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**Translating Francophone Senegalese
Women's Literature: Issues of Change,
Power, Mediation and Orality
(Volume 1 of 2)**

by

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requirements for the degree of
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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated, and translations of

quotations appear in footnotes throughout. Due to constraints of space, I cannot discuss every choice I have made in translation throughout this thesis, so analysis focuses on those issues relevant to the argument at that particular point in the discourse. The appendices provide supporting texts and charts, including a selection of complete source and target text poems. These give a sense of how works may be translated and read in their entirety, but due to spacial constraints I am unable to include full translations of all texts mentioned in this thesis. Some of the translations in this thesis first appeared in my book entitled, *The Other Half of History*, which was published during the period of my PhD. These have been clearly referenced throughout. Some ideas contained in Chapters One, Three and Four have previously been explored in conference papers; however, for the purpose of this thesis, that work has been expanded and rewritten. A small section of Chapter Four, Part III was first analysed in a paper published online by Warwick University; however this has since been rewritten and ideas have been developed further for this thesis. In Chapter One, my translation of a short extract from “Initiation” by Annette Mbaye d’Erneville first appeared in my Masters dissertation, but the translation has since been amended and the analysis within this thesis is new. Further, in the appendices there is translation of “Martyrs” by Mame Seck Mbacké which also appeared in my Masters dissertation; however this is only a supporting text, and arguments referring to this text within the main body of this thesis are unique to this piece of work. The 2003 MLA (Modern Languages Association) Guidelines for document style have been followed throughout this thesis, including the alphabetizing of authors and texts in the Works Cited and Consulted (Gibaldi).

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how interdisciplinary research into the cultural background of Senegalese women writers can impact upon the strategies of the translator of their works into English. It also proposes to illustrate how Translation Studies theories can be applied to the practice of translation, by analysing previously translated works as well as examples from texts that have not been translated before. In this way, the thesis tests the hypothesis that a broad knowledge of Senegalese history, languages and modern day realities is essential in the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature.

Literature and culture are analysed under four key themes – Change, Power, Mediation and Orature, drawing upon issues of language and gender where appropriate, and using extracts from texts and translations to support arguments. Theoretical material is analysed from a number of different disciplines, some of which was collated whilst studying at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. Interviews with writers and academics supplied rare insight into Senegalese literature and society, and time spent living with Senegalese families provided first-hand experience of local cultures, as well as an opportunity to learn Wolof for the purpose of textual analysis.

This thesis contributes knowledge to a number of different fields of study due to its multidisciplinary approach. It also redresses the gender and geographical bias of much previous research into postcolonial African translation, as well as expanding critical work on Senegalese writers. By analysing a range of text types, this thesis progresses many previous studies of Senegalese women's literature that only focus on novels, and it uniquely analyses the influence of the native language upon Francophone African translation. This thesis supports the hypothesis that cultural research can amend the way a translator works, but progresses beyond previous strategies for cultural translation by promoting complete submersion in source text languages and cultures. And through analytical debate it demonstrates how previously translated texts may be rewritten differently today due to changing theories of translation.

INTRODUCTION

Le traducteur, il est obligé de suivre les traces du créateur. Et dans ce sens il doit tout faire pour comprendre l'univers de ce créateur avant d'interpréter son œuvre. Avant de traduire son œuvre. (Seck Mbacké, *Personal* 11)¹

I The Journey of Cultural Translation

To understand truly a piece of literature, must the translator read beyond the terms and phrases put in front of her or can a full understanding of the words woven together be as simple as reading what is on the page?² If the latter is true, then the translator has a relatively straightforward job, but if the former is true, what kind of a journey does the translator need to take in order to understand fully the text and translate the literature to the best of her ability? David Connolly states that “translators often stress the need for a sense of affinity with the poet they are translating” (175) and Basil Hatim and Ian Mason claim that “the best translators of works of literature are often said to be those who are most ‘in tune’ with the original author” (11), and whilst the values of words such as “best,” and “in tune” are complex to define precisely, this

¹ “The translator is obliged to follow in the footsteps of the creator. And because of that, he must do everything to understand the universe of that creator before interpreting his work. Before translating his work.”

² Throughout this thesis, the translator is referred to in the feminine due to the fact that, across a range of text types and languages, a majority of translators are women (Robinson 86; Iveković; Kamala 252).

notion of compatibility and understanding between a writer and translator is echoed by many different theorists and writers, including Senegalese poet and novelist, Mame Seck Mbacké above. But what does she mean exactly when she talks of following in the footsteps of the creator, to what extent does the creator exist and how far should a translator go to understand her universe, to achieve this “affinity,” and to be “in tune” with the author?

In her well-known critical work entitled *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, Mary Snell-Hornby remarks that “the extent to which a text is translatable varies with the *degree* to which it is embedded in its own specific culture, also with the distance that separates the cultural background of source text and target audience in terms of time and place” (41). This thesis finds itself in a new translation space between the worlds of postcolonial³ Senegal and Britain – two societies containing cultures that could not be more different. This research will be testing the hypothesis that a comprehensive understanding of Senegalese cultures is essential in the translation of Senegalese women’s literature into English. And this statement from Snell-Hornby will be challenged by the further hypothesis that in Senegalese society all texts are translatable into English because the translator as cultural “mediator” can lessen the distance between source text and target audience (Hatim, *Discourse* 223).

³ According to Stephanie Newell, whilst the hyphenated term “post-colonial” signifies the historical period following colonialism, the unhyphenated “postcolonial” is used “to signify the wide range of discourses, ideologies and intellectual formations which have emerged from cultures that experienced imperial encounters” (3). For the all-encompassing nature of the second spelling with regard to discourse and ideology, the term “postcolonial” will be employed throughout this thesis.

The translation of Francophone⁴ Senegalese women's literature into English was chosen as a field of study because the body of works is so rich and varied, yet only a small number of texts have travelled further than the country's frontiers with Mali, Mauritania, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and the Gambia, despite being written in a European language. This is incredible considering how large a canon this really is; the University of Western Australia has conducted an ongoing study on Francophone African women writers and in 2007 cited over 60 Francophone Senegalese women authors ("Female"), a figure which is now even higher judging by the number of new texts and writers I found during a recent visit to the country. Whilst clearly a passion for the writers was a incentive in choosing an area of literature to research, Senegalese

⁴ The term "Francophone" is now widely used to describe any French-speaking person or country; however the extent to which French is used varies from one country to the next, depending on its status. In Senegal, French has official status so it is used widely in official workplaces, in schools and in literature, but despite this, it is only spoken by 10% of the population (Malherbe 22). The majority of Senegalese people speak at least one of the many local languages. The term "Francophone" has been capitalised throughout this thesis, in accordance with standard English practice, but the contrary choice of writers has been retained within quotations. It must also be noted that the term "Francophone" is recognised as problematic by scholars such as Roger Little (*World*), David Murphy (*De-Centring*), and Charles Forsdick and Murphy (*Introduction*) due to its use when referring to literature written in French but not that which has been produced in France (3). This usage, they state, suggests a hierarchical segregation of cultures that reinforces the binary divides that colonialism relied upon for its expansion and consolidation (3). Instead, Murphy and Forsdick argue for a 'decolonisation' of the term, by stressing that the word "Francophone" should be used to refer to "all cultures where French is spoken, including, of course, France itself" (7). This all-encompassing meaning of the word is used throughout this thesis, unless expressed by another individual in a way which implies the more limited definition.

literature also stood out from a cultural translation perspective because the country is currently at a crossroads: a crossroads between old and new, Africa and the West, between tradition and modernity, French and Wolof.⁵ And whilst this may have been the case for a while now in Senegal and other Francophone African countries, this intersection (which will be explored throughout this thesis) appears exceptionally pronounced in the Senegal of today and throughout the literature that has been emerging from the country over the past few decades.

In fact, Senegal has a broad history of postcolonial literature due to its very famous Negritude⁶ President, Léopold Sédar Senghor, but whilst many male writers such as Ousmane Sembène, Birago Diop, Boubacar Boris Diop and Senghor himself have gained international success for their works and have been translated many times over, the women writers have often been bound by the borders of their country and even when translated, very few of their texts can be bought overseas either in French or in translation (see Bibliography of Senegalese Women Writers, page 529). The only

⁵ Wolof is one of the six national languages of Senegal, the others being Pular, Sereer, Jola, Mandinka and Soninke (Mbaya 57). However, Wolof is unusual in that it is spoken by over 80% of the Senegalese population (McLaughlin 153) and has become the *lingua franca*.

⁶ The Negritude movement was a literary revolution of the 1930s onwards which was established by Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Gontran Damas as a medium through which their voices, as Black writers, could be heard (see Chapter Two, Part II). Julio Finn describes Negritude as an “artistic movement of modern times whose express creed is to redeem the spiritual and cultural values of a people” (i). Throughout this thesis the term “Negritude” is spelt according to the Oxford English Dictionary, which capitalises the term but uses no accent. The only exceptions are when the term appears in a quote, title or reference, where the author’s spelling is always retained.

real exceptions to this are the works of Mariama Bâ: *Une si longue lettre* and *Un chant écarlate*, which have been translated into many languages worldwide and received much posthumous recognition (see biography in appendices, page 417). *La grève des battu* by Aminata Sow Fall as well as Ken Bugul's *Le baobab fou* have also been well received in translation. More recently some Senegalese poetry has been translated in anthologies of Francophone African women's work, including *The Other Half of History* in 2007 (Collins) and *A Rain of Words* in 2009 (d'Almeida); however these works focus on Africa generally rather than Senegal specifically. Hence, not only will this thesis take translation and cultural studies theories and apply them to new translations of Senegalese works, but it will also analyse existing translations to consolidate arguments. And whilst some of these translated texts date back thirty years, most have not been translated using the comprehensive cultural approach which is taken in this study.

As far back as 1979, in a text entitled *Traduire: Théorèmes pour la traduction*, Jean-René Ladmiral looked at the impact of cultural knowledge on translation, highlighting the translator's need for "une culture générale étendue" (12),⁷ but more recent critics take this further; the translator does not simply need a wide cultural knowledge but must be embedded in it. For example, Hans J. Vermeer speaks of the fundamental need for translators who are both bilingual and bicultural, stressing the importance of cultural knowledge and awareness in approaching translation practice (*Übersetzen* 36). By drawing upon cultural theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha or Kwame Anthony Appiah, this thesis will therefore investigate the extent to which a

⁷ "an extensive general knowledge."

translator needs to be bicultural and bilingual, but also, in a postcolonial world, perhaps even tricultural or trilingual and more.

In *Lost in Translation*, Eva Hoffman claims that “in order to translate a language, or a text, without changing its meaning, one would have to transport its audience as well” (273). Evidently an entire audience cannot be transported, so conveying meaning in translation without any change at all may not always be attainable. Instead, the translator who wishes to impart meaning with as little change as possible must be aware of cultural features that would impede communication to an audience with a different set of cultural expectations. Is it possible, through an awareness of cultural aspects, to communicate meaning without physically transporting an audience? Can the translator thereby break down the situational and cultural constraints that Snell-Hornby believes impact upon the relationship between the text and reader – here, the translator as primary reader (*Translation* 112)? In a society where translated texts are becoming ever more popular due to the impact of globalisation, it is the norm for many individuals to read the translator’s ‘version’ of the text rather than the first ‘version’ produced by the writer of the source text.⁸ This means readers often see cultural meaning through the eyes of the translator, hence the translator’s understanding of source text cultures is crucial.

The importance of the role of the translator as reader and cultural go-between is stressed in an interview conducted by Angela Foster with the winners of the 2007 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. Foster speaks to José Eduardo Agualusa about his

⁸ The idea of different ‘versions’ of a text brings into question the concept of the ‘original,’ which will be investigated in Chapter Four.

book *O vendedor de passados*, translated from the Portuguese by Daniel Hahn and entitled *The Book of Chameleons*. Agualusa states that: “the translator is the best reader a writer has” (Foster, *Talking* 14). He describes the translator in that mediating role between the source and target texts, between the rhythms of different languages and cultures, and continues: “when you translate, you lose something, but if the translator is really good, he manages to gain other things” (15). Clearly, as a prize-winner for his translated text Agualusa firmly believes in the translation process and works with a talented and committed translator; however, his quotations also underline just how important the translator is, not only in the process of introducing a piece of literature to a wider audience, but also in producing a new and arguably ‘original’ text.

Another important consideration is translation into the English language, for the majority of translation traffic these days takes place from English into a multitude of foreign languages and much less so the other way around (Simon, *Gender* 151). However, due to the increasing use of the English language as a *lingua franca* throughout the world, the texts under consideration in this research could be made available to a much wider audience by translating them into English. Whilst this calls into question certain ethics in translation with regard to maintaining a “culture of difference” (Bandia, *Translation* 230) when translating into such a global language, it is of great interest to examine the possible impact of this upon the writers, the canon and the future of Francophone African women’s writing in general. The cultural transfer of Francophone Senegalese women’s writing into an English speaking world is highly significant in that it provokes new thought on a culture that has rarely been communicated before in the English language.

The aim of this research is therefore clear: to apply Translation Studies theories to the analysis of Francophone Senegalese women's literature in order to formulate a series of translation strategies for the rewriting of texts within the genre. In his book, *Ladmiral* looks at the gap between translation theorists and practitioners, confronting the common belief that translators are theoretically challenged, and theoretical concepts are devoid of practicality (12). Whilst translators and theorists may hesitate to agree definitively with either statement, there is some truth in the matter: whilst theorists may analyse translation practice which has already taken place, more rarely is a study done which applies theory to an act of translation still to be undertaken. Hence, Translation Studies concepts will be employed in this research, but they will be 'turned on their heads' by examining Translation Studies theories and applying them to the practice of translation, which is rarely done in this field. In other words, the 'cultural turn'⁹ has been discussed in Translation Studies, but how could an in-depth knowledge of the culture of a country assist with the translation of its works, ie a 'theoretical turn' in translation practice?

Further, this study will test the hypothesis that extensive cultural analysis of texts can break down the constraints between reader and text and assist in translation. Literature and local cultures will be explored side by side to reveal how cultures past

⁹ The 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies is defined by Bassnett and Lefevere as the shift of focus towards the study of a text within the source and target cultures. A study of translation processes and practice is intended to deepen understanding of such things as: how a text is chosen for translation, the translator's role, criteria for translation strategies, and the reception of translated works in a target language (Bassnett, *Turn* 123). As the 'cultural turn' is central to the translation strategy for this thesis, it will be discussed further on page 42, and throughout this research.

and present may have inspired postcolonial women's texts. This will include analysis of Senegalese history and society, the effects of orature¹⁰ and the impact of local language.¹¹ The thesis will also examine both the traditional and modern roles of women in Senegal to discover the resulting impact upon postcolonial texts and the ensuing translation strategies. This is a highly important area of research, because it has barely been touched upon before. Whilst theorists such as Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (Bassnett, *Postcolonial*), Eric Cheyfitz, Vicente Rafael and Tejaswini Niranjana have written on the subject of postcolonial translation theory, there are far fewer academics who focus on translating Francophone Africa.

Extensive studies include Kwaku A. Gyasi's *The Francophone African Text: Translation and the Postcolonial Experience* from 2006, and Paul Bandia's 2008 book entitled *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa*. However, these examples take a more generic approach to postcolonial translation rather than examining one specific country or set of writers, as this study will do by

¹⁰ Orature has many different names, such as oral poetry, folklore, oral literature and oral tradition. It has been described as orature here, because it does not assume a particular type of Western genre, such as poetry or prose. The Oxford English Dictionary first recognised the term "orature" in 1976 ("orature"), when Jerry W. Ward used the word in the *Journal of Black Studies* to describe a creative medium of communication in which "speech not writing" is employed (201). More recently the term was used by Osa Osayimwense in the spring 2001 edition of *Research in African Literatures* (168).

¹¹ Whilst there are many local languages, constraints of time and space impose a focus on the use of the language of Wolof in particular as this is spoken by the large majority of the Senegalese population and has been a clear influence on much of the literature studied. In this way, a greater knowledge of one language has been attained, and this has simplified and streamlined this research.

concentrating on Senegal.¹² Bandia states that the focus of postcolonial translation theory differs from standard translation theory in that it accounts for “the layering of cultures and discourses” present in a postcolonial text (*Translation* 6), and his theory will certainly be applied to this study. However, what is intended in this research is to take the theories to a new level by applying them to specific case studies within a new cultural arena.

This research is of great significance in its attempt to redress the arguably unrepresentative nature of previous studies. For example, the introduction to a bilingual anthology of Francophone African women’s poetry, entitled *The Other Half of History*, notes the absence of women poets in other anthologised, translated and critical works (xix), and this is the case in Bandia’s book. *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa* is hailed on its cover as a long-overdue study on literature and translation in postcolonial Africa. However, the eleven works and six translations cited have all been written by men. Therefore, despite Bandia’s study being recent (dated 2008) and open to current literature and debate, once more the reader is left bemused by the absence of women writers. Furthermore, of the six writers mentioned in Bandia’s study, four are from Nigeria, one is from Cameroon and another is from Guinea (who spent time in Senegal). Therefore, it would be pertinent

¹² Other relevant studies that also take a wider geographical approach include *Decolonizing Translation: Francophone African Novels in English Translation* by Kathryn Batchelor (2009), a collection of works entitled “Translation in French and Francophone Literature and Film,” edited by James Day as part of the *French Literature Series* (2009), and another collection of papers entitled *Translation Studies in Africa*, edited by Judith Inggs and Libby Meintjes (2009).

to question whether or not this is a representative selection of writers from a broad enough range of countries to warrant the all-encompassing term “*Postcolonial Africa*.” Hence, this thesis endeavours to redress the gender and geographical balance of other studies, such as Bandia’s, by contributing to research on female African writers from Senegal.

It must be said that Bandia does include a disclaimer in a footnote on page thirty three, stating that the book “does not claim to be a comprehensive analysis of African writing in European languages,” which is perfectly respectable; however the assertions of the book title and publisher’s blurb are disappointing. There is no intention here to demean Bandia’s study in any way, for it is impossible to cover everything in such a huge subject area, and in this thesis too it is not viable to study every piece of literature by a female Senegalese writer: every piece of research has its limits and time constraints. But more importantly, while Bandia’s study has been extremely useful to this research and will be examined more throughout, analysis of his recent study highlights the immense expanse of research still left to be covered within the realm of Francophone African literature in translation.

Until now, the study of Francophone African women’s literature has been led by critics and academics such as Nicki Hitchcott, Irène Assiba d’Almeida and Renée Larrier, amongst others.¹³ And specific studies of Senegalese women writers include

¹³ The seminal works of these academics date back a number of years. Larrier’s *Francophone Women Writers of Africa and the Caribbean* was published in 2000 as was Hitchcott’s *Women Writers in Francophone Africa*, and d’Almeida’s *Francophone African Women Writers: Destroying the Emptiness of Silence* was published even earlier in 1994. However, all three academics continue to publish in the

Susan Stringer's *The Senegalese Novel by Women* and Lisa McNee's *Selfish Gifts: Senegalese Women's Autobiographical Discourses*.¹⁴ However, despite the growing canon, this is still very much a minority field when it comes to literary criticism. In her paper entitled *Cherchez la franco-femme*,¹⁵ Christiane P. Makward comments on the invisibility of Francophone women writers, stating that:

field of Francophone African women writers, amongst other areas. Note, for example, Larrier's 2007 article in *African Literatures at the Millennium* entitled "'Quand la lecture devient passion: Romance Novels and Literacy in Abidjan,'" and Hitchcott's "Travels in Inhumanity: Véronique Tadjó's Tourism in Rwanda," published in *French Cultural Studies* in 2009. Also in 2009, d'Almeida edited and published *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in Francophone Africa*.

¹⁴ While there are few books dedicated entirely to Senegalese women writers, numerous papers on specific authors have been published in edited collections and journals, a large proportion of these focusing on the works of Mariama Bâ and Sow Fall. Note, for example, Keith L. Walker's "Postscripts: Mariama Bâ, Epistolarity, Menopause, and Postcoloniality" in *Postcolonial Subjects: Francophone Women Writers* or Omofolabo Ajayi's "Negritude, Feminism, and the Quest for Identity: Re-Reading Mariama Bâ's 'So Long a Letter'" in *Women's Studies Quarterly*. Rosa Bobia and Cheryl Wall Staunton published "Aminata Sow Fall: Ses livres et son nouveau rôle" in *Présence francophone* and Jacqueline Boni-Sirera's article entitled "Littérature et société: Étude critique de 'La grève des battù' d'Aminata Sow Fall" appeared in *Revue de littérature et d'esthétique négro-africaines*. Further, a continuing project on "Female Authors from Senegal" can be found online as part of Jean-Marie Volet's research on *Reading Women Writers and African Literatures* ("Female").

¹⁵ Makward uses both the terms "franco-femme" and "francophemme" in her analysis of Francophone women writers. The term and title of the article stem from the phrase "cherchez la femme" taken from the 1854 book entitled *Les Mohicans de Paris* by Alexandre Dumas (Père). The phrase is used to indicate that women are "the universal solvent of male motivation" ("Cherchez").

...rare are the contemporary francophone women who are not driven into exile, to preserve their freedom of thought, lifestyling, and writing. The francophone woman writer seeks social anonymity in an exile made necessary by her stifling visibility 'at home.' (118)

At interview, writer Khadi Fall admitted to spending much of her writing time out of the country where she was not restricted by the constraints of being a woman in a society where the female function entails playing very busy social, working and household roles (*Personal 4*). Sokhna Benga also agreed that many women only write part-time due to their female duties as wife, daughter, mother and worker (*Personal 3*). Conversely, Amadou Lamine Sall who was also interviewed for this thesis, regularly appears on the local television channel, RTS (Radiodiffusion Télévision Sénégalaise). The marked public absence of Francophone Senegalese women writers contrasts with the visibility of male authors past and present, and may be one of the reasons for women writers' lack of public attention. Like the translator, for the most part their invisibility has become an integral part of their job (Venuti, *Translator's*). The translator often works anonymously to produce a piece of work for a new readership, whilst the female Senegalese writer must often remove herself from public life to have the time to do her job. Further, only on infrequent occasions do Francophone women have the opportunity for exposure equal to their male counterparts who may not have the social and family commitments of women authors, whilst the translator must accept that the work she has written is often credited to the source text writer or her name only appears on the inside of the book rather than the cover.

Possibly in part because of this issue regarding exposure, women make very rare, or tokenistic appearances in critical texts (Kumah 1). Whether this is also due to the fact that they started writing much later than their male counterparts (d'Almeida, *Francophone* 3), because there are fewer of them (da Silva 129), because they remain more silent in the international world of literary studies (Brown 3), or because there has been genuine bias towards male writers in the past (Hitchcott, *Women* 154), is beyond the scope of this present study. However, what makes these observations relevant is that they highlight a genuine void in my area of research and in neighbouring subjects, a void which serves to underline the fact that this thesis will contribute towards redressing this gender imbalance by adding to the growing body of works on Francophone African women writers.

In their introduction to *Postcolonial Subjects: Francophone Women Writers*, Mary Jean Green et al. state that one of their objectives is to “generate further studies of francophone women writers individually and in dialogue with one another” (xv). This is also what is intended with regard to this thesis – to stimulate further discussion on the subject of Francophone African women writers in the English speaking world, and in particular to expand studies of Senegalese women’s literature. Moreover, there has been no specific study on the ‘translation’ of Francophone African women’s literature. This research will therefore pull together current fields of knowledge in the areas of postcolonial translation and Francophone African women’s studies whilst asking new research questions specific to the translation of Senegalese women’s literature.

Further, this study will make a unique contribution to knowledge in that the majority of previous research on Senegalese literature in general only focuses on novels,¹⁶ whereas this research looks at a range of different text types. Secondly, whilst the issue of cultural transfer is discussed frequently in Translation Studies, rarely is the native language studied in relation to postcolonial African translation,¹⁷ perhaps because the incredible number of African languages and dialects is somewhat overwhelming when it comes to language learning.¹⁸ For the purposes of this study, I undertook lessons in Wolof whilst staying with Senegalese families in Dakar and Ndiobène, which gave me the opportunity to practise the language first-hand and understand different elements of the culture. This was invaluable in the textual analysis of Senegalese women's literature.

Original material has also been brought to this thesis through primary research conducted on the same trip to Senegal, which includes direct quotes and analysis of interviews with female Senegalese writers Mame Seck Mbacké, Khadi Fall and Sokhna

¹⁶ When speaking to Sall regarding Senegalese women's literature, he commented on how dynamic the world of the novel is in comparison to that of poetry (9). By "dynamic," he is perhaps underlining the fact that novels have attracted more attention from readers, critics and translators. In his example, he includes Seck Mbacké, who despite publishing several collections of poetry has not to this point been analysed in detail by literary theorists (see Bibliography of Senegalese Women Writers, page 529).

¹⁷ Since the nineties, however, there has been a push to study the original languages of some countries, such as India, in relation to postcolonial translation. Note, for example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's 1992 article on "The Politics of Translation" (see Chapter Three, Part III for further details).

¹⁸ According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, there are currently between eight hundred and one thousand languages spoken in Africa and many more dialects ("African Languages").

Benga, male writer, Amadou Lamine Sall and well-known feminist, Penda Mbow.

These interviews broached subjects such as Senegalese culture, orality, translation and the roles of Senegalese women, providing previously unavailable background information, opinions and facts on these issues, amongst others. In discussing the selection of books for a literary journal, Rosemary Smith says that "...editors here, as elsewhere in the world, are looking for strong writing, a unique voice, a story that needs to be told, a doorway to a world another writer couldn't take us through" (Hayward 9). Interviewing Francophone Senegalese women writers has been a doorway into their universe, an opportunity to hear their stories first-hand and gain direct insight into their lives. The interviews have provided rare case studies from women whose views have so often been confined to their works, and whose intentions may not have always been clear. Insight from, arguably, the most famous male poet of his generation (Sall), and an historian (Mbow) whose opinions on women, their role in society and the cultures that envelop them, has offered new perspectives and provided a much greater vision in my mission to understand the real Senegal in order to translate the literature which forms such an important part of it.

Finally, this thesis will be a useful and thought-provoking addition to scholarly work in Translation Studies because it is pluri-disciplinary (as is Bandia's). The need to draw upon different fields of study in the analysis of literature influenced by orality, such as Francophone African works, is highlighted by Alan Dundes (*Interpreting ix*), Ato Quayson (115) and Isidore Okpewho (*Introduction 8*), who make use of subjects such as sociology, linguistics and anthropology, for example. The most challenging aspect of this study is therefore to select those areas of research that are the most

appropriate to the exploration of the translation of postcolonial Francophone Senegalese women's literature, such as secondary research from the fields of linguistics, comparative literature, anthropology, ethnology, gender and postcolonial studies, as well as the obvious disciplines of translation and cultural studies. The challenge is also to juggle many different theoretical concepts within the time and space constraints of this thesis. It will not be possible to research every discipline to the same depth, but instead to analyse profoundly those areas of fields which will provide greater context and depth to this research at the present time.

II Unanswered Questions, New Explorations

In approaching a study of this magnitude, it is essential that the research methodology is coherent as it is the foundation for the entirety of the project. With regard to this thesis, the initial intention was to examine the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature in the context of Hitchcott's enhanced criteria for discussing cultural identity in an African context (*Women* 7), gender issues being added to Jean Derive's categories of sociopolitical, linguistic, geographical and racial concerns (21). Carole E. Boyce Davies also lists a series of important areas for discussion of Black women's positions in a variety of societies, which are race, class, gender, sexuality, national origin and ability (*Hearing* 4). Whilst the research of translation from a cultural perspective commenced under these categories, it soon became clear that some areas were more relevant than others and that this thesis could not be structured in the same way. Everything in translation always returns to the subject of language, for "...language is an expression both of the culture and the

individuality of the speaker, who perceives the world through language” (Snell-Hornby, *Translation* 40). Language cannot therefore be a separate chapter, but an integral part of each one, and this is also the case with gender, which is a continual thread throughout the thesis. It seemed more appropriate instead to find overriding themes which took into account the issues raised by Derive, Hitchcott and Boyce Davies.

By looking at a study closer to this one, it was possible to find a clearer pathway to approaching this thesis. For example, Bandia’s recent book focuses on language and translation, and within it he examines issues such as the politics of language, intercultural writing, cultural representation, linguistic experimentation and the ethics of translation. His thematic structure was of interest; however Bandia’s study differs from this one in that he is investigating translations which have already been undertaken, and his study is much broader in its cultural analysis. A thematic structure such as his was needed, but one which also allowed for an in-depth cultural investigation of Senegalese writing specifically, and women writers in particular. In examining research notes for this thesis, four key themes came to light: ‘change,’ ‘power,’ ‘mediation,’ and ‘orality;’ these umbrella categories allow for a focus on significant cultural and linguistic influences upon literature, whilst introducing a wide range of theories and issues raised by other academics such as Bandia. Each chapter then concentrates upon a series of research questions based upon the initial objectives of this thesis.

Chapter One, entitled *A Culture of Change*, discusses the way in which Francophone Senegalese women’s literature has developed and been transformed in the

context of historical and societal revolution. It analyses the concept of change, how tradition and modernity can be defined, asking where one stops and the other begins, and to what extent female writers are influenced by their roots and traditional values. In a 2007 article entitled *Imaginaire et société wolof: Tradition et modernité*, on the rise of the Wolof people and language throughout Western Africa, Lamine Ndiaye talks of the fictitious world that the Wolof people have created for themselves by modifying facts and social behaviour in order to survive. Chapter One will look in more detail at Ndiaye's decoding of the social and cultural phenomena of the Wolof people, and how this may have affected the literature produced. The customs and cultures of Senegal and the Senegalese will also be investigated, as well as the impact they may have had upon the formation of postcolonial women's literature. To what degree do they use the act of writing as a tool for preserving their own culture or alternatively as an instrument for change and revolution? And how does this impact their writing and ensuing translation in light of the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies?

Sherry Simon states that "the solutions to many of the translator's dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities to literary forms and to changing identities" (*Gender* 138). Thus, whether 'home-grown' or otherwise, this study will investigate local realities, changing identities and language alongside each other. And with the impact of globalisation, this thesis will consider to what extent Francophone Senegalese women writers are influenced by their own travels and contact with other cultures. It will then touch upon the traditional culture of women's silence and how writers have found voices in

postcolonial literature, how the genre was previously neglected or marginalised, but now appears to be flourishing – what has changed and why? And how is this reflected in their writing? How does this create shifts between languages and in translation? And what elements of cultural transfer are brought to light?

Translation Studies is closely linked to Comparative Literature, and it is possible to gain insight from viewing this study in this way. Bassnett states that “Comparative Literature involves the study of texts across cultures, that it is interdisciplinary and that it is concerned with patterns of connection in literatures across both time and space” (*Comparative* 1). The texts will be approached from an anthropological standpoint as well as drawing from other disciplines such as Area Studies to enquire how racial, ethnic and geographical issues may have influenced Francophone Senegalese women’s literature over time. Moreover, Chapter One will focus on the concepts of “time and space” to situate women’s texts in an historical and linguistic framework, using conclusions to determine defining features of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature, and in this way feed into translation strategies.

Chapter One also examines how African literature is treated as a canon and the impact of translation upon the current body of works. In *Women Writing Beyond the Hexagon*, Green et al. claim that:

...canons are created by critics, editors, and existing literary establishments. As editors our intention is not to reaffirm existing francophone canons nor to create an alternative one but instead to give a sense of the richness and diversity of works written by women from various francophone regions and cultures. (xvi)

But in the selection of any texts for translation, conscious decisions are being made as to whether certain texts are included or excluded in that selection. And by translating selected texts, is the translator therefore responsible for canon formation in the target language? Bearing this in mind, to what extent should the translator change her strategies for selection, and should this lead to a different treatment of African literature in translation and why?

Chapter Two explores the concept of *Power Relations*, firstly by considering some of the major political, cultural and religious influences upon the works of women writers. Slavery and colonialism have been the stimuli for power struggles between Africa and the West, Senegal and the coloniser, and between Islamic, Christian and traditional beliefs. How does real life influence what is on the page, whether subject matter, genre or language? And to what extent can an understanding of the multidirectional forces present within the country assist the translator in making working decisions? This chapter will investigate the Negritude movement as a responding power to that of the colonisers, analysing the way in which Senegal blends politics with culture and poetics. It will analyse the power that Senghor wielded over the country politically and culturally, spreading the language of literature and inspiring women writers. Does it help the translator to be equally inspired by the work and words of Senghor when interpreting Senegalese women's texts?

Sène Alioune states that: "le Sénégal estime que la culture n'est pas une appendice de la politique mais en est le préalable et la justification" (10).¹⁹ How are politics and culture so inextricably entwined? Can a Black African president both fight

¹⁹ "To Senegal, culture is not an appendage to politics but a precondition to it and the reason behind it."

and support the French system in a way that creates a power-conflict politically, culturally and linguistically? For the translator, it is difficult to reach the same level of understanding of what culture and writing mean to a community. This chapter argues that it is possible to express this understanding through cultural translation, demonstrating how a lack of cultural and political research can lead to arguably weaker translations. Further, the chapter investigates how Negritude can be updated and applied to recent works of poetry and prose that have been written by women, analysing the impact upon the translation of Senegalese works.

This chapter also explores the power of education and how this may have influenced the way in which Senegalese women write. In some cases, women have been deprived of a literary education due to traditional patriarchal values and traditions, whilst others have been highly influenced by the postcolonial education system, using more Gallicised literary forms and vocabulary. What use can an analysis of education be to the translator? Sall also highlights a potential difference between male and female writing in Senegal, stating that: “les femmes ont leur propre sensibilité...elles ont leur propres problèmes. Elles ont leur propre approche de la vie et de la société. Donc elles écrivent forcément différemment” (11).²⁰ This chapter investigates the depth of truth in Sall’s statement, exploring the possible characteristics of a ‘women’s language’ and how the translator can employ this knowledge in rewriting a text. Are

²⁰ “Women have their own sensitivities... they have their own issues. They have their own approach to life and society. So they are bound to write differently.”

there issues of equivalence²¹ for the translator in finding a ‘women’s language’ in English? And to what extent can George Steiner’s in-depth theoretical analysis of translation and gender be applied to the practicalities of translation (*After*)?

Under colonial rule, women were frequently marginalised in society through education and changed, non-traditional gender roles,²² and this marginalisation seems to have passed over into literature where women have often been negatively stereotyped (Larrier, *Francophone* 20; Steiner 44) or simply portrayed as unreal, hollow characters without depth. It is important to discover how Senegalese women writers reclaim power over their own identities on the page, and how an understanding of this affects the translator. Do the victims turn oppressors? Is the translation, and hence appropriation, of these texts just another form of oppression towards women writers who have struggled so much to release themselves from their past physical and

²¹ Equivalence is a controversial term employed by well-known theorists such as John Cunnison Catford and Eugene A. Nida (*Theory*) for defining the relationship between the source and target text, allowing the target text to be a translation of the source text deemed the original (Kenny 77). The controversial nature of this theory will be discussed in more detail as this thesis progresses.

²² The role of women in Senegalese society changed significantly with both the introduction of Islam and French colonisation. In “Islam, Women and the Role of the State in Senegal,” Lucy Creevey asserts that in the past, the more contact a community had with Islam, the more patriarchal the society and the less likely women were to influence upper-level politics (276). And while women had once played an important role in agricultural production prior to French colonisation, the French attached lower status and economic position to women workers, and this attitude soon spread to other industries (276).

literary constraints? Are these texts womanist or feminist in nature?²³ And in answering this question, what is the feasibility of using feminist translation strategies in rewriting these texts, such as those suggested by Luise von Flotow (*Feminist*)?

Finally this chapter will explore the power of Western ideology and attempt to move beyond Eurocentric translation strategies in order to better represent the source text culture and writer. What parallels can be drawn between the power struggles of colonialism and those faced by the translator – acculturation and assimilation, domestication or foreignisation?²⁴ To what point should the translator be aware of the power of Western ideology in translation decision-making? Then there is the power of the publisher. For Francophone women, the struggle to have their texts read is a

²³ These two terms have distinct meanings. Rooted in White culture and politics, “feminism” is described as the “advocacy of the rights of women (based on the theory of equality of the sexes)” (“Feminism”). Sometimes described as a “Black feminism,” the term “womanism,” coined by Alice Walker, is deemed more significant to Black women than “feminism” (“Womanist”) because it embraces women’s cultures and power whilst confronting certain racist and classist features of feminism (“Womanism,” *Feminist*). “Womanism” is said to acknowledge women’s roles in society as a whole (“Womanism,” *Oxford*), also rejecting certain separatist ideologies of feminism by embracing men, for example, as part of women’s lives (“Womanism”).

²⁴ “Foreignising” the text connotes staying closer to the source language, phrasing and form, producing a text that may appear out of place alongside most other English language texts. “Domesticating” the translation indicates an adaption to the target language and style, creating a text that is often more appealing to the target language reader. It is also possible to apply the words “acculturation” and “assimilation” to this latter category, where the translator attempts to situate the text more firmly in the target culture thereby assimilating the piece of work into the target environment. These terms will be referred to throughout this thesis, and in depth in Chapter Two, Part V.

constant battle, and it is usually commercially and financially driven publishers and sales people who ultimately decide what people should be reading (Makward, *Cherchez* 119). This is also the case with translation. Often it is not the translator who has the ultimate power, but the publisher, so how does this affect what is read in translation?

In a book entitled *Aminata Sow Fall et l'espace du don*, Trinh T. Minh-ha discusses the style and contents of two novels by Sow Fall, highlighting the way in which she deviates from Western ideology both in the form and content of her novels – straying from the paths first taken by postcolonial male Europhone writers and raising issues closer to the hearts of Senegalese women, as well as using the French language in an original and sometimes startling manner. It is the way in which the writers use the French language in such a distinctive manner that is highly interesting here. It is crucial to investigate not only how words and phrases from local languages are used, but also how writers combine the sounds and structures of their local languages with those of French, and how this uniqueness is captured in translation.

Their unique language is representative of their distinct identities shaped through factors such as colonialism and overseas travel. Stephanie Newell talks of “third generation writers,” a category in which most Francophone African women writers find themselves, remarking upon their intriguing and innovative style:

...it is possible that their experiences of migration, exile, and displacement have helped to generate the new styles and themes, in which fixed (racial or gendered) identities are melted down and poured into a field of ‘inter-subjectivity’ which is global in reach and

polymorphous in shape. Dissolving identity and language, shifting boundaries, taking risks with subject matter, challenging notions of the 'readable' text, these authors have stretched and tested the limits of established critical models. (186)

Whilst this research will explain how Francophone Senegalese women writers have not yet stretched their use of the French language to the extent that Anglophone male writers such as Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* or Amos Tutuola in *The Palm Wine Drinkard* do for example, it will also show that there is definite hybridity in their works;²⁵ cultural and linguistic hybridity which should be considered in translation for it is one of the most defining elements of the texts.

This leads to the third chapter: *Mediation, Hybridity and the Native Language*.

The chapter will question the concept and term 'hybridity' and its relevance to Senegalese writers and translation today, through the analysis of interviews undertaken in Dakar. It will analyse the clash of identities triggered by the meeting of France and Senegal, how Francophone Senegalese women writers' hybrid identities are expressed through language, and whether writing in the coloniser's language, the language of the 'other' is an emotional decision or a conscious way of regaining power and control both in the world of literature and beyond. How is French used here in contrast to how

²⁵ In short, hybridity here is used to describe texts that clearly draw from more than one distinct language or culture, and is mostly employed in reference to Europhone literature (Bandia, *Translation* 99). For example, Bandia explains hybrid language as one which is "located between the writer's European and African experiences," and has "definable characteristics which can be described from a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic point of view" (99). The notion of hybridity will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three itself.

it is used in literature from France? How is language manipulated to fit in with Senegalese cultures, and how has it been amended due to different ways of language learning in Africa? Are linguistic norms and conventions distinct from those in Europe, and if so, how does this impact the translator, especially if she is searching for some form of equivalence in the target text? Gideon Toury's analysis of *The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation* will be used here. Further, is the function and register of the text the same? For instance, can Peter Newmark's scale of formality be used (*Textbook* 14) to assess the tone of the text before translation? Or can theoretical research into functionalist approaches as conducted by Christiane Nord be applied to translation practice?

In this thesis the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies will lead to a renewed focus on linguistic issues, by analysing the native languages that permeate French. The most commonly spoken local language is Wolof, so the effect of Wolof upon Francophone women's literature will be examined, asking if the translator should have a good working knowledge of local languages when translating postcolonial literature. This chapter aims to demonstrate how the learning of Wolof can assist in the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature and perhaps other postcolonial African works; are Wolof words, phrases or grammatical constructions used directly in their works to create a linguistically hybrid text; or has the Wolof language influenced the form or style of the literature; if not, are there more subtle sounds reminiscent of Wolof? In these instances, what are the options for the translator?

In approaching the translation of hybrid texts, such as those by Senegalese women writers, this thesis will question whether there are instances when works can be labelled ‘untranslatable.’ Appiah’s research into thick translation will be drawn upon in order to gain a deeper understanding of literature such as this, which is often highly embedded in the source cultures. How can the translator recreate this hybridity in the target language, this blending of French and Wolof? To what degree does this raise issues of foreignisation or domestication in translation, a debate raised by Friedrich Schleiermacher in 1813 (*Different* 49)? Further, can semiotics be used to read cultural signs within the literature, in order to reconstruct them in translation? And is reading these cultural signs part of the translator’s function as a cultural go-between? Hatim and Mason claim that “...the translator takes on the role of mediator between different cultures, each of which has its own visions of reality, ideologies, myths, and so on” (236). This concept of the translator as a negotiator between languages and cultures will be investigated to find out whether cultural signs and implications are distorted or even weakened when crossing borders through translation.

This will undoubtedly lead to issues of the visibility or invisibility of the translator – in recreating a hybrid text, how bold can translators be in their decisions, and can a lack of understanding of the source text culture and languages heighten the visibility of the translator? Can the concept itself of a hybrid text expose the translator more, because the invisible translation of a hybrid text can mean replicating the source text style and language, which in itself is non-standard and therefore stands out? Joanne Collie claims that the “occasionally impossible yet essential” job of translating a non-standard language is crucial in its recognition of the diversity of voices and

cultures in an ever-more global world (186). So how should translations be approached differently when the language is non-standard? And how much does translation affect the reception of this literature with non-standard qualities? Does the complexity of translating these works mean it is harder to retain the cultural implications of the source language text? Can French or English ever truly represent a native African language?

Finally, in Chapter Four *The Influence of Orature* upon postcolonial Senegalese women's literature will be investigated. Speaking of African women poets, Stella and Frank Chipasula comment that "the most articulate of them draw upon the stylistic elements of oral poetry in order to root their works in their cultures" (xxi). However, this thesis aims to demonstrate that level of articulacy is not a factor, and neither is text type, that in fact there are elements of orality present in many different types of Francophone Senegalese women's works, and these are stylistic, but also aural, structural, emotional and topical. In modern Senegal, music and orality are still very much present in everyday lives and cultures, and the way in which both traditional and modern orality may have influenced postcolonial literature will be analysed. In the past, orature has been a highly important part of Senegalese women's lives; as the precursor of literature in Western Africa it was a form of storytelling, amusement, passing time, as well as passing on information and history from one generation to the next.

Researching Senegalese orality, how and when it is used and who writes and performs it may, it is hoped, uncover parallels between the traditional form of storytelling in Africa and the written form which has been brought to the continent

from the West, the aim being to find the most useful translation strategies for this text type. Orature will be analysed in terms of style, form and subject matter, the belief being that the translator can then recognise these characteristics in the postcolonial text and use this knowledge in the production of a translation. There will also be discussion of the concepts of quality, integrity and accuracy in translation – how do these differ in Senegalese and English terms, and how can they be defined by the translator?

The study of orature underlines the question of text type theory in translation. Writers such as Katharina Reiss, Anna Trosborg and Nord draw upon the concepts of genre and text type in the translator decision-making process, in order to define such things as source text intentions and features. It is hoped that their findings may be used to investigate Francophone Senegalese women's literature as a genre, to study the link between Western poetry and orature, and to ascertain whether poetry translation theory is relevant to the translation of postcolonial African literature. Further, inspired by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord's work on oral literature (Lord, *Homer; Singer*), the concept of the 'original' source text will be questioned. And the chapter will investigate how a more fluid sense of originality can change the way in which a translator approaches her work. Some aspects of theatre translation will also be explored, above all the concepts of performance, the role of the audience, and music, all of which appear to play a highly important role in orality. Different forms of oral expression will be analysed with the intention of drawing parallels with written narratives. And most importantly these findings will be related to the work of the translator. Okpewho claims that "poets in the two traditions are motivated by much the same factors and issues even though they have developed in different backgrounds"

(*Introduction* 20), but is this always the case? And even if motives can be compared, how do the two means of expression correspond, or otherwise?

Further, as women's oral past is very different from that of their male counterparts, women's orature will be explored: specifically, who uses orality, when it is employed, the forms it takes, different genres and their features. The chapter will also investigate whether, due to traditional female roles, women are closer to their oral past than their male counterparts, and therefore play an integral role in the communication of orature from one generation to the next. Vermeer's skopos theory will be touched upon in relation to the purpose of women's orature and its possible relevance to written texts. Can the translator use this knowledge as part of her strategy? Further, Bandia speaks of the fictionalising of orature (*Translation* 3), but is this the case with women writers from Senegal? And how might this text type be translated? If it is not fictionalised orature, in what other ways has orality influenced Francophone Senegalese women's literature and ensuing translation strategies?

In summary then, Chapter One begins with an overview of Senegalese culture, providing a general introduction to the link between cultural research and translation. This leads to closer analysis in Chapter Two of key social and political issues that have influenced postcolonial writing and therefore translation. Chapter Three draws upon the previous chapters by looking at the resulting literary hybridity and the translator's role in negotiating between different linguistic and cultural elements of a text. And finally, Chapter Four looks very specifically at the most overt expression of hybridity – orality, pushing the boundaries of standard translation practice to incorporate more fluid notions of an 'original' source text, which are more common to African tradition.

As the thesis progresses, each chapter looks at issues in closer detail. Chapter One is thus very general in its cultural approach, but Chapter Four is very specific in its analysis of orality.

The four chapters defined above will draw upon examples of writing taken from literature by a number of Senegalese women writers in order to explain how elements of culture have influenced their writing and may have a direct impact upon translation strategies. Thirteen writers have been chosen in total, in order to demonstrate the wide range of material available from Senegalese women writers with regard to style, genre, date and popularity. There are well-known writers such as Mariama Bâ and Ken Bugul (Mariétou Mbaye Biléoma) and lesser-known authors such as Khadi Fall or Awa Ndiaye. The text types have been varied in order to test whether certain translation strategies are more relevant to some genres than others. Hence, there are analyses of excerpts from a selection of poetry collections, novels, a piece of theatre and a short story, as well as anthologised poetry from Annette Mbaye d'Erneville whose source texts are difficult to acquire.

The texts date from Mbaye d'Erneville's post-independence poetry in *Kaddu*, published in 1963, to a more recent collection by Seck Mbacké in 2006, entitled *Lions de la Téranga*. The styles vary greatly from writer to writer with some authors drawing intensely upon traditional culture and local language, such as Benga or Fatou Ndiaye Sow. Others, educated for years in the French system and having spent time in France, are more influenced by Western style, such as Sow Fall. As much of the literature is unavailable in the UK and Europe, and even on the Internet, my travels to Senegal and the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar have been fundamental to my

studies. However, initial research into translation and cultural studies theory, for example, took place much closer to home at Warwick University, the School for Oriental and African Studies in London, the British Library and Oxford University, which houses a number of key texts by Francophone African women writers.

Throughout the thesis a number of extracts from the thirteen featured writers will be translated to support relevant arguments. The initial strategy for translating these extracts incorporates theories from three leading translation scholars: Snell-Hornby, Reiss and Newmark. Firstly, Snell-Hornby's "top-down" approach to literary translation will be employed because it allows for a strong consideration of issues of cultural transfer (Collins, *When* 9; Snell-Hornby, *Translation* 121). Her approach begins with a focus on "macro-elements," analysing general aspects of the source text, its context and functions, before progressing to a stylistic analysis and research into "micro-elements" such as syntax, semantics and sound devices (*Translation* 121). This logical system for analysis is effective as it ensures that all elements of the text and all possible readings are taken into account in the process of translation.

Secondly, Reiss's text type research will be considered. In the translation of "expressive" or "form-focused" texts,²⁶ Reiss highlights the importance of aesthetics and how a writer expresses herself (*Translation* 31-32), so the translations that follow

²⁶ In the category of "expressive" texts, Newmark includes all "serious imaginative literature," which encompasses all the source texts within the Francophone Senegalese canon – lyrical poetry, short stories, novels and theatre (*Textbook* 39). In brief, Reiss chooses to label these "form-focused" texts, where "form," she states, "is more concerned with *how* an author expresses himself, as distinct from 'content'" (*Translation* 31).

will incorporate aspects of an individual writer's style. Further, Reiss states that form-focused texts are "*source language oriented*" and that the translator must find an "*analogous form*" in translation in order to create a "corresponding impression" and achieve a "true equivalent." Further, she stresses that a translator must illicit an equivalent effect in the reader when considering elements such as sound, syntax, tempo, style, forms, rhyme, metaphor and meter (32-33). As this research places much importance on source text cultures, Reiss's observations will be carefully considered in the translations that form a large part of this thesis.²⁷

Reiss also underlines a necessity to retain external and internal forms in translation or risk the loss of the work's individual character (35). This loss can be avoided by translating Francophone Senegalese women's literature "semantically,"²⁸ which leads this methodology to a third scholar – Newmark. Newmark believes "semantic translation" is one of only two methods (the other being "Communicative Translation") which fulfil the main objectives of translation – to be accurate and economic (*Textbook* 47). In this thesis, the semantic method has been chosen over the

²⁷ Of course, Reiss's beliefs and methods do not have to be used, for there are no rigid rules when it comes to literary translation, especially if there is no strict translation commission. However, Reiss's strategy does fit very well with the objective in this thesis to explore literature and cultures side by side, for culture can directly influence language both semantically and syntactically as will be discovered in this research.

