Daigle’s encyclopedic novel.

A Re-Voicing That Leaves Traces

In sub-dubbing *Pour sûr* for an Anglo-Canadian audience, Majzels’s presence in *For Sure* is often rendered very much visible. In this way, Majzels disrupts the normalising tendencies to efface the translator’s role across mainstream cultural productions. In an interview with Catherine Leclerc, who noted Majzels’s playful interventions in *For Sure*, the translator commented on his visibility in the novel: “*Pour sûr* [...] is openly, brazenly metafictional because of its fragmentary structure. So, I felt obliged to show my hand, to render the translation, the fact of translation visible. I couldn’t be faithful to the original if I didn’t also put the translator out in front as well.”

Majzels’s visibility in *For Sure* does indeed emulate that of Daigle in *Pour sûr*. For instance, five of the fictionary’s twelve neologisms are signed by both Daigle and Majzels, especially those that depart the farthest from “literal translation”:

¹²⁷ It is common in French to use a circumlocution to evoke a language through one of its most eminent literary figures. *La langue de Shakespeare* is thus a synonym of the English language.

Fictionnaire (PS 281)

engrenade: n.m. — 2005. 1. Crise violente résultant d’une escalade d’incidents influent les uns sur les autres. « Plus rien n’allait, ils craignaient l’engrenade. » (Daigle) 2. IND TEXTILE Motif à éclaboussures. « Elles n’ouvraient jamais les draperies à motif engrenade de leur repaire. » (Daigle)

Fictionary (FS 280)

Spiravalanche: n. — 2005/2013. 1. Violent crisis resulting from an escalation of incidents operating in a chain reaction. “Nothing was going right, he feared a spiravalanche” (Daigle/Majzels). 2. TEXTILE Splash pattern. “She never drew those spiravalanche patterned drapes from behind the panels that concealed them.” (Daigle/Majzels)

Majzels also seizes various opportunities to render “the fact of the translation visible” as part of Daigle’s metafictional interventions. For instance, some of the dialogues in *Pour sûr* are footnoted, mostly for comical effect. This is the case in the passage where Daigle introduces the GIRAFE, the Chiac language’s fictional regulatory body and a parody of the Académie française: « 5. L’orthographe de ces mots est en flottement, en attente de révision par la GIRAFE (Grande instance rastafarienne-acadienne pour un français éventuel) » (PS 93). In *For Sure*, this footnote becomes an opportunity for Majzels to point to the source text:

Notes (FS 87-8)

5. In the original Chiac, the word for hanging up is *hāngér ũp*. Further down, the Chiac term for “come get him” is *cri*. The proper spelling of these words remains undecided, awaiting revision by the GIRAFE (Grande instance rastafarienne-acadienne pour un français éventuel — Grand Institution of Rastafarian-Acadia for French Eventually).”

Moreover, when Daigle notes in a fragment of the section « Le temps » (*Time*) that « Le détail 1011.7.1 sur le chiac arrive un peu tard » (PS 440), Majzels goes one step further, “showing his hand” once again: “The fragment 1011.7.1 on the writing of Chiac may have come too late, not to mention its limited relevance to the translation” (FS 435). On yet

other occasions, Majzels opts to transform metafictional entries into meta-translational interventions as well:

Excuses (PS 429)

Au sujet de la question *D'yòusqu'a d'vient?* de Zed. Puisque la conversation se déroulait en temps réel, l'auteure n'a pu déterminer si Zed demandait *D'où vient-elle*, *D'où devient-elle* ou *D'où advient-elle*, toutes des nuances possibles. L'auteure s'excuse de ce bref manque de vigilance.

Apologies (FS 997)

Regarding Zed's expression « Where she longs at? », the original French "*D'yòusqu'a d'vient?*" leaves open the question of whether Zed was asking whence she came, or where she was from, or where she'd been. The author apologizes for this brief lack of vigilance. The translator, who has fallen back on the Newfoundlandese expression "Where she longs at?," has no excuse.

While it is modelled on Daigle's playful interventions, Majzels's visibility also at times departs from them in important ways. His performance of a re-voicing that leaves important traces of the source version is especially marked in fragments in which language becomes its own object.

In many such passages, Majzels's translation operates in a manner akin to juxtareading, a form of voice-over dubbing that leaves a short lag between the presentation of information in the source language and its translation in the target language. Majzels uses this lag to confront the reader with the source language first and then to repeat it by way of explanation in the target language. This strategy has the effect of compelling the reader to dwell on the oral and written texture of the source language first, consequently matching in *For Sure* moments when language refers purely to itself in *Pour sûr*. As the following example demonstrates, Majzels often uses these moments to reflect the fact of translation onto his Anglo-Canadian reader, posing the matching process (Liu's "hypothetical equivalence") more as a question than as a fait accompli:

Chiac détail (PS 217)

Conjugaison du verbe voir à l'imparfait de l'indicatif en français acadien: *je ouèyais, tu ouèyais, y ouèyait, a ouèyait, on ouèyait, vous ouèyiez, y ouèyiont. Ou je wèyais, tu wèyais, y wèyait, a wèyait, on wèyait, vous wèyiez, y wèyiont. Ou je oueillais, tu oueillais, y oueillait, a oueillait, on oueillait, vous oueilliez, y oueilliont. Ou je woueillais, tu woueillais, y woueillait, a woueillait, on woueillait, vous woueilliez, y woueilliont. Ou je weillais, tu weillais, y weillait, a weillait, on weillait, vous weilliez, y weilliont. Ou je vouèyais, tu vouèyais, y vouèyait a vouèyait, on vouèyait, vous vouèyiez, y vouèyiont.*

Chiac Lesson (FS 215; my bolding)

Conjugation of the verb to see in the past continuous tense of the indicative in Acadian: *je ouèyais, tu ouèyais, y ouèyait, a ouèyait, on ouèyait, vous ouèyiez, y ouèyiont. Or je wèyais, tu wèyais, y wèyait, a wèyait, on wèyait, vous wèyiez, y wèyiont. Or je oueillais, tu oueillais, y oueillait, a oueillait, on oueillait, vous oueilliez, y oueilliont. Or je woueillais, tu woueillais, y woueillait, a woueillait, on woueillait, vous woueilliez, y woueilliont. Or je weillais, tu weillais, y weillait, a weillait, on weillait, vous weilliez, y weilliont. Or je vouèyais, tu vouèyais, y vouèyait a vouèyait, on vouèyait, vous vouèyiez, y vouèyiont. **How to do something similar in English?** I were seein', you was seein', ee were seein', she were seein', we was seein', youse was seein', dey was seein'. Or I was after seein', you was after seein', ee was after seein', she was after seein', we was after seein', youse was after seein', dey was after seein'.*

Majzels does not systematically use juxta-reading to interrogate his translation endeavour in explicit terms. At times, he also deploys this strategy when the point of the source fragment is to illustrate Chiac, as is the case in this passage: "It's all a question of balance. For example, take the phrase '*je vas aouère besoin d'un troque ou d'un vān pour haler mon botte ennewé*' (Least ways, I'll be needin' me some dody's truck or van to haul me boat)" (FS 36). As the following footnoted excerpt reveals, juxta-reading also allows Majzels to introduce his Anglo-Canadian audience to the Acadian linguascape in a manner that fully acknowledges its specificities:

Den you gotta add an *i*: *je ouèy-i-ons*. Like, *je le ouèyons asteure ben je le ouèyions pas ajeuve*. * I's seein' 'im now, but I wasn't after seein' 'im back den.

*11. *Ajeuve*: original Acadian word, undocumented in France. Derived from the verb *achever*, to finish: *j'achève la récolte*, *j'achève de manger*, I finish the harvest, I finish eating: *j'achève*, *j'ajève*, *j'ajeuve*. *Ajeuve*: adv. a while back, back then, a while ago. *J'ai mangé ajeuve*. I ate a while ago, or I was after eatin'. (FS 216)

In many similar passages, the Anglo-Canadian reader is first required to acquaint herself with the untranslated text, before Majzels's juxtareading steps in to situate its semantic content. In so doing, Majzels's re-voicing not only leaves traces of the source text; it gives precedence to many visible and audible layers of it in *For Sure* in congruence with *Pour sûr*'s priorities and cultural politics. Majzels thus resists the normalising tendencies of mainstream literary translation to smooth over traces of the source language. Drawing attention to the linguistic specificity of the source text is precisely Majzels's point.