²⁸ The method of "semantic" translation was used when translating Francophone African women's poetry into English for an anthology entitled *The Other Half of History* (Collins, *Touching* 23-24).

communicative method as an ‘initial’ approach, as it allows for contextual meaning, aesthetic value and cultural understanding of the source text (46).²⁹

The theories of these three scholars will be employed and then built upon throughout this thesis. As outlined, this will be done by drawing from common theories and models from Translation Studies such as Vermeer’s Skopos theory (*Skopos*) or Toury’s analysis of norms and conventions (*Nature*). But clearly, as this thesis incorporates cultural research, the ‘cultural turn’ in Translation Studies (Lefevere, *Translation*) will play a significant role in this study. The ‘cultural turn’ implies the analysis of translation in context, translation as rewriting, and as a form of representation made to respond to the demands of a society and culture, and these ideas will form an integral part of this thesis.

In this research Translation Studies theories will be woven together with an investigation of Senegalese culture and an analysis of postcolonial literature. This thesis will discuss how the general translation methodologies can benefit from a broad and interdisciplinary (see page 23) cultural study, demonstrating how strategies such as those from Snell-Hornby, Reiss and Newmark can be enhanced through more extensive research when translating within this corpus and perhaps related texts. Moreover, as this thesis progresses, the discussion of translation strategies at times

²⁹ Whilst “communicative translation” also considers contextual meaning (47), it would not integrate fully with the cultural stance taken in this thesis. This is because, according to Newmark, communicative translation aims to serve the ‘target’ text readership rather than the ‘source’ language author (48), while the cultural approach taken in this study necessitates a thorough consideration of all aspects of the ‘source’ language and cultures in the process of translation.

departs from the analysis of more standard methods for literary translation as touched upon in this introduction. It will consider, for example, the possibility of “adaptation” (Newmark, *Textbook* 46) which will be explored as a strategy for translating works such as plays and poetry, where ‘rewriting’ or indeed ‘writing’ a new piece of work may assist the transition of a text from paper to performance. Finally, this research will be concluded by analysing the entire study and findings in relation to the objectives stated within the introduction.

Of course, one of the key features of this thesis will be the interviews conducted in Dakar in 2008 which will be used as evidence and insight into the real lives and thinking of Francophone Senegalese women writers and their attitudes and expectations with regard to translation. Novelist, Benga feels that the translator should have “un respect de cette [ma] culture, que l'étranger ou l'étrangère qui a mon texte entre les mains, mon texte traduit, puisse ressentir ce que je ressens” (*Personal* 10),³⁰ but whether it is described as empathy, or “following in the footsteps,” “affinity,” or being “in tune” with the author, it appears most writers, theorists and translators are singing from the same hymn sheet; that translation requires an understanding and identification with the source text writer...but how does the translator of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature go about this?

³⁰ “a respect for this [my] culture, so that the foreigner, male or female, who is holding my text, my translated text, can feel what I feel”

CHAPTER ONE – A CULTURE OF CHANGE

Historical change has forced people reared in one tradition to adopt new behaviour, to accept foreign beliefs, to embrace different norms, and ultimately, to change their values. (Gugler 103-4)

I Literary Representations of Societal Transformation

Most societies and cultures are in a constant state of change, moving from familiar past traditions, values and beliefs and developing new opinions, motivations and behaviours at the same time. Change is an integral part of Senegalese society and a concept which writers, who live or have lived in Senegal, often incorporate into their works of literature. Whilst this notion of change in the academic study of Africa as a whole is not a new one; there are a vast number of anthropological and sociological books on the changing character of Africa (Little, *Urbanization*; Herskovitz; Lloyd, being just three), what is new about this study is the connection between Senegalese change and its relation to literature and translation.

Thus, the present chapter begins by analysing the notion of change in Africa and how it may be represented in literature by Senegalese women writers. It will then go on to investigate whether a background study of cultural change can transform the work of the translator, exploring the extent to which she must be embedded in the culture she is translating. This chapter draws upon concepts such as tradition and modernity, the use of writing as a tool to preserve culture or incite change, the effects of globalisation and notions of time and space, and how each of these themes can be

explored to the benefit of the practising literary translator and arguably ‘improve’ the way in which she works. This chapter also serves to introduce some of the key historical, political, cultural and linguistic themes which will be developed and analysed further, with use of literary examples, as this thesis progresses.

Cultural change is an integral feature of many societies today, but the process and speed of the transformation of Senegalese cultures has been very marked in recent years. In fact, at interview, novelist, poet and scriptwriter, Benga underlined the dynamic nature of present-day Senegalese cultures, asserting that:

...nous sommes dans une société sénégalaise en pleine mutation...par rapport à ses valeurs traditionnelles, par rapport à sa perception de l’avenir... Aujourd’hui, de plus en plus avec la nouvelle génération et la mondialisation, on a plus tendance à aller de l’avant, parce qu’on a quelque chose qui nous pousse vers l’avant. (*Personal 4*)³¹

And it is this constant change, and its resulting shift in perception, opinions and values, which is reflected in the literature of many African writers. And just as, famously, Achebe represented historical change and the impact of the West in *Things Fall Apart*, or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie used the backdrop of a military coup in Nigeria to talk of political and personal change in *Purple Hibiscus*, change is also a key theme in the works of Francophone Senegalese women writers. For example, in *Une si longue lettre*, Bâ touches upon the change in opportunities for women as cultures are

³¹ “...in Senegal we live in a society which is totally changing... with regard to its traditional values, its perception of the future...These days, especially with the new generation and globalisation, there is a greater tendency to move forward, because something is pushing us forward.”

influenced by colonisation. Sow Fall looks at political change in *L'ex père de la nation*, and in *Le froid et le piment*, Seck Mbacké focuses on the harsh change of fortune for African immigrants in France. The main focus in Part I of this chapter is therefore the relationship between changing realities and the embodiment of cultures on the pages of Francophone Senegalese women's literature. It will also investigate the relevance of this relationship to the translator.

Societal transformation is evidently an important theme for many writers, as demonstrated. However, challenging Benga's statement, Seck Mbacké believes that African cultures have not altered at all, but the status of Black people and how this in itself is communicated and asserted through Francophone literature have changed (*Littérature* 204). Indeed, her beliefs regarding status and communication cannot be refuted. However, there is no denying that certain traditions have changed over time and today, more than ever before, society is a fusion or melting pot of cultures, and Senegalese cultures are not exempt from that. Instead, Seck Mbacké's viewpoint must be taken in context; rather than rejecting any evidence of change, it seems that she wishes to highlight the way in which African people have managed to retain many elements of their traditional cultures, despite changes in circumstances. And it is this entire mesh of old, new, and changing cultures that is embodied in Senegalese literature. But how exactly can this be related to language and translation?

In the same article for *Ethiopiennes* with regard to African and Latin American literature, Seck Mbacké discusses the way in which writers manipulate language according to their own experience, saying that: "Chaque écrivain change le langage qu'il reçoit en naissant mais le conserve et le perpétue dans l'irréalité du monde et du

temps, l'écrivain fait plus qu'inventer, il découvre" (205).³² Hence, language is clearly linked to the cultural and the personal, and as "language is not a mere collection of words with commonly accepted meanings; it is also intimately tied to the culture that has given it form" (Green ix). If a culture is in a constant state of flux, so is language, and that impacts upon the translator.

Bassnett supports this argument by stating that "a writer does not just write in a vacuum: he or she is the product of a particular culture, of a particular moment in time" (*Taking* 136). Thus, if time and space, changing realities and the location of a text within that arena are crucial to its writer, those factors must also be of value for the translator when she, in turn, writes the target text. A pioneer of the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies, Bassnett focuses on the way in which texts are embedded in the source text cultures. What this thesis will do is take this one step further, analysing specific cultures and specific texts, and necessarily engaging with the values of the works under consideration (Simon, *Gender* 140). If, as Maria Tymoczko declares, "the culture or tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext which is rewritten – explicitly and implicitly, as both background and foreground – in the act of literary creation" (*Post-colonial* 21), surely the translator needs to be aware of this crucial metatext, perhaps even developing new strategies and techniques as the cultures and languages she studies constantly expand and develop. In fact, Christopher Miller claims that it is possible to "seek a better understanding of Francophone African literature by placing it within its historical, political, but especially anthropological

³² "Every writer changes the language he is given at birth; but he also keeps it and it lives on in the unreality of the world and time. The writer does more than invent, he discovers."

context” (5), and that is the intention here. Whilst the functionalist form of anthropology largely associated with colonialist times may be less valued than formerly (Pálsson 8), a great deal can still be learnt from studies which have a more cultural and sociological slant (Clifford 62).

Hence, to understand cultural change as a crucial metatext, as well as its link to language and literature, it is useful to look at the work of academics who have already analysed this process of change in relation to Africa. Change in Africa is so often attributed to Western influence (Lloyd 160-170), but this acknowledgement on its own can be rigid and narrow. Kwame Gyekye states that traditional societies still demonstrate change in inherent beliefs and practices over time, independent of Western influence. And whilst this change may be less rapid than in other societies, time and encounters between groups of different ethnicities within Africa mean transformation still exists (217). Thus, this study of change must not be limited to looking at influences upon literature that can be linked to colonial and postcolonial times, but it must also consider the effects of more general societal change and the impact that this has had upon language in Senegal. Note, for example, the poem “Au seuil du néant”³³ by Ndiaye Sow, who expresses the importance of rediscovering her roots as her mind escapes the forward momentum of time and space to travel freely within it. Not only does she refer to the legend of the first sacred baobab tree to grow in Senegal over the body of the ancestor who brought it (“Baobab”), but it could be said that she also implies a parallel to the ‘original solitude’ of the Bible:

³³ “At the doorway of Nothingness”

Laissez-moi redécouvrir
Le Baobab Originel
Où dort l'Aïeul
Dans la rumeur profonde
De sa solitude première.
Laissez mon œil éclaté
De myriades de soleils,
Voyager dans l'espace-temps sans rivages

(27)

Let me rediscover
The Original Baobab
Where the Forebear sleeps
In the deep murmurings
Of the first solitude.
Let my vision bursting
With myriads of suns,
Travel in space-time without shores

In this poem it is crucial to capture the reminiscent feeling of times gone by, the regret of change and the urge to remember. An understanding of the legend of the sacred baobab allows for informed decisions to be made, ie the translation of "Aïeul" as "Forebear" or "Ancestor" rather than "Grandfather," for instance. And translation of "sa première solitude" retains a level of ambiguity through use of the definite article, for it could refer to the solitude of the baobab, the Forebear or the 'original solitude,' as

previously discussed. An understanding of general societal change allows for a unique consideration in translation of both the African legend and the possibility of more recent literary influences from beyond the borders of the country. This understanding can have a direct impact upon choices of vocabulary in the target text, as demonstrated.

Other academic analyses of change, such as Joseph Gugler and William G. Flanagan's early sociological study of change in West Africa, explain how individuals acquire new norms of behaviour alongside changing cultures. For example, people may learn to understand how to socialise in an urban setting whilst never losing their ability to socialise in a rural environment (115) as will be discovered, for instance, in *Mame Touba* by Seck Mbacké in Part II of this chapter. Thus, sociological insight can lead to an understanding of literary depictions of particular cultures. By pulling together early analyses of African culture such as this, and personal and other present-day observations and investigations, an understanding can be reached of how the changing nature of Senegalese women's cultures is embodied in their literature. Evidently, Western societies have had an impact upon Senegalese cultures, but those cultures have not simply disintegrated on contact with the West. In fact, Melville J. Herskovitz and William R. Bascom assert that: "There is no African culture which has not been affected in some way by European contact, and there is none which has entirely given way before it" (3). This is why many traditional elements of culture still exist alongside features of cultures that are considered to be European in origin.

For example, throughout Senegal today there are very poignant reminders of where the society has come from and where it is in the process of moving to – the traditional "boubou" is worn one day and jeans and a football shirt the next, families

will sit on the floor to eat from a communal dish with cutlery, and you may see someone on a laptop in a village with no running water. These are just flippant examples, but they do reflect the change in norms expressed by Gugler and Flanagan, demonstrating effectively the way in which Senegalese society embraces both traditional cultures and any new influences which are introduced into society, whether as a result of European contact or internal development, new technologies or globalisation. And this contrast can be seen throughout Senegalese women's literature, including the poetry of Seck Mbacké, for example, which draws upon long-established initiation ceremonies and modern football tournaments.

First embodied by the early Signares of Gorée island³⁴ who were powerful interpreters between African and European languages and societies, and whose cultures were a highly complex “partially blending, largely coexisting” hybrid of Senegalese and European (Brooks 44), the Senegalese writers of today evidently still represent a strong culture of *métissage*. They may not be mixed race, but their hybrid cultures clearly mark the changes that have been made in Senegalese society over the past century. And this change also applies to language. The understanding that this thesis is not analysing the literature of a static society, but of a changing world is crucial; as cultures change, language changes, and both are reflected in Francophone Senegalese

³⁴ A term derived from the Portuguese “senhora,” Signares were highly respected business women, often descendants of Portuguese settlers and local African women who, due to their dual cultural background, were in an excellent position to work as brokers manipulating African and European trading networks. A large number of these women lived on Gorée and in Saint Louis due the fact that more Europeans resided in these locations than in the rest of West Africa as a whole (Brooks 19-20).

women's literature. Further, as cultures and languages are transformed, so too are translation styles, techniques and strategies. These, in turn, affect cultures – it is a constant three-way interaction between language, culture and translation as each one in turn impacts upon the others. This is a crucial point which will be investigated further and at length throughout this research.

It is clear from the discussion so far, that most of the female Senegalese writers studied in this thesis have been witness to a cultural transformation which began long before they were born as a result of ordinary societal development as well as the political, religious, linguistic or societal influences from beyond the country's borders often mentioned in the anthropological studies of old and the ethnographic and sociological studies of more recent times.³⁵ And whilst male writers may have seen

³⁵ According to Gugler and Flanagan three types of change can be identified in West Africa – historical, situational and biographic (97). The historical element represents such developments as the impact of the trans-Saharan trade upon wealth and urbanisation of the cities (97), the spread of Islam following its introduction to West Africa in around the ninth century, the destructive nature of slavery and its final abolition (98), and the ongoing cultural impact of the colonisers (102). There will be a discussion of the influence of historical factors such as these throughout this chapter, developing them further as issues of power in Chapter Two. Situational change is about shifts in behaviour as a result of participating in different social systems, such as the move away from traditional culture as individuals become adjusted to city life (106), the wearing of Western clothing to emphasise social standing (103), or visiting new places due to the introduction of the Senegalese railway in 1881 (115). There will be an investigation of the impact upon literature and translation of such a move between tradition and modernity in Part II. Biographic change is change at the individual level (115), and one that will be analysed further by examining the experiences of individual writers and their works, in this chapter and throughout this thesis.

more change prior to independence due to the fact that they were given more social and academic freedom than women during colonial times (Miller, *Theories* 268), many women have seen incredible change in their lives because independence did not just represent the country's freedom from France, but women's liberty from the constraining nature of European politics (Berger, *Women* 102). And this change from women's perspectives is represented in their prose and poetry. It is worth noting here, for example, the poetry of Ndeye Coumba Mbengue Diakhate who dedicates her poem, "Ceinture d'amour"³⁶ to "...toutes mes sœurs sénégalaises, / Pour un Sénégal prospère, / Dans un monde meilleur,"³⁷ an extract of which is:

Si seulement toutes les femmes le voulaient bien;
Il naîtrait au vieux monde un cœur neuf, plein d'amour et de vie,
Impulsant sans arrêt du bonheur à foison. (12)

If only all women wanted it truly;
The old world would bring forth a new heart, full of love and of life,
Endlessly pulsing with an abundance of joy.

It is essential to capture the source text's positive, uplifting sentiment of hope for change in translation. In the source text, this is achieved through a certain simplicity of vocabulary as well as a brisk rhythm. This has also been attained in the target text above by inverting the structure of the first line in English translation so that it does not 'tail off' with "...really wanted it," but instead embodies the stronger, positive notes of

³⁶ Literally: "Belt of love," or perhaps figuratively it could be translated as: "Circle of love."

³⁷ "...all my Senegalese sisters, / In favour of a prosperous Senegal, / In a better world"

the source text as “...wanted it truly.” In line two, the repetition of “of” sustains the rhythm in the second half, and in the shorter line three, translating “bonheur à foison” as “an abundance of happiness” would cause the end of the poem to drag, where “an abundance of joy” is short, sharp and upbeat. Hence, Senegalese women’s poetry does not always look soulfully to the past, but positively to the future, and these sentiments can also be represented in translation.

Moreover, academic and feminist activist, Mbow claims that women’s literature from Senegal is very realistic (6), a claim that supports the necessity for investigating changing cultural realities in order to gain an understanding of a text prior to translation. Mbow continues to state that, for the most part, these women are not feminists representing some form of social elite distinct from the rest of the people, but instead, they describe a female social reality, “elles comprennent l’anatomie de la femme, elles connaissent l’univers psychique de la femme” (6).³⁸ And this everyday reality expressed in the Francophone literature of Senegalese women writers is also noted by UCAD (Université Cheikh Anta Diop) academic, Ibra Diene, who remarks that both the vocabulary and grammar used appear to translate everyday Senegalese realities (424-425). Therefore, if change is happening in society, it is happening on the page. The realistic and often semi-autobiographical (McNee 61-62; Diene 423) nature of women’s literature means that if the translator can understand this changing reality, she can understand the words and the more complex meanings of the prose or poetry she is translating.

³⁸ “they understand how women are made, they know how women think.”

The argument that writing embodies these continually changing cultures was further supported at interview by Seck Mbacké, who makes a considerable effort to understand a society in the process of change, in order to produce literature that accurately represents real life. Having spent much time in the city and overseas, Seck Mbacké states that, in order to represent rural realities which have changed since her youth, she gained inspiration by visiting the more rural central region of Senegal and literally working in the fields and spending time with country people. She claims that she needed to be close to country folk because understanding their essence or spirit is of great importance if she is going to write about them (*Personal* 11). Her book entitled *Le froid et le piment* is also described as “un livre vérité,”³⁹ founded on her experience as a social worker in France (Signaté 214). If, as has been regularly discussed in Translation Studies, the translator is “rewriter” (Lefevere, *Translation*; Lotbinière-Harwood; Helgason), should the translator be putting in as much effort when rewriting a piece of literature, as the writer of the perceived source text has done?⁴⁰

³⁹ Literally this means “book of truth.” However, the phrase is also an implicit reference to “cinéma vérité,” a 1960s French film movement that “showed people in everyday situations with authentic dialogue and naturalness of action” (“Cinéma”). The way in which Seck Mbacké has created and structured *Le froid et le piment* transfers the realist features of this cinematic movement to the written page.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, self-taught translator of Chinese and Japanese literature, Arthur Waley never went to Asia, nor did Ezra Pound, and did not speak a word of Chinese or Japanese (Weinberger 17), yet was very revered as a translator, as was Pound. An attempt is not being made to criticise their translation

This is a fiercely debated topic, for recent articles by Bassnett, for example, question the concept of rewriting, and instead opt for a looser concept of translation as writing – an idea which stems from the notion that there is not just one ‘original’ text (*Culture* 14; *Writing* 173-4), a concept that will be developed further in Chapter Four. But in interviews, the writers were asked whether the translator can truly understand the present-day realities expressed in their works without visiting Senegal. Seck Mbacké believes it is essential for a translator to understand fully the lives of those she is translating just as the writer of the source text would do, just as she has done, using whatever means to that end (*Personal* 11). And Sall is a clear supporter of the translator working very closely with the source text writer so that the translator can ask questions and Sall can clarify elements of past or present cultures which the translator may not be familiar with. “Il ne comprendrait pas,”⁴¹ Sall responds to the question as to whether a translator can understand his works without going to Senegal (5). In addition, whilst Sall does meet the translator in either Dakar or Paris, it is apparent that location is not of prime importance and it is their working together which is key (5).

Benga also agrees that a translator should work alongside a writer (*Personal* 11), and Khadi Fall believes a translator who does not work closely alongside the source text author, is at risk of mistranslation (*Personal* 13). But contrary to Sall, Benga asserts that it is possible for a translator to understand the cultural messages in her books even if she has not visited Senegal, because they are universal messages

strategies here, only to suggest that following the source text writer more closely can provide a different perspective on her work, and in that way change how the translator rewrites a text.

⁴¹ “He wouldn’t understand.”

(*Personal 6*). Clearly, these four authors are talking about living writers, and there will be cases where the notion of the translator working alongside the writer will be impossible, for example with the now classic works of Mariama Bâ who died in 1981. But what is evident throughout the interviews with these writers is that they expect the translator to take all necessary measures to reduce the situational and cultural barrier between text and the translator in her role as reader, by gaining a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the text. And this necessity for a thorough appreciation of the cultural metatext of a piece of work applies to the process of translating literature from writers both past and present, and this is especially relevant in relation to a society that is in the process of making that transition between tradition and modernity.

II Translating between Tradition and Modernity

The notion of Senegalese change is one that takes into account the journey that societies have undertaken between traditional life and modern cultures, but in striving for modernity, long-lived customs, practices and beliefs are not simply cast away. Thus, if Francophone Senegalese women writers draw upon elements of their cultures which are traditional, and also upon components of other cultures, which have been newly introduced, as well as assuming that some cultures have naturally changed over time, is there a point at which tradition stops and modernity begins? Hitchcott asserts that:

...feminine identity in francophone African women's writing is initially expressed as a tension between the two apparently contradictory poles

of 'modernity' and 'tradition,' poles which often become translated as an opposition between the individual and the community. (*Women* 153)

So, how are these concepts translated into the literature produced by Francophone Senegalese women authors, and more significantly, how is the tradition/modernity "tension," described by Hitchcott, represented in their writing? These are the questions that will be approached in Part II of this chapter.

The concepts of tradition and modernity are always quite separately treated. Tradition being "...a statement, belief, or practice transmitted (esp. orally) from generation to generation" ("tradition"), and modernity can be explained as "an intellectual tendency or social perspective characterized by departure from or repudiation of traditional ideas, doctrines, and cultural values in favour of contemporary or radical values and beliefs..." ("Modernity"). And it can be tempting to contrast these two concepts. However, supporting Hitchcott's suggestion of "apparently contradictory poles," Gyekye states that "the truth of the assertion that every society in the modern world inherits ancestral cultural values implies that modernity is not always a rejection of the past, but it also casts serious doubts on the appropriateness of perceiving tradition and modernity as polar opposites" (217). On the other hand, Appiah states that traditional culture is often defined as that which existed before the European empires, and that interaction with the West "produced a culture in transition from tradition to modernity," calling this state of being – "nontraditional" (*In* 107). But whilst there is no doubting the shifting nature of Senegalese tradition, the word "nontraditional" rejects tradition instead of creating a

blurred line between that and modernity, a line which is more representative of Senegalese cultures and hence literatures.

The importance of this blurred line in regard to Senegalese society is that the concept of modernity is largely part of Western ideology, a cultural phenomenon based on moral values which may not be attractive the world over, but still held up to non-Western societies as examples of what they should be aspiring to (Gyekye 263-264). Clearly, African societies were not isolated prior to Western contact and several traditions existed alongside each other before Western intervention. In his epilogue, Gyekye asks “Which Modernity? Whose Tradition?” (273), and this is a crucial point. It is all a question of perspective and ideology, and to be able to translate while respecting the writer’s original viewpoint and philosophy, the ‘rewriter’ or ‘writer’ should attempt to remain unbiased in her values and beliefs as to what is modern or traditional.⁴² The avoidance of bias in translation is an important concept, and one which is considered by Niranjana in her discussions of representation; she remarks on the challenge to postcolonial translators in evading the privileging of Western thought (169), an idea which will be expanded in the next chapter. To some, reclaiming tradition is in fact a modern African ideal, a postcolonial liberation strategy (Johnson-

⁴² And how exactly the timeline of “traditional” is defined is another complicated matter. Gyekye makes an important point by asking just exactly how long a belief or practice needs to have existed for it to become a tradition (219). He says it needs to have endured through generations, whereas Edward Shils is more specific in his belief that something which has endured at least three generations can be defined as a tradition (Shils 15). Interestingly, Bhabha speaks of “the invention of tradition” (*Location* 3), a telling phrase which demonstrates the indefinable and fluid nature of our histories.

Odim xxxiv). The point is that Francophone Senegalese women's literature should not be treated as if it represents a culture that is in some way 'old' and 'backward,' just because it does not in any way represent an individual's own notions of modern society. Each writer should be studied independently with regard to the cultures she is inspired by, whether traditional or modern. It is important to look beyond the generalities of a culture to learn how each writer draws from that culture in her own personal way.

Hence, this part of the thesis does not judge change, tradition or modernity, or even attempt to define them rigidly as separate entities, but accepting that this ever-changing traditional/modern hybridity is a defining element of Senegalese society helps to explain the starting point from which Senegalese writers begin to put words on the page. The unique cultures represented by postcolonial societies such as those in Senegal are studied in Bassnett and Trivedi's collection of papers on *Postcolonial Translation*, where Tymoczko affirms that:

...as an author strives to represent the experiences or beliefs of a minority culture that differ from those of the dominant culture, it may be necessary to develop new forms which are not part of the dominant receptor system in order to signal or encode such alternate experiences or beliefs. (*Post-colonial* 34)

In the textual analysis of Francophone Senegalese women's writing, an awareness of the different forms that may be present in the source text as a result of this cultural difference is crucial if the translator is to remain sensitive to the metatext.

With this in mind, it is relevant to introduce a previously untranslated work by a Senegalese writer - a short story entitled “Mame Touba” by Seck Mbacké. This text exemplifies the culture of change discussed in this chapter so far – the meeting of tradition and modernity, and the union of various cultures. Moreover, it incorporates all three of Gugler and Flanagan’s categories of change (see footnote 35, page 52), in being influenced by “historical” events such as colonisation, “situational” shifts in behaviour due to the new social system, and “biographic” adaptation through Seck Mbacké herself, as well as individual characters within her tale. As a short story, “Mame Touba” forms part of a genre which is a relatively new phenomenon in Senegal and rarely discussed in previous studies of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature. The short story is described by the editor, Pierre Klein, as a marriage between the traditional African folktale, and the novel – a modern introduction to Senegalese storytelling (9). This raises a number of different factors in literary analysis, some of which will be discussed here.

Firstly, the language of the short story is more representative of the novel than the folktale, as it is more flexible and original (9), despite the fact that the story may appear to read like a folktale. The following example demonstrates how the translator can use a higher register in order to employ language which may be more appropriate to the novel: “L’air était figé, implacable, au grand désespoir de Mame Dia” (*Mame* 163). This may be translated as: “The air was constantly humid, much to the despair of Mame Dia.” But in a higher register it could also read: “The atmosphere felt oppressive, relentless, to the great despair of Mame Dia.” The effects of the two translations upon the understanding of the reader are very different – the first

translation adds the word “constantly” which implies repetition rather than the continuous stability of the word “figé” and the unrelenting nature of “implacable.” The second translation is closer to the tone of the sentence in French, for not only does it employ a higher register – “to the great despair” – but the aforementioned nuances of “figé” and “implacable” are more precisely translated in this version.

Secondly, according to Klein, the plot in a Senegalese folktale is generally static, and the audience already tends to know what is going to happen, but the short stories now produced by Senegalese writers, like fiction, are more dynamic and often have an element of surprise in their conclusion (9). Seck Mbacké’s tale is fictional, but its surprise is the proverb at the end – something more in line with the folktale. It is important for the translator to keep the fictional style throughout, so that the wise adage at the end retains its element of surprise. By recognising the text type, the translator is able to define the function of the text and the most likely register in translation, and follow that by selecting words and phrases according to the predominant tendencies for that text type in the target language (Hatim, *Text* 264). Thirdly, according to Klein, time is most often progressive in the Senegalese short story, just like the folktale, and unlike the novel which may jump back and forth in its timeline (10). For this reason, it is important for the translator working “semantically” to pay close attention to tense throughout. And finally, Klein also notes one of the *skopos*⁴³ of this genre of

⁴³ In translation theory, the transfer of text from source to target language is delineated by the ‘skopos,’ which “is the goal or purpose, defined by the commission and if necessary adjusted by the translator” (Vermeer, *Skopos* 236). The translator’s intention may be to foreignise the text by staying closer to the source language, phrasing and form, or to domesticate the translation by adapting it to the target

Francophone Senegalese writing. He states that the writers “n’ont rien perdu du drôlatique, de l’humour et du pouvoir libérateur du grand rire nègre” (11).⁴⁴ Thus, clearly the writers aim to amuse their readers. This genre draws upon multiple cultures, languages and ethnicities, and with that comes emotion.

To retain the sense of humour in the text is probably one of the hardest jobs in translation. Firstly, because according to Delia Chiaro, “jokes, it would seem, travel badly” (77), and secondly because Anna Wierzbicka asserts that “while the concept of ‘feeling’ is universal and can be safely used in the investigation of human experience and human nature, the concept of ‘emotion’ is culture-bound and cannot be similarly relied on” (4). Creating humour in a text is to encourage an emotion in the reader, but unlike a quick pun with a clear punch line, humour throughout the short story is a little harder to define; it is more subtle. In my opinion, the translator in this case needs to create “equivalent effect”⁴⁵ in the target language. Unless a translator understands humour in the source and target cultures and the way humour in both is constantly

language and style. One of these strategies may be selected, or some strategic position between the two extremes.

⁴⁴ “have lost none of the comedy, humour or liberating power of loud Black laughter.”

⁴⁵ In a discussion of bible translation in 1954, E.V. Rieu states that the principle of equivalent effect is based on the idea “that translation is the best which comes nearest to giving its modern audience the same effect as the original had on its first audiences” (Rieu 153). Nida explains this more clearly in his 1964 publication, stating that “in such a translation one is not so concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (*Principles* 156).

changing, she can only achieve the desired effect by trial and error. For example, the translator could interview a Francophone African audience to find out which elements are particularly humorous, replicating these in the target language and then trialling the story with an Anglophone African audience to see whether the translation provokes the same level of emotion.

Hence, translating culture is immensely complex, especially since those cultures are constantly shifting. In Lamine Ndiaye's *Imaginaire et société wolof: Tradition et modernité*, he speaks of the way in which Wolof society, primarily in Senegal, has changed and adapted over the years in order for the community to survive. For example, during the colonial period, he describes what Gugler and Flanagan would term "situational change" (see footnote 35, page 52), where Senegalese people first began to imitate the behaviour of the colonisers by copying "les gestes et les postures du Blanc" (263),⁴⁶ and this also affected the language. He writes: "Ainsi, naissent de nouvelles règles de conduite: la démarche lente, l'articulation des termes de la langue maternelle mêlée de quelques mots ou expressions – souvent mal prononcés – de la langue française" (263).⁴⁷

According to Ndiaye, following independence, the Senegalese people who had been educated in the French system started to take up administrative positions previously occupied by the colonisers. They behaved and dressed just like the French,

⁴⁶ "the White man's gestures and posture."

⁴⁷ "Consequently, new rules of behaviour emerged: the slow walk, the articulation of words in the mother tongue combined with some terms or expressions, often pronounced badly, in the French language..."

and in this way a new model man was created who was idealised by the society he lived in (263). He was called a “Super Coof”⁴⁸ (264-265). There is no doubting the fact that Wolof people adapted according to the people they met, the education they had and the new places they had the opportunity to visit. However, upon meeting and interviewing many of today’s “educated elite” in Dakar, it was evident that there is not such a clear divide between who they are and their actions and values, and those who have followed what may be perceived as a more traditional Senegalese pathway. Nevertheless, Ndiaye says the Westernised ideal still exists; he states that the present-day Senegalese woman dreams of marrying one of these idealised male Westernised creations, a “Super Coof,” who, Ndiaye believes, takes advantage of his position in society and the women he attracts (264-265). To clarify, in his article Ndiaye appears to be stressing the way in which European contact has modified the behaviour of the Wolof people, and not just their actions, but also their values. Despite this, he feels there is something special within us that incites us to call upon our more deeply rooted beliefs and traditions, which in turn influences the way we behave (258).

Thus, whether it is called adaptation for survival or simply adaptation according to contact, the Wolof community in Senegal has changed and continues to change, and this is reflected in the literature. Bassnett says that “Translation Studies has moved away from an anthropological notion of culture (albeit a very fuzzy version) and towards a notion of cultures in the plural” (*Taking* 133), and by reading Ndiaye’s very palpable examples, it is possible to see how Wolof societies are now drawing upon, not

⁴⁸ “Coof” is the name of a highly sought-after fish used to create Senegal’s national dish – ceebu jën (literally, fish and rice).

just their distant cultural past or tradition, that something that is integral in us all, but also on Western cultures introduced mainly by the Europeans, and which have been absorbed and adapted to suit local society. This is where, like the earlier Signares of Gorée Island, the “Super Coof” becomes that perfect hybrid symbol, not only of language but of culture at its deepest level.

The story of “Mame Touba” represents the way in which Senegalese society has changed; the young people of science living alongside older, wiser and more traditional people, the mixing of French and local languages, rigid Western values to keep people off the street at night, and traditional values such as resting outside in the fresh air after dark, dressing in a boubou or wearing a police uniform. This story requires an understanding of the shifting nature of Senegalese cultures in order to comprehend fully the meaning of each word. Some concepts are explained in the French language using the words which “fit,” which means the translator must read between the lines to understand the word’s true meaning to translate it. Note the words “chaise longue” (*Mame* 164) which could literally mean a chaise longue or a reclining chair, or deck chair, but “bench” is preferable as this would seem more culturally accurate. A deck chair gives the impression in English of being a colourful seaside fabric chair, whereas more likely in this case, it is a long wooden slatted, backless bench. There is a similar issue with the translation of the word “hangar” (164) which would usually mean “shed” or “barn,” but in this instance “hut” would be more appropriate as it portrays a more realistic impression of village life and the traditional way in which animals are kept. Literal or dictionary translations of cultural words are

sometimes not the most accurate interpretations, for French language use in Senegal can be very different to that in France.

On the other hand, there are concepts that reflect modernity, the word “maison” (166) in French could mean house or home, but there may be a temptation to ‘Africanise’ the word by calling it a “hut,” as the word “case” is used by Mame Touba earlier in the text. However, many people in towns and villages across Senegal now have cement-block homes in which they sleep. In more rural areas these are then surrounded by huts for the rest of their belongings, often like a compound surrounded by a fence. In the city houses can be very modern in appearance. In order to account for both possibilities, “home” is a fitting translation. Then there are those words which reflect tradition and modernity mixed. For example, the text makes reference to the police officers’ “lampe-torche.” However, the phrase employed in French without the adjective “electric,” ie “torche électrique,” may introduce difficulties in translation, for it is unclear as to whether this is indeed a battery operated tool or an oil light or flame of some sort. Experience of Senegalese rural societies reveals that modern battery-operated torches are commonly used even in traditional environments in Senegal. They are relatively cheap to buy and even hung over beds as night lights in villages with no electricity. Consequently, if this is a battery-operated torch, this possible reading must be conveyed in translation. Rewriting the text using “torch” may allow for a more antiquated reading than “electric torch” or “flashlight,” for example. Although this latter option then introduces issues of the type of English that is being used in translation (see discussion on American English, page 93-94).

Therefore, a knowledge of present-day cultural realities in Senegal has truly helped with the understanding of some translational intricacies in this text based around the notions of tradition and modernity. Many past literary translators may have translated without endeavouring to understand the depth of source text cultures in their plurality, using more traditional “linguistic” or “grammatical” translation strategies which are “limited in scope to the sentences on the page” (Sturge 67). They may have been content to have researched using a computer and encyclopaedia, but can it honestly be said that this is an adequate way to understand cultures and languages so distant from our own? Perhaps it is from time to time. It would not be truthful to say that every word, sentence or paragraph is as in-depth or complex as another, but unless the translator aims to “follow in the footsteps of the creator” (Seck Mbacké, *Personal* 11) on her journey between tradition and modernity, can she truly say that she has not ‘missed something?’

Whether we are always aware of it or not, language and culture are inextricably entwined: women have followed a different path through history so there are also customs and cultures individual to them which form much of the script to their literary works (as will be discovered in Chapter Two). They seek inspiration from the words of their ancestors (Salhi 29), as well as from the education of the colonisers (Drame, *L'émergence* 121) and their unique identity is expressed through a distinctive language, formed despite the restrictions of colonisation which were unable to lay claim to the mind (Walker 247). Not only do Francophone Senegalese writers therefore represent cultural and societal change, conveying that tension between tradition and modernity,

but also they use their writing as a tool for both cultural preservation and transformation, issues which will be explored further in the next part of this thesis.

III Inciting Change or Preserving Realities through Cultural Language

It would be impossible to list the countless diverse reasons why Francophone Senegalese women writers put pen to paper. Whether an author is inspired by events in her own life, the tragedies or celebrations of others, histories gone by or thought provoking projections for the future, their corpus as a whole is as varied as many others. However, there are two very clear thematic strands of literary thought and perhaps even intention – that Senegalese women appear to be using literature both to preserve their own cultural realities on paper, and conversely to employ literature as a means of challenging certain social behaviours or beliefs. Perhaps this is due to Senegalese women speaking out only recently in a postcolonial society, and because the small number of texts within the corpus allow for a more defined picture in analysis. Whatever the reasons may be for these literary themes, Part III investigates these strands of thought, analysing how women turn to their past or present to express their own cultural histories and realities through literature, and also how they use poetry or prose to change the future by raising important issues for debate. Part III also demonstrates, through examples, how the translator may find this information valuable when rewriting Senegalese texts in English.

The very notions of ‘preservation’ and ‘change’ may appear at once conflicting and enhancing, but both concepts are supported by literary critics such as d’Almeida and theorists such as Maria Tymozcko. The latter asserts that “there is a time-

honoured tradition of using texts for revolutionary purposes” (*Political* 40), while d’Almeida confirms that “social reality and literary expression are inextricably entwined” (*Francophone* 21). If literature and language are so embedded in social reality, then the translator must strive to gain an understanding of the concepts of cultural preservation and change in order to decipher cultural language on the page. Deborah McDowell further asserts that Black women’s literature engages with “shifting aesthetic, critical, cultural conventions and values” (xii), so in analysing the notions of preservation and change, Part III will investigate ways of highlighting cultural language embedded in these forever transforming social realities, demonstrating how it can be handled by a translator.

Hitchcott asserts that Francophone African women writers have used literature to confront issues of a wider social context, such as polygamy, prostitution, miscarriage and unfaithful husbands (*Women* 23), and most prominently some of these issues can be found in the novels of Mariama Bâ. While Bâ’s books may have been written three decades ago, some of the main issues she introduced to her literature are still debated in Senegalese society today including the female condition, marital problems, polygamy, religion, freedom, dependence and class. These books are on university reading lists worldwide both in French and in translation and the issues that arise are sources of debate to those who engage with the texts. When literature has such potential to incite debate, influence attitudes and possibly even provoke change in people’s behaviours, it is of the utmost importance that the translator of similar texts can also communicate a comparable range of connotations or multiple readings in literature that may travel to other parts of the world.

Like Bâ's texts, the works of Mbaye d'Erneville also provoke discussion and change. For instance, in the following extract from "Initiation," a distinct warning against the trappings of the West may be understood when reading the text, which is perhaps calling for a change in perspective regarding the pedestal upon which France had been placed by many since colonisation, or at least opening the reader's eyes to the darker side of Paris:

Don de nous guérisseur
Don des miettes de notre jeunesse
Jeunesse gaspillée dans les nuits de Lutèce
Virginité sacrifiée dans l'alcôve
Anonyme d'un hôtel sans étoiles

(Dia, *Poètes* 158)

Gift from our healer
Gift of the crumbs of our youth
Wasted youth in the nights of Lutetia
Virginity sacrificed in the anonymous hole
Of a no-star cheap hotel

(Collins, *Other* 103; see appendix A, page 379, for full text and translation)

In order to retain the multiple readings and perhaps incite a similar level of discussion in the target language, the translator must not attempt to over-poeticise the extract. During discussions with Joanne Collie, it was enlightening to discover that a more literal rendering of the last two lines of the poem in translation lead to the English version being more 'poetic' than the source text. "A hotel without stars" does not

incite the same negative associations that it may do in French. Here, inspired by T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" whose line "...restless nights in one-night cheap hotels" was recalled in discussion (Eliot 5), the translator wishing to be more visible can reintroduce the more sordid nature of the source text by translating the line as: "Of a one-night cheap hotel." The name "Lutetia" (Paris) also sounds more exotic in English than French, in which Lutèce is more commonly recognised. For this reason, "alcôve" (meaning alcove or bedroom), is translated as hole, which communicates the first reading of the French word whilst conveying another reading – that the room is a hovel. In this way, the translation retains many of the nuances of the source text in translation, thereby allowing for a similar level of discussion in the target language, as well as embodying in translation the momentum for change that appears to be such an integral part of the source text.

With regard to the preservation of social realities, Mariama Bâ has also been very successful. For example, in the following passage from *Une si longue lettre* she reveals issues of class and caste that clearly have been a challenge for Bodé-Thomas in English translation due to conflicts between Western and African social codes. Note, for example, the following passage:

- Quoi, un Toucouleur qui convole avec une bijoutière? Jamais, il 'n'amassera argent'.
- La mère de Mawdo est une Dioufène, Guélewar du Sine. Quel soufflet pour elle, devant ses anciennes co-épouses! (Le père de Mawdo était mort.)

- A vouloir coûte que coûte épouser une ‘courte robe’, voilà sur quoi l’on tombe. (40)

The novel’s English translation by Bodé-Thomas tackles this extract as follows:

“What, a Toucouleur marrying a goldsmith’s daughter? He will never ‘make money’”

“Mawdo’s mother is a Dioufene, a *Guelewar* from the Sine. What an insult to her, before her former co-wives.” (Mawdo’s father was dead)

“In the desire to marry a “short-skirt” come what may, this is what one gets.” (Bâ *So*, 17)

Whilst Bodé-Thomas must be commended as one of the early pioneers in the translation of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature, this particular extract from the translation is lacking in recognition of cultural and social difference, hence destroying the preservation of Senegalese realities that Bâ presented in the text written in French. Firstly, by translating the word “bijoutière” as “goldsmith” he elevates the status of the individual, defying the point that she is of a lower social caste. Instead, this could be translated more literally as “jeweller,” although his clever translation of gender using the term “daughter” could remain (see discussion gender and translation in Chapter Two, Part IV). Secondly, his translation of “voilà sur quoi l’on tombe,” as “this is what one gets,” raises the register to a much higher status than that in the source text. In Senegal, the polite forms of language are rarely used. For example, it is often considered over-formal to use the “vous” form in French, and people tend to lean towards a more informal style. As the translational aim here is to understand source

cultures and try to reproduce them in the target text, “that’s what you get” may be considered more appropriate than a translation of this sentence using “one.”

In this extract, Bodé-Thomas’s treatment of ‘foreign’ terms is also inconsistent – he chooses to add a footnote to explain “*Guelewar*,” as a Princess of the Sine, but not Dioufene (a village in Western Senegal), again losing the cultural realities that were preserved in the source text. Consistency is important in translation. It is necessary to have a strategy, a method and adhere to it, whether that means domesticating or foreignising the text (see earlier explanations of these terms in footnote 24, page 31). Having said that, the word “*Guelewar*” is explained in a footnote much later in the source text. Therefore, it is possible that the translator intended to ‘improve’ the clarity of the source text by moving the explanation closer to the beginning. Either way his footnote, clarifying just one element of the target text, does alter the reading in English without actually assisting in the full understanding of the phrase. If cultural terms are to be explained in translation it is imperative to do so accurately and efficiently.

Analysis of cultural terms is of great value if the translator is to reproduce similar arguments in English. This extract confronts issues of class, status and tradition, which form part of Mariama Bâ’s wish to raise the profile of such matters, thereby inciting change, as well as preserving history (caste issues are becoming less and less prominent in Senegal) through her writing. In a strategy to preserve cultural elements of the source text in translation, it is crucial for the translator to recognise cultural subtexts such as these. In fact it was around the time of Bâ’s publication in 1979 that the field of Translation Studies first saw this focus on culture (in 1978,

Itamar Even-Zohar introduced the concept of polysystems theory,⁴⁹ and Toury focused on norms in translation – see Chapter Three, Part II). As time progressed into the 1980s and into the early 90s, academics looked at how translation is closely linked to cultural context, labelling this enlightening period the ‘cultural turn’ in Translation Studies. As earlier outlined as part of the translation strategy for this thesis, this means they looked at translations in context, but academics also explored how translations are undertaken in reaction to the demands of a culture, how culture influences translation, and conversely, how translation influences the impression given of a particular culture, individual or piece of work (Vermeer, *Übersetzen*; Snell-Hornby, *Translation*; Bassnett, *Studies*).

It is this idea of the translator’s ability to read and rewrite a piece of work within a particular cultural context which will be examined further here; if women are attempting to preserve culture in their literary texts, it follows that the translator must also gain an understanding of any cultural elements that may also be preserved in the translated text. In a discussion on poetry translation, Judith A. Campbell highlights the translator’s problematic role as a reader controlling the meaning potential of a text, something of great significance if the translator is to deal with literature which examines social issues or represents and therefore preserves cultural realities. She states:

It is clear that the ideological and cultural background brought to the text by both the author and reader and hence by both author and

⁴⁹ Polysystems theory outlines the function and development of literary systems and the position of translated literature within them (Even-Zohar 199).

translator governs the way in which the overall meaning potential of the text is actualised. The way in which a reader constructs a representation of the text and relates this to the real world seems to be at the very centre of the problems associated with the translation of poetry. (151)

This concept of the translator is one which is shared both by academics who take a practical approach to Translation Studies, and those who take a theoretical approach. Newmark, who is often of the former group, sees the literary translator as a reader with a difficult and complex job. Despite his focus on the linguistic rather than the cultural nature of translation (*Textbook* 95), and his heated debates with Bassnett regarding the status and role of the translator (Newmark 41 160),⁵⁰ Newmark says that the most tricky form of translation is when literary form is as important as content, and there is a big cultural gap between the source and target cultures (*Textbook* 162). He maintains that the reason why serious literature and authoritative statements are generally the hardest type of texts to translate is that the sense and cohesion of each individual word as a unit is of great importance, just like the sentence or line of a poem and the text as a whole (162). Clearly, it is hard to define or draw a line between “serious” and “non-serious” literature – it is a dangerous judgement to make, especially if multiple readings and subtexts with their underlying webs of connoted thoughts and

⁵⁰ For example, Bassnett contributes an article to *The Linguist* in which she questions the concept of the literary translator, and argues instead for the translator’s role to be redefined as a “writer” (*Telling* 114). Newmark writes a column for *The Linguist*, and in the following edition he questions these beliefs, as well as Bassnett’s view that the literary translator is no less creative than the monolingual writer, adding that “Susan has a rich knowledge of translator-poets, and it is a pity that she hasn’t quoted any to corroborate her arguments...” (41 160).

philosophies have not yet been investigated. However, when a linguistic and grammatically focused translator, such as Newmark, highlights the difficulty in tackling form and cultural issues in translation, it further emphasises the significance of a cultural focus in translating Senegalese women's writing. It also highlights the importance of a great attention to detail in textual analysis and literary translation, especially if the communication of cultural preservation is an issue.

For example, a line of a poem entitled "Paris, bonjour!" by Ndiaye Sow in *Fleurs du Sahel* reads "Ce geste familier de serrer la main" (35). This could quite easily be translated as "That familiar act of shaking hands," but something is lost in translation. Shaking hands in Senegal is not just an act, but an entire social routine which can last many minutes, often accompanied by quite lengthy greetings in Wolof or another local language. The word "familier" in French could mean both familiar, as in the act is well-known, or that it is intimate. To cover both possibilities and considering cultural context, the line can be translated as: "That friendly ritual of shaking hands." "Ritual" conveys the "well-known" which links back to the cultural context of "routine," whilst the word "friendly" translates the possible intimacy that this phrase could also convey. As globalisation and Western influence force change in some more urban environments such as Dakar, these traditions become less visible over time. It is therefore important to preserve them in translation where possible as they become part of cultural history. Poetry here is being used to communicate an important social act which defines Senegalese social courtesies of the time.

Controversially, in contrast to much of the research here, in a chapter on "Translation and Culture," Newmark states that "operationally I do not regard language

as a component or feature of culture. If it were so, translation would be impossible” (*Textbook* 95). I disagree with him on both counts. Language is clearly a component and feature of culture, and translation is not impossible because of that. There are a number of academics who would support this argument. For example, Snell-Hornby asserts that “language, as part of a culture, is one of the most potent means of expression of cultural identity” (*Communicating* 13-14). Edward Sapir claims that “language is a guide to social reality” (*Culture* 69), and Claude Pairault writes an extremely convincing article on the relationship between language and culture, and how language is a window into another culture. He says that language “accompagne ou commente l’ensemble des attitudes et des comportements de la société” (2).⁵¹ Further, translation is only impossible if the translator’s definition of and objective in translation is unattainable, ie if she expects to accomplish a very exacting, precise, perfect rendering of a piece of work when interlingually⁵² translated. When “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality” (Sapir, *Status* 209), this is of course, impossible.

Newmark does not appear to be entirely convinced by his own argument here, and his dismissal of language as a feature of culture may be more to do with his

⁵¹ “accompanies or interprets society’s range of attitudes and ways of behaving.”

⁵² In his paper, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” Roman Jakobson describes three kinds of translation, which are: a) intralingual translation, rewording within a single language, b) interlingual translation, the interpretation of verbal signs in another language and c) intersemiotic translation, the interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal signs (139). This is discussed further in Chapter Three, Part III.

determination not to be “lumped together” (40 127) with other translation scholars,⁵³ to be controversial and to stand out as having a unique standpoint in the world of Translation Studies (Anderman, *Introduction* 1). What Newmark does do, however, is claim that language does contain “cultural deposits” in its grammar and lexis (*Textbook* 95). It appears he is ‘giving in’ to cultural translation without entirely ‘giving up’ his argument. Cultural words, he states, come in five different categories, which he adapts from Eugene A. Nida (*Componential* 178-186). This categorisation of cultural elements in a text is very useful in highlighting features of Senegalese women’s literature that, whilst not always deliberately intended as a means of cultural preservation, still play an important role in encapsulating a snapshot of Senegalese life and society at a particular moment in time. Newmark’s categories are “Ecology,” “Material culture (artefacts),” “Social culture,” “Organisations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts,” and “Gestures and habits” (*Textbook* 95). Translation and cultural theory can then be applied to practice, by taking a number of examples of source texts under discussion in this thesis.

Firstly, the “ecology” category reveals cultural terms such as “harmattan” (Ndiaye Sow 7). Whilst it is not necessary to translate this word, as it is easily looked up should the reader be inquisitive, a cultural understanding of these terms may alter the perspective of the translation of the words around them. For example “Chant

⁵³ In his column for *The Linguist*, Newmark rejects the idea that there was or should be a divide between translation theory and practice but states that: “As a translation theorist, I was disconcerted to be lumped together, unidentified, with all the other translation ‘scholars’, most of whom I do not respect, in some fictitious ‘industry’ which I have no part in – ‘cliques’ would be a more suitable description” (40 127).

chaleur d'harmattan.” If the translator knows this is a dusty, dry West African wind, it may alter the translation of the word “chaleur” from “heat” to “warmth,” which is a more fitting collocation⁵⁴ for a wind. In the category of “material culture,” there is the word “calebasse de lait” (37). It is only by understanding the meaning of a calabash and its use as a container to hold food or liquids that the translator can correctly interpret the phrase as “calabash of milk” rather than “milk calabash.” A recognition and correct interpretation of these terms in translation plays an important role in cultural preservation through literary representation.

If examples of “social culture” are explored, there are no more prominent examples than that of Seck Mbacké’s poetry book entitled *Lions de la Téranga*. It was only when the *Lions de la Téranga* appeared in my hotel when I first arrived in Dakar, that I realised this is the nickname for the Senegalese national football team. Nevertheless, it is clear once the introductions to the book have been read, that this is a dedication to the success of the national team in 2002 when they reached the quarter finals of the World Cup and came second in the African Nations cup. Clearly, as a nickname this phrase is best left untouched, but translation is often more complex than that; in a short article looking at the translation of names from Chinese into English, Cheng Ma explains how not only sound but also the meaning of names is important when rewritten in another language (9). This is also the case with many Senegalese names. Unfortunately, terms from the Wolof language used in a French-language

⁵⁴ Collocation is a linguistic term introduced in 1940 by J. R. Firth to describe the “habitual juxtaposition or association, in the sentences of a language, of a particular word with other particular words; a group of words so associated” (“Collocation”).

context can lose their depth of meaning. “Téranga” (teraanga in Wolof and not to be confused with Taranga which can have a number of unrelated meanings) is a type of hospitality which runs so much deeper than the words ‘hospitality’ or ‘conviviality’ in English. It is about honouring someone with a dignified welcome, a smile, believed to be like a prison door opening, the symbolic offering of water, putting someone at ease, giving a strong positive impression of an individual and of her country. This whole term is laden with such meaning that, in order to preserve those multiple connotations in written form, it is crucial to footnote or reference this word somewhere in translation.

With regard to “organisations, customs etc,” one example can be taken of many from *Une si longue lettre*. Chapter two of the book begins with the customary flow of visitors to the house during mourning – “Quel fleuve grouillant d’être humains...” (15). Having been witness to events such as this in Senegal, I learnt that a house does not just mill or bustle with people on such occasions, but it swarms so that movement is difficult. “Grouillant” can be pejorative in that way, and “swarm” has that negative connotation too, but a river cannot swarm (note footnote 54, page 80 on collocations), nor can it seethe or teem. The important aspects of this sentence are conveying movement of water, a mass of people and the pejorative nature of the phrase. This could be translated using phrases such as a “swelling flood,” “heaving flood” or “surging current,” or switching the noun and verb to create a “surging swarm” or a “swelling swarm” which then introduces issues of alliteration which did not exist in the source text. Bodé-Thomas chooses the words: “What a seething crowd of human beings” (3), but loses rather than preserves much of the sense of movement in the noun.

Finally, Newmark talks of cultural gestures. Again, in *Une si longue lettre* there are several examples such as that of “eye rolling,” which in a Western context would be a gesture of condescension, but clearly does not mean this in Bâ’s work. She writes: “Et l’on s’esclaffe et l’on roule les yeux et l’on admire le boubou de sa voisine...” (20)⁵⁵ and “Je donnais un ton taquin à mon propos, tout en roulant mes yeux. Éternel féminin, même dans le deuil, tu pointes, tu veux séduire, tu veux intéresser” (114).⁵⁶ This does not appear to be a common gesture in Senegal, but reference to this act appears in a paper on the *Cultural Representation among the Wodaabe Nomads* by Jessica Michelle Berger. The Wodaabe are part of the larger Fulaani ethnic group who moved eastwards from Senegal to the Niger region (5), so this is likely to be a Fulaani (Peul) gesture which has remained amongst those communities in Senegal. In Berger’s paper, eye rolling is said to be a way of appearing alluring, to attract attention (13), and this seems to fit with the context of Mariama Bâ’s work. The context allows the reader to understand that the act is not one of disdain but something different, and in the second example it is even clearer that this is a type of flirting. To explain this in translation would be to over-domesticate the work, and leave little to the imagination or range of interpretations to the target language reader. Bodé-Thomas also left this phrase alone in translation.

These “cultural terms,” analysed by means of Newmark’s method of categorisation, each play a role in preserving a view of Senegalese life from a female

⁵⁵ “They laugh heartily and roll their eyes and admire the next person’s *boubou*...” (So 6).

⁵⁶ “I said it teasingly, rolling my eyes around. Eternal woman: even in mourning, you want to make a strike, you want to seduce, you want to arouse interest” (So 60).

perspective post-independence. They represent change, traditional values and modern realities, as well as all that lies in between. Bâ's book won the first Noma Prize for publishing in Africa (Stratton 133), and as such it has done a marvellous job in raising issues for discussion and debate such as traditional mourning rituals or female beauty, which have been analysed in translation here. Whether writing to preserve the past or to incite change, these authors have a unique perspective aside from male writers of the same period because they talk about life and women's roles from a female viewpoint (this will be discussed further in Chapter Two), which makes their works highly interesting subjects for translation.

Consequently, whilst a translation scholar may not agree with everything Newmark writes, he has to be admired for his ability to bring translation practice and Translation Studies closer together. And it has been demonstrated that his categorisation can be a valuable application for highlighting central cultural features in literary texts, allowing the translator to then choose exactly how to communicate (and thereby preserve) these cultural characteristics in translation. In an earlier publication entitled *Approaches to Translation*, Newmark writes very little about the translator's need to render cultural utterings from a source text in the target text:

Normally a translator can treat cultural terms more freely than institutional terms. He is not called to account for faulty decisions, whether he is translating imaginative literature or general works... But generally the most favoured procedure for a recently noted term peculiar to a foreign culture...is likely to be transcription, coupled with discreet explanation within the text. If the term becomes widespread it may be

adopted in the TL. This method is the appropriate sign of respect to foreign cultures. (83)

In this early publication from 1982, he appears to be more concerned about being politically and ethically correct than just correct, but in *A Textbook of Translation* published six years later, he has shown a marked change over time, allowing for a more thorough discussion on culture. In the latter publication, Newmark is demonstrating a newly considered perspective on translation that emphasises the significance of retaining a source text's fundamental cultural features in a target text. Hence, just as history has changed, literature has changed and strategies for translating also change in line with these developments.

Nevertheless, as culture is a word which many define in different ways, to what extent a translator believes language and culture are inextricably entwined is not as important as the common belief, whether a follower of the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies, a translation practitioner or scholar, or indeed both:

...that translation is an exceptionally difficult and challenging exercise; that it demands infinite curiosity and about things as well as words, requires the consultation of people as well as books; that it is collaborative, but finally is usually the responsibility of one person.

(Newmark, *Approaches* 185)

In other words, extensive research into the topic and text that the translator is analysing is of the greatest importance, whoever she is, and whatever other beliefs she has. Her own social realities are changing the way in which Translation Studies are viewed. Thus, it is evident from the analysis in this part of Chapter One that Francophone

Senegalese women use literature both to voice the past from a female perspective, to preserve that cultural past or present, as well as to incite change for the future, and the translator in her role as reader is responsible for decoding this cultural import, made evermore complex with time as the writers studied here are influenced by the effects of globalisation and travel beyond the borders of Senegal.

IV Translation, Globalisation and Travel

Seck Mbacké states in an interview that “le monde est un village planétaire maintenant” (*Personal 7*).⁵⁷ And to a large extent, she is right in that an individual can easily travel wherever she wants, and communication is made far easier with modern technologies and the increasing use of English as a *lingua franca*. But whilst everyone is becoming closer, differences are highlighted. This includes differences in languages and language use. In an article for *The Linguist* magazine, Tim Connell discusses the way in which the English language, amongst others, is developing and finding different forms globally (12), and this is also relevant to the French language. Globalisation and the rapid process of cultural change that it has prompted, has meant that diverse people or cultures may use the ‘French’ language in different ways, according to the societies in which they live, and their contact with other cultures through the media and places they have visited, for example. Hence, Part IV will analyse the influence of globalisation and travel upon the language and literature of Francophone Senegalese women writers, and the subsequent translation strategies when working into the ‘English’ language.

⁵⁷ “The world is now a global village”

In *Translation and Globalization*, Michael Cronin discusses how difficult it is to be a resident in today's rapidly changing global society, asserting that:

If contemporary reality is inescapably multicultural and multinational, then it makes sense to look to a discipline which has mediation between cultures and languages as a central concern to assist us both in understanding globalization and in understanding what it might mean, and why it is sometimes so difficult, to be a citizen of the world. (6)

And this is especially relevant with regard to Francophone African women writers who live between languages, travel widely and have been educated in a different language from those they might use at home. In today's innovative commercial world, it is challenging to keep up to date with all the changes that happen in language use – some temporary, others permanent. Connell maintains that the globalisation of the English language means “there can be no fixed assumptions as to what people have in mind when they are thinking of a particular word” (12). As French has also travelled extensively (although not as much as English in recent years), this lack of fixed assumptions is likely to exist with regard to the French language as well. It also exists because, according to Connell, “everyday language will adapt to meet current needs” (13). The needs of distinct cultures in France and Senegal will not be exactly the same due to different social realities, so language will also not be the same. This means that an in-depth understanding of both Senegalese French language and Senegalese cultures as two connected entities is invaluable in order to translate Francophone Senegalese texts effectively. Understanding the French of France, learnt at school and university by many speakers of English, will not necessarily be sufficient, because the French of

Senegal is developing somewhat⁵⁸ independently to its 'standard equivalent' (see discussion in Chapter Three, Part II on standard and non-standard languages).⁵⁹

Today, more than ever before, Senegalese women are taking this localised form of French and expressing it on a global platform. This is due to extensive changes in Senegalese women's roles in society since independence, as well as much-needed developments in the way others view their literary work. For example, in *Hearing Black Women's Voices*, Boyce Davies speaks of the way in which chosen and forced silence has been practiced by women throughout history (8).⁶⁰ And in the past, women

⁵⁸ The word "somewhat" is used here because the two languages cannot develop totally independently because they are not isolated. For example, the media, especially television and Internet, have an impact upon the communication of languages globally.

⁵⁹ This has happened despite the powerful impact of the Académie Française upon the (lack of) development of the French language. For example, encouraged by linguistic progress of the French language in Canada, Belgium and Switzerland, in 1984 Yvette Roudy, Minister for Women's Rights in the French Socialist government, put forward a proposal to have new gendered nouns for the professions that women are now carrying out. Whilst the proposals were eventually accepted by parliament and included in a Ministry circular, they have not been strictly observed. This may have much to do with the reactionary wrath of the Académie Française, which due to its regulatory function, has hampered the creative evolution of the language in many ways (Ball 194-195).

⁶⁰ Historically, many African cultures have encouraged the silence of women by promoting the image of beauty as silence, and women's speech as ugly gossip (Boyce Davies, *Hearing* 8; Steiner 42). For example Sojourner Truth, as a former slave, used her religious passion to campaign for abolition and women's rights ("Truth, Sojourner"), but was mocked and criticised for speaking out (Boyce Davies, *Hearing* 6). And in the present day, well-known academic and feminist activist, Mbow, has had to face

writers have also been silenced, their work overly criticized for being too emotive and expressive rather than transformative and communicative (6).⁶¹ However this has changed; for a while now African women writers have been making themselves known both locally and on the world stage. Of the writers who were studied as part of this research, a very large proportion travel extensively throughout Africa, Europe and America – studying, researching, working and expanding their knowledge whilst promoting their literature (see Biographies of Writers in the appendices, page 417).

And beyond their personal efforts, Senegalese women's prose and poetry today are encouraged and supported a great deal more than ever before.⁶² D'Almeida considers this now rapidly escalating process of 'speaking out' a balancing act in gender relations and literary strategy (*Francophone* 172) as women confront negative

much criticism in Senegalese society for what are deemed to be controversial beliefs, especially with regard to women's issues and feminism (Mbow 3).

⁶¹ Hitchcott states that women did not speak out due to social and cultural factors; there was a high level of illiteracy amongst women, they were prevented from expressing themselves due to traditional and religious patriarchal structures, and later Western cultures and colonial ideology which marginalised the literature because it was considered inferior (*Women* 2) and less interesting than literature by men (154).

⁶² African women's literature has been supported through events such as the African Literature Association conference in 1991, dedicated to "nwanyibu" or "womanbeing" (Larrier, *Francophone* 5), and Senegal's support of International Women's Day (8 March), which celebrates women's achievements and supports their fight for equality ("About"). The increased number of publications for women writers has been largely thanks to Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines du Sénégal which opened in Dakar in 1976 as Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines ("Publishers"). Boyce Davies says the issue is less about the silence of women now, and more about whether or not people choose to listen (*Hearing* 3).

preconceptions of their identity and their work (Boyce Davies, *Hearing* 5). The challenges of finding a voice and speaking out on a global platform are evidently crucial if Senegalese women are to communicate the matters that are important to them in society. Like the translator who has had to fight for her status on the global stage, her role often downplayed as an activity secondary to “writing from scratch,” the female Francophone African writer has also had to fight to find a global voice, to assert her own identity and to gain respect (Newell 139).

Consequently, how does the translator represent this voice which appears to draw on both the local and the global? Some writers, such as Paul Verhaeghen, believe that the only voice worth that of the writer’s is his own. In an interview with Virginie Drujon-Kippelen for *The Linguist*, Verhaeghen speaks of his venture into self-translation. He asserts that a commissioned translation of his book was nice and correct but that it didn’t sound like him, so he decided to translate the book himself:

The translator needs to be faithful to the book; that is, to its spirit, its rhythms, its breathing – all that amounts to the book’s voice... However, nobody can do your voice like you can, which is why I wanted to do the English translation. (Drujon-Kippelen 10)

It is possible that self-translation will become more popular as globalisation inevitably leads to more foreign-language writers having a strong ability to express themselves in the English language as well. Verhaeghen exemplifies this notion. Well-travelled like many of the Senegalese women writers, Verhaeghen was born in Belgium, writes in Dutch and works at Georgia Tech in Atlanta in the United States. And he maintains that he could never translate someone else’s work because of this issue regarding the

‘voice,’ giving the impression that it is far easier to translate than to write something from scratch, for translation is a task that can be done on demand (10-11). This is a highly controversial opinion, which many translators would debate. And in Verhaeghen’s case, not only do his opinions question his satisfaction with regard to the translations done by others into French or German,⁶³ for example, but his views would require him to translate his works into languages such as Russian or Mandarin, for instance, in which he may not be an expert. Although many writers such as Samuel Beckett (Cohn) or Vladimir Nabokov (Grutman 16), for example, have also successfully translated their own works, this does not always mean that self-translators produce the best translation.

It appears that the only Senegalese woman writer who has attempted to translate her own novel to date is Khadi Fall who has translated the first chapter of her novel, *Senteurs d’hivernage*⁶⁴ for the University of Western Australia which, as already established, promotes Francophone African women’s literature extensively online. It must be emphasised that Fall’s translation was not undertaken for the purpose of publication, but purely as a sample of her work in English for those interested in Francophone African women’s works. It is with this understanding that the following extract from her “self-translation” is critiqued:

⁶³ The French version of *Omega Minor*, written by Christophe Claro, was translated from the English text, whilst the German version by Stéfanie Schäfer was translated from the Dutch text. This questions the whole concept of the supremacy of the ‘original’ version, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

⁶⁴ “*Scent of the Rains*” (“Scent”).

...Tout avait commencé trois années plus tôt. C'était un soir à l'aéroport de Dakar-Yoff où j'étais allée accueillir mon fils Aziz rentrant d'un séjour au Cameroun.

Il était vingt-trois heures quinze minutes. Une bruine légère n'arrêtait pas de tomber, alors que même si elle persistait toute la nuit, elle ne serait pas parvenue à éteindre la soif de la terre. (7-8)

Self-translation:

...All this had started three years before. It was one evening at the Dakar-Yoff airport where I had gone to meet my son Aziz who was returning from a trip to Cameroun.

It was 11:40pm. A light drizzle persisted, yet even had it kept up all night it would not have been able to quench the earth's deep thirst. ("Scent")

Alternative translation:

...It all began three years ago: one evening at Dakar-Yoff airport. I had gone there to collect my son Aziz on his return from a trip to Cameroon.

It was 11:15 at night. There was a persistent light drizzle, yet even if it had lasted all night long, it never would have managed to quench the earth's thirst.

Aside from minor issues of time and spelling, Fall's translation has a certain awkwardness that did not exist in her source text. This is exemplified in the use of the definite article before "Dakar-Yoff" and the departure from more natural phrasing in

English, for instance where she writes “All this had started” rather than “It all began,” or “who was returning” rather than “on his return.” However, it is true that Fall brings a certain knowledge of the text that a different translator may not have, for example in her addition of the word “deep,” as in the “earth’s deep thirst,” which sounds more poetic in the English language than “the earth’s thirst.” And with regard to the title of her book, she translates “hivernage” as “rains” rather than “wintering” or “rainy season,” which may be perceived as more direct translations from the French term (“Hivernage”). This may be linked to her perception of what her voice should be in translation.

Thus, as discussed in Part I of this chapter, an expert translator could draw upon both her own skills as well as those of Fall, who has travelled extensively and thereby gained a good level of expertise in English as well as an understanding of the requirements of cultural translation. The risk of self-translation alone is that unless a writer is as strong in the target text language as the source text language, it is very probable that the translation will be much weaker than the source text. And if a writer self-translates, it is highly likely that she will have a different voice in one language to another anyway.⁶⁵ Instead, if a separate translator has been appointed as rewriter, it is

⁶⁵ This is a highly complex issue; in his paper, “The Death of the Author,” Barthes argues that once the text has been published, the original author relinquishes control and is no longer of importance, so how is it possible to assume the primacy of the author if he is no longer relevant? Further, the implication that the author knows his work and its minutiae better than anyone else can be shown to be simplistic, and ignores the fact that the work transforms over time alongside the changing perspectives of its readers. Also, the notion of “cultural transfer” supports the view that the translator might be better placed to render the work in a target language for the receiving culture. On the other hand, it should be

she who must find a voice (perhaps with the insight of the source text writer), and one which represents this juxtaposition of both global experience and local expression.

But to what extent does the translator render her own voice against the voice of the source text writer? Most of the time translation will find a place between the two. And if Verhaeghen is right when he states that translation is about “rendering an emotion,” being “intuitive and organic” and “staying true to the poetic features and visual approach” (Drujon-Kippelen 11), then this could be a strategy that is acceptable to both source text writer and individual translator. It must be noted, however, that Verhaeghen’s concept of keeping languages separate in interlingual literary translation is very difficult to comprehend (11), especially in a discussion of Senegalese women writers such as this one. That is because, due to earlier influences of globalisation and travel, these writers embrace bilingualism, and their ‘original’ works already include some level of translation within the text – for example, the phrase “Encore des *toubabous*, des Blancs!”⁶⁶ (Benga, *Waly* 27).

Further to this discussion, it must be noted that Verhaeghen translates for an American audience rather than an English one, or an Australian one for that matter, because the cultural phrases he uses are firmly embedded in American culture. This raises the issue of the extent to which, in translation, it is important to capture the

noted that postcolonial theorists may argue against the translation of the text by a new party who may appropriate the work during the translation process, especially if translating into a language of what is perceived to be a more dominant culture.

⁶⁶ “More *toubabou*, more Whites!” In a glossary, Benga states that *Toubabou* means non-circumcised; (130), however in everyday speech, ‘toubab’ is used to mean ‘White person’ in general. And in Jean-Léopold Diouf’s *Wolof* dictionary, he states that “tubaab” means “European” (*Waly* 351).

American audience in today's "global village." The translator into English must not only find a balance between the voice of the source text writer and her own, but she must also assess the type of voice she should have in the English language.

Globalisation has not only seen the primacy of English, but of American English as an "international lingua franca" (Lieber 277), and this must be considered, at least, by the translator. In simple terms, with regard to Seck Mbacké's *Lions de la Téranga*, should the translator be writing "soccer" rather than "football" (28), "game" rather than "match" (18) etc? This is a small point, yet one which is very relevant in the current climate where the US has an increasing amount of power upon the world's communications. Further, as non-colonisers in Africa, America and Americans are popular in Senegal, and many students and academics go to America to learn their English if they can afford to do so. Hence, is the translated voice an American one? The issue of finding a voice is highly significant and relevant to all upcoming translations into English.

If authors such as Verhaeghen feel strongly about the voice of the translator being their own, it follows that when self-translation cannot take place, the translator must be deeply embedded in the life of the individual she is translating for, if her translation is to be 'acceptable' to that source text writer. This does happen; for example, Carol Maier writes of how translation can affect her personally and professionally because of the extent to which she connects with the authors of the texts she is translating or interpreting (1-3). This notion of 'connection' is important in relation to Senegalese women's writing. Many authors have had to compromise greatly in their everyday lives in order for their voices to be heard. And these voices

are being heard, but at the expense of the norms of Senegalese writers' traditional cultures: many remain unmarried, do not have children, travel and live abroad (as previously established), work alone, and risk isolation and criticism (Fall, *Personal* 4-5). Thus, at times these women have chosen global communication over local tradition, taking risks and making sacrifices to tell their stories, in order to change the way in which society treats them and literature represents them globally. Hence, it could be said that the translator has a duty to build a 'connection' with the Senegalese writer and adhere more rigidly to her voice because of the sacrifices she has made to attain that voice.

Globalisation may have made the world a smaller place, figuratively-speaking, but it has also allowed female writers to communicate issues, values and identities that are nationally-specific on an international scale. Translation into English expands this scale significantly. In fact, Lawrence Venuti declares that "...translation...wields enormous power in the construction of national identities and hence can play an important geopolitical role" (*Rethinking* 13). If translation is responsible for the construction of identities, the translator's role when rewriting the works of a lesser-known canon is of great consequence. Sall maintains that:

Le poète est un homme ou une femme qui vit dans une société et qui essaye de rendre cette société meilleure. Le poète est un citoyen. Il prend en charge les préoccupations, les visions et les rêves de son peuple. Mais le poète ne peut pas changer le monde. Le poète ne construit pas des hôpitaux, il ne construit pas des autoroutes, il ne

construit pas des voitures; mais il construit l'homme. Il apporte des valeurs, il apporte une raison de vivre, une raison d'espérer. (4-5)⁶⁷

If the poet is expressing the values of a people, if she is trying to make society a better place, if she is constructing the identity of a person, and giving her reason to live and to hope, these are very strong reasons for keeping that passion and desire for change in translation, ie retaining those values so powerfully expressed by the writers.

In fact, values and identity are an integral part of an individual's being and are often influenced by historical factors that happened long before her existence. Globalisation and travel are not modern concepts. The influence of early European settlers and slave traders left their mark on society today, and one of the most poignant examples of this lies in the story of Gorée Island, off the coast of Dakar, a chilling reminder of horrific slave imprisonment and greedy, racist European battles. It also forms an important part of the history of many individuals in Senegal, Africa and its diaspora, and therefore as part of the identity of the people. The story of Gorée Island is evoked in a poem by Ndiaye Sow:

Reine des eaux tumultueuses
Sur ton trône de granit
Tu surplombes l'Océan
Et mes yeux te voient parsemés de rêves

⁶⁷ "The poet is a man or woman who lives in a particular society and tries to make that society better. The poet is a citizen. He takes responsibility for the worries, views and dreams of his people. But the poet cannot change the world. The poet doesn't build hospitals, he doesn't build motorways, he doesn't make cars; but he creates man. He provides values, he provides a reason to live, a reason to hope."

De rêves brisés, brisés sur tes galets

(19)

Queen of the turbulent waters

Upon your granite throne

You dominate the Ocean

And my eyes see you scattered with dreams

With shattered dreams, shattered on your pebbles

In order to try and gain an understanding of Gorée and what happened there, as well as how the Senegalese people feel about the place, I visited the island of Gorée before translating this poem, acting as a cultural mediator between source and target cultures and texts, writer and reader. This has been the only way to really capture the true sentiments of those who feel Gorée is part of who they are today. Further, as women writers have taken so long to be heard, this poem fills a gap in that literary history from a woman's perspective; it is part of their historical identity and that of their ancestors. Only this depth of empathy enables the translator to select the most appropriate word – shattered rather than broken, scattered rather than sprinkled, pebbles rather than shingle, the former being much lighter and the latter more harsh. The island of Gorée does not “overhang” the ocean like a cliff, as “surplomber” would often be translated as, but instead it “dominates” it – on approaching Gorée by boat, it stands out in the open sea with its proud historical buildings, but also its oppressive past is well-known. In today's global age where travel is always a possibility (if an individual remains undeterred by financial or environmental concerns), when working on historically significant texts such as this one, the translator should gain a greater understanding of

the texts she is working on by visiting the location about which the poem or novel is speaking.

None of the alternative translations of “surplomber,” “parsemé,” “brisé” and “galets,” discussed above, are strictly incorrect. Furthermore, “‘the’ translation *per se* does not exist, and neither does the ‘perfect translation.’ A translation is directly dependent on its prescribed function, which must be made clear from the start” (Snell-Hornby, *Linguistic* 82). Hence, the above translation could take many different forms. However, if the strategy here is to translate semantically and the prescribed function to convey Senegalese realities in translation whilst following in the footsteps of the writer, the trip to Gorée Island was crucial in the application of that translation strategy and function. The translation above assists in the reconstruction of the writer’s identity through the poem, and this includes such well-considered choices of vocabulary in English. Literary translation is a “very social, culturally-bound process” (Bush, *Literary* 129) which can take huge diversions according to the relationship that the translator has with the source text writer. And Gisli Pálsson states that “how we bring life into text depends upon our relations with our hosts” (37). Thus, it follows that if the translator builds a strong relationship with a writer such as Ndiaye Sow and also her culture, and gains an understanding of the journey she has taken and the global influences she has assumed, the translation will stand a greater chance of breathing on with the life of both the source text writer and the translator.

Achieving this understanding will be a complex challenge for the translator if, despite globalisation and travel, aspects of different languages remain incompatible, and especially, it seems, if consideration is given to the theories of linguists Benjamin

Lee Whorf and Sapir whose analysis of the connection between culture, language and thought formed the basis of the often-cited Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.⁶⁸ Describing it as “the principle of linguistic relativity” (Carroll 29), John B. Carroll sums up the main thrust of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which is that “the structure of a human being’s language influences the manner in which he understands reality and behaves with respect to it” (23). Some theorists such as Emmon Bach reject the hypothesis “in its strongest form”⁶⁹ because, he states, “it is possible to convey any conceptual content in any language, even though the particular lexical items available will vary widely from

⁶⁸ The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been discussed in depth by many theorists such as Julia M. Penn (*Linguistic Relativity Versus Innate Ideas: The Origins of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in German Thought*), John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson (*Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*), and John Arthur Lucy (*Language, Diversity and Thought: A Reformulation of the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis*). However, it is not necessary to explore the details of this well-known hypothesis at length here, only its relevance to this particular discourse on translation (as discussed above). It should also be noted that, according to Robert H. Robins, the link between culture, language and thought was expressed much earlier by Wilhelm von Humboldt (101), but it is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which still attracts the greatest amount of debate today.

⁶⁹ The stronger version of the hypothesis states that an individual dissects nature according to her native language, and ascribes meaning in the process of doing so. Whorf declares that a person organises nature in this way due to an implicit and obligatory agreement in our speech community which is codified in the patterns of language. For example, Whorf states that “we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees” (213-214). Robins comments that the weaker form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis allows for “the possibility of deliberately channelling one’s conceptualization along lines other than those immediately prescribed by one’s language” (102).

one language to another” (122). In this rejection, however, Bach does not deny a connection between language, culture and thought. Hence, especially in its weak form, the hypothesis is of value to a cultural theory of translation due to this connection, as well as Bach’s statement of possibility. In fact, Robert H. Robins asserts that:

Empirically the admitted possibility of translation between languages of diverse structures spoken by people of different cultures is scarcely compatible with total linguistic determinism, while the equally admitted difficulties involved in translation afford solid support for the validity of linguistic relativity. (101)⁷⁰

This all makes perfect sense to a translator or to a Translation Studies scholar: if languages were not compatible at all, translation could not take place and people would not be able to communicate successfully with other cultures, and they can, especially in today’s global society. Conversely, there are sometimes clear problems in the translation of certain words, phrases, or grammatical constructs for which it is not easy to find a direct interpretation, (whether we call this untranslatability⁷¹ or an issue of

⁷⁰ The “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” combines two principles. The first – linguistic relativity – states that languages differ in important ways, and the structure and lexicon of an individual language influences how the world is perceived and conceptualized, whilst the second – linguistic determinism – states that language completely determines how people think (“Linguistic”).

⁷¹ Newmark describes untranslatable words as those for which there is “no ready one-to-one equivalent in the TL; they are likely to be qualities or actions – descriptive verbs, or mental words – words relating to the mind, that have no cognates in the TL...” (*Textbook* 17). This is discussed further in Chapter Three, Part IV.

equivalence, for example, does not matter) and these problems occur despite globalisation, and often with words that have a cultural resonance.

This is a critical issue raised by the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's texts into English. The writers draw from both French and Senegalese cultures in their works, often translating concepts from one culture into their writing in another, and the French they produce is proof that their patterns of thinking in a European language differ from those who are European. As outlined earlier, in today's global societies, Europhone women writers are often well-travelled, have studied and worked abroad, speak several languages near-natively and can easily move between cultures and accompanying thoughts. What this means is that they are used to expressing the thoughts of one culture and system in a totally different one and have found convenient and successful ways to do this, obvious examples being to introduce Wolof words to the French language where necessary or to explain a Wolof term using a number of French words. If the writer is a translator from a local language to French, and is attempting to translate into English, as European languages are much closer both syntactically and semantically, does this mean that the writer has already done the hard work in translation and found a way to deal with her difference? Is the translator's job solely then to recognise these differences? This will be discussed further in Chapter Three. What is evident here is that the language of literature has evolved and found different forms due to stimuli such as globalisation and travel beyond the borders of Senegal, both of which have accelerated the process of linguistic change. This evolved language may be discovered on the pages of Francophone Senegalese women's

literature, and in its printed form may be considered by some to be frozen in time and space, but in fact that language can evolve yet again in the process of translation.

V Associations in Literature across Time and Space

In “French Words, Authentic Voices,” Kamal Salhi comments on the way in which cultural space, political commitment, writing strategies and readership are inextricably entwined in the production of Francophone literature (Salhi, *French* 33), and the notion of cultural space as being an integral part of all aspects of literature from author to audience is one that will be explored here. In the field of Comparative Literature, the notions of “time and space” or “time and place” are also of great significance, and according to Snell Hornby can affect whether or not a text is deemed translatable (see Introduction, page 9). The discipline of Comparative Literature focuses on the relative study of texts from diverse cultures, which are often written in different languages at various times in history. For this reason, the subject has always been closely related to Translation Studies. Hence, this part of the thesis investigates the concepts of changing time and space (or place), how they can be applied to the analysis of literature in the field of Francophone Senegalese writing, and how an understanding of literature from these perspectives can assist the translator in putting a piece of poetry or prose in context when interpreting it prior to rewriting.

Understanding the proximity between the disciplines of Translation Studies and Comparative Literature allows a researcher to draw upon a wider field of knowledge in order to reach any outlined objectives. In her book, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Bassnett highlights the way in which Comparative Literature in the

African context “looks at a study of literature which starts with Africa and considers other literatures in relation to that African centre” (75). She continues: “This model of Comparative Literature is in complete contrast to the old Eurocentric models that rejected comparison with non-European texts on the grounds of unbridgeable difference and the absence of a place in the western canon” (75). She states that in many African nations, Comparative Literature is used to explore indigenous traditions (9) and that Comparative Literature has changed and developed to allow for a growth away from the colonial legacy.

Whilst the discipline does need to grow and develop as time progresses and as the world becomes more global, a consideration of colonial factors are still important, as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter which draws upon theories of postcolonial translation and issues of power. However, it is Bassnett’s emphasis on “growth” that needs to be stressed as time progresses far beyond the colonial era, as well as her emphasis on the importance of an Afro-centric study, and a renewed focus on indigenous traditions in analysis (and ‘local present-day realities’ must also be added to this), which are the most important conclusions to take away from her discourse in relation to this study. Further, if Comparative Literature in its more modern-day form looks at how cultures are influenced by importation and suggests that a focus on those cultures is imperative (8), then whether consideration is given to the importation of literature or translated literature and its effects on a culture, based upon polysystems theory (see explanation in footnote 49, page 75), or the importation of outside cultures to that same culture due to colonialism and globalisation, either way an in-depth study of time and place is of utmost importance.

“Time” is important in situating the literature discussed here in its historical context, and “place” in the reassertion of local context and actualities. It is then the application of the knowledge gained from the analysis of academic disciplines such as Comparative Literature, Translation Studies, Cultural Studies and Area Studies to the actual practice of literary translation which is of the most significance. Poetry is considered by some to be an untranslatable text type (see Chapter Three, Part IV for an in-depth analysis), but below are two extracts from poems by Francophone Senegalese women writers Ndiaye Sow and Seck Mbacké in which the very notions of time and space are crucial in textual analysis if the texts are to be considered for translation:

Sowéto, pardonne-moi

Sowéto je n'ai que mon coeur à t'offrir

Un coeur qui saigne

Un coeur qui déverse

Sa moisson de souffrance sur toute l'humanité

Sowéto, je n'ai que ma mémoire à t'offrir

Une mémoire habillée de deuil

Et habitée par la faim de tous les bonheurs

Fusillés à coup de lois

(Ndiaye Sow 43)

Soweto, I'm Sorry

Soweto I have only my heart to offer you

A heart that bleeds

A heart that pours

Its harvest of suffering over all humanity

Soweto, I have only my memory to offer you

A memory dressed in mourning

And haunted by a thirst for all the joys

Shot at the hands of the law

El Hadji Ousseynou Diouf

Notre El Hadji DIOUF national

Pour le sourire d'El Hadji-bonbons

Le forcené de l'objet rond

Prestidigitateur du ballon

Quel que soit ton angle de tir

Ton seul but est de réussir

(Seck Mbacké, *Lions* 102)

El-Hadji Ousseynou Diouf

We'd give anything to see you smile

El-Hadji DIOUF of Senegal

With the orb you thrill us all

Performing magic with the ball

Whichever angle you shoot from

Your goal is to be number one

Firstly, to translate the poem by Ndiaye Sow, it is important to recognise that this is about the Soweto uprising of 1976 in South Africa. The poem is therefore a eulogy to those who died, but also a song which celebrates the freedom they helped bring about. By recognising time and place, the translator can see that *pardonne-moi* does not have to mean forgive me, pardon me or excuse me, but instead: “I’m Sorry,” a phrase that might be said at a funeral and that does not apportion blame to the speaker. As children died at the hands of police who opened fire on the protesting students, *les bonheurs* has been translated as “joys,” as this could not only refer to the loss of happiness but also the loss of people; it is important that this remains in the plural to signify the number of deaths, but also the word “joy” can refer to children, as in “my bundle of joy.” Clearly in the translation of this text, retaining the very personal, poignant and passionate nature of the poem has been of utmost importance.

In contrast to the first extract, the second is a tribute to El-Hadji Diouf, the Senegalese football player. This is a light-hearted poem, written post-2002, the year of footballing success for the Senegalese team (see page 80). Firstly, it must be noted that El-Hadji Diouf plays for Blackburn Rovers in the UK, so in translation a hyphen has been added to his name as it is when used in England. Secondly, this is a modern ditty, so current footballing speak has been employed – you shoot from a certain angle, you do not fire at the goal, nor do you have a “shooting angle.” And it is more probable to hear a commentator speak of footballers performing magic on the pitch, whilst a footballer would not be called a “magician” or a “conjurer” with the ball, as a more

direct translation would provide the reader with in English. Finally, more flexibility has been allowed with the language as this is a modern poem, intended to be a bit of fun and pleasing to the ear. The rhymes and rhythms have been retained in translation but the language has been played around with to make the poem succeed as an amusing little ditty.

Thus, by situating these poems in time and place, the translator can learn a lot about the context of the poem, and it can help her understand how to translate certain words, but most importantly how appropriate it may be to play around with the language and stylistic elements. “Time and place” do not render a text impossible to translate, but an understanding of time and place as non-static, ever-changing concepts, enables the translator to act as an informed cultural go-between. These examples demonstrate the extreme diversity of literary texts and the translator does not need to treat them all the same. But despite the useful nature of these concepts taken from Comparative Literary studies, as a discipline Comparative Literature has received much criticism. Interestingly, whilst Translation Studies has previously been considered a sub-discipline of Comparative Literature (Bassnett, *Comparative* 11), the former subject has, since the early nineties, become the more popular field of study.⁷² That said, there appears now to be a trend marking a departure from the term

⁷² In her introduction to *Comparative Literature*, Bassnett states that the subject is in crisis in the West, but expanding elsewhere, whilst she describes the rapid development in Translation Studies (9-10). Bassnett attributes the diminishing interest in Comparative Literature to the development of new fields of study, such as Postcolonial Studies, which may formerly have been sub-disciplines of Comparative Literature (9-10). She also notes that the subject is becoming less of a discipline in its own right and more “a branch of something else” (11).

Translation Studies and towards something else. In a 2008 article entitled, “Writing Time, Writing Space,” Bassnett talks in detail about the current climate of literary translation, and goes so far as to say that the term “translation” is perhaps not relevant today: she instead takes the notion of “transgression” as outlined by Josephine Balmer, as a more appropriate term which highlights both the debt to another writer as well as the rewriter’s independence (85).⁷³ Simon also uses this term with regard to everyday innovative translation practices,⁷⁴ as well as the word “transfiguration” to describe more creative manipulations (sometimes dubbed “disrespectful,” “deviant” or “excessive” translation) or experimental writing that “in some way trouble the expected goals of language exchange” (*Translating* 120).⁷⁵

⁷³ In *Chasing Catallus*, Balmer claims that she aims to make the difference between ‘original’ and ‘translated’ poetry unimportant by juxtaposing the two throughout her collection and allowing each to inform each other through multiple layers of meaning (9-10). She states that the collection contains a variety of interpretative positions from “straightforward translations” to “versions,” including “transgressions” – “versions which shamelessly subvert a source-text’s original intent or meaning” (9).

⁷⁴ Simon also uses the word “transgressions” to describe her everyday experiences of cultural difference in Montreal (*Translating* xi), where “deviant translation turns traditional forms to new ends” (120), such as religious buildings transformed into apartment blocks (121) or cinema programmes providing some information in one language and the remainder in a second language (122).

⁷⁵ Simon takes this term from E.D. Blodgett’s article entitled “Transfiguring Transfiguration” in which he links the term to Saint Jerome’s use of the word ‘transfiguratio’ to render two different Greek terms for transformation – one spiritual and one rhetorical (Blodgett 18). Simon asserts that this also represents the dual force of translation to dislocate the self as language is displaced, and to enhance the self as languages are crossed/mixed (*Translating* 120).

Bassnett asserts that in a world where globalisation, migration and media have created societies in which geographical space is much more fluid, the concept of the translator is now less of an interlingual interpreter and more of a cultural mediator and writer with multiple perspectives. She states that context and layers of meaning, the assumed and implicit are just as important as the clearly defined (*Writing* 77). Hence, it is the concept of 'time and space' which remains important – placing a piece of work in its historical and geographical context and analysing the text, not just superficially but in depth, to discover any subtext or multiple readings. This will form part of the translation strategy here. With regard to the status of the discipline of Translation Studies, clearly the field is constantly changing; it is developing and finding new directions, and whether it is defined as translation, transgression or transfiguration (in cases of more radical manipulations), it is still possible to draw upon past research in Translation Studies and many other disciplines, old and new; useful research certainly cannot be disregarded, even if over time new ideas have been incorporated into that theory, or disciplines have changed in name, structure and status.

In 2003, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak criticised both Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies as disciplines which are too general in their conclusions, trivialising "reading and writing as the allegory of knowing and doing" (*Death* 28). And in *West African Literatures: Ways of Reading*, Newell adds to Spivak's conjecture, saying that Comparative Literature presumes too much equivalence between texts and "risks erasing cultural specificity," whilst Area Studies is so focused

on the particular that it presumes that separate cultures “cannot be compared” (203).⁷⁶

On the other hand, having criticised Area Studies, Newell does declare that a framework of Area Studies is useful to West African intellectuals in their studies of culture and identity due to that “individual parts” approach.⁷⁷ She explains:

The ‘individual parts’ approach...represents a way out of the postcolonial slough of despond, whereby subjectivity and social context are too readily swallowed up by concepts of indeterminacy and difference. (204)

What can be learnt from this is that postcolonial countries should all be treated individually, as should different authors, and diverse texts. Constantly trying to find parallels or contrasts between pieces of literature within the postcolonial world is ignoring the wide variation of social context. A translator must treat each text anew with a fresh perspective. In the case of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature, not only must she draw on her knowledge of the cultures the writer has encountered in

⁷⁶ It should be noted that some theorists believe that Translation Studies has significantly moved away from debates about equivalence and instead there is a focus on “text production across linguistic boundaries” (Bassnett, *Taking* 133), but whilst academics may have expanded debates on equivalence, the theory is still relevant within wider debates on cultural transfer. The ‘cultural turn’ in Translation Studies highlights the importance of expressing the finer points of individual cultures in a target language, without erasing cultural difference.

⁷⁷ In *Thread in the Loom*, Niyi Osundare comments on the insufficient nature of the term “postcolonial,” highlighting the assortedness of cultures which can all be described as such when their colonial pasts are radically different, such as Africa, India and the USA. He states that there is little room in this approach for “the crucial specificities of individual parts” (44).

France and Senegal, but she must also take into account Anglophone cultures, from the point of view that she needs to be aware of any potential bias when translating for the target readership:

Frénésie Noire en Neige
Paris de noire excitation
Oublie métro et trépidations
L'Afrique à l'Arc-de Triomphe
Tam-tam clamant le triomphe
Ainsi va le poème à la dérive
Pour notre monde de l'autre rive
France-Sénégal Zéro un
Danse éniivrante⁷⁸ pour les uns
Nous ne vous oublierons jamais
Dilection mes mots en procession comme mets
A vous nos offrandes de millet
Trente six mille chandelles allumées

(Seck Mbacké, *Lions* 38)

White Peak of Black frenzy
Black excitement in Paris
Forget the hustle and bustle

⁷⁸ The above spelling of éniivrante has been reproduced from Seck Mbacké's original publication of the poem in *Lions de la Téranga*. However, in standard French there is no acute accent on the 'e.' This may be a mistake, printing error, or a characteristic of Senegalese French.

Africa at the Arc de Triomphe
Tom-tom proclaiming triumph
And so the poem runs free
For our world across the sea
One-nil Senegal-France
For those who win, a heady dance
You, we will never forget
Dilection my words in procession, a plate
For you, an offering of millet
Thirty six thousand candles alight

Firstly the translator may note the standard modern French language used throughout, a high register in general with religious references such as “dilection” and “offrandes” – an attempt has been made to reproduce the register and religious references in translation. The Senegalese elements are presented through references to the “Tam-tam,” and “danse éniivrante.” Whilst the first term is simple to translate, the second causes problems – a celebratory dance is truly “frenzied,” but that word had previously been employed, “intoxicating” would also be suitable, but it is too long, so “heady” was chosen. However, this does not seem to quite capture the nature of the dance, so the translation of this term is still under consideration. Finally, understanding the British way of expressing football scores is important here – whilst ordinarily the home team would be written first, cultural norms dictate that it is more important to say the “nil” after the “one,” so these have been switched around.

In English, the temptation might be to over-explain certain elements of the language; the sentences are short, lack punctuation and articles in the French version, but there is a constant temptation to add them in, in translation. On most occasions this is resisted due to the strategy of semantic translation rather than adaptation, but towards the end, commas have been introduced so that the poem reads well. Whilst the translator may be aware of cultural bias, there is no doubt that she will leave her mark on the translation somewhere. The “individual parts approach” taken from Area Studies is therefore useful in that it promotes the idea of distinctiveness; that literary texts must be analysed from scratch and treated as separate entities. Difference or similarity may be found, but that is not the point. Whilst general strategies for translating Francophone Senegalese women’s literature can be created, every individual translator will need to research afresh each time she approaches a new text.

Clearly essential to this discussion is a comprehension that it is vital to consider the African momentum for change as well as the European one, that the translator cannot become so focused on colonialism that she forgets the many other dimensions to Senegalese society. And further, whilst some of his theories may now appear to be antiquated, it should be mentioned that the anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski was in many ways ahead of other academics of his time as he highlights the non-homogenous nature of African culture in his work (20),⁷⁹ which, quite obvious today,

⁷⁹ In his 1929 paper on Practical Anthropology, Malinowski asks the researcher to “take count of European stupidity and prejudice” as much of that of “the African” (25), which hints at some thought towards equality. However, he also uses phrases such as “the contact of white and coloured” (16) which leans towards being racist or at least inappropriate these days. The article is understandably dated with

was enlightening to many people sixty years ago. It is on the basis of this concept of cultural plurality that the research here into Senegalese cultures and not African cultures as one huge unvarying existence continues. Francophone Senegalese women's literature is work which crosses borders, which demonstrates both the conflicting and the combining of cultures – concurrent confrontation and compromise, resulting in a sort of *métissage* which forms a unique type of text.

Today, many readers might wish the translator to remain 'faithful' to the 'original' writer on the commonsense grounds that it is the writer they wish to read; note for example, Hatim and Mason's discussion of the translation of an eighteenth century French text where the translator's choice in individual words and phrases are directly influenced by clearly felt reader assumptions and expectations (227). However, the role of the literary translator is also becoming more complex; to be respected in the world of academic literary translation, the translator is expected to be an outstanding writer in her own right, to demonstrate strong writing skills, to 'add something' to 'compensate for any perceived losses,' to 'show balance of perspectives,' 'to remain impartial whilst allowing for judgement,' and to work beyond binary distinctions of source and target text (Bassnett *Writing* 77-85). Bassnett argues for a departure from "faithfulness" (85), but it is possible that this would still be requested by many readers of translated texts, and Bassnett herself comments on the

regard to some of his ideas and terminology, but despite the fact that he was a well-known and respected researcher at that time, his views are prejudiced and represent the embarrassing way in which European academics viewed African people at that time.

trust that is placed in translators to ‘reconstruct otherness’ for target readers, and to remain ‘ethical,’ which is a further expectation to add to the list (85). Further, departing from a closer literal ‘faithfulness’ also entails risking the appropriation of a text in ways abhorrent to postcolonial theorists – Venuti, for example, underlines the way in which translations can be used to meet certain political agendas.