Matching Spirit

Overall, Majzels's retelling of *Pour sûr* does not just enable an encounter between an Anglo-Canadian audience and the core aspects of the source text's cultural politics. There are places in *For Sure* where Majzels's attention to wordplay serves purely to match the playful spirit of *Pour sûr*. This is the case, for example, with *Pour sûr*'s "Scrabble" section, which is yet another ludic way Daigle designed to draw attention to the workings of the "linguistic game." The section's twelve entries list the words formed and the points obtained in actual Scrabble games. The number of points per tile being different between French and English, Majzels and his wife spent hours playing new Scrabble games to fill these entries with actual game results (Leclerc and Majzels, "In Conversation). Majzels's translation of *Pour sûr* clearly involved many serious (and "less serious") commitments.

IV

Conclusion: *Pour sûr/For Sure* as Translation Event

In this chapter, I have traced the archive of *Pour sûr/For Sure* as cultural artefacts. In so doing, I have situated Daigle's work in the context of a present-day artistic trend that is rooted in the Acadian cultural revival of the 1960s-1970s. Daigle is a prime contributor to an Acadian literary modernity focused on the representation of contemporary urban realities. By using Chiac more freely than ever before (in her work *and* in the history of Acadian literature) and by making Chiac-speaking characters the centre of *Pour sûr*, Daigle helps to confer new meanings and values on Chiac.

Pour sûr thematically creates grounds for comparison between Chiac and "standard" French; this serves to elevate Chiac and to take "standard" French down from its pedestal. Simultaneously, the deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage allows Daigle to differentiate Chiac from "standard" French, mainly by incorporating the English/French friction that is a core feature of the language alongside its many Acadian French specificities. In Daigle's prose, *chiaquisation* and *francisation* do not negate one another. Chiac crucially gives recognition to the linguistic and cultural reality of Acadians (especially around the Moncton area), and French continues to allow for the performance of broader linkages between Acadie and the Francophone world.

In "Discourses, Legitimization, and the Construction of Acadianité" (2016), Mélanie LeBlanc and Annette Boudreau argue that the success of Antonine Maillet's play *La Sagouine* (1971) and the international recognition of its author were prime contributors to the broader acceptance (in Acadie and beyond) of traditional Acadian French (95). The

play's success progressively transformed "an object of shame [...] into an object of pride, a cultural resource to shift negative social and linguistic representations" (LeBlanc and Boudreau 95). While it is still too early to comprehensively assess the impact of *Pour sûr* on Acadie and representations of Acadie in general, it would seem that what Maillet did for traditional Acadian French in the literary realm, Daigle did for Chiac. As the movement of linguistic acceptance initiated by Maillet continued, and as Acadian writers' focus became increasingly urban and present-day centred, *Pour sûr* marks, like no other literary work before, the investment of Chiac with new, more legitimate values and significations. The culmination of Daigle's already successful career in a novel in and about Chiac, which won Canada's highest literary distinction, and which was well-received in the Francophone world, is likely to further contribute to this trend.

Pour sûr's shift-inducing qualities are significant in and of themselves. However, the institutional context in which they have been negotiated confers additional substance on them. Daigle's novel was published by a mainstream Montreal press (Boréal) opening up, as we have seen, a context for its prominent use of Chiac to constitute heterolanguage for a significant portion of its intended audience. The broader distribution, visibility, and recognition of *Pour sûr* was achieved in the context of the "ridiculously small space" given to non-Québécois cultural productions in a Franco-Canadian cultural scene where resources are largely "controlled by Montreal" (R. Boudreau, 41). This is especially true of radio and television, but also a reality in the literary field (R. Boudreau, 41). As Raoul Boudreau writes: « L'Acadie se trouve donc dans cette situation absolument paradoxale d'avoir à affirmer son identité face à un Québec hégémonique, mais de devoir le faire

grâce à des moyens de diffusion québécois ». (*Acadie finds itself in the absolutely paradoxical situation of having to assert its identity vis-à-vis a hegemonic Quebec, but of having to do it through Quebec's channels of cultural distribution*) (42).

Daigle's novel exemplifies this paradox, bringing to the fore the place of Chiac in *Pour sûr's* publication and marketing process. Like Acadian French in Antonine Maillet's time, Chiac can operate on many levels, including as a powerful "object of pride, a cultural resource to shift negative social and linguistic representations" and as a source of "material and symbolic profits in national and international markets" (LeBlanc and Boudreau 95). The fact that Daigle published *Pour sûr* with a mainstream, large-distribution Montreal press does suggest that her bold deployment of Chiac-as-heterolanguage was institutionally perceived if not as a commodity, then at least as something that could be capitalised on.

And unlike with the remaking of Junot Díaz's *Oscar* (see chapter three), *Pour sûr* managed to markedly remain *about* the language and culture of Acadie. As a cultural artefact related but distinct from *Pour sûr*, *For Sure* has had the effect as the first English translation of a novel largely in Chiac to further invigorate Chiac as a marker of Acadianité across the Canadian cultural scene. The sub-dubbing of Chiac in Majzels's retelling of *Pour sûr* enables the reaffirmation of Daigle's legitimisation of Chiac. To align his version with Daigle's de-hybridisation endeavour, Majzels did not deploy Chiac-as-heterolanguage as prominently in *For Sure* as Daigle did in *Pour sûr*. Nevertheless, the presence of the "minor" language is far from having been effaced, as is the case with *Oscar Wao*.

Majzels's retelling has the effect of acknowledging and extending the radical potential of Daigle's Chiac. A crucial strategy in this regard is Majzels's use of a non-normative, "Maritime-minted" English created specifically to explain and to repeat afterwards Chiac's specificities and positionalities in an Anglo-Canadian context. Through a range of sub-dubbing strategies, Majzels re-voices *Pour sûr*'s Chiac while leaving important traces of it in *For Sure*. His Anglo-Canadian target audience is thus made to listen nearby core aspects of the source version and its cultural politics.

Despite the merits of Majzels's innovative gesture, my research has shown that *For Sure* has had a limited reception in its intended market. There is indeed little evidence of the book's reception in the Anglo-Canadian context. This fact, coupled with the substantial success of *Pour sûr* in the Franco-Canadian context, begs a few important questions about the Canadian cultural and literary scene that this translation event seeks to impact. Does the slow reception of *For Sure* bring us back to the two solitudes, as Majzels and Daigle both have argued in interviews (Leclerc and Majzels, "In Conversion"; Cabajsky)? If that is the case, has there been more interest in the Acadian masterpiece in Anglophone New Brunswick and Atlantic Canada more generally? To what extent could the non-normative translation itself be a factor in this situation? How has the translation been received by non-specialists? These questions signal important avenues for future research around the broader effects of *Pour sûr* and *For Sure* across the Canadian cultural sphere.

More than anything, by providing Chiac with a distinct existence, heterolanguage in *Pour sûr* liberates Chiac from the stigma attached to its perceived hybridity. In Daigle's writing and in Majzels's retelling, Chiac becomes a crucial component of the invigorating power of Acadianité. This is significant because the current and future cultural vitality of Acadie significantly resides in the ability of its artistic community to negotiate its linguistic moorings. In this sense, Daigle's and Majzels's efforts to give Chiac a legitimate life of its own, alongside French and English, are not just a way to inhabit a minority context. As Daigle's own trajectory as a writer exemplifies, the legitimisation of Chiac is also ultimately a vital tactic to prioritise invigoration over alienation.

Conclusion

Unforgetting Monolingualism

If, as Adorno has it, “all reification is a forgetting,” monolingualism is primarily invested in erasing its own history of production.

—David Gramling, *The Invention of Monolingualism*

This dissertation has shown how heterolanguage can function as a powerful conceptual tool to actively unforget and subvert the language ideologies responsible for the reification of monolingualism. Perhaps paradoxically, in the globalised, “post-national,” and increasingly multilingual context of the twenty-first century, monolingualism continues to orient and regulate social meaning in influential yet elusive ways. The multilingual works analysed herein all share a prominent deployment of heterolanguage that serves to disrupt the influence and self-erasure of monolingual ideologies across a variety of geolinguistic domains. By focusing on heterolanguage in conjunction with the cultural politics of “minor” language communities, my dissertation animates the radical potential of heterolanguage as a vital cultural tactic.