In his book entitled *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, Venuti highlights the importance of translation and its cultural political agenda at the time of production (11). In his analysis he recommends:

...examining the place and practice of translation in specific cultures, addressing such questions as which foreign texts are selected for translation and which discursive strategies are used to translate them, which texts, strategies, and translations are canonized or marginalized, and which social groups are served by them. (11)

If translation theorists have been examining these issues for the past few decades, surely translators need to be aware of the way in which their treatment of a text, from selection to final distribution (and all the stages in between) can impact upon the aforementioned “textual investors.” It is worth remembering that what is translated today will be studied tomorrow, and perhaps retranslated according to contemporary beliefs regarding translation techniques and strategies. The translator is therefore responsible for questioning her choices each step of the way during the translation process, being aware of the latest beliefs, values and ethics in the field, and being able to justify her actions.

This is all even more important when the Francophone African women's canon and especially the female Francophone Senegalese canon are almost totally unknown in the Anglophone world. Whilst some individuals may have heard of writers such as Véronique Tadjo who is from Côte d'Ivoire but currently lives in South Africa, Calixthe Beyala of Cameroon or Assia Djebar from Algeria, if each country-specific canon is explored, the lists of writers well-known within the Anglophone world becomes much shorter. With regard to Senegal, many academics interested in the subject might be able to name Mariama Bâ, Sow Fall or even Bugul, but very few would get much further, and virtually no one can name a Senegalese woman poet. The point is this – that currently any translation of women's writing from Senegal carries a heavy responsibility – to be amongst the first texts to represent Senegal and Senegalese women and their cultures in an Anglophone context.

Bâ's books date back to 1979 and 1981, but that was just twenty years after independence. More than twice that amount of time has passed now and more recent works being produced represent the continual change in society, which the translator has a responsibility to represent. Bassnett comments on the importance of translation in the survival of literary texts, and the way that "through translation ideas, images, forms, genres and new perspectives can be brought across otherwise impenetrable cultural and linguistic barriers" (*Writing* 78). In this case, translation is not just about survival, but about communication of knowledge in general. People are using English increasingly worldwide (for the moment at least), and there is "a greater need to reach out across cultural and linguistic boundaries than probably at any moment in the past" (76). Hence, in the current linguistic climate, the translation of Senegalese women's

works into English could generate a greater degree of success for many a writer, in terms of wider readership and critique, as well as financially.

In several ways, therefore, the translator is responsible for canon formation in the target language. But with this in mind, how should the translator approach this responsibility? As already discussed in relation to Newmark (page 83-84), translation strategies change over time, so one solution may be to consider the words of current, practising translators who have experience in this field, feeding their advice into strategies for rewriting literary texts. For example, in a paper entitled “The Writer of Translations” produced for a book called *The Translator as Writer*, Peter Bush⁸⁰ demonstrates the meticulous nature of literary translation, the many drafts he will make of a piece of work, and the slow emerging of the final text through small deliberate changes. He considers the nuance of words, whether or not to clarify certain foreign terms, and the influences of other translations that an individual can, or can choose not to, take on board. And he also consults the feedback of others. Bush demonstrates the depth and intensity of translation as writing and creation, the great importance of the translator as reader (and writer), and not just any casual reader, but one whose words will be read by others (25). As an expert in the field, Bush is clearly emphasising the importance of the thorough and careful attention to detail that is required in the process of literary translation.

⁸⁰ Bush is a celebrated literary translator, Vice President of the International Federation of Translators, and former Director of the British Centre for Literary Translation.

In the same collection of papers, Ros Schwartz and Nicholas de Langes⁸¹ mention the many challenges they have faced in rewriting texts. For instance, they comment on the way in which language can lose its musicality in English translation (15). They describe the translator's responsibility for creating the same emotions in the source text language as the target text language (11), the difficult task of saying 'the same' as the original text even when the words are different, of telling the same story, keeping the same mood, and treating the same human issues (11). And they warn against colonising a piece of work by over-explaining meaning and making it more accessible (13). Again, these challenges can be noted by the translator who wishes to learn from the current expertise of others. Further, there is support in Schwartz and de Langes's comments for the choices of words made earlier in the translation of *Mame Touba*, where I refrained from selecting "euro-ised" terms or using footnotes, which can ultimately be likened to a form of textual colonisation (see Chapter One, Part II of this thesis).⁸²

⁸¹ Schwartz and de Langes are highly experienced, award-winning translators. Schwartz also has extensive experience in translating Francophone African texts both individually and as a co-translator. For example, she has worked on the following English translations: *The Star of Algiers* by Aziz Chouaki, *The Belly of the Atlantic* by Fatou Diome, *La Prisonnière (also titled – Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail)* by Malika Oufkir and Michele Fitoussi, and *Black Docker* by the renowned Senegalese writer, the late Ousmane Sembène.

⁸² As can the translation of names and places. In "Mame Touba," for instance, there is a character called Serigne Touba Mbacké, but this name has layers of meaning – Sérin is a Wolof word which means 'Marabout,' an important Islamic leader or teacher, but the word has been converted into a French one. It is the translator's decision whether to leave the text alone and risk a loss in reader understanding in the

Finally, as an academic as well as a practising translator, Bassnett too emphasises the importance of research, the immense care that should be taken in reading, and in discovering the source text writer's stylistic devices, possibly by reading all the writer's other works in order to attain this knowledge. She also stresses the importance of locating the literature in its historical context then rewriting it for another audience in a different time and place (*Pride* 18). There is no doubt that other translators will supply many more rules and regulations with regard to literary translation, but important to note here are the lengths that today's highly-respected translators go to in order to create a "good translation."

But how can this knowledge gained from the experience of others be applied to the translation of Senegalese literature in particular? Evidently, the concept of meticulous research, the ideas of the translation of emotion, mood, the revision, the refinement, should of course be taken on board, but this is the case with many types of literature. However, with regard to Senegalese women's writing, where the authors are often unknown to the Anglophone translator, where the writers come from very different cultures to hers, use unfamiliar stylistic devices and treat subjects which are largely alien to her, the translator has more responsibility on her shoulders. This is where the idea of reading beyond the text is crucial. What else has this particular

target text, or chance being accused of recolonising the text by substituting the Franglicised Wolof word with one such as Marabout or Saint. The preferable option would be to retain Serigne, possibly returning it to the standardised Wolof transcription. A footnote for the term is not necessary as the context of the name does not overly impair the understanding of the reader, but it also preserves its cultural significance.

writer written? What other translations have been done, if any, in other languages?

Here, the translator as reader comes in to play on a more profound level.

On the other hand, Schwartz's comment about not over-colonising a text by over-explaining terms is crucial – the translator must find a balance between researching to translate well, and not over-developing or over-explaining, and thereby over-domesticating a text. Finally, historical context is of more significance to postcolonial Senegalese texts than many other text types, for the society in which a text was written, and upon which a novel or poem was based has faced dramatic change over such a short period of time. The ratio of “change in time” to “change in space” is very great, so the translator needs to be aware at what point in this rapidly changing jigsaw of foreign cultures the piece of literature she is translating is situated.

In conclusion, culture in Senegal is in a constant state of change due to Western and non-Western influences, and this is reflected in women's writing which reveals a tension between tradition and modernity. As cultures shift, people acquire new norms of behaviour, and to understand that from a literary perspective, the works that are studied for translation must be placed in context. An individual parts approach to translation means treating postcolonial societies separately, but also individual writers and individual works. As well as researching texts and subtexts using conventional means (books, Internet, interviews etc) to gain knowledge into deeply rooted traditions and local forms of modernity, the translator can gain further insight by experiencing first-hand some of the realities, beliefs and values of the source text writer by visiting Senegal. This improves awareness, enlightening the research process, clarifying certain words and phrases and thereby ‘improving’ the target text.

It is evident that languages have evolved and found different forms globally due to varying histories and cultures, so Senegalese French takes a unique form. However, the translator must be able to recognise this form in order to convey its distinctive nature in the target text. And as the French language of Senegal continues to change, it is now affected by the media, technology and the individual travels of writers. This too must be taken into consideration, especially if writers seek to apply their own globally-enlightened voice to the act of translation. Further, in a society constantly bombarded with communication from America, the translator must contemplate working into American English. Francophone Senegalese women have often made great personal sacrifices in order to write, so the translator should reflect upon the extent to which she has a 'duty' to the source text writer to research cultural context extensively. The translator as reader controls the meaning potential of a text, and as cultural background is often highly significant to Senegalese writers, it is imperative for the translator to gain an unbiased understanding of both cultural milieu and perspective. This may not always have been fully considered by translators of the past. The concepts of 'time' and 'space' are useful in situating literature in this historical framework and reasserting local actualities. This process can impact upon the translator's judgement as to the degree to which a text can be linguistically and stylistically manipulated.

In fact, translation and Translation Studies are evolving and the notion of transgression is becoming an increasingly employed term to explain a process which underlines the contribution of both source text writer and translator as an independent writer and cultural mediator. This takes the translator beyond a simple faithful or even a semantic strategy and towards a goal of adaptation, which will be analysed further in

the Chapters that follow. Nevertheless, adaptation, like over-explanation, is a controversial strategy in postcolonial translation due to potential accusations of recolonisation. What is imperative, is to learn from current experts in the field of literary translation, and “attention to detail” is evidently of great importance to them, especially when dealing with unfamiliar subjects or stylistic devices. Not only does this complement a cultural translation strategy but also the interdisciplinary nature of Translation Studies; the numerous academic fields from which it draws can assist the translator in her task. Finally, the translation of Francophone Senegalese women’s works contributes to canon formation, the communication of culture and the visibility of the source text writer. It can also influence cultural political agendas. Hence, the translator has a powerful role, but she is not the only power to influence the translation of Senegalese women’s literature, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO – POWER RELATIONS

...the study and practice of translation is inevitably an exploration of power relationships within a textual practice that reflect power structures within the wider cultural context. (Bassnett, *Meek* 21)

I Political, Religious and Cultural Intervention

Power relationships exist in any culture, but in Senegal particular conflicts between diverse societal forces are what make the country and its people unique. As the nation has grown and changed over the past few centuries, so have the factors that influence it, whether political, colonial, religious, geographical or ideological. And as one power exerts its force over society, others powers push back in the form of beliefs, opinions and behaviours often represented in literature. This chapter therefore builds upon the cultural overview of Chapter One by investigating specific issues of power in Senegalese society and their impact upon writing and ensuing translation strategies. Issues of colonial power including religion, and the anti-colonial power of Negritude will be analysed, followed by a focus on patriarchal power, gender and Senegalese women's own battles against oppression. This chapter examines how writers have reacted to or even contested oppression through a manipulation of their literature linguistically and beyond, demonstrating how different translation strategies can either support or subvert existing power structures and the implied messages of the source text writer. It also analyses the power of the publisher and present-day challenges of writing in a world where the West has been seen to dominate for a long time, not only

in its expression of certain ideologies but also in its control over who should be heard in the literary canon and how a translation should be produced.

The concept of power in Translation Studies may not be a new one (Alvarez; Tymoczko, *Power*), nor is it an original subject for debate in postcolonial studies (Chowdhry; de Boeck; Johnson, *British*), and the notion of power has been treated extensively in philosophical discourse most notably by Michel Foucault (*Power; Power/Knowledge*). However, an interdisciplinary approach to power and its application to the practice of translation in the particular culture of Senegal will bring new insight to this discussion. Bassnett (above) states that translation is a representation of power relations already existing in a specific culture, so if Senegalese society is always in a state of power flux, how does this affect literature, and how does this impact upon translation? For decades now translation has been considered a powerful activity where translators are able to manipulate texts in order to achieve a desired effect on their readers (Gentzler, *Introduction* xi-xii).⁸³ If cultural powers are imposing certain views and behaviours upon Senegalese society, and a representation of these is embodied in Francophone Senegalese women's literature, how does the

⁸³ A number of academics have researched the way in which translators can manipulate texts in order to achieve desired effects. Edwin Gentzler and Tymoczko cite James Holmes as one of the early academics to study audience effect (*Translated!*), as well as the work of Toury, Lambert, van den Broeck, Hermans, Lefevere, Bassnett and Tymoczko who contribute to an edited volume entitled *The Manipulation of Literature* (Hermans) published in 1985 (Gentzler, *Introduction* xi-xiii). Their research has formed an important component of the platform upon which many academics have founded their studies of the cultural, political and powerful aspects of translation today.

translator approach the interpretation, representation and rewriting of these perspectives and images in a target text?

This first part of Chapter Two will introduce some of the major colonial influences upon Senegalese⁸⁴ life, and how these interventions had a direct impact upon the language and literature of the country, and now upon the translator. Senegal's history of colonisation and slavery dates back to the 15th century and is well-documented,⁸⁵ as is the fact that centuries of invasions had a profound effect on African people meaning that their lives and cultures would continue on a radically different path from that which they previously had trodden. However, Francophone Senegalese women writers mostly began to write after independence, and it is the force with which they fought to recreate a notion of self, following colonisation, that defines the work of many of these authors who created "new and powerful identities" in order

⁸⁴ The very naming of the country was an act of power assertion, oppression and cultural appropriation (Bassnett, *What's* 33). The name Senegal is thought to be derived from the Wolof phrase "suñu gaal" meaning "it is our pirogue" (a type of long canoe) or perhaps named after the Zenega Berbers who built an Islamic monastery on the bank of the river Sénégal. Either way, the country's name is a reminder of the rigid borders constructed by colonisers without consideration for pre-existing ethnic divisions in the region.

⁸⁵ The 15th century marked the expansion of international commerce. The transportation of slaves to and from the West coast of Africa, many from Gorée island, began in the 17th century and continued into the 20th century despite the British Abolition of the Slave Trade act in 1807 and the French equivalent in 1818 (formerly abolished in 1794, but restored under Napoleon in 1802). When slavery was abolished, traders switched to dealing in raw materials. These traders were followed by Christian missionaries (Finn 90), and in the late 19th century, governments replaced traders when they shared out Africa at the Berlin conference of 1884/5, establishing colonies and protectorates across the continent (Newell 15-17).

to challenge colonialism on a political, intellectual and emotional level (Loomba 186). Some writers consciously deconstruct the colonial system and the power it represented through manipulation of language and genre, reinforcing their true identities in the process. For example, in her analysis of *L'ex père de la nation* by Sow Fall, Mary-Kay Miller states that:

Sow Fall's text works to dismantle colonial and capital systems of production and reproduction that perpetuate dependent relationships between former colonies and colonial powers, thereby reproducing ad-infinitum certain patterns of domination. (99)

But what Sow Fall cleverly does is twin this critical story of the postcolonial political system with a linguistic and generic deconstruction, ie she matches a historical critique with a prosaic and typological one. For example Sow Fall takes the idea of the autobiographical genre, considered to be a Western construction, and dilutes the autobiography's power so it can no longer be used as "a colonial tool for reproducing a Western image of the self in a non-Western genre" (100). She fictionalises the autobiography, writing in the first person but without implicating herself in the text, and in Miller's words, "clothes the truth" (101-104). By avoiding easy, one-to-one correspondences she signifies "a refusal of the image of the 'naked,' 'natural' (read uncivilised) 'native' who is incapable of dissimulation but also of imagination" (104). It is therefore essential for the translator of Sow Fall's literature not only to understand the historical background of her texts in order to translate them, but also the ways in which she may consciously or subconsciously manipulate genres, phrases and words in a manner which may not automatically be obvious to the reader or translator.

In *Le baobab fou*, Bugul also chooses the autobiographical form to relay her personal experiences of life in Europe following decolonisation. It is believed that the process of writing for her is one of therapy – to heal domestic and socio-political wounds (Gallimore 240), but again she disrupts the autobiographical form by creating a text that has myth-like qualities (252). Using the Baobab tree as a metaphor for her own struggle to take root in Western society (241), she attributes the misfortune of herself and her community to both colonial powers and a tainted pre-colonial Africa where the colonial seed found a favourable ground in which to take root (251). An understanding of the symbolic nature of the text enables the translator to interpret specific elements of the work with a greater knowledge of the multiple possible readings of the source text. Hence, it is clear in both *Le baobab fou* and *L'ex père de la nation* that writers convey the clash between the European and African cultures not only linguistically and in the topics under discussion but also metaphorically and through a manipulation of genre.

The very nature of writing in French could be thought to indicate a form of linguistic control over the writer by the coloniser. Even today the primacy of French in the Senegalese education system has caused children to be hospitalised, traumatised by the sudden switch in language between home and school (Fall, *Personal* 5-6),⁸⁶ so still African writers live with the consequences of the harsh conditions and suffering of

⁸⁶ Many of the writers in this thesis have had no choice but to be educated in French, so writing in a local language such as Wolof or Peul is not always considered to be a valid choice (Sall 3), although some writers such as Seck Mbacké have done it on a far smaller scale than that of their Europhone writing (see discussion, page 242).

their ancestors.⁸⁷ Sometimes this linguistic control is directed at matters of religious colonisation. For example, Newell states that many writers such as Achebe and Tutuola are "products" of missionary activity (16-17), and it could be said that this is also the case with writers from Francophone African countries. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that both Achebe and Tutuola intervene in the English language by adapting it to better suit their own cultures, just as Senegalese women writers do in French.⁸⁸ Hence, creativity and religion or other powerful forces are often highly inseparable.

Intervention in the form of slavery, colonisation and missionary activity has been the stimulus for many power struggles, but authors have in turn intervened in the process of writing by adapting European languages so they are more in-tune with non-European cultures. Therefore, the reality of power relations in Senegal should not be oversimplified, because they may oppress but they also empower. According to Foucault, power relations are never binary but instead one group or individual acts upon others and vice versa in a bidirectional or multidirectional manner (*Power* 340). For example, it is more apt to speak of the power struggles that exist between those who follow Islam, others who follow Christianity, and those who practice traditional

⁸⁷ Finn asserts that Black people now pay for having been slaves, frequently finding themselves pawns in new games of power where Black frequently means exploited, and White – exploiter, poor and rich, victim and victimiser (83).

⁸⁸ Mbulungeni Madiba asserts that women writers have forged their own successful careers by communicating through the written system which was introduced by Christian missionaries for the purpose of Bible translation (19).

African religions⁸⁹ sometimes alongside Christianity or Islam. And there should be no assumption that just because Christianity was the religion of the most recent colonisers that that will immediately be the stronger and more oppressive force.

Islam,⁹⁰ practiced by ninety four percent of the population, is in fact a much more powerful force than Christianity, practiced by around five percent (Gritzner 111).⁹¹ According to Sall, the Islam of Senegal today is “très ‘light,’ très doux, très tendre...très serein, très fraternel, très solidaire... enfin, ce qu’il y a de meilleur, je

⁸⁹ One percent of Senegalese people practice a traditional animist religion based on a belief in local spirits, and these individuals mostly belong to the Peul and Diola communities (Gritzner 51-55). It must also be noted that many Muslims and Christians still retain practices rooted in animism such as wearing a “gris-gris,” a leather pouch which contains spiritual items, or consulting a “marabout” regarding illness or protection against evil spirits, for example (58-59).

⁹⁰ Academics are divided on whether Islam is also a colonial religion pre-Christianity. For example, Wole Soyinka believes Islam is no more African than Christianity (*Conversations* 66), whilst Ali Mazrui believes Islam originated in Africa as Greater Africa includes the Arabian Peninsula (13). And regarding the language of Islam, Newell asserts that “Arabic is the language in which Allah communicated the Qur’an directly to the prophet Mohammed in the sixth century. It is therefore regarded by most Muslims as anything but colonial or colonizing” (47).

⁹¹ Islam was introduced to the Senegalese region in the 13th century by Toucouleur, El Hajj Omar (Leymarie 39). Senegalese Islam is very distinct; the people are Sunni Muslims and Sufi followers meaning they adhere to the basic tenets of Islam but not all the orthodox practices. There are many Islamic brotherhoods, but the main four are the Mourides, the Tijanes, the Qadiriyya and the Layenes. Membership of a brotherhood is passed down through the family (Gritzner 55-56).

crois, dans la religion” (5-6).⁹² However, whilst Mbow does not contradict Sall’s feelings about Islam, there is no doubt her perspective regarding religion is very different as a woman, asserting that Islam has had a huge, often detrimental, impact upon the way in which people perceive things, family relations, and how women are judged (4).⁹³ And certainly, the literature under discussion in this thesis does not always represent such a gentle religion as regards the role of women. Molara Ogundipe-Leslie states that the introduction of Islam disrupted traditional societies, and it also created “new oppressed and subjugated stati and roles for women” (15). It is these oppressive roles, created or influenced by Islam, which have been brought to bear in the works of Senegalese women writers of the past three decades.⁹⁴

For example, Mariama Bâ’s literature provides one of the most candid representations of the Islamic religion from a woman’s perspective in postcolonial Senegalese society.⁹⁵ Thus, it is enlightening to analyse the way in which religion is

⁹² “very ‘light,’ very gentle, very soft...very serene, very brotherly, very united...in short, what is best about the religion, I believe.”

⁹³ According to Mbow it is the interpretation of Islam which is the issue. Further, women in Senegal do now have a degree of freedom and autonomy, but she believes they sometimes create their own restrictions by saying that religion does not allow them to do certain things (*Personal 4*).

⁹⁴ In *The Senegalese Novel by Women*, Stringer comments on the fact that Senegal is the only country in Black Africa to have a body of women’s literature and at the same time these women writers have a strong attachment to Islam (154).

⁹⁵ Some women writers may imply or promote a relationship with God through Islam, but also condemn those aspects of Senegalese culture which are often perceived to be promoted by Islam, such as polygamy, and male domination (Stringer 154-155).

linked to language and translation. Islamic concepts are employed as narrative devices by Bâ (Nnaemeka 84), for example the “mirasse”⁹⁶ is used to reveal Modou’s most intimate secrets (87), and in that way Ramatoulaye is able to regain the power that Modou snatched from her in taking a second wife. Bâ also speaks of Islamic mourning lasting four months and ten days (*Si* 25), a period where Ramatoulaye is able to ruminate on her bitter thoughts, stating: “Puisse leur invocation ne rien souiller de l’état de pureté absolue où je dois évoluer” (25). This is translated by Bodé-Thomas as “May their evocation not soil the purity in which I must live” (Bâ, *So* 25). But unfortunately here, the religious connotations of the words are lost in the translation, “invocation” having religious implications which are not communicated in “evocation,” and the purity has lost its “absolue,” which could perhaps be translated as “absolute” or “unconditional.” Interestingly, the concept of evolving (*évoluer*) may be seen to contradict the religious nature of the text, and perhaps is used to demonstrate Ramatoulaye’s progression beyond the traditional and Islamic laws which have oppressed her. But Bodé-Thomas uses a static verb – to live, when evolving is exactly what Ramatoulaye does. Certainly, these are some of the arguments that come to play in *Une si longue lettre*, and a general understanding of the power of religion can clearly impact upon the translator’s choice of vocabulary in the target language.

But it is the multidirectional forces of different religions which are represented in other texts. At interview Mbow stated that Islam, Christianity and other African religions peacefully coexist in Senegal despite the dominance of Islam (4), and this

⁹⁶ The mirasse is a Koranic order which “requires that a dead person be stripped of his most intimate secrets; thus is exposed to others what was carefully concealed” (Bâ, *So* 9).

view is supported by Fall who claims that in some households you can even find Muslims and Christians living side by side, people celebrating both Islamic and Christian festivals and openly accepting either the presence of churches or mosques whichever religion they follow (*Personal* 9). And many Senegalese people are able to respect both Islamic or Christian beliefs as well as continuing some traditional practices. The following short extract from “Baw naan” by Ndiaye Sow demonstrates the type of issues that may be encountered in translation due to the representation in literature of multiple religions and the fact that a translator must not assume the supremacy of one belief over another:

Baw Naan! Maam Yalla Baw Naan!
Nos grand-mères évoquent nos mânes

(25)

Baw Naan! Maam Yalla Baw Naan!
Our grandmothers invoke our spirits

There may be a presumption that the word “Yalla” is referring to Allah in the first line as this appears to be a singular noun, “baw naan” meaning ‘to hold a ceremony of dancing and prayer for rain,’ and “Maam” meaning ‘grandparent or ancestor.’⁹⁷ However, it is not possible to be certain, because singular and plural nouns are the same in Wolof, only distinguished by the definite article which is not there in this case. Yalla could therefore mean “gods,” especially as the poem is referring to a traditional ritual and calling upon the “mânes” of line two. But it is difficult to be sure, for some

⁹⁷ It should be noted that in Arabic “Yalla” can in fact mean “come on!” or something similar, but this is not the case in Wolof.

Senegalese ethnicities believe in a supreme God (Benga, *Personal* 5). In Senegalese culture the term Yalla is one used in Christianity, Islam and traditional beliefs. To translate “Yalla” as “God” if the term was meant to evoke “Allah” would be to lose that connection, so a judgement has been made in this case not to translate the word “Yalla” in order to retain the religious ambiguity in the target text.⁹⁸

The story of *Mademba* by Fall also exemplifies the different religious forces at play. It demonstrates how Islamic teachings have been merged with the more traditional values of the West African marabout who is often called upon for advice or to predict the future, for example. The religious status of the marabout means many families send their children to live with these religious teachers who draw upon both Islamic and traditional values. However, many marabouts do not have the financial means to care for these children, called “taalibés,” and send them out to beg on the streets.⁹⁹ This has become a huge social and religious problem, especially in Dakar,

⁹⁸ A similar issue exists in *Waly Nguilane, le protégé de Roog tome 1* by Benga. Whilst published in 2003, the reader is taken back to early colonialism in a book that draws greatly from the Sereer faith. The Sereer people worship one God, the word “God” being “Roog” in Sereer. The only way that Benga can distinguish between the beliefs of the intruding Christians and those of the Sereer people is by leaving Roog, like Yalla, untranslated, so that the reader can differentiate between faiths (99-100; 110). Clearly, the translator must also resist at times the temptation to translate words which are firmly embedded in a particular culture.

⁹⁹ At interview Fall confirmed that her country has serious issues to address with regard to the impact of these religious practices upon children. She asserted that whilst the discipline of memorising the Koran may help children to succeed at school, the teaching must be done according to certain standards (*Personal* 10).

and forms the basis for the story of *Mademba* (Fall, *Personal* 10), from which the following extract raises issues of comprehension and translation:

L’**apprentissage** du Coran au Daara¹⁰⁰ avait lieu entre six heures et demie et sept heures et demie du matin. Dès avant huit heures, nous formions des équipes de deux ou trois taalibés et nous nous éparpillons dans Wokaam-village pour **demander l’aumône**. Nous ratissions toutes les maisons pour avoir l’**obole** que Barka exigeait de nous au nom de notre **maître** Sérigne Baabu. (56)

At the Daara, the **learning** of the Koran took place between half past six and half past seven in the morning. Before eight, we formed teams of two or three taalibés¹⁰¹ and we spread out around Wokaam village to **beg for charity**. We made a clean sweep of all the houses to get the **meagre offering** that Barka insisted upon in the name of our **master** Sérigne¹⁰² Baabu.

Four words within this extract stand out as needing a cultural understanding of this issue to be able to translate effectively. Firstly, “apprentissage” may be misleading if translated as “training” or “apprenticeship” in English. This may give the impression that the learning is formalised and leads towards a defined achievement. This may be

¹⁰⁰ “Daara” means school or Koranic school in Wolof.

¹⁰¹ This could be translated as “talib,” meaning student of Islam in Arabic, however to retain the word “taalibé” in this situation preserves the specific connection to and unique situation of the taalibés of Senegal.

¹⁰² See related footnote 82, page 118.

the case in some situations, but not in this novel where “learning” is more appropriate. Secondly, “demander l’aumône” can mean “to ask for charity,” “handouts” or “alms,” or perhaps “to beg for money.” To translate as “to ask for alms” glosses over the very nature of the act which in essence is begging. However, whilst the children beg, the nature of Islam means that people must give to charity, and a balance between these two elements have been found in translation – “to beg for charity.” Thirdly, the word “obole” could be translated as “offering” or “contribution,” but a comprehension of the *taalibés* in the city of Dakar, and also a reading of Sow Fall’s novel, *La grève des battus* reveals that the offerings are in fact very small, sometimes just a couple of cubes of sugar or the smallest of coins. Therefore, this has been translated as “meagre offering.” Finally, the word “maître” could be translated as “teacher” or more inappropriately as “ruler” or “owner.” In this circumstance, the French could imply both and therefore the English term “master” also retains the dual meaning.

The examples above demonstrate the complex web of religions influencing the lives and literature of Senegalese women writers. And whilst the term ‘postcolonial’ in reference to literature is a word which defines the time period in which the literature was written, by no means does it indicate that the works are defined by the colonial power nor the religion of the European colonial power. Whether an individual deems Islam to be a colonial religion or not, what the translator must be aware of is the fact that these literatures are influenced by a multitude of religions, and even if Islam is the most powerful of these in Senegal today, it has still been adapted to fit in with traditional beliefs, which is evident in the literature analysed here for translation. Of course, Islam and Christianity are just two of the many powers which originated

outside the borders of Senegal, but religion in particular has influenced the country and its literature greatly.

There are many aspects of foreign and above all French culture which have been introduced to the country over the past decades and beyond. Yves Clavaron emphasises the way in which the shadow of the oppressor is always hanging over the former French colony and its writers (105). However, this introduction to Chapter Two has highlighted that what is just as interesting, if not more so, is the way in which writers have reacted to or even contested that oppression through a manipulation of their literature linguistically and beyond. And an understanding of these manipulations can directly impact upon the translator's work. It can be stated that colonisation was responsible, to some extent, for bringing together a group of people of different ethnicities, backgrounds, languages, religions etc with the common aim of challenging the coloniser in order to protect African cultures and realities. And whilst European nationalism may have been criticised in the twentieth century for its associations with fascism and colonialism, in Africa nationalism is often linked with anti-colonialism (Loomba 203), and the way in which many writers sought to participate in this anti-colonial struggle was through Negritude.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ It should be noted that whilst some theorists see Negritude as a political struggle (Kane 10; Lewis 53), others do not view it as a struggle at all, and believe Negritude is about culture rather than politics (Fanon, *Damnés* 258-282; Franklin 287-303). Nevertheless, Senegal's President and world-famous poet, Senghor, was a figurehead for the interrelations between politics and literary culture, and he also believed in Negritude as a struggle: "la négritude était également arme de combat pour la décolonisation" ("Negritude, was also a weapon for decolonisation"; *Qu'est-ce* 4), "arme de combat" literally meaning "weapon for fighting." The power bestowed upon Senghor due to his political and

II Translation, Power and Negritude

The postcolonial intertwining of politics, culture and literature in Senegal was first spoken of in relation to one of the most internationally renowned Black writers and the first post-independence President, Senghor. A founder of the Negritude¹⁰⁴ movement along with Aimé Césaire and Léon Gontran Damas, his literary philosophy supported the idea that culture is not just a derivative of politics but the building block upon which politics are based (Alioune 10). Using this idea as inspiration for analysis, Part II of this chapter investigates further the cross-over of politics, culture and literature and the issues of power which bind these notions together. It will analyse the impact of the Negritude movement upon the translator of Francophone Senegalese women's literature, women who, whether "fighters" or "followers" of Negritude, are all highly influenced by the language, techniques, style or views existing in works by early Negritude writers.

Frantz Fanon claims that: "Il y a dans la possession du langage une extraordinaire puissance" (*Peau* 14),¹⁰⁵ and Francophone Senegalese women writers use that language as power to express their own cultural and political views on the pages of their books. The Negritude movement also encouraged the expression of

cultural position in Senegal has facilitated the communication of his values to many other Senegalese writers.

¹⁰⁴ The term "Négritude" was first used in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* published in 1939, an epic poem by Césaire in which he states: "Haïti où la négritude se mit debout pour la première fois" ("Haiti, where negritude rose for the first time..."; 10). And he further uses the term in this poem in relation to himself: "ma négritude n'est pas une pierre..." ("my negritude is not a stone..."; 23).

¹⁰⁵ "Mastery of language affords remarkable power" (Fanon, *Black* 38).

individual cultural and political viewpoints, and is frequently cited as a powerful influence over Black writers worldwide.¹⁰⁶ Whilst there is no doubting that the movement was a revolutionary endeavour to forge a fresh identity spearheaded by the new Senegalese ruling elite amongst others, it must be noted that, that very elite had been created by the French colonial powers and it was recognised that the authors had been manipulated to think in a certain way through their French education (Newell 24-26). In fact, Senghor had a great love of the French language, describing it as “a language of graciousness and civility” and “a language of the gods” (*Prose* 95).¹⁰⁷ Clearly influenced by the strength of France’s policy of assimilation, which promoted French rather than local standards and ideas, the very concept of Negritude is built upon a power struggle, a political game of two players; whilst promoting difference, it is founded upon many shared factors – politics, elements of culture and the French language being the most overt features.

¹⁰⁶ The Negritude movement had a strong Senegalese contingent (Newell 25), and is claimed to be “a rediscovery of the pre-colonial values” (Sellin 172), and according to Césaire, “the consciousness of being black” (Finn 38). On the other hand, Miller states that the Negritude movement was initiated by the colonial school and involved collaboration with the French, the birthplace of Negritude literature being “more Paris than Fort-de-France or Dakar” (*Theories* 16-18).

¹⁰⁷ As a scholar and member of the Académie Française as well as being a politician, Senghor published many poetry collections, academic papers and essays in French. However, he was criticised heavily for his political and linguistic allegiance with France, even being described as a Black Frenchman rather than an African. Senghor retorted saying that “Senegal needs powerful friends, even neo-colonial ones” (“Senegal’s”).

At interview, Sall said it was difficult to avoid Senghor who had a great impact on Senegal and its people, culturally, literarily and politically (2-3), whereas Seck Mbacké was reticent to accept that Senghor is the reason for her country's literary creativity, crediting the nature of the people for the reason why Senegalese women write (*Personal* 13). This may be true, but a natural openness and creativity does not always encourage young women to express themselves in literature instead of music, dance, painting or the spoken word. There is no doubting that Senghor became an icon for the people and had he not been such a high-profile poet, some of these other outlets for creative expression may have been chosen as pathways for the Senegalese writers. People assume the ideals of those who inspire them, and as Senghor combined politics with literature, his beliefs and opinions were filtered down to his people via his works.

The question is whether the translator needs the same understanding of politics and power relations existing in Senegal if she is going to translate Francophone Senegalese women's works. Perhaps the influence of Senghor and politics is such an integral part of Senegalese life that these women insert structures, images and opinions in their books either consciously or subconsciously. For example, in *L'ex père de la nation*, Sow Fall deals with the issues that arise following independence when the coloniser hands control of the government to a puppet President and chaos ensues. Although the country remains unnamed, it is clear that this story could refer to a number of different regions of Francophone Africa where the policy of assimilation meant that control was kept over newly independent countries in Africa.¹⁰⁸ The first

¹⁰⁸ The use of Wolof within the text does point to Senegal and its neighbouring countries, however the book as a whole is more generic and allows the reader to apply the text to other postcolonial societies.

line of the book is very significant in that it demonstrates the way in which the text could relate to a number of nations which gained independence in the early sixties: “En ce jour de l’hivernage de l’année 196..” (7), translated as “On this winter day in the year 196...”¹⁰⁹ It is important that the translator retains this ambiguity which is key to the issue that Sow Fall appears to be confronting here – that political bullying and political mistakes have happened time and time again in different African nations during the postcolonial era. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise when texts are regionally specific and translate them in a less generic manner.

In another example of power and politics, Seck Mbacké’s poem entitled “Martyrs” (*Pluies* 26-27) is a testament to those soldiers killed by the French army for demanding a pay rise, having fought alongside better-paid French troops during the Second World War. It is culturally specific, based on reality and a story that is unknown by many beyond the country’s borders. The translation of every word is vital to the memories of the men who died there, even those words in the short dedication: “À ceux qui n’ont pas vécu Thiaroye,” where vivre is “to live through” or “survive” rather than “experience” (see appendix B, page 382). Thus, whilst a general understanding of postcolonial history and theory may help with the understanding of some works of literature, generic knowledge such as this is not always going to be

¹⁰⁹ Although Sow Fall has published nine books in the French language, only *La grève des battus* (*The Beggar’s Strike*) can currently be found in English translation (see bibliography of writers for full details). *L’ex père de la nation* was chosen for this study because it focuses very clearly on the postcolonial period during which women started to write, and exemplifies the political power relations in society that are embodied in the literature of Sow Fall.

satisfactory background information for a translator of other texts. In fact, Appiah stresses the non-homogeneous nature of African societies in his book entitled *In My Father's House, Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, highlighting the fact that African societies have as much in common with each other as most non-African societies (80), providing yet more justification for the analysis of specific countries and cultures in pre-translation research which was discussed earlier in respect to Area Studies in Chapter One, Part V. In addition, he states that “there is no better point of entry to the issue of the African intellectual’s articulation of an African identity than through the reflections of our most powerful creative writers” (74); if such a parallel can be drawn between reality and what many individuals may call literary fiction, any reading of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature can well be supported by wider reading on Senegalese history and politics, each one complementing the other.

In *A Rain of Words*, an anthology of Sub-Saharan African women’s poetry published at the end of 2009, the French to English translator, Janis A. Mayes claims to have conceptualised and named a translation process called “TransAtlantic” or “sAlt” in the process of her work on the anthology (xxxix). This strategy, she asserts, involves taking the stance of a jazz vocalist or instrumentalist and focusing on the sounds and rhythms or “reverberations” of the text and their relation to ideas and “messages” (xxxiii-xxxiv). This is certainly a common strategy in translating African poetry, due to the clear ‘link’ between orality and poetry, the translation of which I will be discussing in detail in Chapter Four. The other key element to her strategy is that of “translation as memory,” where she sees translation not as a copy of the poem, but as a vivid memory of the poem evoked in her mind (xxxiii-xxxiv). Her methodology

appears to be a strong one, which involves consideration of meaning and style as well as sound and interpretation. However, her strategy could also be considered very generalised and looks little at the specificities of different cultures, different poets and their different works.

Román Alvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal assert in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, that it is no longer possible to consider a text for translation without its context (3), and that “in order for translation to exist, there must have been not only a perfect assimilation of the linguistic content, but also of the experience of the other culture, without the pressures of one ‘superior’ culture over another” (3). Whilst the notion of superiority and translation as a reflection of the postcolonial experience (Bassnett, *Meek* 21) is one which will be discussed later in the chapter when analysing translation and Western ideology, the idea of experiencing the other culture and all that entails is of great significance here. In postcolonial translation, the translator is not only representing the party that has power, but also that which is seeking empowerment (Gentzler, *Introduction* xix), and their reasons for doing this are unique both to each individual party and also to the backgrounds from which they come.

In fact, Mayes translates Seck Mbacké’s poem “Martyrs” for the collection *A Rain of Words* (d’Almeida, 190-193). And whilst it must be noted that the collection is another huge and positive step forward towards the recognition of Francophone African women’s literature on an international scale, the translations in the book do not always demonstrate a full consideration of the historical weight of every word. A footnote does explain the historical significance of this particular poem by Seck Mbacké, but it is not always carried through to the new version. For example, the

dedication noted above is translated as “For those who lived Thiaroye,” which not only sounds a little odd in English but turns the negative into a positive and does not mention lack of survival/ living through an ordeal. The relevance of the army intrusion is embodied in phrases such as “Tournez la face,” but translated by Mayes as “Avert your eyes” losing the exclamation mark, where a more apt translation might be “About turn!” And the shooting down of men followed by – “Les hommes ont craqué” is translated as “The men have gone mad,” when a more appropriate translation would be “The men collapsed.” Whilst Mayes claims to have a “clear sense of the historical, cultural, and political activity surrounding the poem” (*Translator’s* xxxiii), it is evident that cultural and political meaning have perhaps been sacrificed at times for the sounds of jazz, and poor memory may be a noble justification for misunderstanding.

Further, the ‘purity’ of African thought cannot always be assumed, for whilst some texts are firmly embedded in Senegalese history, others draw very strongly from French history or literature. Senghor, for instance, embraced the “beauty and efficacy” of the French language (Bandia, *Translation* 17), but also manipulated it to “rescue the spirit, style and content of African oral literature” (17). And like the works of Senghor, the following poem from Kiné Kirama Fall,¹¹⁰ entitled “Il Faut Comprendre”

¹¹⁰ Throughout her two publications, Kiné Kirama Fall’s name is spelt in different ways due to inconsistencies in transcription. On the cover of *Les élans de grâce*, her name is spelt “Kine Kirima Fall” with no acute accent and an “i” in her surname instead of an “a.” However, in the preface to the same collection of poetry, her name is spelt with an “a” and there is no acute accent (this may be because her name is always capitalised in the preface and sometimes accents are not used in capitalised words and phrases). On the other hand, in *Chants de la rivière fraîche*, the poet’s name is consistently written

clearly represents both the power of the coloniser and Kirama Fall's responding search for empowerment (*Élans* 58). Her use of Charles Baudelaire's "Élévation" from *Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*) demonstrates the great influence that French language and literature, through Senghor and others, have had upon Senegalese women's poetry (see appendix C, page 387, for Baudelaire and Kirama Fall's texts). Ibra Diene calls her recreation of the poem a form of semantic misappropriation and hijacking which subverts the original meaning of the poem, giving it a far stronger sense of deity (426). The fact that she has re-written the poem in this way, using her own simple style, a free form, alternative language and a unique interpretation exemplifies Senghor's own use of French to celebrate African cultural difference.

Many of the words and phrases in the second half of Kirama Fall's poem are taken directly from Baudelaire's text, moved around and distorted a little. Thus, in order to represent the relation between power and empowerment in the English translation, an early rewriting of Baudelaire's 'original' poem by William Aggeler has been used for the second half of the translated text (Baudelaire, *Flowers*; see appendix D, page 390), whilst the first half was rewritten entirely afresh. In this way, the translation represents both forms of power, and the challenge of Kirama Fall and the translator to work freely and then within stricter boundaries. Only two of Aggeler's terms were altered – "wing your way" has been changed to "take wing" in order to avoid repetition which did not exist in Kirama Fall's poem, and whilst "divine" is translated as "heavenly" in Aggeler's version, "divinité" is not rewritten as "heaven" as

as "Kiné Kirama Fall" and it is due to this consistency that this final spelling is used throughout this thesis.

there is a greater change in meaning between the nouns than the former adjectives.

This method in translation has created a poem which, like Kirama Fall's, is a poem of two distinct halves. To translate the whole poem afresh would most likely have had a homogenising effect upon the text:

One Must Understand

About the pain living

Deep in my soul

I want it to leave me forever

Oh suffer

Inhale all evil from me

And carry it away to distant shores

And I rise again to the doorway

Of the place where I keep my dreams

Deep in my eyes

So as to embrace the spring

Oh mind

Fly far away

Take wing through boundless space

And purify yourself in the celestial air

Of the limpid region of divinity

Beyond the vexations the sorrows

And the obscuring weights of life

Happy is he whose soul soars up

Towards the skies

To hover over life

One must understand with ease

The language of flowers

And silent things.

Like Kirama Fall, Senghor saw the use of French and the exploitation of France and what it had to offer in the 'modern' world, as a way of bridging the gap between different ethnicities and cultures (Bandia, *Translation* 17). Negritude was therefore not just about being African but about a balance of power between home and away; Senegal and France, coloniser and the colonised. Foucault draws parallels between the notions of power and knowledge, suggesting that power relations are analysed by looking at forms of resistance, such as women's challenge to traditional male patriarchy (which will be explored shortly), or the way people refuse to accept the power of the administration (*Power* 329). Negritude was also a form of resistance. It was a means of empowering the powerless, and many of the writers studied in this thesis most definitely use Francophone writing as a platform to express their own

needs, beliefs, opinions, values etc; in other words, as a means of exerting their own power.

In *The World Republic of Letters*, Pascale Casanova states that:

...in the aftermath of decolonization, then, the major literary centers have been able to go on maintaining a sort of literary protectorate thanks to the dual character of their languages, which allows them to exert a literary form of political power. (117)

Colonisation followed by its Negritude reaction brought about a new and innovative strand of literature which counteracted the powerful literary and linguistic forces of the coloniser. However, before getting trapped in the binary nature of power and its opposing relation, it is worth noting that to see the notion of power in a simple binary way, is not to see the complex web of cultures, conditions, politics and representations which contribute to the complicated interplay of power clearly shaping the background and foreground of the literature and lives of the women's work analysed in this thesis.

For instance, Negritude has, for a long time, been a male-dominated movement, favouring the male writer over the female, reinforcing old-fashioned beliefs about the role of women, fortifying gender stereotypes and supporting the segregation of the sexes both literally and literarily.¹¹¹ If the Negritude movement was deeply embedded

¹¹¹ Negritude was first documented in 1939, but it was decades later that women began to write and be published in French due to the colonial system favouring the education of men in the French language (see Part III of this chapter). However, although the number of women writers proliferated following independence, rarely are women writers spoken of in terms of their connection to the notion of Negritude.

in the African male psyche of the time, is it possible to take a female perspective from it? Sow Fall not only embraces Negritude in her writing which subverts linguistic norms and speaks of Black African cultures, but it could also be said that she directly disempowers it in *L'ex père de la nation*, by speaking out against post-independent rulers such as Senghor who were controlled by the former colonisers. She expresses her own opinions about the unnamed African society through the voices and thoughts of her characters, thereby exerting her power over the oppression of colonial and postcolonial authorities and those that worked alongside them:

‘Madiama gouvernera pendant quatorze mois au bout desquels vous élirez démocratiquement l’homme que vous choisirez.’

En réalité je ne gouvernais pas. L’armée, la défense, les finances, tous les secteurs clés étaient encore contrôlés par l’ancienne autorité comme au temps de l’autonomie. ‘*Régime fantoche*,’ criait Dicko, mon seul adversaire politique. (10)

‘Madiama will govern for fourteen months at the end of which you will democratically elect the man of your choice’

In reality I was not governing. The army, defence, treasury, all key sectors were still controlled by the former authorities like in the times of autonomy. ‘*Puppet régime*,’ protested Dicko, my only political opponent.

Sow Fall’s book could be a criticism of Senghor (but taken to an extreme, it must be added) because he was considered by many to be a puppet president, and his rival, Prime Minister Mamadou Dia tried to overthrow him, leading to Dia’s

imprisonment – very similar to Sow Fall’s “fictional” novel. It is vital for the translator to have a general understanding of colonial and postcolonial times to translate passages such as this, and comprehension certainly raises questions – why the term “autonomie?” This does not seem to fit with Sow Fall’s opinions regarding the “autorité coloniale” she is referring to, and her search for empowerment. Should this word not be “autocracie”? It would certainly be a question to pose to the writer if this work was being published in translation.

Boyce Davies comments that “a gendered version of the Négritude debate...exists as a specifically female critique of masculinist poetics and politics” (*Encyclopedia* 709).¹¹² And indeed, if the comments of Boyce Davies are considered, and we speak instead of a “feminised neo-Négritude” or “post-Négritude”¹¹³ which critiques “masculinist poetics and politics” and is more representative of the modern Europhone Black female writer across Africa and the diaspora, we may be approaching

¹¹² T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting’s book on *Négritude Women* focuses on three women from Martinique who were part of the Negritude movement in its embryonic years. However, despite a study of their essays, the book says little about the way in which gender may have influenced the movement (Stovall), focusing instead on the past, and on a genre which only narrowly represents the texts researched in this thesis. Edouard Glissant also criticises Negritude for its lack of solutions and relevance to today. Nevertheless, the movement is of far too great an importance to be cast aside as it has incited literary debate for decades (Césaire, 1937; Sartre, 1948; Thompson, 1958; Berrian, 1967; Sellin, 1970; Leiner, 1980; Finn, 1998; Newell, 2006) and continues to do so.

¹¹³ Although the concept of post-Negritude has been cited in numerous texts such as *Beyond Negritude: Essays from Woman in the City* (Nardal 4), *The Womanist Reader* (Phillips 196; 199; 201) and *Perspectives on Wole Soyinka: Freedom and Complexity* (Jeyifo 111; 112), little work has been done on Negritude or post-Negritude and translation.

a new version that works for the women of today. So how does this help us with the translation of women's works? *Une si longue lettre* is one of the clearest examples of how a Francophone African woman writer has developed complex female characters. Not only the protagonist, but each of the female personalities is multidimensional, whereas the male characters in the book remain faceless – the reader knows their names and the significance of their actions, but they are representative of a gender rather than individualistic. The translator of the literature must take care to retain this tension between characters in the new version, never over-complicating the male roles by using more complex or descriptive vocabulary nor under-developing the female characters by selecting less powerful depictions. This power struggle represents the fight undertaken in society by many Senegalese women, and communicating this to the reader is an integral part of the skopos of the Francophone text.

If Negritude was about the search for an African identity and a movement which brought a perceived power to those writers who embraced it, that identity has changed along with the cultures and the gender roles that form an important part of today's Senegalese society. Whilst some Black male writers may be able to state that Negritude is no longer needed once the Black man has stood up and fought for his rights, perhaps Black women still wish for that empowerment to right the wrongs of their literary past, and a feminised neo-Negritude is part of that process. In 1952, Fanon stated that: "Le Noir qui pendant quelque temps a vécu en France revient radicalement transformé" (*Peau* 15),¹¹⁴ but many women writers are amongst the first

¹¹⁴ "The Black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed" (Fanon, *Black* 19).

generations to be making those journeys, and the impact is reflected in their literature – the literature of independence and the literature of today. Translation plays a crucial role in representing these literary women and their literary works, in supporting that process of empowerment through a feminised Negritude or otherwise, and in continuing that journey of communication.

Edwin Gentzler and Tymoczko state that “scholars from many fields have articulated the central importance of translation in establishing, maintaining, and resisting imperialist power structures” (xv), and this is especially the case with postcolonial translation theorists; not only can translation support existing power structures, but it can also subvert them just as women writers both support and oppose the values of Negritude in their writing. In a country where, since it has existed in a local form, literature is employed as a voice mostly by a small elite to express opinions for or against existing power structures, for the translator to manipulate a source text in translation could be destructive to the many-layered meanings of that text. Dubbed the “power turn” by Tymoczko, translation which plays upon ideas of “cultural dominance, assertion and resistance” (Gentzler, *Introduction* xviii) is not simply an issue of ‘wordplay’ but political and cultural intervention, an intervention which is embodied in the country of Senegal whose literature has been shaped by the pressures of foreign invasion. However, women writers have not only been influenced by the same power relations as male writers, but have their own unique battles due to the role that gender plays in their lives and in their writing.

III Gendered Education and Language

Power is not only linked to politics and public life, but also to wider cultural issues of domination, to everyday matters of interaction and learning whether traditional, colonial or of today. Education and communication have had a huge bearing upon gender and the balance of power between male and female in the real world and in literature. This part of the thesis therefore investigates the power of education and the differentiation between male and female schooling, analysing how the commonly varying quantities of women's education in the French language may have led to different styles of writing. Further, Part III of this chapter considers the way in which female and male cultures are often very independent, and that separate pools of communication have resulted in the development of distinct languages. Is it possible to speak of a unique female language used by Senegalese women as a form of empowerment in society as well as in literature? If this is the case, the translator must be aware of the characteristics of this language for these features to be transferred to the target text.

During both colonial and pre-colonial times, girls and boys/women and men received very different forms of education. In traditional society, a man was prepared for leadership roles in the family and society, and women for life in the home. Boys and girls would undergo different initiation rites (Madubuike 68-69), and despite the fact that their intelligence was understood to be equal in Wolof societies (Sallah 49), the education of women was neglected during the colonial period (Sow 9),¹¹⁵ and there

¹¹⁵ Whilst some mixed race girls were educated for the first time in Senegal in the 1820s, and the daughters of chiefs started to receive an education towards the end of the nineteenth century (Thioune

was a focus on educating boys and men “to suit a specific male-oriented colonial agenda” (d’Almeida, *Francophone* 5). Hence, at independence just a third of all school pupils were girls. Education may have led to the empowering of women, but this was deliberately held back from them for decades (Thioune 32),¹¹⁶ and therefore had an impact on their ability to write in French.

The independence of Senegal in 1960 did bring about a surge in female students (Thioune 32), but girls are still more likely to be kept out of school to help in the home and less likely to find jobs even when they have the same education as men.¹¹⁷

Further, despite today’s women taking top roles in education, business and

32), it only became a realistic option for many girls in 1939 when it became necessary to train female midwives and teachers at Senegalese schools (Sow 9).

¹¹⁶ The colonisers, including Christian missionaries, attempted to mould women into gender roles deemed appropriate by the Europeans (Berger, *Women* 107-108), so women lost their historical involvement in the public sector, and previously fluid gender distinctions became rigid, leaving women at home (Kumah 2). Nevertheless, traditional Senegalese patriarchal structures did little to prevent the withdrawal of women from society and “the sex role distinctions common to many African societies supported the notion that western education was a barrier to a woman’s role as a wife and a mother” (Boyce Davies, *Introduction* 2).

¹¹⁷ Since the 1980s, it has been recognised that there is a great need for women’s education in Senegal. The Centre Régional d’Enseignement Technique Féminin de Dakar (CRETf) focuses on educating young underprivileged women, providing French language lessons as well as lessons in local languages, practical skills and job training (Ndiaye, *Interview* 6). Amongst many other groups, the Comité National de Lutte Contre des Violences Faites aux Femmes and PAPAII both look at improving literacy, especially of young girls (Papis 3).

government,¹¹⁸ the power of traditional patriarchy still prevails in Senegalese society, and poverty and illiteracy remain a barrier to women's equality (Mbow 3), factors that are both linked to education and clearly have a powerful influence over language. Moreover, even though the education system is now more accessible to women, at university they represent no more than 20% of students (5). All these factors have led to a female population in which levels of education in French are extremely varied. Thus, it follows that women's writing in French differs according to the extent to which they have been educated in the colonial or postcolonial systems.

It could be said that there are tri-directional forces at play in the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature. Firstly, there are 'traditional teachings,' secondly, '(post)colonial education' and thirdly 'translation into English.' The way female Senegalese writers put words on the page is significantly influenced by their amount or lack of colonial education. This may vary according to the time, with more recent writers most likely to have been fully educated in the French system from childhood, and to have gained a place at University. On the other hand, those writers who published closer to the date of independence were far more likely not to have experienced an education in French right through to university level. Because of this, the French they use may not be as fully "assimilated," ie their language may not take a

¹¹⁸ Note Eugénie Rokhaya Aw who is the Director of the Centre d'Études des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (CESTI), a public school of journalism linked to Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (Bâ, *Femmes* 33-34). Following the success of a number of her businesses, Adja Dior Diop is now President of the ASFCE (Association Sénégalaise des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprise) (39), and Mame Madior Boye was the first woman Prime Minister of Senegal from 2001 to 2002 (83-84).

standard form due to the fact that the writer may be thinking in their first language and writing in their second language. The variation in education experience has created three different methods in which women express themselves through language in literature.

Firstly, Kirama Fall had little schooling, and the language used in her poetry reflects a certain narrowness of vocabulary. Non-native speakers of French might not have to look up a word when reading her works, whereas they sometimes will need a dictionary at hand with other writers. This is by no means a criticism, but an enlightening observation which may assist the translator of her works in vocabulary selection. Why over-complicate a poem in translation, if it was not that way in the first place:

Belle, belle et brune
C'est un don du ciel
Depuis le sein de ma mère
Belle, belle et brune
C'est un don du ciel
Et la tendresse de ma terre

(Chants 11)

Brown, brown and beautiful
A gift from the skies
Since mother's breast
Brown, brown and beautiful
A gift from the skies

And the earth's tenderness¹¹⁹

Secondly, there are younger writers who have been born and brought up post independence and educated in the French system. They have lived abroad, worked in “modern” environments where French is spoken and French culture has been embraced. And little difference can be extracted between these Senegalese women and French women, apart from subject matter. Aminata Ndiaye is very much an example of this. She was born over a decade after independence in 1974, educated in the French system, doing her PhD at the Sorbonne in Paris before returning to the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (*Brumes*), where most communication is in French. She writes:

Méconnaissable Sahel,
Pays de *Mame Linguère!*
Toi jadis si fier
De ton visage de grâce
Qui effaçait les affres
Inspirant jeux tendres
Et langage du bonheur

(18)

Unrecognisable Sahel,
Land of *Mame Linguère!*¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Earth, land, soil or ground are all valid translations of “terre.” Here “earth” was chosen because, like the French, it can have a both a broad and specific meaning ie “world,” and “land” or “soil.”

So proud yesteryear
Of your graceful face
Which erased the pains
To inspire tender games
And language of joy

However, these manifestations of language are complicated by the fact that educated women sometimes use their writing ability to benefit others. Mbow states that women such as her, who have had the opportunity to be educated, have a duty to raise women's issues in society in order to liberate women and ensure societal progress with regard to their roles (2). This should be taken into great consideration. An author's aptitude for writing French is sometimes influenced by her attempt to represent the lives of ordinary Senegalese women past and present, rather than her own disparate life situated in a very small academic world. The following extract from a poem by Mbaye d'Erneville is an excellent example of this (see appendix E, page 392, for full poem and translation), for the simplicity of its language is not directly representative of her extensive career and education in France and Senegal:

¹²⁰ The poem, entitled "Sahel" speaks of the ancient Wolof kingdom of Kayor and its king or "Damel," the most famous of which was Lat Dior Diop who died in battle protecting his territory against the French (Johnson, *Oral* 211-212). He is the subject of a well-known epic tale (211-222) and of a poem by Senghor entitled "Lat Dior, Le Kayor, l'impossible déficit" (*Lat Dior*). "Linguère" is the name of a département and town in the north-west (formerly Saint-Louis region) of Senegal and it also means mother or sister of the king. "Maam" means grandparent or ancestor in Wolof. This is therefore most likely to refer to an ancient female ancestor of Lat Dior Diop (possibly now a Wolof spirit).

Danse, Nègresse marron!
Le Blanc applaudit
Le Blanc rit de bon coeur
Danse, Nègresse marron
Retrouve les pas de la danse du fouet!
Tes reins souples tu les dois
À ton aïeule guinéenne que tu ne connais pas

(Dia, *Poètes* 156-157)

Dance, maroon¹²¹ Negress!
White man applauds
White man laughs heartily
Dance, maroon Negress
Recover the steps of the whip dance!
Your supple back you owe
To a Guinean grandmother you never knew

(Collins, *Other* 103)

An attempt has been made here to replicate the same level of language in English translation with the only obvious deviation from standard English being the loss of the

¹²¹ The French word “marron” may be translated as “brown,” but more likely in this case Mbaye d’Erneville is referring to one of the word’s other meanings: “runaway slave.” This has not been translated in full here as it would not fit with the rhythm of the poem. Instead the word has been more directly translated into English as “maroon,” thereby finding a balance between sound and meaning, both of which are very important in this poem.

definite article, a stylistic liberty taken in translation which enhances the rhythm and simple language of the 'original' text.

But whilst it is possible to isolate shifts in language use due to differing levels of education in French, do men and women actually write in distinct ways? Seck Mbacké and Benga, who have been educated to a high level in the French system, believe there is now little difference between male and female writing in Senegal (Seck Mbacké, *Personal* 12; Benga, *Personal* 4). So, when men and women are educated in the French system and become part of that Europhone educated "elite," do the barriers between 'masculine' and 'feminine' writing become somewhat blurred and traditions more distant, and is the gender of a piece of literature harder to identify? This may be so for Benga and Seck Mbacké, but at interview, Sall commented that women write about their own issues and approaches to life and society and therefore they write differently (11). I agree to a certain extent. Evidently, not all women's literature is the same – but for example, Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* clearly sees Senegalese life from a female perspective. Thus, as more women receive education alongside men, the differentiation between female and male writing is harder to make, but distinctions do still exist in writing past and present, because education has varied and still does so.

The research of Tamara Underwood shows the general difference between male and female language. In her study of women in the Senegalese village of Niaga-Wolof, she describes the way in which women form social and organisational discussion groups, to talk of their daily lives or plan special occasions, and the very distinct roles of men and women (34). It is my understanding from experience of living in the village of Ndiobène in Senegal, that these different roles exist whether

women are educated or not. Generally, men and women continue to form distinct social groups, so it would be assumed that language over time has developed in different ways. Aissata Sidikou confirms this, commenting on a “female language” that communicates the way women perceive themselves (22). Hence, there is definitely an understanding that women communicate in a different way, a way which reflects their society, power often lying in a sense of community amongst other women. Further, if, as Gyasi states, “contemporary African writers ‘translate’ their African vision, their cultural values and language, into the European medium of expression” (*Francophone* 9), the visions of men and women are going to be vastly different, and therefore their language.

In general terms, research into language use supports the notion of female familiarity in communication, stating that women speak about emotion more than men (Worell 397). Further, Dan Spender comments upon the way in which women and men develop different “conversation codes” which set up patterns of talk between people of different sexes (1). He states that gendered speech is present early in life when people visibly amend their body language, vocabulary and volume according to the gender of a baby (12), but this will of course vary from one language to another. Elizabeth Abel’s book on *Writing and Sexual Difference* also makes it clear that some generalities regarding male and female language use can be learnt, but this varies from culture to culture.

Other academics pinpoint more exacting characteristics to define male and female language use. In *After Babel*, Steiner remarks upon the “universal” difference

between male and female language use of identical words and constructs (40),
commenting that:

At a rough guess, women's speech is richer than men's in those
shadings of desire and futurity known in Greek and Sanskrit as optative;
women seem to verbalize a wider range of qualified resolve and masked
promise. (42)

Whilst a statement beginning with "at a rough guess" may not initially attract
confidence in Steiner's beliefs, it is interesting here that he speaks about the richness of
the optative mode (expressing choice or wish), which is very evident in the following
poem by Awa Ndiaye:

Les mots que je veux te dire
Sur mes lèvres se bousculent.

Je confie au vent des serments d'amour
Que je croyais ne jamais dire.

Je t'espère et une douce volupté me prend.
J'ai soif de ton corps d'amour et de désir...

Je sais que demain sera pour nous!

(29)

The words I want to tell you
Spring around upon my lips

I confide in the wind the pledges of love
That I believed never to tell.

I crave you and sweet pleasure seizes me.
I thirst for your body of love and desire...

I know tomorrow will be for us!

This poem clearly demonstrates a wide variety of language to express desire and futurity, the range of which has been transferred to the target text. Steiner's comment that this resolve and promise is not absolute, but concealed in some way, supports the argument so far that Senegalese women writers do express themselves despite the fact that elements of the cultures in which they live have been oppressive to their articulation. The first half of the poem represents a certain inhibition in her words, as if she has been holding back her feelings for a long time. For this reason, the words do not "line up" on her lips, but "jostle" or "spring around" as if she is hesitant to express herself. She confides in the wind, and whilst her feelings are certain, the directness of her speech is not, as she ponders: "That I believed never to tell." The poem in French conveys the attribute of "masked promise" described by Steiner, which is translated effectively here into the target text.

With regard to women's language in Senegal specifically, Mbow claims that Senegalese women do have a distinct way of talking and are known for their chitchat:

Elles savent parler, elles savent s'exprimer. Et je suis toujours émerveillée par la richesse du lexique chez les femmes wolofs... C'est vrai que le discours sur l'amour est très riche, le discours sur la façon de gérer la famille, le mari, etc., ce sont les discours très, très riches. Il est vrai que l'univers de la femme est différent ici de l'univers de l'homme, qu'on le veuille ou non et cela se répercute sur le discours. (6)¹²²

This very much supports Steiner's former statement as well as the earlier assertion that women find power through community (page 160). Further, if women's language with other women is very distinct from conversations with or amongst men, then the translator must be careful to replicate register, tone and the nuances of specific words, without assuming that the oral nature of these conversations means that word choice must be simple – women's language is claimed to be very rich, especially when there is a personal connection.

In his discourse on female language, Steiner continues to assert that:

Feminine use of the subjunctive in European languages give to material facts and relations a characteristic *vibrato*. I do not say that they lie about the obtuse, resistant fabric of the world: they multiply the facets of reality, they strengthen the adjective to allow it an alternative

¹²² "They know how to speak, they know how to express themselves. And I am always amazed by the richness of the vocabulary of Wolof women... Certainly, discourse on love is very rich, discourse on the way the family is managed, the husband etc – those areas are very very rich. Certainly, a woman's world is different here to a man's world, and whether you want it or not that has repercussions upon discourse."

nominal status, in way which men often find unnerving. There is a strain of ultimatum, a separatist stance, in the masculine intonation of the first-person pronoun; the 'I' of women intimates a more patient bearing, or did until Women's Liberation.... (42)

Using Steiner's observations of the use of subjunctive, strengthening of the adjective and the "patient" first person, it is interesting to look again at the translation of *Une si longue lettre* to see if these textual characteristics have been transferred to the target text. For example:

Non, **je** n'ai pas peur de la lutte sur le plan de l'idéologie; mais dans un parti politique, il est rare que la femme **ait** la percée facile... Nous sommes utilisées selon nos **compétences** dans nos manifestations et organisations...mais c'est un militantisme sain qui n'a de récompense que la **satisfaction** intérieure. (137)

No, I am not afraid of ideological struggle, but in a political party it is rare for a woman to make an easy break-through... We are given tasks according to our abilities in our activities and organizations...but it is a healthy militancy whose only reward is inner satisfaction. (Bâ, *So* 74)

In Bodé-Thomas's translation above, he chooses to retain the use of nouns where an adjectival alternative could have been employed, for example: "We are given tasks according to how competent/able we are" or "whose only reward is to be satisfied within." Either of these alternative translations would have weakened the power and impact of Bâ's 'original' words. But the translation of the subjunctive is much more complex.

In *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet comment on the simplicity of rendering the subjunctive in English, but also the problems of communicating the nuances of the subjunctive in translation from French (144). In this case, “il est rare que la femme ait la percée facile” is translated as “it is rare for a woman to make an easy break-through,” but the nuance of “ait” has not been entirely rendered in translation. Instead the translation could read: “it is rare that a woman might make an easy breakthrough,” but what the translator may gain in nuance here, she may lose on fluency. Interestingly in the paragraph above, which is a speech by Ramatoulaye’s daughter Daba, the first person “I” form does not have a patient bearing at all, perhaps because she is seen to be of the new liberated generation of Senegalese women in the book, confirming Steiner’s statement.

On the other hand, the following extract from “Mirage” by Mbengue Diakhate exemplifies the patient nature of the first person in other examples of Senegalese literature:

J’ai frôlé, yeux fermés,
Le chemin constellé.
J’ai vogué dans les cieux,
Le merveilleux des Dieux,
Délices inespérés.....

(17)

1 I skimmed, eyes closed
The spangled way
I sailed the skies,

The marvel of Gods,
 Unexpected delights....
 2 I stroked, eyes closed
 The starry way
 I wandered the skies
 The marvel of Gods
 Unexpected delights...
 3 Closed eyes
 I wandered the skies
 I traced the starry way
 Treasure of the Deity
 Unexpected pleasure...

It is not so much the “I” which is distinct in this poem, but the verb that follows it. Firstly, “frôler” means to brush against or touch lightly. It conveys a certain gentleness and uncertainty. In translation one, “skimmed” is correct but it is too impatient and definite, whereas “stroked” in version two, or better still “traced” in adaptation three communicates the softer nature of the French verb. Then, “voguer” can mean “sail,” but it is also a literary verb meaning “float,” “wander” or “drift,” especially when speaking of someone’s thoughts. Translation one, although correct, does not take this into account, whereas two and three convey the serene quality of the French poem and in that way embody Steiner’s understanding of the patient nature of the female first person. “Le merveilleux,” meaning “the supernatural” in its noun form is also significant as both French and English use the word more frequently in its adjectival

form to mean marvellous, wonderful or fantastic. The noun has been retained in translation as this has been underlined by Steiner as a key characteristic of female language. Further, translation three attempts to replicate the sounds of the French poem by manipulating structures and finding alternative words so that style and meaning are balanced in translation. Hence, “women’s language” in some form or other does exist; the examples above demonstrate that it is possible to pinpoint features of this language, and this process may assist the translator in her rewriting of Senegalese works.

Babacar Thioune also examines a number of distinctive areas in Senegalese women’s writing. For example, he notes the juxtaposition of women’s writing in particular to the oral form (*Exploration 5*) and the way in which Senegalese women adhere to social realities (226). He claims that men and women write about the same subjects, but their perspectives on the world are different. Béatrice Didier also claims that women “n’avaient jamais écrit exactement comme les hommes; si elles utilisaient le même langage, elles l’utilisaient autrement; souvent plus librement” (30). And like Thioune, she also comments on the oral basis of women’s language, a fact which has often been a reason for rejecting it (32), but one which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four. Finally, Thioune notes the often cited autobiographical form (referred to in relation to *Sow Fall* and *Bugul* in Chapter One) and the importance of the first person in women’s discourse. So issues of voice, especially when the text is in the first person (singular or plural), are powerful in African women’s literature and should be transferred into the target text as key characteristics of the poetry or prose in question.

Nevertheless, to make the issue more complex, Thioune says that some women write like men and vice versa (5), and Didier states that great writers attempt to break away from the language and stereotypes of their time (31). This supports the argument that talented modern writers such as Seck Mbacké and Benga write in a more androgynous way. The fact is that women's writing is varied and there are exceptions to the patterns stated. It is important to consider all these elements but with no presumptions. The translator must analyse the text to ascertain as to whether the language demonstrates characteristics such as that of "qualified resolve" or "masked promise," a "vibrato" due to subjunctive use, strong adjectives or a particular "richness," especially on subjects of love and family. The translator must also be aware of women's closeness to orality, use of the first person, their adherence to social realities as well as their unique perspective on the world.

It may not be possible to describe women's language use in Senegal definitively, for there are perhaps some writers who, deliberately or otherwise, do not follow standard patterns. However, there are some characteristics that the translator can search for when analysing the text for rewriting in the English language, and the translator of Senegalese literature who wishes to adhere to the more intricate qualities of a text and replicate the nuances of "female language" in translation, must take great care in the decision-making process between different words and phrases. Simon asserts that translation:

...obliges us to ask with each proper name, with each cultural reference, with each stylistic trait, with each idiomatic expression, with each swear word: how similar is this reality to its possible replacement in another

language?...how different? When do differences climb from the trivial to the substantial? (*Translating* 24)

Gendered vocabulary adds a new dimension to this, as an integral part of many of the writers' identities as well as the characters they develop.

Of course, translation decisions depend upon the skopos and strategy of the translator, but if, as here, the aim is to follow in the footsteps of the writer, then names, cultural references, stylistic traits, idioms and each and every word carry with them a social reality for which the translator can endeavour to find the nearest possible word of 'equivalence.' Differences may exist between cultures and languages, but the way they are communicated can be better understood if the translator comprehends the cultural relevance of the word in question. And that includes the powerful nature of gendered vocabulary in embodying women's realities, as well as an understanding of the education and background that has lead the writer to the point at which she puts pen to page. It is a page upon which women writers can reempower themselves by rectifying their representations of the past and reinforcing their identities of the present and future.

IV Repossessing and Rewriting Representation

It is often cited that following traditional and colonial oppression, power has again been torn away from African women through literary representations by male, sometimes Negritude, authors. Women have been portrayed either as "flat, secondary characters"¹²³ or "idealized to such an extreme as to neutralize their existence as real

¹²³ Florence Stratton also comments on how women are identified with petrified cultural traditions and are always allocated to a male character as wife, mother, girlfriend etc (8). Certainly, a majority of

people” (d’Almeida, *Francophone* 8). They have been represented as “passive and silent,” of “heightened sexuality” (Larrier, *Francophone* 31-36), “gossips” (21) or even whores personifying Africa’s degradation during colonialism (Kumah 8).¹²⁴ And high profile women writers such as Mariama Bâ do not hesitate to criticise male authors for such demeaning representations as these (*Fonction* 5),¹²⁵ reclaiming their own identities through language and literature.¹²⁶ Part IV of this chapter therefore studies

literary critics believe that female characters in African male literature lack psychological depth and individuality (Stringer 150).

¹²⁴ It may be argued that these criticisms are no longer relevant, however these studies were written between 1994 and 2000. Further, while male writers may have depicted women in this way throughout their early literature (and perhaps now create more rounded female characters), women are still making up for this imbalance in present day literature. Senghor’s poems, “Femme noire” (*Anthologie* 151) and “Nuit de Sine” (149) or David Diop’s “À ma mère” (Dia 138) and “À une danseuse noire” (Dia 140) are four examples of the objectifying or metaphorical use of women in Senegalese poetry.

¹²⁵ Mariama Bâ states that: “The nostalgic songs dedicated to African mothers which express the anxieties of men concerning Mother Africa are no longer enough for us. The Black woman in African literature must be given the dimension that her role in the liberation struggles next to men has proven to be hers, the dimension which coincides with her proven contribution to the economic development of our country” (*Fonction* 5).

¹²⁶ It is possible that male writers may not have been able to develop women’s characters fully if they have not been part of a significant proportion of their lives. Further, some male writers such as Ousmane Socé Diop do not speak badly of women, whilst Sembène is deemed by Seck Mbacké to be a feminist (*Personal* 12). Benga also claims that a woman who is considered secondary in a patrilineal society is usually a wife but never a mother, for a mother is considered sacred (*Personal* 4). But unfortunately, negative representations are common and these are all exceptions or excuses.

the impact of repossession of identity upon the literature of female Francophone Senegalese writers. If women are retrieving their own identities, how is this reflected in their language? And in the process of empowerment through reclamation, do women writers take a feminist stance in their works? If so, how should the translator rewrite both identity and ideological stance in the target text?

Keith L. Walker asserts that “African women now have the perspective, privilege, political space, and right to attend to their own agenda distinct from that of the African male” (247). Surely women have always had the perspective and the right, but perhaps not the political space or privilege. In Part II, a writing strategy for reclaiming power over gender representations was discussed, highlighting the way in which women may create much deeper, rounded female characters in their own literature, as does Bâ in *Une si longue lettre*. Stringer confirms this, stating that “both male and female writers tend to present the other gender either superficially or from a psychologically limited angle” (151), so Senegalese women appear to be deliberately downplaying their male characters in order to fight back. And whilst male critics may accuse women of not creating well-rounded male characters, in *Un chant écarlate*, Bâ appears to make a conscious effort to represent both male and female views (Stringer 49), thereby dispelling such potential criticism. This is a far-reaching issue that, for time and space constraints, cannot be discussed in detail here, but still the translator can learn from insight into the identities, representations and intentions of the source text writer. For example, in *Translation as Reparation*, Bandia speaks of the significance of communicating shades of meaning and trajectories of a thought process without alteration in a different language (30). The representation of female identities

in Senegalese literature forms yet another extra-linguistic level of communication often conveyed through these more complex shades of meaning within a text.

For instance, in their literature, both Mariama Bâ and Sow Fall clearly communicate the fact that women are not silent, that they have a voice and an opinion (d'Almeida, *Francophone* 175). Bâ and Sow Fall may not write this overtly in their literature, but they do construct characters that support this view. Bâ's use of the epistolary form means that her entire story is written from the female perspective, and whilst Sow Fall's novel *L'ex père de la nation*, introduces both likeable and dislikeable female characters, they have strong personalities and views. In the following extract, Coura is not denying her womanhood but her derivative position as Madiama's wife:

Je jure au nom de Dieu, que pour toi, je ne serai plus une femme parce que, par ma propre volonté, je me fais dès aujourd'hui la réincarnation de ta mère, ma tante Coumba Dado Sadio. (58)

I swear to God, I will no longer be a wife to you, because from this day forward and through my own willpower, I have become the reincarnation of your mother, my aunt Coumba Dado Sadio.

As many other critics have pointed out, the formation and development of characters (Lionnet 326) often with a political (or social) function (Boyce Davies, *Introduction* 15), the way in which they interact (Pavlenko 11), their speech, as well as the statements made about women and the labels they are given within novels and poetry (d'Almeida, *Francophone* 175) all contribute towards the wider redefinition of female identities within African societies. Further, often by seeking identification with the reader through images of women as victims, texts also perform the function of

challenging others to change. Language is about power, and women are reclaiming that power. And the socially conscious translator has a duty to represent that reempowerment in her target text.

Power is also reclaimed through the depiction of topics that are not written about by male writers, who have focused on their own interests for decades. According to Florence Stratton, ‘national’ allegory is a popular choice for male authors, but for women writers this is far less so, as they are not as involved in public life.¹²⁷ However, Seck Mbacké asserts that the subjects written about by women and men are very similar, for instance Chapter One of this thesis discusses Seck Mbacké’s poetry written for and about the national football team (see page 80). She has also covered issues of war (*Pluie* 26-27) and immigration (*Froid*). Nevertheless, this has not always been the case with female writers, including Benga and Seck Mbacké. The often cited opinion the translator must distance herself from is that representations of the political are more important than literary depictions of other public, private or personal issues. And just because these latter representations are sometimes granted a lower status does not mean that less cultural research needs to be done. Instead, the feminist motto rings true here, in that “the personal *is* political” (Hanisch).

Subjects broached by many women writers have not been studied to the same extent that male texts have been. For instance, Larrier claims that “cooperation and friendship are privileged in the literature of women from French-speaking Africa and

¹²⁷ Stratton also notes that women’s lack of particular interest in politics could be a response to men’s negative depictions of the female gender in political works produced by their male counterparts (*Contemporary* 10).

the Caribbean” (*Francophone* 87) and this is most definitely the case with Bâ’s *Une si longue lettre*, where friendship between the two protagonists is one of the key subject matters. This distinguishable body of literature in Senegal covers many issues unique to women’s writing or seen anew from a female perspective, and includes discussions of motherhood and maternity (Mbengue Diakhaté 9; 13; 14-15; 16 etc), fertility and sexuality (Ndiaye Sow 17; Mbaye d’Erneville, *Dia* 155-159), polygamy (Bâ, *Si*; Sow Fall, *L’Ex*), love (Bâ, *Chant*), prostitution (Bugul), a celebration of women (Ndiaye Sow 9-13), then poverty (Fall, *Mademba*; Sow Fall *Grève*), government (Sow Fall, *Grève*; *L’Ex*), and religion (Kirama Fall, *Chants*; Fall, *Mademba*), amongst many other topics.¹²⁸

Ogundipe-Leslie describes empowerment for Black women as “social recognition and dignity just as, most of all, it means space to speak” (17). Benga states that women are often militant in their writing, because society has imposed so many expectations on one single gender and women are very affected by that. Benga sees writing as primarily a woman’s battle where women are at once subjects and creators of language (*Personal* 3) and where literature mirrors social reality (Stringer 15). And Ogundipe-Leslie asserts that Black women wish to have “power which recognizes responsibility in dignified freedom; power which positively promotes Life in all its

¹²⁸ These are mere examples and of course subject matter cannot always be pigeon-holed in this way. The point is that women do speak about subjects unique to them or from their own distinct viewpoint. It must also be noted that love between a man and woman is rarely spoken of in Senegalese women’s literature unless broken down by the pressures of society as in the novels of Mariama Bâ and Sow Fall. Love is more often spoken of in relation to God as in the poems of Kirama Fall or Awa Ndiaye.

forms...” (17). Far from Patrique Mérand’s claim that women were born to be silent in the presence of men (95-97), women are speaking out about the lives they lead, so often hidden from view in the male literature of yesteryear.

Whilst many Senegalese women are now financially and socially independent (Mbow 7), the social and familial roles imposed upon them in Senegal mean that a female writer must strive particularly hard, compared to a male writer of the same standing, to make herself heard in literature (Fall, *Personal* 4). Because many of these subjects could have a social and political impact upon the women of Senegal, it is essential from an ethical viewpoint to gain an understanding of these issues prior to translation in order to communicate the multiple connotations and meanings of the source text. Translation has been described as a powerful and aggressive act, but this would not necessarily be an appropriate strategy in the case of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature.

For example, in Steiner’s well known quotation he talks of the translator who “invades, extracts and brings home” (314), and he sexualises the process, describing moments of “appropriative penetration” (314) and “rapture” (317) with sex described as “semantic,” and “ejaculation” a linguistic concept. And whilst the model he presents is not overtly labelled as masculine, “the whole ‘thrust’ of Steiner’s argument supposes the perspective of masculine sexuality” (Simon, *Gender* 29). This model is incredibly different from the image of the translation as the derivative feminine,¹²⁹ but

¹²⁹ Lori Chamberlain asserts that feminist research across a number of disciplines has revealed an opposition between productive and reproductive work that influences how a culture values that work. She maintains that originality and creativity are seen in terms of paternity and authority, “relegating the

surely in translation an interventionalist approach can be taken which is strong and feminine, yet ethical at the same time. Translation is certainly powerful but does not need to be aggressive, and this can be achieved through the transfer of all the source text and source writer's values into the target text.

Simon states that "the process of meaning transfer often has less to do with *finding* the cultural inscription of a term than in *reconstructing* its value" (*Gender* 138), and it is the attainment of this "value" which is of the highest importance in the retelling of many of these texts. But the idea of "value" is challenging to judge. In his analysis of Senegalese women's poetry, Diene asserts that women's poetry is a paradox, in that the poets strive for parity between the genders whilst stressing difference (427):

Eternelle Femme, je suis,
Et folle comme toutes les femmes
Qui espèrent le bonheur,
D'espoirs mollement bercée,
A ton cœur, le mien, j'ai rivé.

(Mbengue Diakhate 17)

Eternal Woman, i am,
And foolish as all women
Who hope for happiness,

figure of the female to a variety of secondary roles." This opposition, she asserts, is also used to highlight the difference between the acts of writing and translating, the latter being seen as "derivative" and "feminine" (57). This distinction is also referred to in Chapter Four, page 314.

Half-heartedly cradled with hopes,

To your heart, mine, i have tied.

This opening verse from “Mirage” by Mbengue Diakhate sums up this paradox; her poem juxtaposes hope and reality, love and futility, difference and aspiration for equality. “Woman” is capitalised and positive as the first part of the sentence, but at that point the phrase recoils, with “je suis” almost as an afterthought. The effect of this structure has been retained in the target text by using a lower case “i”. “Folle” may be translated as “mad,” “insane” or “crazy,” but it is more appropriate in this instance to translate as “foolish” for it is self-deprecating with regard to the pointlessness of desire.

The fourth line also produces a number of challenges. Firstly, the word “mollement” can be translated in numerous ways including “softly” or “feebly,” “idly” or “unenthusiastically,” but to retain the sentiment of futility rather than weakness or indolence, the term “half-heartedly” has been employed in translation. Secondly, the verb “bercer” can mean to “cradle,” “rock,” “nourish,” “lull” or “soothe” and evidently the translation in this instance should ensure that the allusion to mothering is preserved in the target text. However, “bercer de” can also mean “to delude with,” so “rocked” simply does not suffice, “nourished” is too encouraging of her hopes, and “lulled” or “soothed” indicate calming rather than the protecting nature of “cradled,” which has been selected above. This poem is strongly feminine throughout its subject matter, choice of vocabulary and expression, but at the same time it raises crucial issues of gender difference through an acceptance or perhaps ironic acceptance of women’s fate as secondary, where “i” is always an afterthought.

Whether Mbengue Diakhate, Sow Fall, Bugul or Seck Mbacké, the large majority of Francophone Senegalese women's texts use literature as a powerful medium to communicate progressive social causes, and according to Simon, this is also the case with many women translators, who believe that the transmission of significant literary texts, such as these, is an essential task (*Gender* 134). By judging the subject matter of Senegalese women's literature from a Western perspective, many texts may be deemed feminist acts of writing for the recognition of women's rights (Drame, *Émergence* 119). But the texts must also be judged from a Senegalese perspective. At interview, Mbow described feminism in Senegal as an attitude, a consideration for the promotion of women's rights, fighting against the injustices women have faced over the centuries, but also to be in a more equal, fair society, one which enjoys contributions from all components of that society (2). If this is what feminism means to women in Senegal, then surely many of the writers analysed here, who raise issues of equality and injustice, are taking a feminist stance. Women have written against the previously male-dominated canon and in that sense redefined African literature (Stratton 176).

Filomina Chioma Steady believes the original form of feminism is African feminism, based upon independence, autonomy and power within gender-based roles (28). And Iris Berger and Frances White claim that women moved into the postcolonial era with an African feminism in which they had high expectations that their demands would be met (129). Another perspective is that these texts take a womanist approach, a concept which appears more apt (see footnote 23, page 31). However, a womanist stance may once have been deemed rebellious and

contemporary, but less so today. Thus, if the translator wishes to have an impact on a present-day Europhone audience which would incite the surprise or shock perhaps intended by the source text writer, she would need to embed a form of modern rebellion in the target text in order to achieve equivalent effect on the target text reader. If the translator chooses to take a feminist stance in translation, she can reassert the power of voice originally demonstrated by the source text writer. It makes sense then, that “womanism” or “Black feminism” becomes “Western feminism” when translated into a Western culture.¹³⁰ This is a concept that has not previously been discussed in relation to Translation Studies and Senegalese literature.

On the other hand, there are many arguments against the application of feminist theory to non-Western cultures. Lloyd W. Brown does not even consider this as a possibility (184).¹³¹ Susheila Nasta also questions whether being feminist can in fact reflect an “implicit adherence to another form of cultural imperialism” (xv), so forcing

¹³⁰ It must be noted that women’s literature from Senegal may sometimes take a feminist or womanist perspective, but over time this element has perhaps been given less attention as women take on various new subjects and concerns. The corpus has broadened since its conception (Mbaye d’Erneville started writing poetry in the late 1950s) to envelop a number of different writers, with differing opinions, objectives, styles, topics and ideological approaches – amongst these ideological approaches are ‘womanism’ and ‘feminism.’

¹³¹ Brown warns against making easy comparisons between Western feminists and the judgements of Black women writers, for there is no more political uniformity between them than among Western feminists (184). Hence, a feminist approach towards the translation of these texts is discussed as an option in this thesis rather than a necessity, and there is also reference to the ethical implications of taking such a strategy.

the hands of these women writers by imposing a feminist translation strategy upon their works could be considered a further oppressive act of colonialism. Spivak believes that a disrespectful translation, one which does not adequately render the rhetoricity and textuality of a text, is a betrayal of the democratic nature of the discipline (*Politics* 371-372) and von Flotow cites possible dangers in translating women's literature due to universalist notions about women (*Gender* 92). Considering Senegalese women's literature in terms of feminism could therefore be considered a way of applying a notion to a culture to which it simply does not apply.

The translator has a number of strategies to choose from, of which one option would be to translate using a very restricted form of equivalence and adhere more rigidly to the words and meaning of the text as they appear on the page. Alternatively she could take a feminist approach which is much more aggressive in nature, and bestows more creative power upon the translator. If the translator is to choose between these two possibilities, in the knowledge that "'woman' and 'translator' have been relegated to the same position of discursive inferiority" (Simon, *Gender* 1), then to take a feminist translation approach would empower both through language. A feminist approach takes the language and its social implications by the scruff of the neck, in no delicate obedient way which seeks out equivalence between individual words and phrases, but one which actively transforms the text into a brand new piece of writing which draws in new readers through its innovation.

Taking a feminist approach therefore gives the translator the opportunity to be creative, and von Flotow cites three different ways in which this can be done (*Feminism* 74-80). Firstly, there is "supplementing;" compensating for the differences

between languages by utilising some form of explanation or clarification within a text. Secondly, she states that feminist translators can use “prefacing and footnoting” to reflect on the translator’s work and stress her active presence, called “womanhandling” by Barbara Godard (91). Finally, there is “hijacking,” appropriating the text so that it reflects an individual’s own political intentions, feminising words perhaps, or “correcting” language to remove male generic terms (von Flotow, *Feminism* 74-80).

For example, *Le baobab fou* appears to be incredibly womanist in its outlook, not just because it deals with issues such as female independence in a postcolonial world, but it goes so far as broaching subjects such as prostitution, and it makes no excuses for that. The 2008 edition of the translation includes an afterword explaining the strength of character of the writer and how she pushed the boundaries of social acceptability. Like a preface or a footnote, this could be deemed a feminist move in translation. The following extract from the book represents the breaking away of Ken Bugul from her life in Senegal, her first steps into a new world and independence:

J’étais dans le hall de l’aéroport, le cœur palpitant comme si j’y étais seule. J’en frissonnais presque et j’avais du mal à retenir le tremblement de mes lèvres devenues si lourdes, pesantes comme si elles allaient tomber de moi. (33)

I was in the hall of the airport, my heart beating as if I were there alone. It almost made me shiver and I had a hard time controlling the trembling of my lips, which had become so heavy, seemed to weigh so much that I thought they might fall off my face. (Bugul, *Abandoned* 23)

A feminist translator could indeed hijack the text by reinforcing the feminine that exists in the French – alone/alone or heavy/heavy, which may seem strange to a reader, but it highlights the feminine without impeding meaning. The translator could also amend the text so it reflects a feminist perspective, for example: “My lips had become so heavy that I thought they might fall off my face, but I managed to control them and stop the trembling.” The translator, Marjolijn de Jager, does “supplement” the text to account for the differences between languages by adding “my face,” and thereby demonstrating a degree of power over the text, but this is not overtly feminist. And, it should be noted that this supplementation in some ways smooths out the translation by losing the awkwardness of the ‘original’ French text – “I thought that they might fall off my self” would retain this awkwardness.

There are certainly options for feminist “supplementation” of *Le baobab fou* in translation, for example, in Bugul’s use of the masculine plural pronoun employed in French to refer to both genders: “Ils rentrent dans la cour de la concession familiale...”(9). Whilst feminist translation often compensates for differences between languages (von Flotow, *Feminist 75*), it may also highlight the feminine in translation, so instead of beginning the sentence with the genderless: “They,” the phrase could instead commence: “Fodé and his sister, Codou went back into the courtyard of the family compound....” There are also possibilities for gender clarification in the following extract:

Le baobab aussi, on se demandait à quoi il pensait. Car, parfois, il se mettait à rire, parfois à pleurer et cela arrivait aussi, il s’endormait pour rêver. (Bugul, *Baobab* 36)

And what, also, was the baobab thinking about? For sometimes it would begin to laugh, sometimes to weep, and it would happen as well that it would fall asleep so that it could dream. (Bugul, *Abandoned* 17)

Whilst de Jager translates the pronoun “il” as “it” in English, this choice weakens the personification of the baobab. If it is translated as “he,” the baobab can no longer embody Bugul herself, whose womanhood has already been commandeered by the fear of the publisher who advised her to publish in the name of a man (Garane 164). To approach the text from a feminist stance, it may instead be translated as “she” or the text could even be supplemented by using “he or she.”¹³² It should be noted, however, that de Jager’s translation of the title, *Le baobab fou* as *The Abandoned Baobab*, is not feminist at all – whilst the loss of the masculine gender makes the associated metaphor with the female lead character (Bugul herself) more transparent, the new adjective: “abandoned,” could be associated with weakness and tragedy (rarely associated with feminism), rather than “fou,” which could be translated as “mad,” “insane,” or “wild.”

According to Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, “making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about” (Gauvin, *Letters* 9). However, as discussed this may be seen as an aggressive or at least interventionalist way of treating a text; even if the source text writer is a feminist, that does not necessarily mean that she endorses feminist translation techniques, and it is necessary to question the extent to which a treatment

¹³² It is also necessary to note the earlier analysis of an extract from Bodé-Thomas’s translation of *Une si longue lettre*, where he does indeed compensate for the differences in language by reintroducing the feminine gender in English where it otherwise may have been lost in translation (see page 73).

such as this is ethical. Antoine Berman states that “le traducteur a *tous les droits* dès lors qu’il joue franc jeu” (*Pour* 93),¹³³ and from this perspective, the translator could gain permission from the source text writer to be creative with the text in this way, just as Lotbinière-Harwood did with her text, *Letters from Another*, a translation of *Lettres d’une autre* by feminist Lise Gauvin. This would be an ideal situation from an ethical point of view.¹³⁴ Feminist techniques in translation certainly provide an influential strategy in reasserting the identities of Senegalese women as well as underlining the powerful position of the translator who performs more than the secondary, derivative role often incorrectly assigned to her in theories and representations. However, it is also important to consider non-Western ideologies in the translation of Francophone Senegalese works. Certainly, a distancing from the domination of the Western gaze can give the translator a unique and democratic perspective upon her work.

¹³³ “translators have *all the rights* as long as their game is played up front” (Simon, *Gender* 36).

¹³⁴ The degree to which the translator should consult the source text writer is a complex one. Suzanne Jill Levine comments on the authority of the ‘original’ author to legitimise her translation choices, and only appears to use an abusive translation strategy if the writer’s work is already subversive (16). Gentzler mocks her strategy, asking whether she would publish her work without that authority, and stating that the most abusive translators are those who have the greatest power and prestige such as Pound (*Translation* 204). Indeed to seek approval from the source text writer regarding every word and phrase could be time-consuming and impractical, however this thesis is suggesting that seeking approval may be an option with regard to more interventionalist approaches to translation.

V Translating Beyond the Western Gaze

Just as Senegalese writers make adjustments when they translate an African cultural reality into the French language on the page, perhaps attempting to suit or subconsciously fit certain ideologies in the colonising culture, the translator will also deliberate over strategies of acculturation and assimilation, domestication or foreignisation. So, the power struggles between colonial forces and former colonies such as Senegal can not only be compared to the writer of postcolonial works, but also to the role of the translator working between two or more different worlds. Chapter One referred to Niranjana's underlining of the necessity to evade the privilege of Western thought, and Gentzler and Tymoczko also assert that the translator of a text must represent both parties – the one with power and the other seeking empowerment (xix). But not all translators represent both parties equally. Part V of this Chapter therefore looks at ways in which translation strategies can represent all parties invested in a translation, looking at Western and non-Western ideologies in the written world but also beyond, at issues of perception and control in the publishing world.

Part II of this chapter discussed the way in which assimilation was the word used by the French to define their colonial policy, where the teaching of French language and cultures would lead to the colonised subjects becoming French citizens themselves, eventually rejecting their own indigenous cultures. Acculturation, on the other hand, is the process through which the Senegalese people may have adapted to the norms of the French culture, and certainly, whilst total assimilation is rather far-fetched, there is no doubt that throughout the colonial period and beyond, Senegalese people were acculturated to the French language and culture primarily through politics

and education. These politically and culturally-charged words are also frequently used in Translation Studies to describe a strategy whereby there is some form of linguistic adjustment in favour of the target text culture and norms. In describing this strategy, Venuti, declares that:

A translation project may conform to values currently dominating the target-language culture, taking a conservative and openly assimilationist approach to the foreign text, appropriating it to support domestic canons, publishing trends, political alignments. (*Strategies* 240)

Venuti calls this a “fluent strategy,” a “labor of acculturation” and one which “domesticates” the foreign text, eradicating its linguistic and cultural difference and encoding it with target language values, beliefs and representations (*Rethinking* 5). This strategy is a form of neocolonialism; surely when political and social issues stemming from the colonial period are raised in a piece of literature either overtly through subject matter or by inserting words from local languages, or subtly through the manipulation of genre, for instance, to domesticate the literature, wiping out these elements of difference would be to doubly colonise the work. The writers have already chosen to express themselves in the language of the coloniser; to then erase the subversion of source text norms is to deny the identity, values and beliefs of the writer.

The opposing strategy of “foreignisation” would be for the translator to retain the individual characteristics of the source text so that the target text appears foreign, promoting those aspects of a piece of literature which are firmly embedded in the source text culture. Venuti states that a strategy such as this may “resist and aim to revise the dominant by drawing on the marginal, restoring foreign texts excluded by

domestic canons” (*Strategies* 240). The danger of a strategy such as this is that if a text is completely foreignised with no consideration at all made to the cultural understanding of the target text reader, the literature may appear so obscure that some of the cultural and political issues communicated by the source text writer may not be understood fully. Liu Yameng states that a strategy of foreignisation “fails to take into account how the translation could affect the target audience’s perception of the source culture and what consequences the source language community is likely to suffer as a result of the changed perception” (62).¹³⁵

For example, a literature class I teach in Kenilworth studied *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa of Nigeria, a highly respected piece of literature which was the first novel to be published in the English language by an African woman. However, many students were unimpressed by Nwapa’s use of the English language which represents Nwapa’s own translation of the Igbo language in its semantics and syntax, especially speech patterns (Duruoha 193), and they were unable to tear themselves away from the preconceptions they have of what a sophisticated book should be, seeing it as simplistic. So equally for the translator working into English, to foreignise Francophone literature into what the target language reader perceives to be an ‘inferior’ type of language may make the reader feel that the source text writer and her works are

¹³⁵ Whilst this idea of suffering perhaps seems excessive from an English perspective where the market has been flooded by English-language texts and the idea of a piece of literature being representative of English cultures would seem rather extreme, if consideration is given to the relatively small number of texts written by Senegalese women and how few are available in translation, an individual reading one single text may indeed believe it to be a snapshot of typical life in Senegal.

also inferior. Therefore, a foreignisation strategy may create an impression upon the reader of what the original text is like (such as whether it is sophisticated or otherwise), an impression that may be distorted by the values of the target text culture.¹³⁶

Translation is therefore a highly political act which can either support or reject the objectives, structures, beliefs, values and opinions that the translator believes to be expressed by the source text writer, and this is a very powerful position for the translator to hold. To domesticate entirely would be to recolonise the text, but to foreignise entirely may prevent cultural understanding, or worse still, prevent the text being published (that issue will be explored shortly). Gentzler and Tymoczko state that:

Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways, translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture.

(Introduction xxi).

¹³⁶ In a paper for *Third World Quarterly*, entitled “Translating Terror,” Bassnett comments on this very phenomenon in relation to the rewriting of Al Quaida messages by a Reuters’ translator. By using a foreignisation strategy and following the Arabic very closely, the translator makes the English translation appear “archaic, over-the-top, ranting, almost absurdly Old Testament in short, fundamentalist.” In this way, stereotypes of fundamentalists as being in conflict both with political enemies and also modernity are reinforced, in contrast to the ‘original’ Arabic quotations which were “intended,” Bassnett states, to have totally the opposite effect (395).

By choosing a particular strategy, or more likely a combination of these two strategies, the translator is taking a stance, either supporting or denying the political and cultural messages that she believes to be implied by the source text writer. The translator's decisions can affect the way in which a country and its people are represented, whether or not the translated literature is successful in the target market and whether the premise of the book is either lost or found in translation.