The presence of “minor” languages in *Zona Sur*, *La jaula de oro*, *Notre étrangère*, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and *Pour sûr* rapidly brings to the fore how the global system of circulation and its infrastructures also function as crucial sites of geolinguistic struggles for legitimacy and recognition. As a time of unprecedented multilingualism and language contact, the twenty-first century is also the historical

period when linguistic diversity is diminishing the most. As more languages seem to be visible to us, few languages are in fact in a position to be strong vectors of culture under the current global regimes of cultural power. To exist and carry the voices of their communities, “minor” languages require their users’ strategic resourcefulness. This is where writers and filmmakers like the ones studied in this dissertation can intervene.

My dissertation is based upon a critical and comparative understanding of how, in today’s world, colonial epistemologies continue to inform the dominant conception of language in unitary, nationalistic, and monolingual terms. This coloniality of language is what European modernity has established as the norm throughout the world, through the colonial imperial project and its extension into today’s global capitalism. Across geolinguistic contexts, cultural productions can serve, through their poetic use of language, to consolidate a reductive and hegemonic vision of language. They can, however, also serve to subvert it in powerful ways. This subversive potential is what I have explored in this dissertation.

By making heterolanguage the backbone of a new reading practice, I have zoomed in on the multilingual qualities and the non-translation stance that are prime features of the films and novels herein examined. My analysis of twenty-first-century multilingual texts has fleshed out the political potential of heterolanguage. By zeroing in on the poetics of a corpus built around the cultural politics of “minor” language communities, I have animated the radical potential of a conceptual tool capable of unravelling the meaning of multilingual works in which the necessity to negotiate the inaccessible is made purposefully inescapable.

The works examined in this dissertation all contribute to undermining the coloniality of language through their deployment of heterolanguage. At the same time, they all negotiate this deployment as they circulate transnationally. Their transnational circulation is facilitated by a variety of mediating processes, including paratexts, institutional categories (e.g. global art cinema), and translation. By looking at the impact of these processes on the deployment of heterolanguage in *Zona Sur*, *La jaula de oro*, *Notre étrangère*, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and *Pour sûr*, my dissertation gives recognition to their varied political projects while acknowledging the multivalence of texts across contexts. As we have seen, while heterolanguage may occupy a towering position in the initial project of a writer or a filmmaker, this position must be renegotiated in transnational circulation to the point where it sometimes actually no longer occupies a significant position as part of subsequent ideological projects.

In the initial versions of *Zona Sur*, *La jaula de oro*, *Notre étrangère*, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and *Pour sûr*, the deployment of heterolanguage paradoxically foregrounds distance through language to create a proximity with the cultural politics of a range of “minor” language communities. Through heterolanguage, the works studied critically reveal the constructed nature of the monolingual myth (and its numerous offshoots) and the “overwhelming yet unostentatious structural constraint” it nonetheless exercises “upon social meaning” (Gramling 17). Through Chiac-as-heterolanguage, France Daigle conquers a voice for herself and her Acadian characters. She privileges a “realm of felt life” that has traditionally been denied existence in the literary realm. With a poetics constructed around linguistic simultaneity and assertive

non-translation (heterolanguage's essential conditions), Junot Díaz powerfully conjures up the bi-cultural *Bildungen* of Latino protagonists of significant African descent. By making untranslated Dioula a central feature of *Notre étrangère*'s mode of address, Sarah Bouyain aligns the audiospectator with Amy's condition as a stranger to herself while constructing a utopian spectatorship that obliquely comments on the structural constraints of FSSA cinema as art cinema. Heterolanguage makes it possible for Diego Quemada-Díez and Juan Carlos Valdivia to expose and subvert contemporary mestizo-Indigenous relations marked by the linguistic implications of the colonality of power.

The corpus constituted in this dissertation and the methodology applied in analysing it have allowed me to grind out the conceptual lens offered by heterolanguage in context-specific ways. In so doing, I offer a novel way to apprehend language and linguistic alterity across a range of contemporary texts and geolinguistic domains. The radical potential I discern in heterolanguage is inscribed in its power to highlight and disrupt a colonality of language that permeates all geolinguistic contexts, not just the ones I have examined in this dissertation. I have also demonstrated how the deployment of heterolanguage emerges from the works' initial context of production, while keenly deserving to be studied in circulation. What does France Daigle's *Pour sûr* become when translated into English for an Anglo-Canadian audience? How can we understand Junot Díaz's ideological project in Achy Obejas's translation of *Oscar Wao* to Spanish? How is the significance of *Notre étrangère*'s deployment of heterolanguage shaped by the film's production and circulation for a global art cinema audience? How do the trailers made to

(transnationally) market *Zona Sur* and *La jaula de oro* filter the initial contact of potential audiospectators with heterolanguage?

By allowing me to address these important questions, heterolanguage reveals its heuristic value in the broader context of twenty-first century cultural production and transnational circulation. The global system of circulation today crucially carries and shape the cultural politics of “minor” language communities. It is necessary to understand in what ways and to what consequences. Alongside trends that reinforce linguistic concentration, we are witnessing the emergence of a global political economic context that is also favourable to the distinctive value that “minor” languages confer on cultural productions. Multilingualism and linguistic specificity contribute to distinguishing texts on a poetic level, orienting their (increasingly transnational and global) trajectory as they circulate through a range of commodifying channels. It is in this context that the works studied herein deploy heterolanguage as an eminently political gesture whose scope and complexity demand to be studied in circulation. Authors and filmmakers who deployment “minor” languages (as heterolanguage or not) often have to negotiate linguistic power relations in the space generated between pride and profit.

My dissertation has mainly focused on delineating an epistemological space for heterolanguage as a prime site for the negotiation of the cultural politics of “minor” language communities, in twenty-first cinema and literature. Conceptually, heterolanguage makes possible a novel, non-binary way to engage with language and linguistic alterity, one the revolves around access as opposed to constructed notions of prestige. My critical, political appropriation of the term heterolanguage (coined by Carol

O'Sullivan in *Translating Popular Film*, 2011), allows it to truly serve as a tool for escaping the sticky issue of having to label language varieties based on their perceived and ideologically-constructed social status and/or purity. It is, however, important to note that the mode of reading I propose provides for a valuable model for the analysis of cultural production beyond the literary and cinematic realms, and especially, beyond the genres (the novel, global art cinema), regions, (and even time period) studied in this dissertation. In particular, the alliance I have constituted between critical multilingualism and critical transnationalism in my analysis of heterolanguage in twenty-first cinema and literature has important explanatory value in contexts where “minor” languages and heterolanguage are currently emerging in force.

For scholars invested in the cultural politics of “minor” language communities today, the media arts (film, video, new media, and audio) stand out as a particularly promising area of research. More than the prestige and written form of literature (i.e. the novel) and niche-market cinema (i.e. films that circulate as global art cinema) considered in this dissertation, the media arts are prime sites of production for “minor” language communities (e.g. Indigenous communities) in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the increasing accessibility of certain digital technologies and the concurrent emergence and multiplication of new distribution and exhibition outlets have been correlated with increased production opportunities for small film/media-making entities (Alia; Dowell; Ginsburg; Hjort and Petrie; Iordanova, Martin-Jones, and Vidal; Lacunza; Raheja). The model I have elaborated in this dissertation paves the way to future research that would investigate how these trends comparatively play out in relation to “minor” language

communities the world over. Broadening the genres and media considered in this work will constitute a crucial step in this regard.

Appendix 1

Médium large—Segment “*Canada: The Story of Us*”

Translated Transcript

Catherine—In front of me is the historian Laurent Turcot. Bonjour Laurent!

Laurent—Bonjour Catherine!

Catherine—So, there is a documentary series, which I mentioned at the beginning of the program, broadcast by the CBC, two episodes have been seen to this day: *Canada: The Story of Us*. It has sparked many reactions in Quebec but also in Atlantic Canada since the first episode was aired. Each episode lasts 44 minutes and it is the story of Canada until ... as of now in the first episode we got up to about the Conquest. And well, we have seen the First Nations peoples represented, a little, we have seen the French represented, but it has raised a great many critiques. Laurent Turcot, you have published a letter with a couple of your historian colleagues, which has been published for instance in the *Globe and Mail* and posted on social media. What is it that struck you about this series?

Laurent—Well, what stuck us, we were four, well in fact we are more than that, I think this letter had about thirty signatories, and what struck us is the representation of Canadian history, which, sincerely, just looked like a 1930s infomercial. Which is to say, well let's just quickly sum things up here. What is history? History is not the past, it's in fact the study of traces of the past, and as with a police investigation sometimes various witnesses are called in to tell us how you have experienced this, and it is by weaving these testimonies that we arrive at what may actually have occurred, but it's always a hypothetical approach, with a perspective. So, it aims to be scientific. But now what we've seen in *Canada: A Story of Us* is simply and squarely the foregrounding of a very strong ideological stance, with dangerous shortcuts that can induce a vision of the past which, in our view, is not up-to-date with what we know.

Catherine—OK, you say “the foregrounding of a very strong ideological stance.” I've seen the first episode, and we never hear any overt ideological position. It's much subtler than [you make it to be]. Is it through imagery, or by way of something else, then?

Laurent—Yes, certainly. Let's agree that the people who produced the series are intelligent people nonetheless, and they have an enormous budget. In fact, from a visual point of view and from the point of view of craftsmanship, it is beautiful. There are

reconstructions, the reconstruction of Champlain's settlement of 1608 is wonderful! And truly when I started watching, I said to myself I want to like this. Because you know, Catherine, I have participated a lot in this type of series, I worked with Ubisoft...

Catherine—Even with video games, right?

Laurent—Indeed, I participated in *Le rêve de Champlain*.¹²⁸

Catherine—So, you're really not against this kind of popularisation [of history],...

Laurent—Absolutely not! But now I find myself on the other side, criticising, and I think it is necessary to have a debate. That's why I do not shun debate. But what's really at stake [in this docuseries], from an ideological standpoint? Well, first, the way Francophones are represented and omissions. The Acadians, first of all ...

Catherine—They're not there.

Laurent—Poor them! Not only were they forgotten from the grand national narrative, but in so doing important facts are also omitted. Now was this voluntary? John English, the one who wrote the series, who's also a former Liberal deputy, with ties to the Trudeau family, who's at the Trudeau Foundation, who's written two biographies of Trudeau the father, who's a member of the Royal Society of Canada, he said: "Well, you know, we had to choose 50." Yes, sure.

Catherine—Well even if that's the case, they should not go ahead and affirm that in 1608 Champlain established the first habitation in Canada. That's not true.

Laurent—That's not true. The docuseries starts in 1608. The Acadians critiqued this, and they are right. But, at the same time, they also forgot another figure, which is Jacques Cartier in 1534. And then you'll tell me: "Well there are the First Nations." Well, of course there are the First Nations! And particularly with a government, which is Trudeau's government, because let us recall that the first three minutes [of the series] show Justin Trudeau facing the camera, explaining that our history is a problematic one, where all is not black or white, that there are complications ...

Catherine—Well, he's right on that, though.

¹²⁸ *Le rêve de Champlain* is a documentary series recently produced by TFO (Télévision française de l'Ontario), a publicly funded, Francophone educational television station and media organisation serving mainly Ontario. Samuel de Champlain was a French cartographer, explorer, colonial administrator. He played a major role in the colonisation of Canada by the French and the foundation of New France from 1603 to 1635.

Laurent—He's right. So, then we're all thinking that at last the First Nations will have a place, and God knows we are currently witnessing an indigenous resurgence,¹²⁹ so we'll make room for different voices. But the one the documentary uses to talk about the First Nations is Joseph Boyden, who has recently lied about his indigenous origins. And now he's the one to develop that perspective. And let's all agree that First Nations in [the docuseries] are only a passing wave. We learn that the word Canada is an indigenous word. Yes, sure, but let's go beyond that. [They should] develop what we know: archaeology has revealed tons of things about First Nations, so why hold on to an extremely caricatural vision. It is in this sense that I was saying that *Canada: The Story of Us* [presents us with] an ideological pre-conception.

Catherine—First Nations people are essentially [portrayed as] fur traders, and you find that this is reductive and that not enough attention is paid to their way of life, their relationship to nature. Is that so?

Laurent—Well it is still the perspective of the coloniser who arrives and imposes his civilisation on a barbaric element, and the barbarians here remain the indigenous who [merely] endure, as it were. The first episode is titled "*Worlds Collide*," [...] so the idea is that two worlds are opposed that eventually collide, but it is still the coloniser who imposes his vision. The poor indigenous are represented, in a way, as a sub-race. But...

Catherine—Well, that's your point of view. I find that they seem to be well-adapted, much better than us the colonisers, and to have a control over things, an organised society still ...

Laurent—But that society is not seen! We know a lot about it now.

Catherine—It's all going too fast then ...

Laurent—We agree on this.

Catherine—Now, Laurent, I must pause us for a second, because we did seek out someone from the production side, an interlocutor, to have him in discussion with you. It was impossible to find someone who could ... speak ... [ill at ease] ... express himself in French. Someone suggested Marcel Martel, but Mr. Martel, a historian, told us: "Listen, I was interviewed for the last few episodes. I don't even know what was kept. So, I cannot make a judgement, I cannot come and defend the entire production." But the producers, yesterday, sent a declaration to teams from Radio-Canada. They said, as the series'

¹²⁹ Although it predates the Idle No More movement that burst onto the Canadian political scene in 2012-2013, a "resurgent approach to recognition" recently crystallised around the movement, with important implications for First Nations politics and cultures in Canada (Coulthard 159). At the heart of this ongoing process is Indigenous peoples' desire to build "diverse, nation-culture-based resurgences" by "significantly reinvesting "in [their] own ways of being," including their political, legal and intellectual traditions, their languages and their artistic and performance-based traditions (Simpson qtd. in Coulthard 155).

producers, and this is a translation, first they indicate being pleased with the level of passion it raised in many people, including those who critiqued the series. They are not necessarily in agreement with the critiques, but they appreciate the reflections. So, there is a sentence that's a bit particular ... It is said: "Our series has been commissioned by CBC's Anglophone service for an Anglophone audience." What do you make of that, Laurent? ... and they mention in passing, and I wanted to cite it now because you were saying that the series was covering too much ground too quickly, but they said, indeed, that it is not their intention with this format to represent a global and exhaustive form of the history of our nation. They say it: it's a docudrama, we did not have time to talk about everything, we could not talk about it all.

Laurent—Well, I found their defense legitimate at first, but I found a lot of issues in the sentence you have just cited. It implies that because I am a Francophone, this is not addressing me. But you know all too well, Catherine, that we speak English, we understand English, we have a cultural system that does not limit us to French. Now, that implies that what is being weaved again here is the famous "two solitudes"¹³⁰ and with the clear branding "this is not for you" [Catherine and Laurent in unison]. Let's calm down a little. And now we just talked about the First Nations, but we could talk about the French too, and how they are depicted. Champlain, who, let's be clear here, is a giant in the history of New France, is considered like some kind of *coureur des bois*, dirty, poorly organised ...

Catherine—He looks like a complete paranoiac.

Laurent—Oh, it's un-*be*-lievable!

Catherine—The scene [in which he appears] that is the most developed is the one where he gets one of his men hanged, which likely did happen, but still it is a matter of choice.

Laurent—Oh and on top of that it's in such ugly French! At some point one of the men says: "Ôon vâa rrévoltEr" [the phrase should be "on va se révolter"].

Catherine—[Laughs] "On va révolter."

Laurent—*Come on!* Make an effort! The phonebook of the UDA [Union des Artistes] is full of actors who all want to work. Go get some names in there. And, obviously, they did not take actors from the UDA, but they did not consult any historians from French Canada. And here I am not speaking only of Quebec, but also of French Canada. There

¹³⁰ The Canadian Encyclopedia indicates that *Two Solitudes* is a 1945 novel by Hugh MacLennan "whose title has become emblematic of Canada's most troubling legacy: the relations between English and French Canadians." In everyday life, this foundational myth occupies a crucial place in the grand national narrative, eclipsing and/or obliterating, as the Canadian Encyclopedia's entry so powerfully illustrates, other troubling legacies: Canadian settler colonialism's effects on First Nations peoples (including cultural genocide) and the cultural-institutional marginalisation of non-Québécois Francophones.

are many of them. And let's be clear, scholars are ready to contribute in this regard. We are more than willing to make ourselves useful to society. Why have they not consulted us?

Catherine—Here you mention Champlain. The docuseries offers an odd vision of Champlain, indeed: dirty, disheveled hair, constant paranoid and stern look. By contrast, in your letter, you mention the character of James Wolfe.