Note the following extract from Sow Fall's *L'ex père de la nation*:

Phrase: "Mais il avait prêché dans le désert car, le jour du vote, le peuple m'avait souverainement choisi." (11)

Foreignised: "But he had preached in the desert for, the day of the vote, the people had supremely chosen me."

Domesticated: "But he had been talking to a brick wall (crying in the wilderness), because on election day the people had overwhelmingly chosen me."

Combination: "But he had preached in the desert, because on election day the people had overwhelmingly chosen me."

Whilst the phrase "prêcher dans le désert" is one used in standard French, it also reflects the cultural background of the book and would culturally "make sense" in the source text. Both options of domestication lose this somewhat, the first – "talking to a brick wall" would not only be culturally distant but also irrelevant to many Senegalese people and would lose the religious connotations.¹³⁷ The second, "crying in the

¹³⁷ The Bible speaks of John the Baptist who cried/preached in the desert/wilderness of Judea about the coming of the Lord but few would listen, as in Matthew Chapter 3 for example (*New* 725). John is also

wilderness” loses the specificity of the geographical reference as well as weakening the verb from “preaching” to “crying.” A combination of foreignisation and domestication strategies has been used because “preached in the desert” is perfectly understandable in English without losing the cultural and geographical references, and yet there has been an attempt to make the text read more smoothly in English as it does in the French, by making some very minor syntactic and semantic modifications.

So, whilst the idea of foreignising a text may, to many scholars, appear to be a strategy which promotes the source text and culture, academic Liu believes quite the opposite, that this strategy is all about the target culture, a Northern construction aimed at promoting a counter-discourse which preserves the cultural distinctions of the South (61) thereby exoticising the text. Liu writes about the Chinese translation community where often Western translation theories are equated with *the* theory of translation (58), and instead calls for a strategy of “representational justice” when translating between South and North (62-64), a form of translation intervention which would right the wrongs of previous translation scholars who may have been selective in their choice of texts for translation, in the way they have been translated, as well as in their Western ideologies (69). Liu states:

...as a central value, representational justice would require that the translator pay close attention to how the source culture and its members could be affected by her choice of source texts, her deployment of translational strategies, her mode of representing the Other. It would

a highly regarded Prophet of Judaism and also assumed to be the Prophet Yahya in the Koran (Livne-Kafri 116).

demand that no matter what approach she adopts, her translation would induce in target readers a deepening awareness of shared humanity, an enhanced sense of identification with or solidarity for the source culture and its members. (64)

It would seem that a strategy of representational justice would suit the words of Seck Mbacké which began this thesis – to follow in the footsteps of the source text writer. Liu wants the translator who is concerned with representational justice to “strive to find out the meaning or meanings which the source discourse community has assigned to the source text” and “defer to that community’s judgement should the target discourse or other factors on the target side induce a different interpretation” (68). This is often discussed in relation to postcolonial literature: the way in which the translator should distance herself from Western ideologies by incorporating non-Western thought on translation into her strategies (Tymoczko, *Enlarging*).¹³⁸ But rather than deny Western theory just because it is ‘Western,’ the translator should take from Western feminist or postcolonial theories, for example, as those translators who do are said to be open to importing extra linguistic codes and cultural markers from the source culture (Gentzler, *Translation* 197). But at the same time, the translator should keep an open mind to any flaws or potential bias that these theories may offer, as well as considering source text models and theories if they are available, such as Liu’s

¹³⁸ This view is one shared by Green et al. who, from a Francophone viewpoint examine the value of moving beyond “hexagonocentrism,” and they further stress the importance of speaking of Francophonie(s) in the plural to avoid the homogenisation of Francophone authors (xi).

theory of representational justice. In Chapter Four there will be an exploration into African translation tradition.

Appiah comments on African identity often being the product of a European gaze (*In* 81),¹³⁹ and it is very difficult to avoid this as a Western scholar. Each individual has her own perspectives, and whether “Western” or not,¹⁴⁰ that will be the case, but for the translator who has the task of representing another culture it is more crucial than ever to put this perspective to one side and see the text in the eyes of the source text writer and culture. A clear example of this can be taken from *Un chant écarlate*, the second novel of Mariama Bâ which was translated as *Scarlet Song* in 1986 by Dorothy Blair:

¹³⁹ Soyinka once stated that “we black Africans have been blandly invited to submit ourselves to a second epoch of colonisation – this time by a universal-humanoid abstraction defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of *their* world and *their* history, *their* neuroses and *their* value systems” (*Myth* x). For this to change, Miller asserts that it is necessary to stop considering theory to be purely Western, and information to be all that Africa can provide (*Theories* 3).

¹⁴⁰ The term “western” in itself is problematic as it is not simply geographically related. The Oxford English Dictionary also highlights this issue, describing the term “Western” as “Of or pertaining to the Western or European countries or races as distinguished from the Eastern or Oriental,” also “applied to the countries of western Europe that opposed Germany in the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45” or “pertaining to, or designating the non-Communist states of Europe and America” (“Western”). Hence, “Western” has historical and political significance which may or may not be of relevance today. Further, the word “Western” today often refers to the developed world as opposed to the developing world.

Usine Niari Talli secouait sa torpeur nocture, sous le soleil qui
s'ébrouait. Les dernières ombres se dessoudaient, restituant aux choses
formes et couleurs. (Bâ, *Chant* 11)

The district of Grand Dakar known as Usine Niari Talli takes its name
from the two parallel main roads that run through it and the Biscuit
Factory in the neighbourhood. Usine Niari Talli was shaking off its
nocturnal torpor in the first quiver of morning sunshine, and objects
resumed their normal shapes and colours as the last shadows faded. (Bâ,
Scarlet 11)

Blair's work must be admired as one of the earliest, and one of still a small
collection of translations of Senegalese women's literature. However, the first
sentence from Blair's English translation has been taken from an explanatory footnote
by Bâ and translated almost exactly. And whilst there is nothing incorrect about doing
this, translation trends and the strategies that accompany them change over time.
Where once a strong domesticating strategy such as Blair's may not have been
questioned, those who study translations today may be concerned at the degree to
which Blair manipulated the text for a Western audience. Further, a footnote provided
to assist and educate the European reader has become the opening sentence in Bâ's
second and final book, losing the impact of the dynamic opening line of the French text
by replacing it with one that is static and descriptive in English. Translation Studies
scholars may question whether Blair has given enough consideration to the source text
author's perspective in translation.

In addition, the literary translator must be aware not only of the conscious selection of texts, theories, or even words and phrases, as above, but also those actions which are made subconsciously. Gentzler declares that translators of “so-called Third-World texts” may unconsciously manipulate literature. For example, he asserts that translators may make changes in a text that lead to a reinforcement of cultural stereotypes or a conformity to cultural norms that did not exist prior to translation (*Translation* 196). Surely, the more the translator is aware of the source perspectives the less likely this is to occur. On the other hand, an awareness and sensitivity in translation could possibly reveal aspects of the source text which may otherwise have remained less visible to the target text reader, which can be seen as a positive action in translation. To be a literary translator, therefore, is to hold a culture in the palm of your hand and mould it into a new form; an altered shape, perhaps with a slightly different shade of colour and texture, but the substance and mass remain the same. To be a translator is to have complete power over a text and for some this power can be self-consuming; tempted to interject their own world views and politics into the translation the translator falls prey to the “power turn” in Translation Studies (197), and whilst no strategy is incorrect, as previously stated, if the aim of translation is to represent the views of the source text writer and follow in her footsteps, interspersing the text with personal viewpoints rather defeats the original objective.

If, as Bandia asserts, “Euro-African literature was born out of the encounter between Western acculturation and native inspiration” (*Translation* 28) surely the translator should also aim to balance the different perspectives present in the texts under consideration. However, is it possible for European translators to distance

themselves from Western perspectives and see the literature through Senegalese eyes? At a conference in 2006 at Manchester University, entitled *Translation and Conflict II*, Tymoczko described the way in which translators allow their work to be influenced by dominant discourses, and adapt to normative pressures. She stated that it is the translator's role to be visible, audible and ethically responsible, especially in cases of conflict (*Keynote*). In an overt situation of conflict such as war, this is perhaps a more obvious a statement to make, but as has already been made clear, in postcolonial literature there is constant conflict between languages and cultures, and whilst it is not always necessary for the translator to be audible and visible in her texts, it is important that she is willing to be audible and visible in the discussion of her works and why she may have interpreted something in a particular manner. Further, an 'ethical' translation would take into consideration the less dominant and prevalent source text language and culture and its challenge to normative Europhone practices.

But whilst Tymoczko insinuated that perhaps translators may not always be conscious of their bias towards dominant perspectives, Gentzler believes that translators are becoming increasingly aware of their own world views and how they might influence the translation process (*Translation* 216), and translation scholars, those who often (but not always) undertake literary translation (rather than technical, for example) are normally very conscious of the tendency towards the Western bias of certain translation strategies. If the translator is aware of the control she has, this means she is perfectly able to take either a Eurocentric or Afrocentric approach or a combination of both, as suggested here. Spivak asserts that "translation is the most intimate act of reading. Unless the translator has earned the right to become the

intimate reader, she cannot surrender to the text, cannot respond to the special call of the text” (*Outside* 183). The translator earns that right by learning all aspects of the source and target text cultures, languages, beliefs, values and ideologies and finding an intellectual balance between all aspects of the literature and associated theories.

Pálsson talks of a “cultural dyslexia” as being “the inability to read the alien, cultural worlds of other people” (23), and certainly this may take place if the reader has no idea of the background to a piece of literature. However, for the informed translator who has conducted pre-translation research there is no excuse for “cultural dyslexia.”

A thorough and broad investigation is essential in translation.¹⁴¹ That investigation may involve research into alternative paradigms, for example; in *‘Logiques métisses’: Cultural Appropriation and Postcolonial Representations*, Françoise Lionnet comments on the fact that Francophone women writers can suggest alternative ideas or theories which discretely oppose the power of the dominant culture. Examples of this may be dress codes, music or idioms, but she says that these “discrete moments” do not necessarily form counter-ideologies (339). It is these more discrete moments that are harder to read in Senegalese literature, and often those that can be missed out in translation. For example, in Blair’s translation of *Un chant écarlate*, there are many instances where she domesticates the text and in this way bows to the

¹⁴¹ A side issue is whether or not the translator can do the work due to lack of time or money. The translator often gets paid very little for literary translation, but it must be noted that the Senegalese writer almost certainly gets paid far less. And whilst respect for the literary translator in monetary terms has always been rather low, if it is mostly academics or highly experienced professionals who are translating literary works, they are doing it out of interest and professional respect rather than money, and in that case a comprehensive and extensive analysis of works for translation is of utmost importance.

oppression of the European culture, where a more “faithful” rendering of the source text in translation would have retained that power for the source text writer, Mariama Bâ:

Bah! Je me lèverai plus tôt que de coutume, à l’instant où le couvercle du *satala njappù* paternel tintera, au lieu d’attendre les reniflements de mon frère ou le *trass, trass* des savates de Yaye Khady.

There is a footnote explaining the term *satala njappù* as “Bouilloire pour ablutions” (Bâ, *Chant* 13). In translation, this reads:

So what! I’ll just have to get up earlier, when I hear the rattle of Pa’s kettle for his ablutions, instead of waiting for my brother’s sniffing or the flip-flop of Ma’s sandals. (Bâ, *Scarlet* 4)

Blair removes evidence of both the Arabic (*satala*) and Wolof (*njappù*) languages, and whilst the terms are explained in a footnote as a kettle, this is purely an explanation, which does not suffice for the main body of the text. The exclamation becomes very English (so what!) and the “*trass trass*” which in French appears to mimic the sound of old shoes slithering through the sand, now becomes the noise of holiday flip flops! Finally, the mother’s name “Yaye Khady,” meaning “Mama Khady” in Wolof, has been removed and replaced with “Ma,” which very much domesticates the extract into English culture.

Therefore, whilst it is important to research the general characteristics of Francophone texts, every novel or poem has its individual challenges and for a more faithful rendering of the text, the translator must research the characteristics of a text that are particular to a specific time, place or individual. Miller claims that

“colonialism and its interference in African systems breaks down any absolute barrier between Africa and the West” and that contemporary African discourse seeks to redress this (*Theories* 14), a vital point if the translator intends to use non-Western as well as Western theories; so a contemporary translation should also redress this by reintroducing difference:

Well! I will get up earlier than usual – as soon the lid jingles on Papa’s *satala njàppu*, rather than waiting for my brother’s sniffling or the *shush-shush* of Yaye Khady’s old shoes.¹⁴²

The translator needs to move beyond the colonial and take a broader perspective by reestablishing the African nature of the text in the French language context, whilst also taking a narrower perspective – seeking to find out what the author and her writing is really communicating, as demonstrated by the above example.

Certainly, however ethically sound and open minded to different cultures and theories the translator may be, she has little power at all when she faces the publisher. Between 1984 and 1990, translations accounted for just 2.5% of published works in the UK and 3.5% in the USA (Venuti, *Rethinking* 6). And in 2001, *Publisher’s Weekly* stated that at most, six percent of all books translated worldwide were translated into English (with fifty percent being translations out of the English language) (Wimmer). This does not leave much room for the Senegalese writer who hopes to have her works translated into the present-day *lingua franca*. But the challenge does not end at

¹⁴² Here “old shoes” has been used instead of the more direct translation of “old slippers” which may give the Anglophone reader an impression of comfy house slippers as worn in British homes. This would be incorrect.

whether or not the text is translated – a power issue which is almost entirely controlled by the dominant target culture (Aixelá 52). Jaview Franco Aixelá also comments on how the translator will adjust her practice to guarantee acceptance from those “powers that be,” ie publishers and literary critics (52), and this could possibly be the reason for some of the translation decisions debated here, that were made by early translators of Senegalese women’s literature, such as Bodé-Thomas (page 73) and Blair (page 196-197).

This very urgency to be published often means the translator will undertake a strategy of acculturation purely to domesticate the text and make it intelligible or familiar to the target language reader as discussed earlier (page 186) in relation to Venuti (*Rethinking* 5). This strategy would then undermine much of the cultural and linguistic research that the translator may have done up to this point. Further, this approach would be unlikely to fit with a strategy of “semantic translation,” nor of “representational justice,” and certainly to domesticate would be to follow an entirely different pathway to that of the source text writer. Evidently, there is no right and wrong, but what an incredible loss of cultural value there would be should Senegalese texts be acculturated in this way when translated into English.

To avoid this disappointing and sad route into conformity, the translator firstly has the option of taking the initiative and selecting texts that are not prescribed by a particular publishing house or literary board, but this does mean researching and reading in more depth and doing her own selection process, and it will be much harder to publish or to get the funding to publish. The alternative way to redress in some way this “unstable balance of power” (Aixelá 52), is if the translator can overcome her own

ego she has the option of working with smaller publishers or publishing independently. This option has its own problems – a smaller publisher is likely to be less well respected and certainly will not have the funds to promote the book to any great extent. It is a Catch-22 – publish prescribed books with a well-known publisher who may have a domesticating influence on the text but will raise its profile, or select a text which is culturally and linguistically of interest, publish locally, retain control of the translation strategy and editing process but with limited finance and marketing. Is this not just reinforcing the imposed silence on Francophone African women writers, by not allowing them a larger platform upon which to voice their views? Or is any platform a positive step for female Francophone Senegalese authors?¹⁴³ As already stated, very few of their works have been translated, and then only from a small selection of writers (see Bibliography of Senegalese Women Writers page 529).

A further option is for the translator to gain some sort of independence through her own professional respectability and status. In Christopher Larkosh's paper on *Translating Women*, he comments on the capabilities of a translator who has achieved a very high level of professional freedom and institutional power. He cites Victoria Ocampo as providing an alternative model of freedom by setting up a literary journal of which she is director, so that there was no need to translate works assigned by an editor merely to earn money – she could translate and publish exactly what she wanted

¹⁴³ At interview, Fall expressed her disappointment in there being no interest in translating *Mademba*, despite its popularity and success in the Francophone world (*Personal* 13). This award-winning title would potentially be an enlightening task for a literary translator who takes a cultural approach to translation, as it embodies a wide range of modern Senegalese cultures.

(102). In the UK, with centres such as the British Centre for Literary Translation, or the Poetry Translation Centre, and journals such as *Modern Poetry in Translation* or *The Translator* amongst others, the profile of translated literature is well supported but still peripheral. And there remain a number of issues to overcome, including a degree of academic snobbery where a small publisher may be snubbed by literary critics, a work unlikely to be reviewed or acclaimed purely because of a lack of connections. And translated poetry is much more of a publishing challenge than prose; ultimately, what sells is translated (Makward, *Cherchez* 119), and when it comes to the mass UK market, translated poetry is not on the bestseller list. This does not mean to say that there is not a market at all. More significantly poetry represents a vast sum of cultural worth.

The challenge for the translator therefore goes far beyond the words on the page and even to representations of a culture through the images used for publication purposes. For example, on an early publication of Bâ's *Une si longue lettre*, a picture of a Black woman writing is shown on the front cover, summing up Bâ's intention to highlight the communication of a woman who is finally being heard (Larrier, *Correspondence* 752). Unfortunately, this has been lost through time and translation, as recent copies of the book in French or English do not display this on the front cover (Bâ, *Si; So*), most probably because the publication rights, originally belonging to NEAS, were passed to foreign publishing houses where the significance was perhaps not fully understood, and instead stereotypical images of Africa appear to have been

carelessly printed instead.¹⁴⁴ It should be noted therefore, that the translator (and the publisher or editor) could be deemed responsible for communication that goes far beyond the written word. It is a political game which began with colonisation and ended up in the hands of the publisher, but the translator has a great deal of power to influence what happens in between.

In conclusion to this chapter, in order to translate Francophone Senegalese women's literature an understanding of the country's political and cultural climate, past and present, can greatly inform the process. Senegal has experienced many types of intervention throughout its history, including periods of slavery and colonisation which have directly influenced the language and literature of the country. The translator needs both a comprehension of these periods in African history as well as knowledge of Senegal-specific historical events in order to make informed translation decisions. Women writers have actively responded to these interventions in a number of ways. They have been influenced by the Negritude movement, reclaiming power by

¹⁴⁴ On the cover of the French publications of *Une si longue lettre*, Saint-Paul uses a non-descript blue and white image in 1986, whilst *Le Serpent à Plumes* in 2001 featured a stereotypical abstract image of African people in traditional dress. Both Heinemann covers of the English translation feature a fictional image of the same woman. In the first, published in 1981, she appears sad and alone on her knees in the sand with a happy couple in the distance. But in the second, published in 2008, just her face can be viewed. Heinemann's first attempt clearly undermines many of the issues that Bâ was conveying in her literature – perhaps that is why the front-cover alteration was made. The Wolof version published in 2007 by NEAS is the only version of those studied that has used an image extremely close to that of the book's first publication in French in 1979. Perhaps all the implications of Bâ's work are understood by the Senegalese audience far more than their European counterparts.

challenging the colonial and postcolonial authorities through the written word.

However, they have also spoken out against the previously male-dominated movement, and this too may influence the way in which texts are written. Foucault's concept of power in terms of non-binary power relations is embodied constantly within women's works through representations of multiple religions, numerous languages and the subversion of standard European literary forms and genres.

Women's unique perspectives are illustrated in their writing styles and language which have transformed alongside their societal roles. The power of education in the French language could be seen to have segregated the way in which women write, so translators can learn from researching their educational background. However, all women are creative in language and often draw from others' realities in their works. And whilst the translator can take some generalities from the analysis of "women's language," such as the "richness" of their words, it is challenging at present to reach any cast-iron rules. Nevertheless, the translator must pay extra attention to issues of register, tone and the nuances and cultural value of terms and phrases. Women also reclaim power over their identities by creating more in-depth female characters in their novels than their male counterparts – this extra-linguistic factor should be transferred to the target text. The translation of many works is essential for the movement of cultural ideas and issues relevant to Senegalese women. Further, some texts display womanist or feminist values, and if the translator believes it is ethically sound to take a feminist approach, such a strategy can empower both the female writer and translator, making them both seen and heard in the real world.

Finally, in choosing a strategy, the translator must be aware of the colonising effect of a domesticating approach, whilst understanding that pure foreignisation fails to take into account the importance of the perception of the source culture by the target text audience. The translator needs to be aware of any potential bias of Western strategies and ideologies, looking at non-Western models and philosophies, seeing the text from the source writer's perspective, and retaining the overt or discrete oppositions to the power of the 'dominant' culture. And whilst the translator may believe her job is based around words and meaning, care should be taken in the translation of non-linguistic elements related to publishing, such as the symbolic meaning of images used on the cover of books – an integral part of the writer's communication. Moreover, the powerful role of the publisher in today's society can 'make or break' a writer, influence the decisions of a translator and impact greatly upon the cultural reception of a text that inhabits the contact zone between different cultural realities.

CHAPTER THREE - MEDIATION AND LINGUISTIC HYBRIDITY

...when the two cultures come together the hybrid product that results from this encounter poses additional problems in the act of translation. Because of these factors, there is a subjective dimension since the translation depends on the translator's reading of the cultural and ideological concepts and social history that produced the African text. (Gyasi, *Francophone* 29)

I A Symphony of Identities

In *Cultures In-Between*, Bhabha considers the migrations of modern times, stating that “this part-culture, this *partial* culture, is the contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures – at once the impossibility of culture's containedness and the boundary between” (54). This connective tissue is an extension of the “contact zone,” denoting the meeting place between multiple elements of an individual's identity, the extreme diversity of which, as discussed, is unmistakable in postcolonial cultures such as Senegal. Francophone Senegalese women writers have spent much of their time living between different cultures, navigating the boundaries connecting Africa with Europe or sandwiched between multiple languages.¹⁴⁵ Often described as ‘hybrid,’

¹⁴⁵ These contact zones bring together male and female, Africa and Europe, Senegal and France, Islam, Christianity and traditional beliefs, and many different languages such as Wolof, Fula, Soninke and French. It is also the meeting place of smaller, but no less significant, elements of an individual's

their identities are communicated through language and that language through literature. The translator's challenge, therefore, must be to understand these multiple cultures and ideologies communicated through language, to delve into the writer's world, and to mediate between the varying constituents of the symphony of identities embodied in the words of the writer.

Hence, Chapter Three examines the way in which the societal change and power structures discussed in previous chapters have led to this "hybridity." Whilst hybridity may seem to be a universal condition today due to globalisation, this chapter considers the particular relevance of this term to the Senegalese writers and present-day translators through the analysis of interviews and literature by women authors. And although language cannot be separated completely from culture, the main subject of this chapter is linguistic hybridity and negotiation rather than the cultural focus of previous chapters. Chapter Three explores the extent to which a comprehension of hybridity influences the translator's strategies, by questioning whether the translator must be a multilingual and multicultural mediator as she works between more than two languages and cultures. It considers how the translator can deal with different types of hybridity as Senegalese women writers stray from the norms and conventions of standard French. It discusses how local language learning may alter the translator's perspective, and how semiotics can provide a useful platform for analysis during the translation process. The chapter considers these strategies as an integral part of the

cultures and identity such as her class and background, personal interests in music or writers and the travels she has made beyond Africa and Europe.

translator's role as cultural and linguistic go-between and as she negotiates between her own visibility and invisibility in translation.

In an article for a book on *Postcolonial Subjects*, Walker says that:

In transitional social realities, the need to write often leads to the search for new forms of expression. Most often, existing art forms are recovered, reformulated, and revalued. The 'threshold,' 'aftermath,' or 'watershed' literatures of francophone production express their blurred realities and borderline living in mixed genres or hybrid forms. (252)

It is clear that this purported hybridity existing in Senegalese French is very much a result of the strength of local African languages to resist complete colonisation by the French language. Instead, when writing in the language of the 'Other,' the postcolonial Senegalese author takes inspiration from the diverse cultures and identities she comes into contact with. And this hybridity is embodied in her literature, a literature written in "non-standard" French which poses unique challenges for the translator owing to innovative modes of articulation and her habitation of the contact zone. Thus, this first part of Chapter Three will investigate further the notion of hybridity mentioned in Chapter One, looking at its significance to Senegalese writers and translation.

As touched upon briefly in earlier sections, the idea of writing in the language of the 'Other,' that of the coloniser, is one which has been and is still discussed frequently by scholars. However, Christiane P. Makward asserts that Francophone women writers suffer doubly from this condition of being "Other" because they mostly write in French rather than a local language, but also because they are women rather than men. Due to this, she says that there is great indifference and prejudice towards

their writing (120). Since African people began writing in European languages, they have been made to feel as if they are betraying their traditional cultures (Thiong'o 151-152). People were convinced that speaking French could lead to the danger of thinking in French and believing in the superiority of the oppressor (Finn 3). Despite these views, many Francophone African women writers continue to use the language of the coloniser, but rather than being subservient to it, they appear to use French as a conscious way of regaining power and control in both the world of literature and beyond. Julio Finn asserts that the challenge for many Black writers:

...was not so much *which* language to use or whom to write for, but how to turn that language into a force of liberation. Their task was to deEuropeanize these European tongues, and Africanize and Negroize them by investing them with black meanings, connotations, spirits and rhythms. (41)

So using French is not just about bowing to the wishes of the coloniser, but about using something which belongs to the 'Other' to the writer's own advantage – colonising the coloniser.

Pierre Soubias compares the use of the coloniser's language to an adoptive mother, whom you love as much as your biological mother whilst knowing that a certain natural link is missing (126). This link is perhaps what incites writers to use the language differently; the connection these writers have to their first language is the reason why influences from that language continually appear in their works. Soubias states that the French language may be "on the side of" the coloniser, but he also declares that that very same European language can aid decolonisation, assisting in the

creation of a new identity which is neither a traditional African identity nor a French one (127). And it is this form of identity which is translated into the works of Francophone Senegalese women writers. The challenge to the translator into English is the recognition of the features of this unique form of writing. It is writing from a country where only a small number of postcolonial women's texts have been rewritten in English to date, and very few translators have the ability to work between all the cultures which form part of this fascinating corpus.

According to Bandia, the postcolonial writer is "a bicultural or bilingual subject with the uncanny ability to negotiate the boundaries between a minor and a major language culture" (*Translation* 31), Bhabha declares that "hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities" (*Location* 112), Robert Young speaks of a certain "syncretism that characterises all postcolonial literatures and cultures" (24), and Clavaron reinforces the fact that postcolonial writers often live between two worlds:

Pris entre deux langues, deux cultures, deux histoires, l'écrivain postcolonial se trouve placé dans une situation d'énonciation instable, incessamment confronté à une double alterité pour construire une identité à la fois individuelle et collective. (117)¹⁴⁶

Much work has been done within this field with regard to Anglophone writers and also in relation to Negritude writers such as Senghor, or more recent male authors from

¹⁴⁶ "Caught between two languages, two cultures, two histories, the postcolonial writer is put in a situation of unstable enunciation, at any time faced with a double otherness which produces an identity that is both individual and collective."

Senegal. However, it is informative for the translator to investigate how this concept of hybridity drawn from two major cultures, and one readily used in postcolonial studies, applies to female Senegalese authors. There was a mixed response from the writers when interviewed.

Seck Mbacké states in no uncertain terms that cultural hybridity does not exist (*Personal 9*), before thinking about the idea a little more and declaring that:

Nous sommes ce que nous sommes. Avec nos valeurs traditionnelles, nos valeurs de civilisation, mais en même temps nous sommes ouverts aux apports de l'extérieur. Cela ne veut pas dire...que ces apports arrivent à modifier jusqu'à notre comportement, jusqu'à notre façon de vivre, etc. (9)¹⁴⁷

Later, when the notion of hybridity was discussed in a less personal, world context and it was suggested that everyone has hybridity due to globalisation, she then states “bien sûr il y a cette hybridité” (9).¹⁴⁸ She declares that everyone should take from their own cultures to enrich their universal civilisation. Although ‘impressions’ are not always welcome in a PhD thesis, it should be noted that from Seck Mbacké’s interview, I sensed that she was being defensive; that she believed the very concept of hybridity is a negative one, that holding on to traditional cultures, societies and values is of immense importance to her, and that the idea of Senegalese culture being diluted in some way by

¹⁴⁷ “We are what we are. With our traditional values, our values about civilisation, but at the same time we are open to outside contributions. That doesn’t mean to say... that these contributions go so far as to succeed in altering our behaviour, our way of living, etc.”

¹⁴⁸ “Of course there is that hybridity.”

other cultures was not permissible in her eyes. I also noticed this protective reaction when I asked her why she decided to write in French rather than in Wolof – she responded that she also writes in Wolof, but to date there is just one poem in Wolof in her entire published collection (5).

The responses of Seck Mbacké seem to indicate that she believes she is betraying her roots in some way by writing in the language of the coloniser. But against this, it could be argued that cultural or linguistic hybridity is not about the dilution or betrayal of traditional cultures, but instead female Francophone writers from Senegal draw upon both Senegalese and French realities in order to create their texts; no culture is in any way lessened, but the writers simply have more experiences and cultures to be inspired by in their creativity. What is vital here is to note that she agrees most definitely that she draws upon Senegalese cultures in her writing in French, and this is enough to pursue the line of thought – that indeed, whether it is called hybridity or “global cultural enrichment,” Seck Mbacké’s texts should be analysed deeply by the translator for the varying cultural signs that Seck Mbacké has coded in her literature due to her contact with different cultures.¹⁴⁹ Further, if what she has said is acknowledged and respected, it is also necessary to underline that this should be the case whether literature from a “postcolonial writer” is being translated or

¹⁴⁹ It must be added that this thesis is not suggesting that “pure” pre-colonial cultures existed, a view that is supported by postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha (*Location* 114), or academic Salman Rushdie who celebrates hybridity, rejecting “the absolutism of the pure” (Rushdie 394). This analysis simply stresses that the impact of one set of cultures upon a group of others is rarely greater than in the case of colonisation in countries such as Senegal.

otherwise, although clearly colonial influences are bound to be of a much greater weight due to length of presence in the country, education, workplace environment, official language status etc etc, than other influences such as, for example, American culture and language, which may be encountered from travels, the media, and other more recent effects of globalisation.

In contrast to Seck Mbacké, Benga accepts hybridity on many levels such as in religion, or in language. She says she cannot imagine writing only in French as certain words or turns of phrases cannot be expressed in French, but can in Wolof (*Personal* 7). However, again it is the concept of hybridity in a global context that is embraced by both Sall and Khadi Fall. Speaking from his own viewpoint and as a male writer, Sall is in agreement with the more basic form of linguistic hybridity, from the perspective that he is Peul but uses the French language. However, he takes this further, adding that he also takes on the “culture” of the Other, whoever that may be (7):

Il y a une interpénétration des cultures. Il y a ce que Senghor appelait ‘l’enracinement et l’ouverture.’ Il ne suffit pas seulement d’être sénégalais. Il faut aussi être également à la fois américain, japonais, français, russe. Il faut s’ouvrir à tout le monde.... (7)¹⁵⁰

And Fall rejects the notion of hybridity whilst agreeing with the idea of global enrichment favoured by Seck Mbacké and Sall. She believes that writers cannot “vivre

¹⁵⁰ “There is a permeation of cultures. There is that which Senghor called ‘taking root and branching out.’ It is not enough just to be Senegalese. It is also necessary to be equally American, Japanese, French, Russian at the same time. It is necessary to open up to the whole world...”

hybridité”¹⁵¹ in their works of literature anymore, because we live in a multicultural world (Fall *Personal* 12). Fall describes the way in which her second novel, *Senteurs d’hivernage* uses the medium of the radio to communicate local information which would previously have been communicated via the tam-tam (12), and accordingly the language of her text, whilst primarily French, embodies the multicultural nature of her text, which is interspersed with Arabic, Sotho and many words from Fall’s first language – Wolof (*Senteurs*). Hence, the issue is not whether there is hybridity in Francophone Senegalese women’s works, for hybridity is inevitable because writers draw upon more than one culture and language in their literature. The issue is how hybridity is defined and named, and even more importantly how it is used by the writer and the effect it has on the reader.

According to the Oxford English dictionary, the term “hybrid” can mean “Anything derived from heterogeneous sources, or composed of different or incongruous elements.” But in the same list of definitions, in terms of animals and plants, the word is also said to mean “half-breed, cross-breed, or mongrel,” (“Hybrid”), words which in human terms are insulting and often associated with racism. Whilst the term ‘hybrid,’ in a literary context, may not necessarily be as negatively strong as these terms, it is clearly a word for debate, and may be better switched for a more acceptable alternative. ‘Globally enriched’ seems too general to really define the works of a postcolonial writer whose experiences differ greatly from a writer who has simply acquired knowledge through books or travels, ‘bicultural’ is too narrow in terms of the fact that cultures should be considered in their plurality, and the term ‘bidentity’ is

¹⁵¹ “live hybridity”

often associated with sexuality. “Cross-cultural” is a term used by Bill Ashcroft et al. in *The Empire Writes Back*, but again this may have negative connotations, and Bhabha says that the term “multicultural” is used so widely now that it has no specificity (*Cultures* 55). In postcolonial studies the term “hybrid” is becoming more and more outdated, and is regularly replaced with other terms such as “transnational” or “transcultural.”¹⁵² Edouard Glissant also offers the notion of the “tout-monde,” as an alternative paradigm in which the multilingual world embraces the huge blend of different languages (*Tout-monde*), and there has been a keen projection towards the study of “World Literature” beyond the postcolonial (Le Bris; Prendergast; Simonsen). However, whilst these words accurately describe the crossing of borders or cultural mixing, they are often used as non-postcolonial generic terms which have come to exist as a result of more general globalisation.

The word “hybrid” can be substituted with words such as “united,” “joined,” “tied,” or “coupled” identity but the truth is that at present academia does not appear to have found yet a satisfactory substitute for a concept which in today’s world is becoming ever-more prolific. The writers interviewed for this thesis are obviously concerned about negative associations of the term “hybrid,” such as those above, but are very comfortable regarding the notion of having a mixed identity due to two distinct but now harmonising cultures. This supports the decision made to use the term

¹⁵² These terms are now common, for example, Paul Gilroy employs the terms “transnational” (ix) and “transcultural” (4) to describe the societies of the *Black Atlantic*, also using the latter term in relation to Britain’s Black settlers (7) and considering the impact of an “outernational and transcultural reconceptualisation” upon the political and cultural history of Blacks in America and Europe (17).

and to consider this cultural mixture enriching rather than limiting. So, for the purposes of this chapter, the term hybridity is used, but only with the understanding that this word is merely the term which most closely fits this theoretical discussion.

However a translator or academic decides to term this notion of hybridity, from reading a number of theorists such as Bhabha, Clavaron or Bandia, it is clear that postcolonial writers are considered to be “in-between,” “not-quite” in one world or in another (Clavaron 107), and to suffer from what Clavaron calls “linguistic insecurity” due to their perceived collaboration with the coloniser and their constant switching from one language or culture to another – concepts he describes as bilingualism and biculturalism (106-108).

Bandia considers this in terms of translation:

This specific use of colonial languages to express African sociocultural reality is neither the result of an entirely foreignizing nor a domesticating strategy. Rather, it is the product of a search for a compromise between African and European language expression, a middle passage, a blend of source and target language translation strategies, fine-tuned and adapted to deal with the linguistic and cultural hybridity, or *métissage*, characteristic of the postcolonial text.

(Translation 5)

He maintains that this goes against traditional translation theory which used to be based on binary oppositions (5). Thus, if Bandia is describing a postcolonial text as one which has already undergone a form of translation, the translator must devise an innovative strategy in order to rewrite it in yet another language. And if these texts are

going to be twice-translated, surely a new type of mediation is required from the second translator in which she must be more than simply bilingual and bicultural, but instead, multilingual and multicultural. Undoubtedly, Francophone Senegalese writers draw upon multiple cultures, languages and experiences when writing, primarily due to their colonial past. And whether or not their texts are called “hybrid,” there is no doubting that the translator must be a cultural and linguistic negotiator in the process of rewriting, and recognise the need for a new approach that takes into account the writers’ nonconformity to the norms and conventions of standard French.

II Refashioning Norms and Conventions

Bandia’s research on intercultural writing practice recognises not only the hybrid nature of Europhone works, but that in writers’ conscious or subconscious deviations from norms and conventions, they succeed in enhancing the “Africanness” of a text (*Translation* 41), and he asserts:

The Europhone writer has chosen to forge a language which allows him or her to use both language systems at once, thus doing away with colonial norms of expression and subverting the implied language hierarchies. (9)

These words ring true in the literature of Francophone Senegalese women writers who stray from standard practices in drawing from their own ‘hybrid’ world. Further, at interview, it was clear that this distinct “Africanness” was created because authors do not always think in French, and/or French language is not always adequate to express cultural realities (Seck Mbacké, *Personal* 6; Fall, *Personal* 12). Hence, Part II of this

chapter on hybridity will look at the ability of the inter-European language translator to recognise this distinct “Africanness,” asking how the translator can effectively act upon this knowledge. For instance, can this insight be employed to specify in a clear and concise way exactly how the French in Senegal differs from the French of France? And is it possible to give the translator a new set of “rules,” “norms” or “conventions” which may apply to Senegalese French, along with recommendations of how to deal with these linguistic variances?

In his analysis of the Senegalese novel, Ihechukwu Madubuike speaks of the way in which many African writers use a new style of writing which is “neither completely African nor French” (*Senegalese* 88). He both identifies a certain lack of experimentation among Senegalese writers who conform very much to French style, whilst recognising that they still modify French to translate African realities (95). He declares:

As far as style goes, the Senegalese writer is a conformist, an imitator following closely the French literary tradition. He is not, however, a servile imitator, without any originality. His works occasionally bristle with literary elements drawn from the oral tradition. Seriously absent, however, is a concerted effort to Africanize French. (99)

Whilst Madubuike’s text focuses on a small selection of male writers, his words do resonate in the prose of Francophone Senegalese women. The novels written by the writers studied for this thesis do not at first sight appear to have torn apart the French language and turned it into something totally unrecognisable as standard French. And here the famed novels of Bâ or Sow Fall may be cited, as well as those of Khadi Fall

and Seck Mbacké. In fact, Remi Clignet claims that African students who spent time in France become adjusted to Western “norms and values” and dislodged from those of their own indigenous society (307), so it is possible that African women writers who have been through this process themselves write with a closer adherence to the norms of the European language than those who have not.¹⁵³

And whilst Madubuike’s comment on ‘original conformity’ may seem rather contradictory, what is gathered from his statement is that Senegalese writers do not appear to be expanding any frontiers with regard to linguistic experimentation. But this does not mean that digressions from the norms and conventions of standard French do not exist and can be ignored. Quite the opposite. There are still many elements that are not rooted in standard French. Further, from the small number of collections of women’s poetry produced by Senegalese writers, linguistic experimentation appears more abundant in that genre. This is probably because poetry allows for a more creative approach and yet can be widely accepted by a reading public due to, and

¹⁵³ For example, Sall studied in French extensively and chooses to write in a relatively “pure” form of the language (4), whereas Tutuola writes in a form of pidgin English, according to Sall, because he is not an academic (4). Conversely, Achebe, despite a career in academia, chooses significantly to manipulate English (*Things*). This is also the case with highly educated writers who express themselves in French. For example, Henri Lopes, former Congolese Prime Minister, and Ahmadou Kourouma of Côte d’Ivoire both significantly distort standard French, infusing it with their own cultures and local African languages (Gyasi, *African* 143). Therefore, the extent to which a writer adheres to the norms of the French language depends upon the writer, their academic background and personal choice, and this will be the same for female writers.

despite, this creativity¹⁵⁴ (whereas a creative translation of a technical document, for example, would perhaps not be quite as acceptable). The important factor to note here is that the translator should be aware not only of the glaring digressions from standard language, but also the more subtle “translations” of the culture, thoughts, language and beliefs of the Senegalese writer.

The subtlety of Seck Mbacké’s digressions can be seen in both her poetry and prose. For instance, she adapts French to suit her culture and native language, using techniques such as repetition, of which there are numerous examples in *Pluie-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer*, something she claims is characteristic of stylistic hybridity (*Personal* 9-10), and frequently used for emphasis in local languages. This repetition can also be found in her novel, *Le froid et le piment*. For example, Seck Mbacké begins one chapter of the book in the first person (85), writing as if she were an African man telling his story. The language there stands out as being non-standard French; repetition is frequent, and there are also examples of shorter sentences of simpler language which evoke the traditional languages spoken on the street. In other extracts, there are linguistic approximations where Seck Mbacké explains a complex Wolof notion such as “teraanga” in a few French words (93; see explanation page 81), or she translates directly from a Wolof adage into standard French. For example: “la force la plus bestiale peut émaner de l’esprit le plus raffiné” (“the most beastly strength can emanate from the most refined spirit”; 95). Here, the power is not in the words

¹⁵⁴ Jakobson states that poetry is untranslatable but that creative transposition is possible with regard to poetry (143), supporting the theory that a creative approach is in fact more acceptable, for it is the only option available.

used, but in the actual proverb and its vivid metaphorical alliance of oppositions.¹⁵⁵

This translation from Wolof into French serves to foreignise the text, which in turn demonstrates her difference.

At this stage it is interesting to note that there is a clear difference in Senegal between the way in which the French language is acquired and education in general is carried out, putting French and Wolof in tandem with each other in the process of learning.¹⁵⁶ The natural way in which these languages work together is demonstrated in *La grève des battù* by Sow Fall, which also introduces some of these subtle issues in translation:

“Même dans les quartiers de toubabs; les toubabs noirs et les toubabs blancs accomplissent ce rite.” (24)

As already mentioned in this thesis (see footnote 66, page 93), the most common usage of toubab is to mean “White,” and less often it refers to the more general translation – “European,” which today would rarely refer to the colour of an individual’s skin. And

¹⁵⁵ In Appiah’s essay on “Thick Translation,” in which he focuses on the translation of Akan proverbs, he asserts that “for literary translation our object is not to produce a text that reproduces the literal intentions of the author... but to produce something that shares the central literary properties of the object-text” (397). This is the case with the above proverb in which the oppositional quality of the proverb is more central to meaning than the individual words.

¹⁵⁶ Today, the Senegalese children who go to school but whose first language is not French, are taught French at school by Senegalese people whose first language is also not French. And whilst the education system is still based on the French one, many teachers admit to resorting to local languages in the classroom, especially Wolof (Cisse 129). And there are proposals for a system that more effectively integrates local languages into education (Drame, *Language* 168-172).

in her literature, Benga uses the term to mean “non-circumcised.” There are number of words from which “toubab” could possibly be derived, which are “tubbi,” meaning to convert (Diouf, *Dictionnaire* 351) and “Tugël” meaning French or European (“Tugël”), although it is not possible to be certain. However, in analysing the context of this phrase, knowledge of these possible derivations are of little assistance to the translator, for there is no particular “European area” in Dakar, nor is there a specific “White area.” Thus, it seems that the term “toubab” is referring to a particular area that embodies something typical of “White people” in Dakar rather than “White” itself. In the case of Sow Fall’s novel, the usage of “toubab” is different again to the practices above. The term “tubay” in Wolof means “trousers” (Diouf, *Dictionnaire* 351), so perhaps the term “toubab” refers to those individuals wearing European dress – trouser suits for example, who are not necessarily White, French, European or non-circumcised, but work in the offices of more affluent areas of Dakar. This reading is supported by the context of the phrase which is that of giving to the beggars in the city, and this sentence is juxtaposed with one referring to poor areas.

It may seem obvious to the informed reader that “toubab” does not only apply to White people because the text refers to “toubabs noirs,” however Blair translates the above phrase as follows, rendering the first reference to “toubab” as “white”:

“Even in the white areas; the black *Toubabs* and the white *Toubabs* all respect this ritual,” (Sow Fall, *Beggar’s* 8)

This is not strictly incorrect, but the above discussion alters the way in which a new translator approaches this phrase. While the first reference in the source text to the word “toubab” does not actually require translation, nor capitalisation nor italicisation,

if the translator were attempting to domesticate the text, as Blair has done above, a more accurate translation would perhaps be “affluent,” “rich,” “wealthy” or even “business.” Further, the word “respect” does not satisfactorily render the more active verb “accomplir.” To respect a ritual does not mean that an individual has completed it. A preferable translation would be “carry out.” A translation that has understood the more subtle nuances of the language would then be achieved, as below:

“Even in the wealthy areas; the Black toubabs and the White toubabs all carry out this ritual.”

or perhaps:

“Even in the toubab areas; the Black toubab and the White toubab all carry out this ritual.”

Hence, language does not always stray radically from standard forms, but that does not mean that the translator should not be sensitive to the more subtle deviations from standard language. In fact that sensitivity can very much alter the translation, as demonstrated.

But of course, there are more overt digressions from norms and conventions, which are exemplified in the deliberate tactics used to differentiate European language in postcolonial texts. In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft et al. talk of two strategies used in postcolonial writing – abrogation and appropriation. Explaining these processes in relation to English language use, they state:

The first, the abrogation or denial of the privilege of ‘English’ involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication.

The second, the appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the

centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege. (37)

Benga is more explicit in this way, and she admits to manipulating the French language, by using Wolof words and phrases. And at interview, she explained the way that in *La balade du sabador* she creates metaphors in Wolof and then translates them into French (*Personal* 6-7). Similarly, in *Pluie-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer*, Seck Mbacké truly embraces the appropriation of the French language. Taking one poem from the collection entitled “La fille à son père,” this begins:

Vaillant fils de Rufisque¹⁵⁷
Des falaises cuivrées de Bandiagara¹⁵⁸ El
Hadj Omar Veille sur toi Toubas la pieuse
T’enveloppe O Lumière de Cheikh
Amadou Bamba¹⁵⁹ Auréole du Prophète
Mouhammad Sur Lui La Paix Sur lui le
Grand Salut Et sur toi le grand-père de
Mon Lion Ahmadou Sembène¹⁶⁰ Le Brave

¹⁵⁷ Rufisque is a Lebou fishing village which has expanded into a major suburb of the Senegalese capital of Dakar (“Rufisque”; “Rufisque-Senegal”).

¹⁵⁸ Bandiagara is a city in Mali inhabited by the Dogon people. The sandstone cliffs extend over 200km and are on the UNESCO World Heritage List (“Cliff”).

¹⁵⁹ Cheikh Amadou Bamba was the founder of the Islamic Mouride brotherhood and the Senegalese holy city of Touba. He is said to have discovered the city beneath a large tree in a vision of light (“Holy”).

Valiant son of Rufisque
 And the tanned cliffs of Bandiagara El
 Hadj Omar¹⁶¹ Watches over you Touba the pious
 Envelops you Oh the Light of Cheikh
 Amadou Bamba Halo of the Prophet
 Mohammed Peace Be Upon Him Great Salvation
 Be upon him And upon you the grandfather of
 My Lion Ahmadou Sembène The Brave

Whilst written in French, the extract as a whole reads as if it has been constructed in another language because of the references to Senegalese people and places that are most likely to be unfamiliar to those living outside of the country. Seck Mbacké also appears to translate from Wolof phrases taken from Arabic, which have much less resonance in French, such as “Sur Lui La Paix Sur lui le / Grand Salut...,” meaning “Peace be upon Him Great Salvation be / upon Him.” Further, the reference to the lion, has more than the usual symbolic meaning of courage or strength (“lion”): it is one of Senegal’s national symbols, featuring not only on its Coat of Arms, but also in the national anthem, the lyrics of which were written by Senghor at the start of his

¹⁶⁰ Seck Mbacké spoke to me about the son she had with well-known writer and film-maker, Ousmane Sembène. A presumption is being made here that Amadou Sembène is this son, and this fits with the poem’s title.

¹⁶¹ El Hadj Omar Tall is a legendary figure in Senegal, an Islamic scholar and West African political leader of the 19th century. His empire stretched across the countries we now know as Senegal, Guinea and Mali (“El Hadj”).

presidency in 1960 (see appendix F, page 394).¹⁶² As a result, the meaning of the word goes far beyond the definition that the term “lion” would ordinarily be given. And whilst Madubuike may state that Senegalese male novelists conform and that “a concerted effort to Africanize French” is absent in their works, this extract is taken from one of many poems written by Francophone Senegalese women who make a concerted effort to embed their own culture and language in the texts they compose. Hence, translators must form strategies which embrace this cultural capital (Lefevere, *Where* 11) in its “hybrid” form. If more than one culture is being drawn from in translation, then understanding the individual ideologies and translation traditions of each society would allow the translator to begin her task from a new standpoint which does not originate in one particular philosophy and therefore endeavours to evade one form of translation bias.