Laurent—Oh, Wolfe, of course, we know he's an extremely tormented character. He's about twenty years old, he's an insecure general, and the letters he writes, particularly to the government, which are sent to London, are extremely, how can I put this ... tormented. He's not sure what he's doing. He is being criticised by his own officers.

Catherine—All of this is documented?

Laurent—Yes, we know. Historians have been working on this for years, you know. 1759 is our moment in Canada, which breaks, literally. And as I was saying this morning in *The Globe and Mail*, it's our equivalent of the French Revolution. Politicians base the definition of their political vision on this event. So, to see a James Wolfe climbing Cap Diamant, looking magnificent, his shirt sparkling white.

Catherine—Sure ... After having crawled his way up Cap Diamant, he gets up there, fit as a fiddle.

Laurent—He gets there and commands his troops as if he just knew all was going to go so well.

Catherine—With such a self-assured look.

Laurent—That's just not it. And the funniest thing is that this revives once again the idea that it all happened [the battle that Wolfe's troops won] in less than twenty minutes. As far as I know there were no timers then, and we have no way of knowing how long it lasted. It is true that it lasted a short period of time, but there is a danger in reviving those myths, because they must be destroyed yet again. What becomes dangerous is the construction of a hero based on ideas that are stereotypes. And in Quebec we've done it a lot. You know Dollard des Ormeaux, who's a great myth of Canadian history, who in fact was a nobody who had fun smuggling alcohol left and right, whom we've made great because we needed him to replace the queen. But there is a danger here, and we would have expected from the CBC, a story that would not necessarily be perfect but that would at least have shown the tension that existed about the crucial moment that is the Seven Years War (1756-1763), or what has here [Quebec] been called La Conquête.

Catherine—Therefore, in your view, there is a lot to be dissatisfied with when looking at this from our Francophone point of view. It's a little concerning to be told "this was made by Anglophones for Anglophones."

Laurent—Had we done the same in Quebec, don't you think we would have had the same reactions from English Canada?

Catherine—Yes, of course.

Laurent—And rightly so.

Catherine—Of course, but it does not mean that we would have done it perfectly either. Right?

Laurent—Absolutely not. And that's why we should do it.

Catherine—Indeed, we should do it. But maybe we should do it together. What do you think?

Laurent—I completely agree with you.

Catherine—That is why you were saying there are many who could contribute to this work.

Laurent—I invite the Trudeau government and Mélanie Jolie to do their homework again. What if we made another one?

Catherine—What if we made another one? Let's see. Why not. For 150 years, two series would not be too much. Thank you very much, Laurent Turcot, History Professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, who has watched the beginning of that series, *The Story of Us*, which will continue to be aired on the CBC channel. 8 episodes to go. Thank you very much for stopping by our studio, Laurent.

Laurent—Thank you very much.

Bibliography

- « 1755 : L'Histoire et les histoires ». *Centre d'études acadiennes – Université de Moncton*. 2007. Web. Accessed 10 May 2017.
- "About Us." *House of Anansi Press*. 2017. Web. Accessed 17 April 2017.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London, New York: Verso, 2000.
- Alia, Valerie. *The New Media Nation: Indigenous Peoples and Global Communication*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010.
- Alim, H. Samy. "Introducing Raciolinguistics: Racing Language and Linguaging Race in Hyperracial Times." *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*. Eds. H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Arnetta F. Ball. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 1-30.
- Allen, Richard. "Theory of Identification." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory*. Ed. Edward Branigan and Warren Buckland. London: Routledge, 2014. 237-241.
- Alvaray, Luisela. "National, Regional, and Global: New Waves of Latin American Cinema." *Cinema Journal* 47.3 (2007): 48-65.
- Alvaray, Luisela. "Hybridity and Genre in Transnational Latin American Cinemas." *Transnational Cinemas* 4.1 (2013): 67-87.
- Armes, Roy. *African Filmmaking: North and South of the Sahara*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2006.
- Arrieta, Daniel. "El Spanglish en la obra de Junot Díaz: Instrucciones de uso." *Hispanica* 53 (2009): 105-126.
- Avendaño, Nadia. "The Chicana Subaltern and the Ethnic Female *Bildungsroman* in Patricia Santana's *Motorcycle Ride on the Sea of Tranquility*." *Letras Hispanas* 9.1 (2013): 66-75.
- Bagnall, Janet. "Census 2011: Montreal a shining beacon of bilingualism." *Montreal Gazette*. 26 October 2012. Web. Accessed 08 June 2017.
- Bailey, Benjamin. "Language and Negotiation of Ethnic/Racial Identity among Dominican Americans." *Language in Society* 29.4(2000):555-582.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. 259-366.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. "The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism." *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. 10-59.
- Barlet, Olivier. « Les cinq décennies des cinémas d'Afrique. » *Africultures*. 16 May 2008. Web. April 07 2015.
- Bassnett, Susan and Harish Trivedi. *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. New York, London: Routledge, 1999.

- Betz, Mark. "Beyond Europe: On Parametric Transcendence." *Global Art Cinema*. Eds. Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 31-47.
- Birke, Dorothee and Birte Christ. "Paratext and Digitized Narrative: Mapping the Field." *Narrative* 21.1 (2013): 65-87.
- Birtwistle, Andy. *Cinesonica: Sounding Film and Video*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010.
- Bolduc, Yves. « Antonine Maillet ». *Encyclopédie canadienne*. 13 April. 2015. Web. Accessed 22 May 2017.
- Booksmag. "Junot Díaz s'exprime sur le spanglish." Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube. 10 February 2009. Web. Accessed 27 June 2017.
- Bordwell, David. "Authorship and Narration in Art Cinema." *Narration in the Fiction Film*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. 42-49.
- Boudreau, Annette. *À l'ombre de la langue légitime : L'Acadie dans la francophonie*. Paris : Classiques Garnier, 2016.
- Boudreau, Raoul. « La littérature acadienne face au Québec et à la France : Une double relation centre/périphérie ». *Regards croisés sur l'histoire et la littérature acadiennes*. Madeleine Frédéric and Serge Jaumain eds. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006. 33-46.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991.
- Bourque, Denis. « France Daigle ». *Encyclopédie canadienne*. 21 April 2015. Web. Accessed 3 May 2017.
- Bouyain, Sarah, dir. *Notre étrangère*. Athénaïse, 2010. Film.
- Bouyain, Sarah. "Venice Film Festival." Online video clip. *Dailymotion*. Dailymotion. 08 September 2010. Web. Accessed 23 October 2013.
- Bouyain, Sarah. "Thessaloniki Film Festival." Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube. 08 December 2010. Web. Accessed 23 October 2013.
- Bouyain, Sarah. *Personal Interview*. 28 October. 2013.
- Boyden, Michael and Patrick Goethals. "Translating the Watcher's Voice: Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* into Spanish." *Meta* 56.1(2011): 20-41.
- Brault, Michel, dir. *Éloge du chiac*. Office national du film, 1969. Film.
- Brun del Re, Ariane. *Rev. of Pour sûr*, ed. France Daigle. *Nouvelles Études Francophones* 27.2(2012) : 251-254.
- Burke, Kenneth. "Poetics in Particular; Language in General." *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966. 25-43.
- Buzelin, Hélène. "22 February 2001: *Les Allusifs* Enter the Publishing Scene." *Translation Effects: The Shaping of Modern Canadian Culture*. Kathy Mezei, Sherry Simon, and Luise von Flotow eds. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014. 290-304.
- Cabajsky, Andrea. « 'Le sentiment vif de créer': entretien avec France Daigle ». *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 39.2(2014). Web.
- Cabajsky, Andrea. "'The Vivid Feeling of Creating': An Interview with France Daigle." *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne* 39.2(2014). Web.
- Cadieux, Marie, dir. *Éloge du chiac, Part Two*. Office national du film, 2009. Film.

- Caffarel Serra, Carmen. "Estados Unidos: presente y futuro del español." *Enciclopedia del español en los Estados Unidos*. Ed. Humberto López Morales. Madrid: Instituto Cervantes, 2009. 19-21.
- Carney, John, dir. *Once*. Summit Entertainment, 2007. Film.
- Carpio, Glenda R. "Now Check It: Junot Díaz's Wondrous Spanglish." *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination*. Eds. Monica Hanna, Jennifer Harford Vargas, and José David Saldívar. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 257-290.
- Casielles-Suárez, Eugenia. "Radical Code-switching in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 90.4 (2013): 475-487.
- Cassivi, Marc. « Lettre à Christian Rioux ». *La Presse*. 22 July 2014. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Cassivi, Marc. *Mauvaise langue*. Montréal: Somme toute, 2016.
- Celayo, Armando and David Shook. "In Darkness We Meet: A Conversation with Junot Díaz." *World Literature Today* 82.2(2008): 12-17.
- Céspedes, Diógenes and Silvio Torres-Saillant. "Fiction is the Poor Man's Cinema: An Interview with Junot Díaz." *Callaloo* 23.3(2000):892-907.
- Chaudhuri, Shohini. "Introduction." *Contemporary World Cinema: Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. 1-13.
- Chiasson, Herménégilde. *Conversations*. Moncton, N.-B.: Éditions d'Acadie. 1998.
- Ch'ien, Evelyn Nien-Ming. *Weird English*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Chion, Michel. *L'audio-vision: Son et image au cinéma*, 2nd edition. Paris: Nathan/HER, 2000.
- Chow, Rey. *Not Like a Native Speaker: On Linguaging as a Postcolonial Experience*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
- Cisneros, Sandra. *Caramelo or puro cuento: A Novel*. New York: Knopf, 2002.
- "Coopération cinématographique." *France Diplomatie – Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Développement international*. 01 September 2012. Web. Accessed 03 April 2015.
- Cresci, Karen. "Junot Díaz: 'We exist in a constant state of translation. We just don't like it.'" *Buenos Aires Review*. 4 May 2013. Web. Accessed 12 January 2013.
- Cresci, Karen. "Simultaneidad lingüística: La ficción de Junot Díaz y su traducción." *RECIAL* 5 (2014): 1-22.
- Crofts, Stephen. "Reconceptualizing National Cinema/s." *Film and Nationalism*. Ed. Alan Williams. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002. 25-51.
- Daigle, France. *Pour sûr*. Montreal: Éditions du Boréal, 2011.
- Daigle, France. *For Sure*. Trans. Robert Majzels. Toronto: House of Anansi Press. 2013.
- Deresiewicz, William. "Fukú Americanus." *The Nation*. 26 November 2007. 36-41.
- Derrick, Roshawnda A. "Radical Bilingualism in *Killer Crónicas*." *Hispania* 97.3(2014): 366-367.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*. Paris: Galilée, 1996.
- Devy, Ganesh. "Translation as Origin." 'Of Many Heroes' – *An Indian Essay in Literary Historiography*. *The GN Devy Reader*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009. 162-167.
- Díaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2007.

- Díaz, Junot. *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*. Trans. Achy Obejas. New York: Vintage Español, 2008.
- Díaz, Junot. *La maravillosa vida breve de Óscar Wao*. Trans. Achy Obejas. Barcelona: Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, 2008.
- "Director John Carney talks about hit film *Once*." *Clash*. 21 Mar. 2008. Web. Accessed 5 May 2016.
- Djebar, Assia. *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*. Paris: des femmes, 1980.
- Dowell, Kristin L. *Sovereign Screens: Aboriginal Media on the Canadian West Coast*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013.
- Doyon-Gosselin, Benoit. « Bibliographie de France Daigle ». *Voix et Images* 29.3(2004) : 101-107.
- Duchêne, Alexandre and Monica Heller. "Pride and Profit: Changing Discourses of Language, Capital and Nation-State." *Language in Late Capitalism: Pride and Profit*. Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller eds. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Dufour, Christian. « La langue de Mommy ». *Le Journal de Montréal*. 30 September 2014. Web. Accessed November 7 2016.
- Dumitrescu, Domnita. "'Spanglish': What's in a Name?" *Hispania* 95.3(2012): n. p.
- Dumitrescu, Domnita. "English-Spanish Code-Switching in Literary Texts: Is It Still Spanglish as We Know It?" *Hispania* 97.3(2014): 357-359.
- Durocher, René. "Quiet Revolution." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 4 March 2015. Web. Accessed 13 May 2017.
- Edwards, John. *Challenges in the Social Life of Language*. New York, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Edwards, John. *Sociolinguistics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama." *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. Ed. Christine Gledhill. London: British Film Institute, 1987. 43-69.
- Esdaille, Milca. "Same Trip, Different Ships." *Black Issues Book Review* 3.2 (2001): 40-41.
- "Estimation des francophones." *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, n.d. Web. Accessed 18 April 2015.
- « Étalon de Yennenga. » *FESPACO*, n.d. Web. Accessed 03 April 2015.
- Fagan, Allison E. "Negotiating Language." *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*. Eds. Suzanne Bost and Frances R. Aparicio. London: Routledge, 2012. 207-215.
- Falicov, Tamara L. "'Cine en Construcción'/'Films in Progress': How Spanish and Latin American film-makers negotiate the construction of a globalized art-house aesthetic." *Transnational Cinemas* 4.2 (2013): 253-271.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1965.
- Finnegan, Nuala. "'So What's Mexico Really Like?': Framing the Local, Negotiating the Global in Alfonso Cuarón's *Y tu mamá también*." *Contemporary Latin American Cinema: Breaking into the Global Market*. Ed. Deborah Shaw. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. 29-50.

- Flood, Alison. "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao declared 21st century's best novel so far." *The Guardian*. 20 January 2015. Web. Accessed 11 January 2017.
- Fofana, Amadou T. "Language Matters." *The Films of Ousmane Sembène: Discourse, Culture, and Politics*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2012. 93-125.
- Fortin, Marie-Claude. « Pour sûr de France Daigle: l'œuvre ouverte ». *La Presse*. 16 September 2011. Web. Accessed 12 May 2016.
- García Vizcaíno, María José. "Cisneros' Code-Mixed Narrative and Its Implications for Translation." *Mutatis Mutandis* 1.2(2008): 212-224.
- Gauvin, Lise. *L'écrivain francophone à la croisée des langues. Entretiens*. Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1997.
- Ginsburgh, Faye. "Rethinking the Digital Age." *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, and Politics*. Eds. Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008. 287-305.
- González, Christopher. *Reading Junot Díaz*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015.
- Gramling, David and Chantelle Warner. "Critical Multilingualism Studies: An Invitation." *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 1.1 (2012): 1-11. Web.
- Gray, Jonathan. *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.
- Grosjean, François. "Why Are People Bilingual?" *Bilingual: Life and Reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 3-17.
- Grutman, Rainier. *Des langues qui résonnent : L'hétérolinguisme au XIXe siècle québécois*. Montréal: Éditions Fides, 1997.
- Grutman, Rainier. "Multilingualism and Translation." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. Ed. Mona Baker. London: Routledge, 2004. 157-160.
- Gutiérrez, Ivonne. "¿Por qué nadie está viendo cine mexicano?" *Sin Embargo*. 8 July 2015. Web. Accessed 15 March 2016.
- Habash, Gabe. "Just How Much Does a Pulitzer Prize Help a Book's Sales?" *Publishers Weekly*. 19 April 2012. Web. Accessed 12 January 2017.
- Hanna, Monica. "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Cannibalist: Reading Yunior (Writing) in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*." *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination*. Eds. Monica Hanna, Jennifer Harford Vargas, and José David Saldívar. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 89-111.
- Hansen Esplin, Marlene. "Self-Translation and Accommodation: Strategies of Multilingualism in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and Margarita Cota-Cárdenas's *Puppet*." *MELUS* 41.2(2016): 176-201.
- Heller, Monica. *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*. London, New York: Longman, 1999.
- Hemingway, Ernest. "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway*. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Higbee, Will, and Song Hwee Lim. "Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies." *Transnational Cinemas* 1.1 (2010): 7-21.
- Hjort, Mette and Duncan Petrie. *The Cinema of Small Nations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