In Mona Baker’s *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Myriam Salama-Carr contributes a paper on “French Translation Tradition,” and whilst there is no particular paper on Senegalese translation, Bandia contributes a paper on “African Translation Tradition.” It is interesting to compare the two papers: whilst interlingual French translation tradition can be clearly traced back to the 11th century (Salama-Carr 409), the earliest record of any kind of “professional linguist” in Africa is identified as

¹⁶² According to the official government website, the lion is a the symbol of the North Soudanian ethnic group to which most Senegalese people belong, and is a symbol of power, the king, the sun and God, and “Aucun animal ne pouvait mieux représenter le Peuple Sénégalais, dont les vertus cardinales sont le courage et la loyauté” (“No animal could better represent the Senegalese People, whose cardinal vertus are courage and loyalty”; “Symbolique”).

the griot who recorded and narrated history and culture and mediated between kings and their people (Bandia, *African* 295). Literal translation tradition was taken very seriously in the French tradition, with Étienne Dolet burnt at the stake accused of mistranslating Plato (Salama-Carr 410), whereas the traditional griot could be more creative in his interpretation, the concept of an ‘original’ text being more flexible in oral traditions (Finnegan, *Poetry* 65). Back in the 16th century, the activity of translation in France was credited with introducing new words to the French language, rules of translation were formed, and there were debates regarding the extent to which translation could be a creative activity (Salama-Carr 410-411). In contrast, early forms of translation such as the use of drum language to represent the human voice along with its tone and rhythm as well as the translation of early pictorial signs into written language have been an integral part of the creative nature of African translation tradition (Bandia, *African* 296).¹⁶³

Today, the translator-author has become increasingly important in France which boasts a high output of translated texts and a number of very well-known translation theorists,¹⁶⁴ whilst in Africa, literary translation is poorly paid, the European

¹⁶³ Bandia states that translation as we understand it in the West began with the need for communication between Arab or European travellers or colonisers, missionaries who produced written forms of oral languages in order to spread Christianity, and some enslaved Africans produced translations of oral forms in written forms in a European setting. These translations diminished as slavery became even more brutal over time. During colonial times, griots became less important because people were suspicious of their ability to mediate with the colonisers (*African* 295-203).

¹⁶⁴ In her article on French translation tradition, Salama Carr cites a number of well-known French translation theorists, including George Mounin (*Belles; Problèmes*), Jean-René Ladmiral (*Traduire*),

language is considered to be inadequate for expressing African thought, translation is often done by under-qualified practitioners, and it is only very recently that translator training has been introduced in local universities. However, aside from other African countries, Bandia claims that in Senegal there is an excess of professional translators. Further, one of the most well-known Senegalese academics, Cheikh Anta Diop, was respected for his translations into modern African languages, amongst others, based upon his study of hieroglyphics (*African* 303).

A translator can draw upon this knowledge to break away from the norms and conventions of Western tradition and approach African texts in a different fashion; taking a hybrid translation approach to hybrid texts. Whilst earlier, Newmark's theory of semantic translation was embraced, it is important not to become too entangled in Western translation trends; from one century to the next the role of the translator has changed, along with her strategies; from faithfulness to foreignisation, literality to originality, there always appear to be rules and expectations. In contrast, African linguists have always embraced creativity and have laid down few ground rules, and whilst theorists may criticise the lack of professional organisations to control translator standards in some parts of Africa, in other ways it has been this lack of restrictions which has meant that African linguists were ahead of their time in their inter-media approach to the representation of the voice and the more fluctuating, and in some ways indeterminate, nature of the original text.

Henri Meschonnic (*Pour; Alors*), Antoine Berman (*L'Épreuve; Tours; Critique*) and Michel Ballard (*Traduction; Cicéron; Relations*) (Salama-Carr 414).

Whilst it is important to state a clear translation method for consistency purposes and perhaps so the reader may understand the translator's primary approach, within that method there may be a number of different strategies; the idea of looking beyond the words of the source text, at musicality, imagery, and a less rigid 'original,' as well as understanding that at times the so-called "rules" of translation can be put aside, allowing for a more relaxed approach to the rewriting of African women's texts. In Senegal, translators are clearly respected for their ingenuity rather than their rigid fidelity to rules and regulations, and this theory has been carried through to the alternative translation of Seck Mbacké's poem below:

Fearless son of Rufisque
And the great copper cliffs of Bandiagara
El Hadj Omar protects you
In Holy Touba's embrace
And Cheikh Amadou Bamba, his light
Is the halo of the Prophet Mohammed
Peace Be Upon Him
Great Salvation Be Upon Him!

And upon you
Grandfather of My Lion
Amadou Sembène the Brave

Translation strategies which take a more relaxed or more creative approach to rules and regulations may exist in an ideal world, and this idea will be developed

further in Chapter Four. However, in Toury's analysis of *The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation*, he comments on the way in which translators must acquire norms in order to work within specific cultural environments in order to fulfil the role allotted to them by a particular community (205). With translated literature in English forming only a very small part of the overall literary canon (see page 198), it is possible that the translator who refuses to comply with British or American literary conventions, for example, may be rejected by publishers for their appeal to only a select readership; Toury states that there is normally a price to pay for deviating from behavioural norms (207). On the other hand, Anglophone African writers have been widely published since the 1950s,¹⁶⁵ and have been read both in the British and American academic communities and beyond for several decades. Publishers, along with the reading public, have therefore accepted many of the deviations from standard English,¹⁶⁶ and so it may be presumed that digressions from literary norms will also be accepted in Francophone works translated into English.

¹⁶⁵ For example, Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard* was first published in 1952 by Faber and Faber in 1952. That was followed by *My Life in a Bush of Ghosts* in 1954 and *Simbi and the Satire of the Dark Jungle* in 1955, amongst others. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was first published by Heinemann in 1958 and was followed by the launch of their African Writers Series in 1962, which was seen as a way of capturing new markets in the publishing world. By 1970, eighty books had been launched in the series, with over two hundred by 1992 (Stec 141).

¹⁶⁶ Deviations from standard French in source texts are also widely accepted. For example, Acadian novelist, Antonine Maillet, deviates from standard French and instead uses the French language as spoken by the Acadian people of today, which displays seventeenth century structures and idioms ("New

Nevertheless, in deviating from normative behaviours, translators risk more professionally than source text writers who may use the same techniques for manipulating the English language.¹⁶⁷ Here, the translator must make a crucial decision – is she willing to select a text that in semantic translation will potentially challenge the norms of standard English or Anglophone literature which has already succeeded in the market? This may mean sacrificing sales for art. According to Toury, however, non-normative behaviour can incite changes in the system (213), so the translator who does this might be making a brave decision, but it could also be a ground-breaking one. Conversely, a translator who is not prepared to translate a text semantically (if that is the strategy), should not select a text where in translation many stylistic elements, for example, would be sacrificed simply for the sake of acceptance in the target market.¹⁶⁸ When Francophone Senegalese women writers are only beginning (post-independence) to penetrate the world market, it would be a travesty not

Brunswick”). And despite this non-normative behaviour, she has still won a number of international prizes for her work, including the prestigious Prix Goncourt (“Maillet, Antonine”).

¹⁶⁷ For example, Toury comments on the potential penalties of non-normative behaviour in translation which can vary – from having to resubmit a revised version of a translation, to a loss of recognition as a translator (*Nature* 213). This is not to say that source text writers do not have to face the opinions of editors and publishers – they do, but the penalties for creativity are rarely so dramatic.

¹⁶⁸ As mentioned earlier, writers such as Mariama Bâ, whilst embedded in source text culture, challenge fewer linguistic and stylistic norms of the standard French language and have already been successfully translated into English and received worldwide acclaim. The translator and other investors in a translation must decide whether they are willing to take a particular risk and if not, perhaps choose a different text which will not require so many ‘compromises’ in translation.

to attempt to replicate meaning, style and cultural elements of the source text in translation.¹⁶⁹

The concept of norms lends itself to every aspect of a translation, whether that is norms of standard language or grammar, or publishing conventions, such as the use of footnotes or glossaries (discussed in Part IV). But whilst the translator as reader may be able to recognise the more glaring examples of normative or non-normative language, such as the use of foreign words or terms and a grammatically distorted sentence which highlights a text's hybrid nature, other elements may be much harder to recognise. For example, the norms of register and function. With regard to function, Nord analyses functionalist approaches to the act of translation in her publications, drawing upon the principles of action theory (*Translating* 15-26)¹⁷⁰ and skopos theory (27-38)¹⁷¹ to demonstrate how the construction of a translation is dependent on the function of the text in both its source and target cultures.

¹⁶⁹ Senegalese women writers have subjects and concerns they have shown they want to communicate on a wider platform, so to compromise them in some way for the sake of Western ideologies and beliefs of what a text should be, is to silence once again those women who have striven to be heard.

¹⁷⁰ Action theory is made relevant to translation in that "the text is regarded as an element of a communicative interaction which takes place in a situation. The communicative situation... becomes then the centre of attention, while the linguistic structure of the text body, which can be analysed by textlinguistic methods, is of secondary importance. It is on the basis of an action-oriented concept of textuality that we may regard the translation of a text as an 'action' which makes it possible that a text fulfils certain functions for other participants in a new situation" (Nord, *Text* 257).

¹⁷¹ Nord differentiates between the function and the skopos of a text. She asserts that "Translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified

It is explained by Nord that for each translation there is a specific brief which must first be analysed if the translator is to produce a functionally appropriate target text (59-62). This process should be followed by an analysis of the source text as a piece of work situated in a particular culture, with the brief still in mind (62-63). This may help the translator to highlight either adherence or deviation from standard norms and conventions and mediate between them in the source and target texts. And according to Nord, this strategy allows the translator to identify any problems early in the translation process and decide on particular strategies she can use to deal with them (64-68).¹⁷² Whether the assignment or brief is defined by a publisher or translator herself, this functionalist approach is very useful in defining any issues of non-standard language, hybrid elements, culturally embedded words or phrases in the source text or deviations from literary norms and conventions of the source text. It can therefore assist the translator in her initial textual analysis, as well as feeding into her strategies for the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature.

according to the intended or demanded function of the target text (translation skopos)" (*Text* 32).

Skopos, she states, can be defined as the "goal or purpose" of a translational action (*Translating* 27), whereas function refers to the way in which the receiver uses the text "depending on their own expectations, needs, previous knowledge and situational conditions" (28).

¹⁷² According to Nord, these problems may be a) pragmatic – due to the contrast between the source and target text situations, such as culture-bound terms, or proper names, b) convention-related – arising from differing norms in the two cultures, such as text typological or genre conventions, c) linguistic – resulting from structural differences in vocabulary or syntax, or d), text specific – particular metaphors, puns or rhyme (*Translating* 67-68; *Text* 174-175).

Nord is careful not to rigidly define the type of rewriting that a translator should undertake in these instances. She claims that:

Functional translation does not mean that source-culture conventions must be replaced by target-culture conventions in each and every translation. Depending on the translation purpose and type, the translator may opt for reproduction or adaptation. There are also translation tasks where some kinds of conventions have to be reproduced where others should be adjusted to target-culture standards.

(Translating 57)

Whilst Nord does define certain types of translation such as “documentary” and “instrumental” translation (*Text* 80-81),¹⁷³ she by no means specifies which method a translator should use, but what can be drawn from her functionalist analysis is that the translation brief must be linked to the translation function in pre-textual analysis, to highlight translation problems, and thereby incorporate issues that may arise in this process into translation strategies. In the case of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature, her four categories can help the translator to work logically through matters of linguistic and grammatical hybridity thereby reducing the possibility of missing something crucial in pre-textual analysis.

¹⁷³ In brief, Nord asserts that “Documentary translations (such as word-for-word translation, literary translation, philological translation and exoticising translation) serve as a document of a SC communication between the author and the ST receiver whereas the instrumental translation is a communicative instrument in its own right, conveying a message directly from the ST author to the TT receiver. An instrumental translation can have the same or a similar or analogous function as the ST” (*Text* 80). SC here refers to Source Culture, ST to Source Text, and TT to Target Text.

Further, while functions of literature are hard to gauge when transferring texts from one culture to another due to the individual size and features of differing reading communities, this also applies to textual register. Newmark uses a scale of formality to assess the textual register before translating (*Textbook* 14), but whilst he comments on the “impersonality of French” (15), this observation clashes with the use of French in Senegal. As touched upon in Chapter One (page 73), the Senegalese are much more familiar, for example, they readily use “tu” instead of “vous” in what may be perceived as formal occasions, with new acquaintances or when speaking to elders or those in a position of responsibility. Society is more relaxed in general, and therefore language takes a less formal style. This is an interesting issue for the translator to deliberate in the reading of “Mame Touba” by Seck Mbacké, where the police officers are not showing any kindness towards the elderly Mame Touba. Their use of the “tu” form may be considered to be a form of disrespect, but before the translator tries to compensate for this in any way in English,¹⁷⁴ they should consider that this is most likely to be the form used in Senegal whether there is disrespect or not. For example:

Source text: “Tu vas le savoir tout de suite” (166)

Translation: “You’ll know soon enough!”

Translation with compensation: “You’ll know soon enough!” he sneered.

¹⁷⁴ For example, in reference to her translation of *Orlanda* by Jacqueline Harpman, Schwartz states that she compensates for a sudden switch between the “vous” and “tu” pronouns in French by using an intimate gesture in the English translation which could be seen as being culturally equivalent (12).

Once again, this supports the argument that a translator who is satisfied with understanding standard French language may translate in a different, and possibly inadequate or inaccurate¹⁷⁵ way, from a different translator who makes an effort to understand the French of Senegal. The translator may find that other aspects of stylistic transfer such as emotional tone or attitude, again may vary between standard French and that of Francophone Senegalese writers. Here I cite an example from my visit to Senegal, where the mother of the family regularly complimented me on my increasing weight; in Europe this would often be considered insulting, but in Senegal it was a big compliment, and she also considered it personal flattery as it meant I had been well fed in her home. Reading these emotional or attitudinal cultural signs correctly and mediating between different norms and conventions is a highly important job for the translator. The very substance of the hybrid text is one that strays from

¹⁷⁵ Venuti neatly summarises the notions of accuracy and adequacy in translation, stating that “Contemporary canons of accuracy are based on an adequacy to the foreign text: an accurate translation of a novel must not only reproduce the basic elements of narrative form, but should do so in roughly the same number of pages” (*Translation* 484). However, clearly there is an element of personal viewpoint, and others may stretch the notions of accuracy and adequacy. For example, Venuti cites Abbé Prévost who claims his four volume translation of the seven volume source text, *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson is indeed accurate. And it is not just length which has been significantly altered in the target text, but the work also involves abridgement and adaptation (484). Bassnett also speaks of early notions of accuracy as understood by theoreticians such as Dante or John of Trevisa, highlighting the fact that whilst an accurate translation may rest upon the translator’s reading and understanding of the ‘original,’ that does not mean that she is subordinate to the source text (*Studies* 58). Toury further explores the concept of Adequate Translation (AT) in his work entitled, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* which has been critically assessed by Theo Hermans in *Toury’s Empiricism – Version 1*.

standard expectations, and never are these deviations more overt than in the deliberate use of terms and phrases from local languages, whose semantics and syntax are rarely investigated in detail in the interlingual translation of Senegalese women's literature.

III The Role of the Native Language in Postcolonial Translation

In The Francophone African Text: Translation and the Postcolonial

Experience, Gyasi asserts that:

The problematic crux of modern Europhone African literature is precisely the issue of language and its relation to the notion of translation. Clearly, African writers who make use of European languages do not have the same attitude to these languages and therefore do not follow a conventional approach in their use of language. (8)

And it is the unconventionality of language that will be the focal point here. Modern-day translators are used to taking the 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies (Bassnett; Lefevere; Venuti), but rarely these days do they turn towards the language, that is to say not the French that a Francophone text may be written in, but the language behind it, the native tongue that has influenced it. Thus, the native language of Senegal and its influence on writing in French is the concept which will be discussed in this Part of Chapter Three. There is no doubt that the large majority of translators of Francophone texts do recognise when a literary text is of the "non-standard" variety (Collie) and take relevant steps towards replicating the key sounds and language diversity when translating the text into English. However, it is important to question whether many European translators take the trouble to learn the native language of the postcolonial

writer being translated, so they have a true insight into the writer's linguistic world, so they can identify specific words and grammatical constructs, selected sounds and deliberate phrasing.

The role of the native language in postcolonial Translation Studies has already been researched to some degree by writers such as the aforementioned Gyasi, in his article entitled *The African Writer as Translator – Writing African Languages through French*, and Chantal Zabus's discussion of the indigenisation of the ex-coloniser's language in *The African Palimpsest*. However, Gyasi and Zabus focus mostly on how African writers themselves translate African language and culture into their writing, but not how translators reinterpret those translated items and translate them yet again. Many renowned male African writers such as Achebe and Tutuola have been studied extensively with regard to their use of the English language and how they manipulate the sounds, structures and vocabulary to represent their culture and native tongue, claiming what is perceived to be a European language as their own. However, rarely do critics or translators analyse women's literature in this way. Perhaps this is because, due to women writing later than their male counterparts, there has been a focus upon the unique female perspective with regard to African societies, rather than women's use of European language. Spivak states that:

Rather than imagining that women automatically have something identifiable in common, why not say, humbly and practically, my first obligation in understanding solidarity is to learn her mother tongue. You will see immediately what the differences are. You will also feel the solidarity every day as you make the attempt to learn the language in

which the other woman learnt to recognize reality at her mother's knee.

This is preparation for the intimacy of cultural translation. (*Politics* 379)

Thus if, as Spivak suggests, an individual learns the native language in order to translate Francophone Senegalese texts, how can this effort influence the translation process? To what extent is it a necessity in postcolonial translation? And is it possible to develop translation strategies and theories to accommodate this concept? In most African countries there are a number of widely spoken local languages, but what is unusual about Senegal is that one native African language is spoken by four fifths of the population (McLaughlin 153), and therefore influences most people in the nation, including Francophone writers – Wolof.

First defined by Fiona McLaughlin as “wolofisation” (153), the growing influence of the Wolof language is portrayed by Lionnet as dominating Francophone literature because “French is appropriated, made into a vehicle for expressing a hybrid, heteroglot universe.” She describes it as a “kind of “linguistic métissage” (326) which Maweja Mbaya notes in the works of many Francophone writers who:

...font usage, dans leurs œuvres, des mots, expressions et formes grammaticales issus des cultures et langues locales, non pas à cause de l'ignorance de la norme française, mais plutôt par pur réalisme et dans le souci de traduire leur vécu quotidien. Le respect de la norme standard ne semble plus avoir une grande importance. (78)¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ “...make use, in their work, of words, expressions and grammatical structures that come from local languages and cultures, not because they are unaware of French norms, but through pure realism, and

Hence, Wolof is not simply a common tongue that is spoken by users of different languages, but it also has an influence on the other languages that surround it, as well as upon the translator who not only has to mediate between two languages and cultures, but at least three – in the case of Seck Mbacké who is of Wolof ethnicity – at least Wolof, French and English – the language the translator is working into in this instance.

But for the translator to form a strategy for dealing with texts that draw from multiple languages such as those by Francophone Senegalese women writers, it is first necessary to define the specific ways in which this type of hybridity may manifest itself within the writer's works. In fact, Clavaron speaks of two kinds of hybridity – that of genre (which I will deal with later) and that of language (*Mise*), which will be discussed first. Both overt linguistic hybridity (switching between two languages) and discreet linguistic hybridity (one language or its structures, grammar and idioms articulated in another),¹⁷⁷ have been discussed at length by theorists and can be broken

with the view to translating their real daily life. Respecting the standard norm no longer seems to be very important.”

¹⁷⁷ Jean-Marc Moura also describes the hybrid character that negotiates between oppositions in the world of religion (eg between Christianity and Islam), mythology (perhaps between West African and European myths), technology (note the earlier reference to laptops in a village with no running water – page 51) and also between different viewpoints (eg opposing French and Senegalese perspectives on the roles of women), for example, which form a character's identity (157). This type of hybridity can be communicated in different ways in a work of literature – hybridity of subject matter and hybridity of viewpoint, ie it is not just about the subjects the writer discusses, but the position she takes in writing about them. These subjects in general have been covered in earlier chapters.

down into separate categories for the purpose of this study. For example, in *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft et al. speak of “selective lexical fidelity,” leaving untranslated words from a local language in the text to highlight cultural distinctiveness (37). And in Senegalese terms, Mbaya underlines the ways in which the French and Wolof languages interact to produce a hybrid form of communication. He describes “code-switching” within conversations; beginning a discussion in Wolof, and switching to French half way through. This type of “code-switching” is also employed regularly by television presenters, for example (91). It is parallel to Ashcroft et al’s “selective lexical fidelity,” but is distinct in that “code switching” is where one language is spoken then swapped to another, whereas “selective lexical fidelity” usually describes the way in which the French language is punctuated by the odd word in a local language. An extreme form of code-switching is described by Mbaya as a dialect called “le français sénégalais,”¹⁷⁸ or “le français langue d’Afrique,”¹⁷⁹ a total *mélange* of the two languages (171) and used on the streets of Senegal. Mbaya cites the following example: “Stabilité politique su amul, économie bi du muna dox” (121), which is literally: “Political stability if there is none, the economy will not work,” meaning “If there is no political stability, the economy will not be good.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ “Senegalese French”

¹⁷⁹ “The French language of Africa” or “Africa’s French language.”

¹⁸⁰ This is a unique language which demonstrates no particular bias to either Wolof or French. A similar phenomenon has been widely studied with regard to French and Creole in Caribbean literature in studies such as Gertrud Aub-Büscher and Beverley Ormerod Noakes’ *The Francophone Caribbean Today: Literature, Language, Culture*, Jean Jonassaint’s “Literatures in the Francophone Caribbean,” *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing: Guadeloupe and Martinique* by Sam Haigh, or

Then there is a form of ‘semantic hybridity’ in the way that words function, their value and meaning, which has been discussed by theorists such as Bhabha (*Location* 248) or Gyasi, who describes semantic shifts whereby European words and phrases are assigned new meanings (*African* 151). Mbaya too cites the creation of entirely new words for phrases that are far more accessible in Wolof, but are based around the French language. For example, “absenter quelqu’un” means “not to be able to find someone because of their absence.” This does not exist in standard French, but it sounds French (161). This can also be considered a form of “calquing” (Makouta-Mboukou, *Introduction*). Finally, Mbaya reveals evidence of grammatical influences of Wolof upon the French language, where a French adjective such as “normal” is transferred into the negative form using a Wolof construct – “normal” becomes “normalul,” meaning ‘it isn’t normal’ (121). This can be described as ‘syntactic and grammatical hybridity,’ a type of relexification,¹⁸¹ which uses structures or grammar from one language and expresses them in another.¹⁸²

Migrations and Métissage edited by Pascale de Souza and H. Adlai Murdoch. However, it is rarely researched with regard to Senegalese texts, and never with regard to Senegalese women’s literature and translation.

¹⁸¹ The term “relexification” is discussed in detail by Zabus in *The African Palimpsest* (101-155) and formerly defined by Loreto Todd in terms of Europhone language use in West Africa to mean “using English vocabulary but indigenous structures and rhythms” (303).

¹⁸² To comprehend how these forms of linguistic hybridity appear in Senegalese women’s literature, it was necessary to gain a basic understanding of how the language was structured – whilst I researched in Senegal, I took daily Wolof lessons for this purpose. Writers with traditional Wolof names such as Bâ,

These different forms of linguistic hybridity can be found in Senegalese women's works. Firstly, "code switching" was found to be particularly evident in Seck Mbacké's poetry collection entitled *Pluie-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer* where she places a poem entitled "Timis" written in Wolof (33) half-way through the book. The rest of the poems are written almost entirely in French (see appendix G, page 396, for source text and translation). The use of the Wolof language and the unusual layout of the poetry mean the text type is unclear. Is this Western-style poetry or oral poetry more reminiscent of African tradition? By translating the poem literally at first, the text type is clearer, individual phrases can be understood, and the translator can decide how to lay out the poem in translation. In fact, although the poem does use repetition, some rhyme and a clear rhythm, it generally follows a Western style. Either way, the translator can make an informed decision in translation. Furthermore, if the translator chooses to rewrite the entire collection and she understands a few words of Wolof, she would know there is probably no need to translate this poem at all, for a version does appear in French on the next page (6). The translator's decision then would be whether or not to translate the French version (see appendix H, page 398) or the Wolof one for an English collection, for example.

Having lived in Senegal and experienced the source text culture and language was an immense help with the translation of some of the sentences, but it also raised questions that lack of knowledge would not have. This is evident in the analysis of the

Fall, Mbacké, Mbaye, Ndiaye, Seck and Sow (Malherbe 82) were chosen for this particular part of the research because the likelihood of identifying evidence of Wolof in their works was greater.

following extract from *Le froid et le piment* where the use of “selective lexical fidelity” is apparent:

Le long des trottoirs, sous le froid mordant et dans la neige, traînent des *sabadors*, des **boubous** en flammes jetés par les fenêtres.... (Seck Mbacké 41)

Along the pavement, in the snow and biting cold, there is a trail of *sabadors*, flaming **boubous** which have been thrown from the windows....

“Boubou” is known by many Europeans as an item of clothing worn in West Africa, but the word “sabador” is an outfit worn by men in Senegal, consisting of trousers and a smart type of “boubou” worn as a shirt. Whilst it looks in this sentence that the latter is explaining the former, the words in fact have different meanings. Only the lack of “and” implies that Seck Mbacké is providing an explanation. In some ways, the above translation is not completely satisfying, but not wanting to over-domesticate the English version, that part of the sentence has been translated almost word for word.

In other examples, a Wolof word or phrase is followed by a translation into French in brackets. Zabus describes this technique of tagging or explaining an African word or phrase with its Europhone equivalent as “cushioning” (158-159). For example: “Elle a même préparé du thiébou dieune (riz au poisson) à ce dernier” (Seck Mbacké, *Froid* 63). Whilst “riz au poisson” by no means describes the dish, again there has been an attempt to avoid over-domestication. However, the transcription of thiébou dieune is better amended: “She even made ceebu jën (fish and rice) for him.” In this version, the modern standardised version prescribed by the Centre de

Linguistique Appliquée de Dakar (Malherbe 25) has been used, so it can be pronounced correctly by the well-informed. Seck Mbacké's transcription is too firmly embedded in the French language.

“Cushioning” as a form of “selective lexical fidelity” is not only present in Seck Mbacké's poetry and prose, but also her play entitled *Qui est ma femme?* where conversations between two of the protagonists combine both Wolof and French, for example:

ADAMA: Amaïa. Arrête ; Amaïa écoute-moi. Tu sais que ton mari t'a passé tous les caprices. Alors! De grâce reprends-toi. **Adina amoul solo.** La vie est si éphémère.

AMAIA: Si tu as des conseils à donner adresse-toi à ta femme. **Toppatol sa affaire.** Occupe-toi de tes oignons. Tu est pire que l'assassin qui vient présenter ses condoléances. (104)

ADAMA: Amaïa. Stop; Amaïa, listen to me. You know your husband has indulged all your whims. Come on! For goodness sake, pull yourself together. **The world / life is not important.** Life is too short.

AMAIA: If you have advice to give, speak to your wife. **Mind your own business.** Mind your own business. You are worse than a murderer offering his condolences.

Understanding the native language of Wolof, it can be seen that Seck Mbacké has translated each of the Wolof phrases into French in the next sentence. Evidently, this means that the Wolof phrases sound ‘silly’ when translated into English, and more suitable to be left untranslated so there is no unnecessary repetition in the English

language. However, this does not necessarily have to be the case. The domesticating translator may decide to remove evidence of the Wolof language, or footnote the Wolof. Alternatively, the Wolof of Senegal could be translated into the Wolof of the Gambia, so for instance, “Adina” becomes “Aaduna,” “amoul” changes to “amut” and “solo” to “soloh.” Again, the translator is mirroring the source text writer by working interlingually between a native language and a colonising language:

ADAMA: Amaïa. Stop; Amaïa, listen to me. You know your husband has indulged all your whims. Come on! For goodness sake, pull yourself together. **Aaduna amut soloh.** Life is too short.¹⁸³

Seck Mbacké’s extract also contains a more subtle deviation from standard grammar where “Tu est” has been written as opposed to “Tu es.” As this is a play and the deviation would not be highlighted orally, the translator may decide to leave this be and translate as “You are,” a decision supported by the fact that this deviation is an anomaly. Alternatively, the translator may decide to highlight the glitch and translate as “You is,” encouraged by the fact that this is indeed what was printed in the ‘original’ text.

Zabus also describes a common technique in Europhone African literature of “contextualisation,” where meaning of a word in an African language is implied by the words and phrases that give it immediate context (158). This is not as common in Francophone Senegalese women’s literature as cushioning, but can be found in the poems of Mbengue Diakhate. For example, two lines of the poem “Le secret du griot”

¹⁸³ For the purposes of this translation, I have used the Gambian Wolof dictionary produced by the Peace Corps in Banjul in 1995 (“Wollof-English Dictionary”).

read: “Ce sorcier m’a confié: pleurons frère: Baay Amath, / Dans la nuit s’êteindra. Mon tam-tam, sur la natte...” Whilst the term “tam-tam” is well-known to many readers of African literature as a type of drum, the Wolof word and name “Baay Amath,” meaning “father Amath” are not. However, their meaning is somewhat implied throughout the poem. Each verse has the same structure, clearly mentioning a different family member or individual at the end of the same verse line. Whilst the reader may not know definitively what “baay” means, the context provides the reader with the necessary basic understanding. Mbengue Diakhate clearly chooses this method of embedding the Wolof language in the French text. The translator must decide whether to do the same in the English translation, which would be the preferable solution (note that “baay” also means “father” in Gambian Wolof), or to translate the term into English within the text, or even to footnote the term (discussed in detail in Part IV).

With regard to “semantic hybridity,” a number of examples can be found in Seck Mbacké’s text, *Le froid et le piment*. For example:

La poignée de mains traditionnelle et symbolique et les salutations en longueur, les salamalecs ne manquèrent pas avec des nouvelles sur la santé des vieux amis. (93)

Here, the meaning of the word “salamalecs” is an issue. This clearly comes from Salamaalekum, taken from Arabic “peace be upon you,” but used as an initial greeting to say hello. In the Collins Robert dictionary, this is translated as “bowing and scraping,” and online it has similar pejorative translations (“Salamalecs”). From a detailed reading of the text, it appears that Seck Mbacké does not wish to be critical in

this instance, so the translator has two options – to replace the word “salamalecs” with “Salamaalekum” or find an alternative term which is more familiar to Anglophone readers. Here, the translator may also be assisted by the fact that there are many writers from the Asian community writing in English who may already have familiarised the Anglophone reader with common Islamic terms, including forms of greeting,¹⁸⁴ and therefore to use “Salamaalekum” would be acceptable. Nevertheless, this translation does not seem to work in this context for it sounds awkward in English. Instead, in a more fluent translation, the word “greetings” has been employed, and the translation for salutations has been switched to “hellos:”

The traditional, symbolic handshake and lengthy hellos, the greetings weren't lacking in news about old friends and their health.

Kirama Fall also wolofises her works through “semantic hybridity,” and to understand this, it is necessary to refer to a common Wolof introductory conversation (see appendix I, page 399). In her poem, “Toi qui t'en vas,” Kirama Fall writes the lines, “Que la paix soit dans son cœur / La paix seulement” (*Élans*, 29). The phrase “Only peace” is not a phrase used commonly in French or English, but it is recreated by Kirama Fall. Had the translator not studied Wolof (and its link to Arabic), the depth of this phrase would not be recognised. Potentially, it could be translated incorrectly, perhaps by over-domestication of the wolofised language, but it also offers the

¹⁸⁴ For example, in Khaled Hosseini's international bestseller, *The Kite Runner*, he intersperses the text written in English with Arabic phrases including Inshallah (God willing) (71; 262;265), Mashallah (Praise God) (29; 121;245), and Salaam alaykum (Peace be upon you) (39; 205; 207).

translator the opportunity to choose whether she wishes to explain this to the target text reader.

Analysis so far demonstrates that the study of Wolof as part of cultural analysis pre-translation can assist in the interpretation of the Francophone text by making the translator aware of cultural and linguistic elements that may otherwise be overlooked, and providing a depth of understanding that goes beyond the basic knowledge of the French language. In a paper entitled *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, Roman Jakobson defines three different types of translation; intralingual (rewording), interlingual (translation proper), and intersemiotic (transmutation) (139). However, the journey of translated literature by Senegalese women cannot be described as one or the other, as it is a complex web of all three processes, where signs and languages are constantly translated. If the entire process is analysed (see Figure 2 in appendix J, page 400), there are a number of different stages from the conception to reception of a translated work. Just like many other literary texts, Senegalese women's works do not begin on the page, but in the world around them, as non-verbal signs (which will be analysed in more detail in part V of this chapter) and thoughts which they translate into language that will finally appear in a work of literature. The translator therefore needs to understand the processes in the chain up until the point where the text is received; otherwise the cultural evaluation by the end reader will be distorted.

The native language is an essential ingredient in this procedure; in literature whereby the source text author is writing in a colonial language and threading in her native tongue, the interplay between intralingual and interlingual translation will be present at every stage of the creative process. The source text writer works

interlingually between her native language and the colonial one, whilst the process of creative writing itself involves constant rewriting and intralingual translation. If the translator's intention is to be considerate of all aspects of the source text and source writer, then surely this process should be mirrored in the analysis, interpretation and translation itself; the translator must be prepared to work with the two or more languages present and not simply translate interlingually from French into English, for example.

Referring back to Kirama Fall's poem, (discussed on page 247), it is a perfect case of how Jakobson's translation typologies have worked together to produce a hybrid language often unidentifiable to the uninformed translator. Translating within her languages, and between languages she has created a French phrase from the native tongue – "Only peace." The translator who has studied Wolof to a small degree will recognise this phrase and will be able to make an informed decision as to how this should be translated; either literally from the French, or otherwise, or even adding a footnote to explain the commonness of the words and their link to well-being. In this way, the translator is mirroring the behaviour of the source text writer, by working interlingually between French, Wolof and English, and intralingually in finding a suitable solution to explain the phrase in translation.

Returning to *Le froid et le piment* by Seck Mbacké, there are far fewer examples of syntactical or grammatical hybridity, but there are some very subtle signs of Senegalese influence on the French language. In a book on Senegalese writer, Sow Fall, postcolonial theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha comments on the way Sow Fall speaks a Senegalsed French which she describes as containing deliberate repetitions of clichéd

phrases and playing on stereotypes in certain dialogues (69). And in the dialogue of *Le froid et le piment* you see similar effects:

Des conneries! Des conneries! Je vais en dire. Je vais en dire parce que j'en ai trop vues. J'en ai trop vues de toutes les couleurs. (Seck Mbacké 85)

Bullshit! Bullshit! That's what I say. That's what I say because I've seen too much of it. I've seen too much of it, in every shape and form.

The important task for the translator working semantically is to recognise these stylistic effects and attempt to retain them in translation, which has been accomplished in this version. Further, grammatically, one of the noticeable features of Wolof is its lack of prepositions (Malherbe 35), and this sometimes appears to affect the writing of Francophone texts. In a poem by Seck Mbacké from her book, *Les alizés de la souffrance* (see appendix K, page 401), not only is there a lack of prepositions, but also a lack of variety. This may be deliberate or involuntary, but it is certainly a feature of the text and should be considered during textual analysis pre-translation.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ According to Appiah, "Learning the grammar and lexicon of a language is learning a complex set of instructions for generating acts that are standardly intended to achieve their effects in others who know the same instructions...and precisely by way of a recognition of those intentions" (*Thick* 392). Distinct grammatical features of the Wolof language include the complex verbal system that does not mark time, mode or person, but uses a series of pronouns which express nuances of tense (29). The article also appears after the noun (20), and the numeral system is a quinary one (38), where five is the base, instead of ten, as is most common in French and English.

Finally, an additional form of hybridity can be noted where the French imitates the sounds of the Wolof language. The following extract from a poem entitled “Ce Soir” by Ndiaye Sow exemplifies this:

L’horizon est vêtu
De **p**ourpre et **d**’or
Et se **m**ire **d**ans la **m**er
Pour **p**arfaire ses **p**lis.
Spectacle **g**randiose
À **n**ul autre **p**areil,
Offert **ch**aque soir
Par l’**A**RTISTE éternel.¹⁸⁶

(31)

The Wolof language uses many plosive and nasal consonants, which is in part due to their unusual classification system, which consists of eight words for ‘the,’ in the singular - ‘bi, gi, ji, ki, li, mi and si’ (Malherbe 29), and also because Wolof nasalises certain letters, those often transcribed as mb, mp, nd, nk, for example. Finally, the

¹⁸⁶ This poem appears to be very influenced by French poetry of the late nineteenth century, especially Jules Laforgue who often draws upon the spectacle of the setting sun. The image recurs almost obsessively in his *Poèmes inédits* with two poems entitled “Soleil couchant” (16-20), and one, “Soleil couchant de juin” (108), although it is also possible to note the implications of death, the dying of life and hope. In Ndiaye Sow’s poem there are echoes of Laforgue’s language from these three poems, including the “horizon” (16; 108) which is on fire (16) and “d’or” (108;109), “la mer” (19) and “éternel” (20). It appears that this poem reflects a complex set of inter-relationships, as well as transfer from Senegalese language and culture, and this should also be taken into consideration during translation.

language simply does rely more on strong, definite sounds than either French or English (see appendix L, page 405). Hence, in translation, it is considered a priority to replicate some of these sounds in the target text:

The horizon is **clothed**
In **crimson and gold**
And is mirrored in the sea
Perfecting its **pleats**.
A **magnificent** show
Unparalleled,
Presented each evening
By the eternal **ARTIST**.

(see appendix M, page 405, for full text and translation; Collins, *Other*
107)

Some translation scholars may argue that these are simply forms of alliteration and will be recognised anyway by a good translator. Nevertheless, for a semantic translation, there needs to be a recognition not just of the alliteration, but of the type of alliteration. In the translation above, the presence of most of the key plosive and nasal consonants that reflect the native language have been imitated. Only in this way can a translator balance both meaning and aesthetics.

In their analysis of translation between French and English, Vinay and Darbelnet list seven different translation methodologies: “borrowing,” “calque,” “literal translation,” “transposition,” and “modulation,” “equivalence” and “adaptation”(55), thereby providing an excellent summary of the ways in which an

individual may cope with the varying challenges of literary translation. The examples analysed here use each of these methods. However, it is being argued in this thesis that a thorough knowledge of the native language may alter which methodology is used. Understanding that a word mimics the sound of the native language may alter a translator's perspective, so instead of using a literal translation, an equivalent term may instead be used in order to represent both sound and meaning at the same time. The number of methodologies has not changed, but the way in which they are used has been adapted to suit the dimensions of hybrid texts such as those written by Francophone Senegalese women writers.

The ways in which Senegalese women authors hybridise their texts through the use of native language varies greatly from writer to writer and clearly not everything written in Francophone Senegalese women's works is an issue in translation. But unless a translator is aware of both Wolof and French and of the full cultural context of a piece of work, how can she be sure she is not missing something? How can she be certain that she is aware of the full range of interpretations of the source text? Gyasi talks of an aggression in relation to the writing of Francophone African texts by describing a "violence" used by authors against the colonial language, distorting the European language to extremes to better represent their native African tongue (*African* 157). But experience so far of Senegalese women writers is that they are generally more subtle than that. Their action could be described as "clever manipulation" rather than "violence." And this subtlety is harder to spot than a more aggressive treatment of a text. Nevertheless, whilst the translator, as here, may make every effort to research

and learn the source language in translation, in any form of cultural translation there are bound to be issues of untranslatability.

IV Cultural Language and Untranslatability

Pálsson states that: “Just as the hunter may ‘fall for’ a potential prey, the translator may be ‘seduced’ by a text. And just as an animal may refuse to be killed, a text may refuse to be translated” (17). The issue of translatability is one that the literary translator frequently faces in her quest to reproduce not only meaning but the aesthetics of the source text. The complexity of postcolonial writing offers the translator yet more challenges, as discussed in this thesis, because writers draw upon multiple languages and cultures. But up until this point, there has been little mention of the untranslatable. Can, as Pálsson claims, a text simply refuse to be killed/translated? Or does the text always die, only for the translator attentively to breathe new life into the very piece of work she has captured? (Un)translatability is therefore the subject of concern in Part IV, as this chapter builds upon the knowledge of hybrid language, the nonstandard text and its deviations from norms and conventions to discover whether there are still obstacles that cannot be overcome in the task of translation.

In his discussion of the untranslatable, Newmark states that “untranslatable words are the ones that have no ready one-to-one equivalent in the TL” (*Textbook* 17), and in a later article discussing the notion in terms of the text, he asserts that:

...an approximate translation is always possible or, in other words, translation is always possible, more or less. (In this case, ‘more’

indicates overtranslation, where superfluous content is added; and ‘less’ indicates undertranslation, where there is insufficient content.) One can also say that a translation is ‘thin,’ where the language alone is translated and the reader is ignored; or ‘thick,’ where linguistic and cultural difficulties are glossed with an eye on the likely readership. (52 31)

It can be understood from this that there always has to be some sort of compromise, that translation can never reach the goal of perfection; that the translation is too much, too little or it suffers from a type of inadequacy where either language, culture or reader are not fully considered (the term ‘thick translation,’ will be discussed in detail shortly).

Other scholars believe poetry in itself to be totally untranslatable (Bonney 186), or at least impossible to translate poetically (Weissbort xii), but the concept is becoming rather restrictive; having no one-to-one equivalent does not make a word untranslatable.¹⁸⁷ Surely nothing is impossible, for language and culture is all about difference, and translators accept that rarely will they be able to swap one word, phrase, paragraph or concept directly from one language to another, and this certainly does not solely apply to poetry. Newmark comments that the terms “literal” and “free” can also be employed to describe “untranslatability” (the former) and “translatability”

¹⁸⁷ The lack of on-to-one equivalents leading to untranslatability would indeed limit translation to what Paul Grice and Appiah call “(assertoric) utterances” (Grice 89; Appiah, *Thick* 390-391) ie the translator writing statements in an assertive mode which only imply or suggest meaning rather than provide straightforward denotation.

(the latter) where free translation is acceptable in terms of “unimportant texts” and literal translation in “a serious text” (52 31). Whilst Newmark admits these are generalisations, and the words “serious” and “unimportant” may be considered rather too definitive in terms of textual quality, his meaning is clear; that serious medical documents, for example, need a literal approach, and cultural literature (ie creative writing that is firmly embedded in a particular culture) can be approached in a free manner if it is to be translatable. However, if as Newmark states, it is mainly cultural words¹⁸⁸ which raise issues of translatability (31), and these are primarily found in non-technical documents, this surely means that almost everything is in fact translatable if the definition of translation and the process of translation remain open to creativity. Certainly, it can be argued that this must be the case in this thesis which focuses on literary translation.

At this point it is useful to return to the issue of “thick” and “thin” translation as defined by Newmark above; “thin” meaning that language is translated and the reader ignored, and “thick,” where linguistic and cultural difficulties are glossed for the readership. Appiah discusses this in much more detail in an earlier article entitled “Thick Translation,” in relation to Ghanaian proverbs written in a dialect of the Twi-language, and which are highly embedded in the source language and culture. He describes “thick translation” as that which “aims to be of use in literary teaching; “...‘academic’ translation, translation that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context...” (399). But in terms of Francophone Senegalese women’s writing, the source text

¹⁸⁸ See page 79 for Newmark’s earlier discussion of “cultural words” and the categories that he assigns to them.

author has already been required to find ways to handle ostensibly “untranslatable” cultural terms in her own literature even before the French to English translator approaches the text.

For example, the use of footnotes, endnotes, glossaries and explanations within texts to describe fully cultural terms and in that way practice “thick translation,” are regularly used by Senegalese women writers when explaining local terms, phrases or values in the French language. Fall has no issue with explaining cultural terms such as *gongo*¹⁸⁹ in either footnotes or endnotes (*Personal* 14; *Senteurs* 186; *Mademba* 110), and Seck Mbacké says that notes are necessary, although they can create breaks in the act of reading (*Personal* 11). However, Benga entirely relies on the use of extensive glossaries (she finds footnotes intrusive; *Personal* 7), and this system is often favoured by editors in Senegal (10), to the extent that she includes a twenty-two page glossary of cultural terms, historical facts, beliefs and proverbs in *La balade du sabador*. The issue is whether further explanation is required for target text readers in the English translation, especially if the target readership is an academic one.

For instance, in *Une si longue lettre*, Mariama Bâ uses footnotes to explain ‘untranslatable’ Wolof words such as “wolëre,” which she describes as “Amitié ancienne” (129). And in his discussion of the term, Assane Sylla states that “wolëre” means “ami auquel on est lié par une longue et profonde relation d’assistance mutuelle” (89). The French to English translator can use a number of techniques,

¹⁸⁹ In *Senteurs d’hivernage*, Fall explains the term “gongo” as “plantes odoriférantes séchées et réduites en poudre, destinées à parfumer le linge intime” (“fragrant plants that have been dried and reduced to a powder, and used to make underwear smell nice;” 186).

including a translation of Bâ's footnote – “long-standing friendship” (this could even appear in the text itself), or a translation of Sylla's more lengthy and precise definition – “friend who one is linked to through a long and deep relationship of mutual assistance,” which gives the reader a more profound understanding of one of Bâ's key themes, or the translator may choose to employ a combination of the two explanations – “long-standing and deep friendship of reciprocal help.”

There is no one-to-one equivalent of “wolëre,” but this has not meant that it is untranslatable, the only question is how it is translated as there are several options. In fact, Bodé-Thomas chooses to use endnotes and the first direct translation above, although the words seem hollow in comparison to their full meaning. This is by no means a criticism of Bodé-Thomas for he is only translating the words of Bâ or perhaps the editor of the ‘original’ text, but Sylla's words provide a depth to the text that would otherwise be unavailable to the target text reader. The different options can all be placed under the umbrella phrase of “thick translation.” At this point it is also necessary to refer back to Blair's translation of *Un chant écarlate* in which she includes a lengthy footnote from the source text in the target text written in English (see page 192-193). This too can be seen as “thick translation,” but perhaps a more radical and transparent practice that can incite much criticism and debate due to the lengthy nature of the gloss and its position in the text – at the very opening to the book.

In the case of poetry, it is very unusual in Senegalese women's collections to find an explanation of terms in footnotes, endnotes or glossaries. The collection, *Filles du soleil* by Mbengue Diakhate, for example, includes many words that are highly

embedded in the source text culture. Note the following extract from the poem,

“Négresse en Laisse:”

Le voile d’or de Ndiaré,
De Ndaté, reine sereine,
Njimbot Mbodj, la sublime,
Et Laama, ma lin’guère!

(20)

None of the cultural “words” are explained by Mbengue Diakhate. However a “thick translation” would give information in notes or a glossary to place the poem in a thorough cultural and linguistic framework, for example:

Ndiaré: Mame Ndiaré is a female spirit and divine protector of the village of Yoff, near Dakar (“Big Tuuru”).

Njimbot Mbodj: was former Queen of the Waalo kingdom, in the North East of present-day Senegal (Barry 267).

Ndaté: Ndaté Yalla Mbodj was the sister of Njimbot Mbodj and succeeded her to the throne in the mid-nineteenth century. She is remembered for her passionate fight against the European colonisers (Barry 267).

Laama, ma Lin’guère: Lingeer is the name given to the mother or sister of the King, therefore Queen or Princess (“Lingeer”). “Laama” is most likely to mean a master of a territory (Diouf, *Dictionnaire* 195). It could also be an individual’s name, or refer to a Senegalese village called *Lama*, although this is unlikely.

General: the poem may at first seem to be referring to slavery, especially with regard to the title – “Négresse en Laisse” (Negress on a lead), for example. However, the poem is more likely to be referring to colonisation, as members of the monarchy mentioned in this verse were in power at the time of European colonisation and would have died shortly after. The poet progresses to say that she now envies those who died early and did not see their honour destroyed.

Nevertheless, the question remains as to how “thick translation” may be practiced without glosses such as these. Embellishment is certainly an option:

The golden veil of Yoff’s spirit Ndiaré,
Of Ndaté, serene Queen, who fought the coloniser,
And her sister, Njimbot Mbodj, the sublime,
And her Majesty, my ruler!

Whilst this is not incorrect as a translation, in trying to retain some sort of semblance of a poem, all the information gathered for the glossary cannot be included and the translator may be left wondering if it is really worth disrupting the rhythms and sounds of the poem simply to include more information within the text itself. There are also further issues, such as the lack of specific information about Laama’s identity which can be more precisely explained in a footnote rather than a text. Further, the possible words “Malin” and “Guerre/guère” – “ma lin’guère” can be read in the source text, and the translation has the potential to become ridiculous if the translator is then trying to retain such sonorous qualities as well as the entire breadth of meaning all within four lines of a poem. This would perhaps be better explained in a footnote.

It is issues such as these that Yves Bonnefoy and Daniel Weissbort must be referring to in their statements regarding the translatability of poetry. However, Appiah's approach is much less pessimistic, for he confronts the issue of the untranslatability of culturally embedded terms and texts in a way that does not restrict the disciplines of translation and Translation Studies, but broadens the scope of each by claiming that there is no perfect translation as there exists no set of "desiderata" (*In* 397). Indeed, Appiah continues to explain that whilst the objective of translation is to create a text that matters the same to one community as it does to another, "there can always be new readings, new things that matter about a text, new reasons for caring about new properties" (397). Hence, whilst it may be very difficult for a foreign community to have the same feeling of "mattering" as a Wolof community may have of the historical nature of Mbengue Diakhate's poem, in trying to communicate what "matters" to the target text reader, the translator is conveying new readings and reasons for caring to a fresh audience.

French translation theorist Ladmiral states that in fact "Tout est traduisible, et/ou: la traduction est impossible. Tous ces problèmes sont insolubles en soi et en général: on y trouve qu'au coup par coup des solutions partielles" (16).¹⁹⁰ And this appears to be the type of issue that resounds in the words of Bonnefoy and Weissbort – that if the translator is resorting to partial solutions, poetry is being rendered "untranslatable." These "partial solutions" are exemplified in the process of translating an extract from the poem, "Deux Nègresses," by Mbengue Diakhate:

¹⁹⁰ "Everything is translatable, and/or: the translation is impossible. All these problems are impossible to solve in themselves and in general: on an ad hoc basis you can find partial solutions."