- Hoefert de Turégano, Teresa. "The New Politics of African Cinema at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs." *French Politics, Culture & Society* 20.3 (2002): 22-32.
- Hoefert de Turégano, Teresa. "Featuring African Cinemas." *World Literature Today* 77.3-4 (2003): 14-18.
- Hoefert de Turégano, Teresa. *African Cinema and Europe: Close-up on Burkina Faso*. Florence: European Press, 2004.
- Hoefert de Turégano, Teresa "Sub-Saharan African Cinemas: The French Connection." *Modern & Contemporary France* 13.1 (2005): 71-83.
- Hopewell, John. "Morelia: 'Desierto' Marks Full-On Cinépolis Distribución (EXCLUSIVE)." *Variety*. 27 October 2015. Web. Accessed 2 February 2016.
- Hopewell, John. "'Jaula de Oro's' Quemada-Díez Preps 'Operación Atlas' (EXCLUSIVE)." *Variety*. 30 December 2015. Web. Accessed 2 February 2016.
- IMCINE (IMCINE). "#Entérate Anuncia la @CinetecaMexico que la cinta mexicana más taquillera en sus salas este 2014 fue @La_Jaula_De_Oro." 5 December 2014, 23:10. Tweet.
- Iordanova, Dina, Martin-Jones, David and Belén Vidal. "Introduction: A Peripheral View of World Cinema." *Cinema at the Periphery*. Eds. Dina Iordanova, David Martin-Jones, and Belén Vidal. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010. 1-19.
- Jiménez Carra, Nieves. "La traducción del cambio de código inglés-español en la obra *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* de Junot Díaz." *Sendebarr* 22(2011): 159-180.
- Johnson González, Bill. "The Politics of Translation in Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo*: Translation, Defamiliarization, Ethics." *Differences* 17.3(2006): 3-19.
- Kernan, Lisa. *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. "Regimenting Languages: Language Ideological Perspectives." *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2000.
- Kuhn, Annette and Guy Westwell. "Remake." *Dictionary of Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. n. p.
- La mala palabra. "La burbuja de Juan Carlos Valdivia (film *Zona Sur*)." YouTube. 2 September 2009. Web. Accessed 19 February 2016.
- Lacasse, Germain. *Le bonimenteur de vues animées: Le cinéma « muet » entre tradition et modernité*. Quebec City, Paris : Éditions Nota Bene/Méridiens Klincksieck, 2000.
- Lacunza Mendizábal, Mariana Andrea. *Estéticas digitales y nociones de identidad en el cine boliviano contemporáneo*. Diss. Ohio State University, 2011.
- Landry, Nicolas. « Histoire de l'Acadie ». *Encyclopédie canadienne*. 05 March. 2015. Web. Accessed 10 May 2017.
- Laurendeau, Paul. « Joual ». *Encyclopédie canadienne*. 14 November 2011. Web. Accessed 10 May 2017.
- Laurendeau, Paul. "Chiac." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. 3 May 2016. Web. Accessed 13 August 2016.
- Lavoie, Pierre and Myriam Fontaine. « Michel Tremblay ». *Encyclopédie canadienne*. 04 March 2015. Web. Accessed 09 May 2017.

- LeBlanc, Mélanie and Annette Boudreau. "Discourses, Legitimization, and the Construction of Acadianité." *Signs and Society* 4.1(2016): 80-108.
- LeBlanc Rioux, Martin. « La langue Radio Radio? Réponse d'un être handicapé en voie d'assimilation ». *Voir*. 3 November 2012. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- LeBrun, Denis. « Les éditions d'Acadie ». *Nuit blanche, magazine littéraire* 12(1984) : 70-71.
- Leclerc, Catherine. "Between French and English, Between Ethnography and Assimilation: Strategies for Translating Moncton's Acadian Vernacular." *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 18.2 (2005): 161-192.
- Leclerc, Catherine. *Des langues en partage? Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature contemporaine*. Montreal: XYZ, 2010.
- Leclerc, Catherine and Robert Majzels. "In Conversation: Catherine Leclerc & Robert Majzels." *Lemon Hound Literary Journal*. 27 Sept. 2013. Web. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Léger, Rémi. « Traîner la culture acadienne dans la boue ». *Le Devoir*. 2 November 2012. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Lewis et al. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 19th ed. SIL International. 2016. Web. Accessed 2 June 2016.
- Liu, Lydia H. "Legislating the Universal: The Circulation of International Law in the Nineteenth Century." *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1999. 127-164.
- Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." *The Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Eds. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Kitchen Table Press, 94-101.
- Low, Bronwen, Sarkar, Mela, and Lise Winer. "'Chus mon propre Bescherelle': Challenges from the Hip-Hop nation to the Quebec nation." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 13.1 (2009): 59-82.
- Lussier, Marc-André. « Honte de la langue de Mommy? Vraiment? ». *La Presse*. 17 October 2014. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Mamula, Tijana and Lisa Patti. "Introduction." *The Multilingual Screen: New Reflections on Cinema and Linguistic Difference*. Eds. Tijana Mamula and Lisa Patti. New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2016. 1-14.
- Marín, Bernardo. "El cine mexicano pide paso en los festivales y en las salas." *El País*. 3 June 2013. Web. Accessed 15 March 2016.
- Marin, Stéphanie. « Les allophones fréquentent les écoles francophones au Québec ». *La Presse*. 31 March 2017. Web. Accessed 08 June 2017.
- Marsh, James H. « La déportation des Acadiens ». *Encyclopédie Canadienne*. 15 July 2015. Web. Accessed 5 May 2017.
- McArthur, Tom. "Code-Mixing and Code-Switching." *The Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. n. p.
- Mezei, Kathy, Simon, Sherry, and Luise von Flotow. *Translation Effects: The Shaping of Modern Canadian Culture*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.
- Milian, Claudia. "Latino/a Deracination and the New Latin American Novel." *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination*. Eds. Monica Hanna, Jennifer Harford Vargas, and José David Saldívar. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 173-200.

- Miquirray, Juan Pablo. "La jaula de oro." *Revista Santo y Seña*. June 2014. Web. Accessed 10 July 2014.
- Murphy, David and Patrick Williams. *Postcolonial African Cinema: Ten Directors*. Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Newman, Roger. "Johnson calls Trudeau fossil, Quebec's foe." *The Globe and Mail*. 26 February 1968. Web. Accessed 14 June 2017.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. "The Language of African Literature." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 435-456.
- Norman, Rachel. "'A Bastard Jargon': Language Politics and Identity in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*." *South Atlantic Review* 81.1 (2016):34-50.
- Nornes, Markus. *Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey. "Minnelli and Melodrama." *Screen* 18.2 (1977): 113-118.
- Nuessel, Frank. "Language: Semiotics." *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 2nd ed. Ed. Keith Brown. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006. 665-679.
- Obejas, Achy. "A Conversation with Junot Díaz." *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 42.1 (2009): 42-47.
- Obejas, Achy. "Translating Junot." *Chicago Tribune*. 14 September 2012. Web. Accessed 12 January 2017.
- Obejas, Achy. "Translating Fiction." *Forum for Scholars and Publics*. 28 March 2017. Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Guest Lecture.
- OcioDF. "Entrevista con Juan Carlos Valdivia – Zona Sur." Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube. 10 September 2011. Web. Accessed 19 February 2016.
- O'Sullivan, Carol. *Translating Popular Film*. New York: Palgrave, 2011.
- Otheguy, Ricardo. "El llamado *espanglish*." *Enciclopedia del español en los Estados Unidos*. Ed. Humberto López Morales. Madrid: Instituto Cervantes, 2009. 222-243.
- Otheguy, Ricardo and Nancy Stern. "On so-called Spanglish." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 15.1(2010): 85-100.
- Paris, Django. "'It Was a Black City': African American Language in California's Changing Urban Schools and Communities." *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*. Eds. H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 241-253.
- Pérez-Firmat, Gustavo. *Tongue Ties: Logo-Eroticism in Anglo-Hispanic Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Postma, Regan L. "¿Por qué leemos esto en la clase de español?: The Politics of Teaching Literature in Spanglish." *Hispania* 96.3(2013): 442-443.
- "Premiada cinta mexicana 'La jaula de oro' se estrena en EE.UU." *Lifestyle*. September 2 2015. Web. Accessed 12 March 2016.
- Quemada-Díez, Diego, dir. *La jaula de oro*. Animal de Luz Films, 2013. Film.
- Quijano, Aníbal. "La colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina." *Anuario Mariateguiano* 9.9 (1997): 113-121.
- Radio-Canada. « Polémique renouvelée sur le 'franglais' ». *Radio-Canada – C'est pas trop tôt!* 24 July 2014. Web. Accessed 14 March 2015.

- Radio-Canada. « Vive le Québec libre : les mots qui soulèvent la tempête » *Radio-Canada – Première Plus*. n. d. Web. Accessed 22 May 2016.
- Rafael, Vicente L. "Translation, American English, and the National Insecurities of Empire." *Social Text* 27.4 (2009): 1-23.
- Raheja, Michelle H. *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.
- Rioux, Christian. « L'enfant roi ». *Le Devoir*. 10 October 2014. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Rioux, Christian. « Radio Radio ». *Le Devoir*. 26 October 2012. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Roberts, Dexter. "400 million Chinese Can't Speak Mandarin and Beijing is Worried." *Bloomberg*. 23 September 2014. Web. Accessed 2 May 2016.
- Robitaille, Antoine. « ADISQ – Un défi poétique ». *Le Devoir*. 30 October 2012. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Rodríguez-González, Eva and M. Carmen Parafita-Couto. "Calling for Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Spanglish and its Linguistic Manifestations." *Hispania* 95.3(2012): 461-480.
- Romaine, Suzanne. "The Bilingual and Multilingual Community." *The Handbook of Bilingualism and Multilingualism*. 2nd ed. Eds. Tej K. Bhatia and William C. Ritchie. Somerset, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 445-465.
- Rosa, Jonathan. "From Mock Spanish to Inverted Spanglish: Language Ideologies and the Racialization of Mexican and Puerto Rican Youth in the United States." *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*. Eds. H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Arnetta F. Ball. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 65-80.
- Rosen, Philip. "Notes on Art Cinema and the Emergence of Sub-Saharan Film." *Global Art Cinema*. Eds. Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 252-262.
- Sakai, Naoki. "How do we count a language? Translation and discontinuity." *Translation Studies* 2.1(2009): 71-88.
- Salazkina, Masha. "Translating the Academe: Conceptualizing the Transnational in Film and Media." *The Multilingual Screen: New Reflections on Cinema and Linguistic Difference*. Eds. Tijana Mamula and Lisa Patti. New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2016. 17-35.
- Saldívar, Ramón. "Historical Fantasy, Speculative Realism, and Postrace Aesthetics in Contemporary American Fiction." *American Literary History* 23.3(2011): 574-599.
- Sanaker, John Krisitian. *La rencontre des langues dans le cinéma francophone : Québec, Afrique subsaharienne, France, Maghreb*. Québec, Paris : Presses de l'Université Laval, L'Harmattan, 2010.
- Sarkar, Mela. « 'Ousqu'on chill à soir?': Pratiques multilingues comme stratégies identitaires dans la communauté hip-hop montréalaise ». *Diversité Urbaine* (2008) : 27-44.

- Scott, A. O. "Dreaming in Spanglish." *New York Times – Sunday Book Review*. 30 September 2007. Web. Accessed 10 January 2017.
- Scott, David. *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2004.
- "Sembène, Ousmane." *Encyclopedia of Africa*. Eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Web. Accessed 15 April 2015.
- Sembène, Ousmane, dir. *Borom Sarret*. La médiathèque des trois mondes, 1963. Film.
- Sembène, Ousmane, dir. *Mandabi*. Filmi Domireve, 1968. Film.
- Shaw, Deborah and Armida de la Garza. "Introducing Transnational Cinemas." *Transnational Cinemas* 1.1 (2010): 3-6.
- Silva Gruesz, Kirsten. "Alien Speech, Incorporated: On the Cultural History of Spanish in the US." *American Literary History* 25.1(2013): 18-32.
- Smith, Iain Robert and Constantine Verevis. "Introduction." *Transnational Film Remakes*. Eds. Iain Robert Smith and Constantine Verevis. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017. 1-18.
- Solanas, Fernando and Octavio Getino. "Towards a Third Cinema." *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*. Vol. 1. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976. 44-64.
- Statistique Canada. Série « Perspective géographique », Recensement de 2011. *Statistique Canada*. Web. Accessed 7 April 2017.
- Stavans, Ilan. *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.
- Stratford, Madeleine. « Au tour de Babel! Les défis multiples du multilinguisme. » *Meta* 53.3(2008): 457-470.
- Summers, Lawrence. "What You (Really) Need to Know." *New York Times*. 20 January 2012. Web. Accessed 16 May 2016.
- "The 2008 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Fiction." *The Pulitzer Prizes*. n. d. Web. Accessed 12 January 2017.
- "This Is How You Lose Her." *Amazon.com*. n. d. Web. Accessed 12 January 2017.
- Thomas, Piri. *Down These Mean Streets*. New York: Knopf, 1967.
- Thompson, Wayne C. "Bilingualism." *Canada: The World Today Series 2014-2015*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014. 37-38.
- Tió, Salvador. "Teoría del Espanglish." *Diario de Puerto Rico*. 28 October 1948. 5.
- Torres, Lourdes. "In the Contact Zone: Code-Switching Strategies by Latino/a Writers." *MELUS* 32.1 (2007): 75-96.
- Torres, Lourdes. "Spanglish." *The Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*. Ed. Richard T. Schaefer. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008. 1272-1274.
- Torres-Saillant, Silvio. "Dominican-American Literature." *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*. Eds. Suzanne Bost and Frances R. Aparicio. London: Routledge, 2012. 423-435.
- Tremblay, Tony. "'Lest on too close sight I miss the darling illusion': The Politics of the Centre in 'Reading Maritime.'" *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature Canadienne* 33.2(2008). Web.

- Tribinevicus, Medeine. "Book Review: *For Sure*, by France Daigle." *National Post*. 2 August 2013. Web. Accessed 14 May 2016.
- Trinh T., Minh-ha, dir. *Reassemblage*. Women Make Movies, 1982. Film.
- Trinh T., Minh-ha, dir. *Naked Spaces – Living is Round*. Women Make Movies, 1985. Film.
- Trinh T., Minh-ha, dir. *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam*. Women Make Movies, 1989. Film.
- Trinh T., Minh-ha. "Speaking Nearby." *Cinema Interval*. London, New York: Routledge, 1999. 209-225.
- Turits, Richard Lee. "Un mundo destruido, una nación impuesta: La masacre haitiana de 1937 en la República Dominicana." *Translating the Americas* 2(2014): 1-47.
- TV5Monde. « Ça bouge au Canada – Acadieman, l'antihéros du Nouveau-Brunswick. » Online video clip. TV5Monde. TV5Monde. n. d. Web. Accessed October 28 2016.
- Valdivia, Juan Carlos, dir. *Zona Sur*. Cinenómada, 2009. Film.
- "Valdivia: Las empresas empiezan a confiar en publicistas bolivianos." Detalle noticia – Economía. *Bolivia.com*. 9 July 2008. Web. Accessed 12 March 2016.
- Van Beneden, Peter. "Viewer 'Identification' with Characters in Television and Film Fiction." MCS—*The Media and Communication Studies Archive Website*. Aberystwyth University. November 1998. Web. Accessed 18 March 2014.
- Vázquez, David. J. "Novel." *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*. Eds. Suzanne Bost and Frances R. Aparicio. London: Routledge, 2012. 299-309.
- Vázquez, David. J. *Triangulations: Narrative Strategies for Navigating Latino Identity*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Veronelli, Gabriela A. "Sobre la colonialidad del lenguaje." *Universitas Humanística* 81 (2016): 35-58.
- Vieyra, Paulin S., dir. *Afrique-sur-Seine*. PVS-FILMS, 1955. Film.
- Vieyra, Paulin S. and Pierre Haffner. « Propos sur le cinéma africain. » *Présence Africaine* 170.2 (2004): 43-54.
- Warren, Paul. « Mommy: un grand film, oui, mais... ». *Le Devoir*. 11 October 2014. Web. Accessed 7 November 2016.
- Watts, Richard. *Packaging Post/coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005.
- Woo, Elaine. "Piri Thomas dies at 83; Latino writer." *Los Angeles Times*. 23 October 2011. Web. Accessed 02 July 2017.
- World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 2015. Web. Accessed. 18 April 2015.
- Xinhuanet. "Government orders TV anchors, guests to use Mandarin." *English.News.Cn*. 6 January 2014. Web. Accessed 2 May 2016.
- Yau, Wai-Ping. "Translation and Film: Dubbing, Subtitling, Adaptation, and Remaking." *A Companion to Translation Studies*. Sandra Berman and Catherine Porter eds. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2014. 492-503.
- Yildiz, Yasemin. *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.
- Young, Robert J. C. "That Which is Casually Called a Language." *PMLA* 131.5 (2016): 1207-1221.

Zentella, Ana Celia. "Spanglish: Language Politics versus *el habla del pueblo*." *Spanish-English codeswitching in the Caribbean and the US*. Eds. Rosa E. Guzzardo Tamargo, Catherine M. Mazak, and M. Carmen Parafita-Couto. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016. 11-35.