A Ils étaient cent, nous étions deux.
Ils étaient cent, deux cents, trois cents peut-être;
Et nous, deux négresses: tâches¹⁹¹ sombres parmi eux.
Tâches sombres sur qui, tels des projecteurs,
Des centaines d'yeux étaient braqués

(21)

B They were one hundred, we were two.
They were one hundred, two hundred, three hundred
[perhaps;
And us, two Negresses: dark stains among them.
Dark stains on which, like spotlights,
Hundreds of eyes were fixed

C They were a hundred, we were two.
They were a hundred, two hundred, three hundred or more;
Us among them: two Negresses, each a dark flaw.
Dark flaw on which, like spotlights from afar
The hundreds of eyes were fixed

¹⁹¹ Tâche with the accent can mean 'task' or 'job,' whereas without the accent it can mean 'stain' or 'mark.' Mbengue Diakhate has used the accent, however this must be a mistake, misprint or perhaps a characteristic of Senegalese French, because translating this as 'task' or 'job' does not make sense in this particular context. The translation above has therefore used the definition of 'tache' instead.

D They were a score, we were two
 They were a score, two score, three score or more;
 And us, two Negresses: dark stains among them
 Dark stains on which, like spotlights from afar
 The scores of eyes were fixed

Version B is a literal translation that does not make a particular attempt to render stylistic elements of the source text, while versions C and D raise questions in the translation of style and sound, where there are attempts to preserve rhyme and multiple readings. The source text rhymes: “deux/eux,” so in the transfer to target text C, this has been rendered by more/flaw, changing the structure of the lines and wording whilst retaining the reading that: ‘we are not sure how many people there are, but we are outnumbered.’ In this translation there has also been an attempt to create a double-entendre, as in the source text “d’yeux/Dieu,” as there are constant references to God throughout Mbengue Diakhate’s poetry collection. Here, though very subtle and certainly contestable, the word “Father” has been comprised across the last two lines which read: “...from afar The hundreds of eyes were fixed.” In version D, the ‘hissing of hatred’ has also been introduced, for it is present in the source text through constant ‘s’ sounds. To achieve this has meant a far more radical departure from the ‘original,’ replacing “hundred” with score, introducing the rhyme score/more and the word “stain.” The poem does not now give the impression of such large crowds of people, and possibly the term is a little antiquated, but this amendment does have the desired effect on the reader. This translation exemplifies Newmark’s quote above in which he states that “translation is always possible, more or less,” for in each of these

translations either content has been added or take style has been taken away. The translation is “thin” in version B where language has been translated, and “thick” in versions C and D where linguistic difficulties have been considered. But the text is certainly not untranslatable.

Untranslatability is therefore a very subjective term, one which raises issues of foreignisation or domestication/acculturation, ie to what extent should the translator explain certain terms or alter some stylistically non-standard elements in order to make the text more fluent or accepted in the target language. Translation theorist, Simon favours a middle ground (*Gender* 154): a translator who works as mediator between different cultures. And to a large extent this is what is being attempted here. Firstly, an attempt is being made to translate meaning whilst taking into account the culture in which that meaning has been embedded. Secondly, consideration is being given to words which may be perceived as “untranslatable” in the target language, and an effort is being made to try to find a way in which they can be transferred into that target language and culture with as little compromise to the source text and culture as possible. This process of negotiation between different linguistic or cultural elements of a text is often made clearer by translation theorists through discourse on semiotics – the decoding of signs within a text, the recoding of which can either showcase or conceal the work of the translator by means of a series of choices in textual reconstruction.

V Semiotics and the Translator's Visibility

Hitherto in this thesis, the translator has been identified as playing a pivotal role as a powerful mediator between different languages and cultures, creating poetic translations of literary texts often declared 'untranslatable.' However, all discussions or arguments thus far ultimately return to the negotiation of 'meaning.' The assessment of the value of meaning in Senegalese French and the reconstruction of that worth in the English language is a fundamental practice upon which most traditional theories of translation are based. And this can be seen in terms of semiotics. In fact, David Chandler states that: "to decline the study of signs is to leave to others the control of the world of meanings which we inhabit" (15), so if the literary translator wishes to direct meaning in the target text, it follows that she must have a knowledge of signs. The focus of Part V of this chapter is therefore to investigate the use of semiotics in the translator's negotiation process and her production of meaning in the target language. It will consider whether an understanding of semiotics can inform the development of strategies for translating Francophone Senegalese women's works, and if in the process of decoding and recoding cultural language the translator may heighten her visibility or retreat into hiding beneath the meaning of the target text.

In their study entitled *Discourse and the Translator*, Hatim and Mason consider the responsibility of the translator, in her role as the primary reader of a text, to identify and then overcome the incompatibilities in the value of varying cultural signs in different communities (223-224):

Unlike the ordinary ST or TT reader, the translator reads in order to produce, decodes in order to re-code. In other words, the translator uses

as input to the translation process information which would normally be the output, and therefore at the end of the reading process. (224)

Thus a translator is the most thorough reader a text can have; she deliberately seeks out the signs embedded in the text and uses that information for textual recreation. And a number of other translation theorists also promote the useful nature of semiotics; textual signs embedded in the source text, as a method of analysis during the translation process (Ladmiral 15-17; Godard 91; Riffaterre 204-205), further supporting the value of this investigation with regard to translating Senegalese works. But what does this mean exactly? And what form do the signs take?

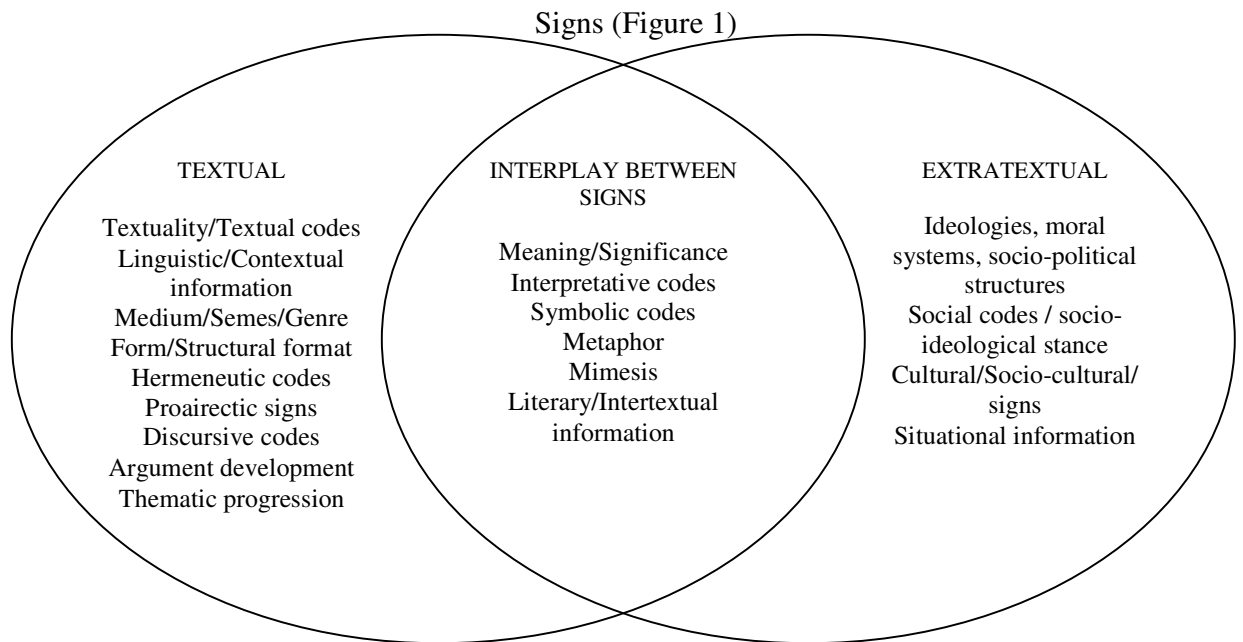
Chandler states that a “text is an assemblage of signs (such as words, images, sound and/or gestures), constructed (and interpreted) with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication” (2-3), but this is a very complex notion that, if it is to be used in this research, must be broken down to make it clearer and more relevant to the task of the literary translator. James Holmes, for example, proposes that when reading the text, the translator creates a list of distinctive features and then re-codes them according to an elected new ranking system in the target text (*Translated!*), and this could be a useful and logical way to employ semiotics when analysing and translating. And for the purpose of this research, a list of semiotic categories can be formulated by drawing upon the analysis of translation and literary theorists, thereby making Holmes’ process clearer for practical use by the translator.

For instance, Hatim and Mason state that signs include “ideologies, moral systems and socio-political structures” (223), as well as citing “structural format”

(230), “intertextuality” and the development of an argument (230), “metaphor” (233), “thematic progression” (234) and “socio-ideological stance” (238). Bassnett also declares that the process of decoding takes into account “both textual features and extratextual factors” (*Transplanting* 60), and Holmes himself mentions contextual, intertextual and situational information (89). Chandler asserts that there are three types of codes; firstly, “social codes” related to knowledge about the world, then “textual codes” that refer to the medium and genre, and finally “interpretative codes” which denote the relationship between the previous two categories (149-150), and he highlights the importance of recognising the interplay between different codes (172). Further, Roland Barthes lists five codes he believes are present in literary texts; hermeneutic codes, semes, symbolic codes, proairectic codes and cultural codes (*S/Z* 19-20),¹⁹² and Michael Riffaterre names “discursive features,” “mimesis,” and “textuality,”¹⁹³ as well as stressing the importance of the link between text and intertext (204). Hence, if the codes from these theorists are amalgamated, a coherent diagram such as the following one can be produced:

¹⁹² In his book entitled *Semiotics*, Chandler has very useful explanations for each of these terms – Hermeneutic codes – narrative turning points, semes – medium-related codes, symbolic codes – themes, proairectic codes – basic narrative actions, and cultural codes – prior social knowledge (171).

¹⁹³ It follows that “discursive features” pertain to the argument and reason of a text, “mimesis” to the representation of the world in the poetry or prose in question, and “textuality” to textual criticism.



Riffaterre states that the type of signs existent in the source text should be replicated in the target text, and the literary translator “must semiotize forms and sounds like the original, although in a different system” (204), rendering both meaning and significance from the source text in translation (205). In this case, the diagram above could be a useful categorisation tool in pre-translation analysis. Further, reading signs is an integral part of the translator’s role as a cultural go-between,¹⁹⁴ and if, as Chandler asserts, “studying semiotics can assist us to become more aware of the mediating role of signs and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing

¹⁹⁴ Many theorists describe the mediating role played by the translator – Anthony Pym (58), Schleiermacher (44), Walter Benjamin (83) and Umberto Eco (*Mouse*), amongst many others. Further, whilst some people may believe that translation should be about mediation rather than equivalences, the two terms are not mutually exclusive. Steiner, for example, promotes the process of negotiation in translation (281), whilst asserting that languages are “cut from the same pattern” (98).

social realities” (14), the translator as mediator can use the fundamentals of semiotics to guide her from one text to another by heightening her awareness of individual textual and extratextual elements.

However, the translator must be aware that signs are often deeply embedded in a text. In fact, Stuart Hall maintains that certain codes can be “so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed” (167). Chandler supports this, stating that we actively create meaning “according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which we are normally unaware” (14). Hence, the translator must explore beyond any linguistic superficialities, take apart and reconstruct prose or poetry, noting all the textual, extratextual and additional factors, creating a new and ‘original’ text which takes into consideration all aspects of the text she is using as a source. In this way, the translator’s job is more thorough than that of the source text writer, for the latter can construct unaware of the signs she is embedding in the text, but the former must be attentive to every detail. A further consideration is that no two languages have identical codes (Verschauen 80), but if the translator understands the significance of varying signs in the spaces she is translating from and to, she can negotiate backwards and forwards between both language and culture in order to find solutions to her problems. Here, the above diagram can be employed by the translator; by noting the textual and extratextual codes utilised knowingly or unwittingly by the writer (as well as the way these work together), the translator can ensure a full understanding of all the signs before she begins her work.

Interestingly, Riffaterre believes that the most successful translators work on the basis of presuppositions, ie that the translation presupposes a source text, style and topic presuppose a genre, and indirection of meaning presupposes the sociolect and intertext (205). However, if the translator is too reliant on presuppositions, she may not always recognise when a presupposition is incorrect. The translator of the Francophone Senegalese text should begin each translation with a clear mind; if, as already discussed, norms and conventions differ from those of standard French literature, and the translator bases her presuppositions on previous experience of reading French texts, she may presuppose factors that are non-existent. Whilst Riffaterre's "presupposition theory" may work with some aspects of translation, it cannot always be reliable; "hybrid" texts break many textual "rules" as the translator has previously known them, and are grounded in more than one culture, which can alter the meaning or interpretation of textual signs.

So, the translator can mediate between the signs of two different languages, cultures, people, texts or realities but still find "equivalences" between these signs which often sit on opposite sides of that "borderline" so frequently described by translation theorists. In literary translation this equivalence is rarely achieved using a pure word-for-word translation, but rather the nearest possible meaning, an explanation or paraphrase, a similar idiom, or the closest form or genre. This can be investigated further by looking at an extract from "Si l'espoir ne meurt..." by Ndiaye Sow (see appendix N, page 407, for full text and translation):

Pour des semilles de survie

En pousses vertes de bonheur

Où nulle fièvre ne bouscule
La gloire des moissons de Soleils

(41)

For the seeds of survival
In green buds of happiness
Where no fever upsets
The glory of the Suns' crops

(Collins, *Other* 107)

There are many different signs in this short extract of which a number of the most pertinent to this discussion will be analysed. Firstly, if the textual signs within this extract are examined, it is possible to begin to create equivalences through negotiation between source and target texts. The overriding form is that of poetry in a free form which was easily replicated in the target text, including the approximate length of lines. As discussed, textual signs are also about sounds, and in this poem the alliteration of “semailles,” “survie” and “Soleils” was simple to retain in English translation. The term “moissons” meaning “harvests” was translated as “crops” due to the sound of harvests being awkward in the plural after the word “Suns.” The thematic progression, line upon line is preserved in translation, as is the use of the written word in terms of the medium of communication. With regard to extratextual factors, clearly this is a poem about Senegalese culture written in French, and although she is Senegalese, Ndiaye Sow has been educated in the European language. Consequently, although written in standard French overall, there may be some anomalies. For example, in Ndiaye Sow’s poem, she writes “de Soleils” in the plural, and there may be

a temptation to translate into the singular believing it to be a literary quirk or even a mistake. However, it is important not to do so, as this is likely to be either a reference to traditional West African animist beliefs, a recognition of the individual occurrences of each rise and fall of the sun, a translation from a local language or a reference to Ahamadou Kourouma's text: *Les soleils des indépendances*.¹⁹⁵

If analysis then moves to the understanding of the interplay between signs, it is possible to find direct linguistic equivalences for most words or phrases in English, whilst remaining aware of this juxtaposition of Senegalese culture and French language. Particular difficulties come into play with the term "pousses" which translates as "shoots," meaning the shoots of plants, but in context in translation the meaning would not be clear and may sound a little odd. For this reason, the translator must negotiate between equivalences in French and English. By choosing the term "buds," the agricultural reference is preserved, as well as the notion of blossoming happiness. Although "buds" is not a direct translation, it is the closest possible equivalence that can function appropriately in this line of the poem. "Bousculer" is also an interesting word that can be translated in multiple ways such as "shove," "jostle," "knock into," "shake up" or "liven up," or as far as a calendar is concerned, it

¹⁹⁵ *Les soleils des indépendances* also employs the plural "suns," which possibly stems from the Malinke language where the word for day, "tele," when used in the plural means era, period or year (Gyasi, *African* 154). There does not appear to be a similar connection to the Wolof language, but around three percent of Senegalese people are Malinke (Gritzner 111), and as previously mentioned there are many other ethnicities and languages throughout Senegal (see footnote 5, page 11). "Suns" is also used by Kourouma as a symbolic image representing beauty and life as opposed to the darkness of colonisation (Gyasi, *African* 154).

can mean to “disrupt” or “upset.” There is no word in the English language that can fully encompass the multiple images that the French term may generate, but the translator can select the most appropriate equivalent, which is to “upset.” With regard to intertextuality, the title of the poem is highly relevant as it reflects Ndiaye Sow’s French education in recalling the title of André Gide’s autobiography, *Si le grain ne meurt*. This was translated into English as *If It Die*, and for this intertextuality to be retained in English, the translator must also recall the autobiography, and could name the poem “Hope, if It Die,” for example (Collins, *Other* 107).

Nevertheless, as a negotiator, the translator not only has to work with the signs of two or more different languages and cultures, but she must also negotiate with herself; to what extent therefore should the translator become part of the piece of work she is writing? Whilst translation scholars and expert practitioners may admire a translation which adheres rigidly to the form or meaning communicated in the signs of the source text, it may not be accepted by everyone else unless the target text signs are adapted in some way to suit the receiving market. Either way, the translator alters the visibility of her presence within the text, according to how little or how much she adheres to the source text form and meaning. Venuti writes that: “A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently,” and believes that this fluency can be achieved if the translator adheres to current usage, maintains continuous syntax and fixes a precise meaning (*Translator’s* 1). However, in the case of many Europhone African texts, a publisher, reviewer or reader’s concept of fluency may clash dramatically with a method of semantic translation. Senegalese women’s works are

mostly identified by their linguistic and stylistic peculiarities which a semantic translator would aim to replicate; however, these peculiarities would have to be ‘ironed out’ for the target text reader to receive a text which reads as fluently as one written in a standard European language. To rewrite a fluent text in the target language means the translator of a hybrid text needs to compromise on many details of the source text. But if the target text is non-standard and therefore not completely fluent, the target text reader may think that this means the translation is poor or the translator is not very good.

Also criticising this constant need for ‘fluency’ in English-language translation,¹⁹⁶ Venuti comments how it is often believed that “the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text” (2). However, it is only the bold translator who is brave enough to render these peculiarities in the target text, and who is unwilling to conform, who should claim the title of the “invisible translator.” A translator who tries to make a non-fluent text fluent, who may not have rendered the extensive signs of the source text culture in the target text, is in fact more visible, although it may not seem so to some readers. And in this case, the reader would be missing out on an important aspect of the source text – the fact that it differs from a text written in standard French, for instance. Further, if today’s literary canon is filled by texts from all over the world and digressions from standard forms and languages are becoming more acceptable, as

¹⁹⁶ Venuti himself sometimes chooses a non-fluent strategy. For example, in *The Scandals of Translation* he selects an archaic rather than a “more fluent” English translation of an Italian phrase as he prefers its “antique formality” and resulting close adherence to Tarchetti’s Italian (15).

previously stated, the translator is able to take more risks than one who worked fifty years ago, for example.

Taking an extract from “Griot de ma race” by Mbengue Diakhate, it is possible to demonstrate the effects of ‘ironing out’ the peculiarities of source text signs in translation:

A Je suis griot de ma race:
 Poète, troubadour;
 Je chante très haut ma race, mon sang,
 Qui clame qui je suis.

(29)

B I am griot of my race:
 Poet, troubadour;
 I sing very loud my race, my blood,
 That proclaims who I am.

C Bard of my clan:
 Troubadour and poet;
 Singing loudly of the clan,
 Singing loudly of the spirit,
 That declares who I am.

Version B is a direct translation of source text signs into the target text. It retains the declaratory nature of the first three words by leaving out the article, and again in line three, declining the addition of “‘about’ my race,” and using “loud”

instead of “loudly.” Further, the foreignising effect of the noun “griot” has been preserved. Nothing essential has been added or taken away, in that way preserving the free quality of the poetry, the meaning and rhythms (more or less). Through the retention of these considerations, translation B embodies much of the essence of the source text, but it does not read particularly fluently in the English language, unlike version C. This translation attempts to bring a stricter form to the poem by losing the awkwardly long line three and splitting it into two. It also sounds more traditionally poetic due to the introduction of rhyme, more overt repetition and jaunty rhythm. But in doing so, it has changed “race” to “clan” and “blood” to “spirit,” thereby introducing shifts in meaning. Also, “griot” is translated as “bard,” which is not incorrect, but does not encompass the full meaning of the ‘original’ term. And finally, “clamer” is translated as “declared” which is more common in English, and possibly therefore flattens the language a little. Certainly, this translation is more fluent, but it is version B that renders the translator more invisible as she adheres to more of the non-standard signs and peculiarities of the source text in translation.

In an article entitled “Translation: Walking the Tightrope of Illusion,” Anthea Bell discusses her methods of translation from German and French into English, favouring a more “invisible” approach to her work. However, this could possibly lead to a loss of quality and cultural layering. Bell states that translators:

...must be free, where necessary, but not excessively free; we owe a double duty, to the author of the source text and to the readers of the book in the target language, and here again we are always walking that metaphorical tightrope between languages, trying not to fall off it but to

preserve the illusion that what was thought and written in one language can be read and understood in its essentials, in another. (66)

Consequently, again the translator must be a negotiator – one that negotiates between her own visibility and invisibility in order to render in the target language a text which adheres to many aspects of the target text whilst reading in a way that appears fluent to the reader. This is a complex balancing act.

Citing a seminar Bell attended where the issue of the translator's visibility/invisibility was a topic for discussion, she says that individuals supporting one or the other method came to a "near-agreement" that the gap between the two schools of thought can be bridged in practice by a "good" translator (66). However, an indefinable adjective is encountered – what makes a "good" translator? Newmark asserts that a good translation should be "valid" (ie decently written) and without factual errors or prejudiced language," (50 32) and it is necessary to add to this: 'someone who abides by the translation commission or skopos.' However, this does not mean that the translator is respecting the signs of the source culture in her work. Liu speaks of how Western translators carefully select texts, adopt domesticating strategies and filter out any remnants of foreignness from their translations (55). And whilst, as touched upon earlier, it is commonly understood that many literary translators will select texts which they believe will be successful in the target language, and this is a necessity in a field of work which is relatively badly paid and achieves little recognition, Liu is perhaps too generalising in her statement that Western translators adopt domesticating strategies and filter out remnants of foreignness.

In her assessment of the Chinese translation community, this may be the case, and besides, it is inevitable that there will be an element of domestication as interlingual translation will always involve a linguistic shift from foreign to familiar in order to be understood at least on one level. But previous translations of Francophone Senegalese works, although only few in this field, demonstrate a broad range of strategies, some domesticating such as Blair's translation of *Un chant écarlate*, and others safeguarding more of the non-standard nature of the source text such as Marjolijn de Jager's translation of *Le baobab fou* which generally appears to have embraced the source culture to a greater extent as well as a wider range of non-conventional signs adopted by the source text (Bugul, *Abandoned*). Again, there is a return to negotiation – negotiation between domestication and foreignisation, visibility and invisibility, textual and extratextual signs and their representations in the source and target text as well as the interplay between them. Translation can be seen on multiple levels and perspectives, but certainly an awareness of semiotics as well as a perception of self can engage the translator in a new dimension of understanding and interpretation.

So, in conclusion to Chapter Three, the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature is a complex one where problems can arise from a lack of knowledge regarding the source text cultures, associated identities, and how they are expressed through language. This chapter has investigated the controversial notion of hybridity and its relevance to Senegalese women writers, whose experiences of the contact zones between cultures have created new linguistic and stylistic challenges for the translator. Simon states that "the space 'between' becomes a powerful and difficult

place for the writer to occupy” (*Gender* 162). This chapter has demonstrated that this is very true. The position is “powerful” from the respect that the translator has control of meaning transfer from one side of the space to another, but “difficult” in the necessity for extensive knowledge of the multiple features of a hybrid world. Chapter Three has confirmed that Senegalese women writers live between languages and move fluently from one to another, so the translator must mediate between the signs of different cultures if she hopes to do the same in rewriting a Francophone Senegalese text in English.

This chapter has demonstrated how vital it is to understand the norms and conventions of both French and local Senegalese languages such as Wolof, including norms of transcription. This has been helpful in recognising non-standard French and representing it effectively in translation through a process of negotiation between languages and cultures. In learning foreign languages we are made to believe in language purity and specific, strict grammatical rules, but meanwhile languages are developing beyond recognition, despite regulatory bodies that do their best to prevent it. It is important to recognise that the impact of African culture upon postcolonial texts does not stop at the form and style of the literature produced, but that the native language can also have a clear impact. It is evident from the examples above, that the French language can only partly represent a local Senegalese language such as Wolof, so the study of linguistic hybridity is a necessity in postcolonial translation if all aspects of a text are to be considered. This in turn affects the way in which Translation Studies scholars approach their theories and methodologies; it is often said that the translator should always have an exceptional knowledge of the language she is working

into (Thelen 242), but it has been demonstrated here that understanding the source text cultures and languages in their plurality is just as important.

Chapter Three has further demonstrated that the problem of the untranslatability of poetic texts is not completely insurmountable if creativity and a broad range of possible translatory solutions are embraced. The practice of “thick translation” of culturally embedded texts is not only possible through annotations, but also through solutions within texts, including embellishment or what have been deemed “partial” but innovative resolutions that have still considered all linguistic and cultural textual qualities. And whilst the field of semiotics can greatly assist the translator in her analysis of a text, it remains her decision as to how she ranks the varying signs discovered in her literature of choice, a literature that she communicates in her own unique way to the reader of works that are highly embedded in the oral cultures of West Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE INFLUENCE OF ORATURE

Chez nous, la poésie n'est pas écrite. Elle est orale. Elle a toujours été orale depuis l'aube des temps. C'est depuis qu'on la met dans les livres, depuis qu'on l'a emprisonnée dans les livres qu'elle a beaucoup perdu de sa magie. Mais chez nous la poésie orale est dans la rue. Elle se promène dans la rue; elle est partout dans la rue. (Sall 6)¹⁹⁷

I Stylistic Features of Orality in Literature

According to tradition, the griots or griot(t)es,¹⁹⁸ transmitters of African orature, are often buried within the huge, hollow trunk of the great Baobab tree of Senegal, and with them aspects of the history of a culture and of a people are frequently put to rest. However, whilst much effort has gone into preserving male orature and studying its form and effects on postcolonial literature, very little has been done to investigate the influence of African women's storytelling upon Francophone literature and the way in

¹⁹⁷ "Where we are from, poetry isn't written. It is oral. It has always been oral since the dawn of time. But ever since it has been put in books, ever since it has been imprisoned in books, it has lost much of its magic. But, where we are from oral poetry is on the street. It walks along the street; it is everywhere on the street."

¹⁹⁸ Whilst the word "griot" has a feminine in French - "griotte" or "griote," the term "griot" is used to denote both male and female griots in the English language ("griot"), and will therefore be used throughout this chapter to mean of both sexes, unless otherwise indicated. It should be noted that in Bodé-Thomas's translation of *Une si longue lettre*, he chooses to translate the term "griote" as "griot woman" (Bâ, *So* 67).

which it draws from both written and oral qualities. Hence, Chapter Four develops the notion of hybridity in Chapter Three by looking at one of the most prominent aspects of hybridity in Senegalese women's writing – orality. It identifies specific manifestations of conscious and subconscious orality within texts, providing analytical guidance to the translator of Senegalese works. The chapter considers how the existence of orality in prose has meant that the borderline between different literary genres and text types is blurred, and as a result the translator may find that poetry translation theory can be applied to that of prose. This chapter investigates the performative nature of orality and the influence of the audience as well as the nature of African translation tradition, all of which promote a more fluid concept of the original text. This idea opens up new creative possibilities for the translator. The chapter also demonstrates how a gender-specific knowledge of orality can further assist the translator in her analysis of Senegalese women's writing.

Orature is a native African art form where men and women sing, chant or perform works, often memorised and passed down from one generation to the next. It is highly embedded in African culture, but it is also evolving and moving beyond tradition and into the present day (Mapanje 1). At interview, Sall explained the way in which orality forms a deep-rooted part of Senegalese life, and is therefore instilled in the poets that form a part of it. However, whilst Sall asserted that traditional orality, so often now confined to written form, has thus lost much of its magic (see quotation above), new written works by Francophone writers conversely employ orality to infuse such charm and sparkle into their written works. And this is not a characteristic that can only be found in the poetry of male writers; it is well documented that African

women poets also use stylistic elements of oral poetry in their written works (Chipasula xii). Part I of Chapter Four therefore provides an introduction to the concept of orality, outlining some of the key characteristics of the genre, demonstrating how these qualities can reveal themselves in Senegalese women's works, and how the translator may choose to incorporate these features into her translations.

At interview, Seck Mbacké described the way in which she writes "in African," inspired by the culture which surrounds her:

Et quand j'écris sur le milieu africain, par exemple comme celui de la Casamance, je suis tentée d'utiliser les mêmes termes que les griots de la Casamance. Voyez-vous? C'est quelque chose qui s'adapte à ma façon de vivre. Donc cette répétition-là, ces allitérations-là, se retrouvent dans la culture africaine. Le diali, quand il a sa kora, quand il chante, souvent il y a des allitérations. C'est fait exprès. (*Personal 8*)¹⁹⁹

But as usual there is no hard and fast rule; whilst some writers such as Seck Mbacké embrace orality in their literature, others such as Benga stress the fact that times are different now, that their generation is one of technology and the written word, and whilst everyone is aware of griots as they see them every day, they do not have the opportunity now to discover fully the power of their orality, as previous generations did:

¹⁹⁹ "And when I write about the African environment, like that of Casamance for example, I am tempted to use the same terms as the griots of Casamance. Do you see? It is something which adapts to my way of life. So that repetition here, those alliterations there, can be found in African culture. The diali, with his kora, when he sings, there are often alliterations. It's done on purpose."

Nous avons appris par l'écrit, nous avons grandi dans l'écrit, etc. Donc cette génération orale, c'est plus une génération qui vient de la brousse, des zones rurales etc. Donc, on n'a pas un lien très, très fort avec l'oralité. Ça, il faut le dire. (*Personal 11*)²⁰⁰

Her only contact with orality, she feels, is through the stories told by her parents and grandparents, especially the bedtime tales passed on by her grandmother (11). The presence of orality within Senegalese literature clearly differs from one person to the next, and its existence also may depend on text type or genre; Sall and Seck Mbacké are primarily poets, whilst Benga is principally a novelist. And the influence of orality in the present day may also depend on whether a writer was raised in Dakar or not; Benga was born in Dakar in 1967, whereas Seck Mbacké and Sall were raised in Kaolack and Gossas respectively. Having said that, whilst writers such as Benga may shun the possibility of an oral influence, if as Sall states, orality is an integral part of life in Senegal, there is also the possibility that Benga draws from orality without realising it.

However, before this chapter looks in detail at the presence of orality in specific works (such as those of Seck Mbacké and Benga) and how the translator should deal with that presence, it is necessary to investigate particular manifestations of orality. If a strategy for the translator of Francophone Senegalese women's works is to be

²⁰⁰ "We have learnt through writing, we have grown up with writing, etc. So, this oral generation, is more a generation which comes from the Bush, rural areas etc. So, we don't have a really, really strong connection to orality. It must be said."

provided, it is necessary to generate a comprehensive list of oral characteristics which the translator could possibly employ as a 'crib sheet' during pre-translation analysis. Mayes speaks of the "reverberations" of rhythmic language in Francophone African women's poetry (see page 141) and Larrier also notes this as a key quality in the performance of orality, as well as repetitions, refrains, onomatopoeias, exclamations, series of questions, proverbs, maxims, and a call-and-response structure between the storyteller and audience (*Francophone* 55). Other characteristics, amongst many noted by theorists include: tone – in that it can be exploited by the oral artist, just like rhyme or rhythm (Finnegan, *Literature* 4), pitch, tempo, including pause length and vowel length, harmony, and melody (Oyebode 92-93), and music in general – either control of tonal accents, singing or instruments (Okpewho, *Introduction* 24), as well as familiar devices used in traditional 'Western' poetry such as alliteration and assonance (Finnegan, *Literature* 131). And in his analysis of postcolonial literature, Bandia says there are a number of specific manifestations of orality which can be both conscious and unconscious – a comment which supports my own theory with regard to the works of Benga. He cites these as: oratory, discursal indirectness, proverbs, vulgarity, names, references, and modes of address (*Translation* 11).

Noting these general characteristics of orality, it is very apparent from the works of Seck Mbacké (as she admitted), that a conscious effort has been made to embrace oral tradition in her poetry. For instance, her poem entitled "L'homélie des mots" (*Alizés* 59-63) uses endless repetitions, allowing the non-repetitive lines to stand

out. There are many examples of alliteration, consonance and assonance,²⁰¹ and capitalisation gives the impression that certain words or phrases must stand out orally – be shouted or exclaimed:

Les mots flagellent

Les mots harcèlent

Les mots scellent

Les mots endorment

La bêtise

(63)

And further on:

Les mots ont des maux

Les mots se taisent

Pour savourer

Le parfum du silence

Puis

LES MOTS VONT FAIRE DODO

POUR AGRIPPER LE RÊVE

²⁰¹ Assonance describes the use of the same consonants with different vowel sounds or the same vowel sounds but different consonants, such as “flagellent” and “harcèlent.” Consonance signifies the repetition of consonant sounds such as “harcèlent” and “scellent.” Alliteration indicates the use of the same consonant at the beginning of words or on the stress of a verse line, such as “savourer” and “silence.”

Clearly, different writers have different ways of expressing their orality. For example, Sall explains that he uses capitalisation as a way of controlling rhythm or tempo – he says it helps him guide the change in direction of a piece of work, to take a breath (7), and this may be the case with Seck Mbacké. The translator’s job is a matter of interpreting the many different signs of orality on the page, working out why the writer uses certain stylistic devices and discovering a way to represent them in translation.

At interview, Seck Mbacké expressed how she thought the translator should react to the rhythms and sounds of her works. And whilst recognising the difficulty the translator faces, she still believes that the translator should aim to replicate them in the target text:

S’il y a des répétitions, des allitérations, il sera obligé de rendre ça. Et c’est difficile, parce que le mot dans la langue française n’a pas la même sonorité dans la langue anglaise. Et c’est là que se trouve le piège. Comment peut-il maintenant arriver à rendre ça? Ça je ne saurais le dire parce que je ne peux pas me mettre à sa place. (*Personal 10*)²⁰²

These are certainly challenges which the translator faces with regard to this poem. A possible translation would be:

Words flagellate

Words intimidate

Words validate

²⁰² “If there are repetitions, alliterations, he will be obliged to render them. It is difficult, because words in French don’t have the same sound in English. And that’s where the trap is. Now how can he manage to render that? I couldn’t say, because I can’t put myself in his place.”

Words lull the innate

To sleep

And further on:

Words are wayward

Words abate

To savour

The scent of silence

Then

WORDS GO BEDDIE-BYES

TO SNATCH AT A DREAM

The words of Seck Mbacké could not be truer here when she speaks of the complexity of rendering the same sounds in English as may be found in a poem written in French. Of the eighty three lines in the poem, more than half consist of a sentence beginning “Les mots” followed by a verb in the third person plural ending “ent.” To ensure the translation also possesses consistent endings as in the French, a set of regular verbs with a common ending had to be chosen – “ate.” The homophones such as “mots” and “maux,” are extremely complex to render whilst keeping some element of the meaning – the solution of “words” and “wayward” is not as sleek as the ‘original’ but suffices for the time being as the search continues for a better solution. There are also examples of semi-homophonous words such as “harcèlent” and “scellent,” which have also been rendered in translation as “intimidate” and “validate.” The rendering of sound is of the utmost importance in a text which relies on the oral for its very being.

Meaning is more flexible, for it is the meaning of the poem as a whole rather than that of individual words which brings the poem alive; the power of the word is the concept Seck Mbacké is communicating, and the sound of the words is at the heart of that power.

As someone who has had many of his works translated into English, Sall also underlines the importance of the imagination of the translator, the value of not translating literally but being a poet in her own right, playing with the sound, rhythm and meaning of words to produce a brand new creation from a creation (8). And in support of Bandia's theory of unconscious orality, Sall says that when he writes he does not think about orality, but simply writes in his own way, a way which has its own rhythm, tempo and music, and which draws upon his own characteristics as a Peul or as an African (6). Hence, there may also be certain aspects of orality in the works of Francophone Senegalese women writers which they may not have considered as stemming from oral literature. From this perspective, surely then it is necessary not only to work with a female Senegalese writer where possible when translating her work, but perhaps also to look beyond her words. For example, in an extract from Benga's novel, *La balade du sabador*, certain elements of orality can be seen within it. For instance, the first section of the book is entitled "Chant nocturne," overtly referring to the oral before the book begins:

Des **p**lantes aux tentacules **b**aladeurs **p**euplaient les **b**erges du Salam,
énorme serpent **b**leuté aux **m**éandres **m**ultiples, grossi par les **r**écents
et **a**bondantes pluies **d**ont le **d**ivin "Rog" avait bien voulu le gratifier
dans sa miséricorde. (11)

Some of the most obvious examples of orality are highlighted in bold, such as the alliteration of the plosive “p,” “b” and “d” sounds, and the assonance of the nasal vowels, firstly the ã sound in the second syllables of “serpent” and “récentes,” and third syllable of “abondantes,” then the õ sound of the second syllable of “abondantes” and “dont,” which really build upon the oral effect of the rain pounding down. And the passage, as one complete sentence, finds a slow and graceful rhythm when read aloud. The reference to “Rog,” the supreme God of the Sereer people (613) is also typical of oral poetry in that it situates Benga’s story in West African religious mythology. A translation that attempts to render these oral qualities in English may be as follows:

Plants with wandering tentacles **p**opulated the **b**anks of the Salam, a **m**assive **bluish serpent** with **many** twists and turns, swollen by the **r**ecent and **a**bundant **t**orrent of rain kindly presented to it by the divine and merciful “Rog.”

It is evident, therefore, that orality is present in Francophone Senegalese works, whether conscious or otherwise, and that the translator must be aware of this either way, not simply relying on information provided by the source text writer for example.

Interestingly, Stella and Frank Chipasula state that it is the only the most articulate of women writers who draw on oral poetry in their writing (see quote page 36), but this may not appear to be the case with Francophone Senegalese women writers. A poet such as Kirama Fall has been described by Senghor as being authentically Senegalese but also uneducated and clumsy in her writing style (*Préface* 3), and this may be viewed as inarticulacy. In contrast, if ‘Senegalese’ is taken to mean ‘embedded in the oral’ (as Sall views his country), Kirama Fall’s texts can also be

viewed as highly articulate. This produces an obvious contradiction. In Kirama Fall's collection entitled *Les élans de grâce*, Engelbert Mveng speaks about the rhythm and musicality of her work (9), and throughout her poems there are obvious examples of this, such as the internal rhymes of "L'assaut de vagues" (11), the repetitions of "Nos instants" (21), the alliteration and wordplay of "Sa ma kole"²⁰³ (18-19) or the form and structure of "Ciel" (59). And in her earlier collection, she describes the poems as songs in her title, *Chants de la rivière fraîche*, as well as reiterating this fact below a number of titles in the book – "Donne-moi" (22-23), "Demain" (24-25), "Les enfants du soleil" (57), and "Des louanges nouvelles" (59-60).

Further, the word "Louanges" means praise, and is reminiscent of praise poetry, a traditional form of orality often embraced by women (McNee 25). And the collection also refers to the traditional instruments of orature, such as the 'kora' and 'balafon' in "Lacs de Guiers" (*Élans* 18-19), dance, and the possibility of audience participation through questioning in "Qui le sait" (30). Senghor also notes how Kirama Fall is reminiscent of popular Senegalese village poets, and stresses the clear rhythms of her work in poems such as "Le lever du soleil" (28-29). Thus, in this particular case, Stella and Frank Chipasula's argument does not appear to stand, because orality here, it seems, is not related to articulacy. Alternatively, it is possible that articulacy is not related to education, for Kirama Fall has succeeded in writing despite a lack of formal instruction. Either way, none of the Senegalese women poets and their possible relation to orality should be dismissed before analysing their works. Clearly, orality

²⁰³ Literally: "My Glue."

can appear in many different forms, in many distinct pieces of work, and the translator should not be prejudiced in her analysis.

The issue, once again, is how these translated works are judged in the target language and culture. If an individual is translating texts that are embedded in the oral and focusing on the sound devices detailed earlier, will a translation strategy that departs from a strict translation of meaning be questioned with regard to accuracy and standard? Paul Selver states that the quality of a poetical translation is judged on the extent to which it reproduces content, rhythmic structure and verbal effects (21). Thus, accuracy does not have to denote “scientific” and “precise” as Bassnett describes the seventeenth-century attitude towards translation (*Comparative* 149), but rather ‘thorough, considered and truthful to all aspects of the text,’ which relates to stylistic devices as well as meaning. And Lakshmi Holmström also stresses that the integrity of the translated text as a whole is more important than a narrow fidelity to the source text (44).²⁰⁴ And Holmström’s concept of ‘integrity of the whole’ rather than of the details is one that fits in well with the general translatory stance of this thesis (here I take integrity to mean moral soundness and a high level of professionalism).

Nevertheless, standard English literature does not take the same form as many Francophone Senegalese women’s texts, and there is always a concern that a translated

²⁰⁴ In full, Holmström states: “I am more bothered about the integrity of the translated text as a whole, rather than the detail which – once researched – might well have to be interpreted and negotiated. It seems more and more important to stress the translator’s agency as a mediator between a text and its translation and a negotiator between two languages. This also means to me an acknowledgement that the translator too is gendered and operates from his or her own cultural assumptions and relationships” (44).

text that acknowledges the stylistic devices of African orature may not be considered of a high professional standard because perceptions of what that is varies between cultures. The challenge, it seems, is not whether the translator can produce an accurate or quality translation – if the translator is capable, honours integrity and the text is well-researched, this is possible. The element that cannot always be controlled by the translator is the perception of the target reader within the target culture, as discussed in Chapter Two, Part V in relation to issues of foreignisation and domestication. Holmes states that, apart from those rare translations that break rules and norms to become primary texts in a polysystem (see footnote 49, page 75), most translations which are accepted by the target text culture “conform to the receiving polysystem’s notions of what literary texts, or at least translations, should be like...” (108). In other words, a piece of work will be judged according to whether it is perceived to be a good poem or novel in English (note earlier example regarding Nwapa, page 187), adding a further layer of difficulty to the translation process. However, it is not just conformity that is interesting here, but the fact that this conformity often makes the translation more ‘acceptable’ and therefore readable or enjoyable to the target reader. And whilst translations that break convention can also be agreeable, this is less frequent and much harder to quantify.

For example, Okpewho states that in orature, repetition “is a valuable means of emphasising an important point or a pressing need, it is basically the product of the emotional excitement which music it inspires” (*Introduction* 25), but in traditional English poetry or prose, repetition may be considered uncreative or simplistic; speaking in broad terms, Jean Aitchison comments, for example, that “repetition is

treated as a lowly skill” (23). However, *Kaddu* by Mbaye d’Erneville is filled with repetition that successfully contributes to the stylistic creativity of her work.²⁰⁵ For example, note the poem “Kassak,”²⁰⁶ which begins:

Tu es homme, ce soir!
Tu es un homme, mon fils!
Par ta chair meurtrie
Par ton sang versé
Par ton regard froid
Par ta cuisse immobile.

(Dia, *Poètes* 155)

You are man, tonight!
You are a man, my son!
With your beaten flesh
With your spattered blood
With your frozen stare
With your motionless leg.²⁰⁷

Whilst a translator may fear rejection of a text that uses such extensive repetition due to criticisms of its use in literature, and may possibly consider varying

²⁰⁵ Mbaye d’Erneville’s poems are highly influenced by orality, and this is clear from the outset for speakers of Wolof – *Kaddu* means speech or spoken word.

²⁰⁶ Kassak is a celebration of circumcision with song and dance (“kasag”).

²⁰⁷ This poem is translated in full by Brian Baer in *The Heinemann Book of African Women’s Poetry*.

While the translation is different to my own, he also retains the repetition in English throughout (Chipasula 113-114).

the vocabulary or structure of the poem, this is not necessary. Despite any negative remarks concerning its use as a stylistic device, it has been employed by many of the great English poets such as Wordsworth or Shelley (Steinman). Thus, because of their familiarity with such works, readers are more likely to accept the stylistic variations of non-European literature such as the more extensive use of repetition in “Kassak,” and this common oral device will be discussed further as this chapter progresses. Analysis of orature in this thesis therefore concerns the way in which traditional Senegalese poetic stylistics are communicated through written literature and how wider notions of accuracy, quality and integrity can be upheld in the translation of texts influenced by orality. In Part II, this analysis will be taken a step further by exploring how the boundaries of genre and text type have been stretched to incorporate orality, investigating how this too may affect translation strategies.

II Hybridisation of Genre and Text Type in Translation

In the analysis of texts to be translated, the rules of genre and text type usually assist the translator by laying down ground rules before the translation is to take place. During textual analysis, the translator will recognise the structure and language of a poem in one culture and translate the text into a poem that will be recognised as such in a target culture. And sometimes she may choose to play a little with the norms of different cultures and languages, for instance by taking a traditional English poetic form and switching it to a French one. This in itself is a complex undertaking, but the process of translation is even more involved when consideration is given to a genre or text type that crosses the boundaries usually drawn by “standard” literature. In Chapter

Three's analysis of the Wolof language, reference was made to Clavaron's distinction between two kinds of hybridity – that of language but also that of genre (*Mise*). And this hybridisation of genre or text type is the main focus of Part II of this chapter. It will look at the way in which writers draw upon the qualities of traditional African oral forms as well as the characteristics of Western genres to create their texts, analysing the way in which the norms of genre and text type are distorted and how this variation can be dealt with in translation. It will explore orality beyond traditional poetic forms, questioning the use of poetry translation theory for a much wider range of text types, and the relevance of traditional African orality in today's world.

In *Text Typology and Translation*, Trosborg states that “genres correspond directly to the text distinctions recognized by mature adult speakers, reflecting differences in external format and situations of use” (6). And with regard to text type, Hatim and Mason define its theory as “a conceptual framework which enables us to classify texts in terms of communicative intentions serving an overall rhetorical purpose” (140). Reiss defines four text types – content-focused (informative), form-focused (expressive), appeal-focused (operative) and the automedial type (multimedia type) (*Translation* 28-46), which she later redefines as multi-medial to include visual texts without sound, and in 1990 to comprise texts that contain features of the other typologies (*Brief* 185). However, what happens when communicative intentions are not clear, and the “mature adult” does not recognise the genre or text type they are being faced with? Hatim and Mason describe a process called “intertextual hybridisation” where “in subtle and highly intricate ways, a text is shifted to another type and made to serve another purpose without completely losing at least some of the

properties of the original type” (147), and this also applies to genre. By drawing upon elements of oral tradition, Senegalese women writers are modifying expected norms of genre and text type.

The genres of the texts analysed in this thesis so far are all clearly poetry or prose, including theatre, but traditional linguistic norms have been distorted. In other words, a Western genre has been used but the native language or features of oral literature also form part of the text. The text type is definitely expressive, but the native language is used within it for a purpose – to inform the reader of cultural issues related to language, converting the text to an expressive-informative one. In her analysis of text typology, Trosborg asserts that “communicative functions and text types are universal, but subservient to cultural norms reflected in realisation strategies and the organisation of texts. Lack of relevant knowledge of genre, communicative functions, text types and culture may result in distorted translations” (18). The translator must therefore take care to represent the linguistic norms and characteristics of both text types and both genres in translation.

To make analysis of texts simpler, it is possible to draw upon *Littératures francophones et théorie postcoloniale* by Jean-Marc Moura, who divides hybridity of genre into three different forms; firstly, a direct switch from a local genre or literary form to a Western one, for example Kirama Fall’s transfer from oral songs to written ones (see page 291), secondly, the writing of an original piece of work in a French literary tradition, such as Seck Mbacké’s short story, a relatively new genre to Senegalese authors, and in this case it appears to have been written around the concept of a traditional folktale (see discussions of “Mame Touba,” in Chapter One, Part II),

and finally the appropriation of a Western literary genre leading to a situation whereby it is difficult to determine the exact genre (Moura 137). Sow Fall's *L'ex père de la nation* can be cited here, because it wavers between fiction and autobiography, or possibly Seck Mbacké's poetry book entitled *Pluie-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer*, which may read like a Wolof epic tale, but at the same time appropriates the concept of Western poetry in the way in which the text is set out on the page.²⁰⁸

C'est continué, et quelques fois il y a des répétitions. Mais c'est fait à dessein. C'est une façon de montrer que la poésie ne peut pas être enfermée dans un étai. La poésie n'a pas de contour limitatif. Voyez-vous. La poésie est libre. (Seck Mbacké, *Personal* 9)²⁰⁹

So, Seck Mbacké has taken a Western literary genre and made it her own by drawing upon aspects of orality in her poetry collection, for example:

²⁰⁸ There are no full-length lines forming sentences and paragraphs, but at the same time the poetry seems to read like prose as it is written in a continuous form. In a similar way to Sall who asserts that his poetry flows constantly like speech where one line moves automatically to the next without stopping (7), Seck Mbacké's work here is reminiscent of an epic tale, a lengthy story which often takes a poetical form in transcription and also draws upon many stylistic devices used in orality. It is also much freer than standard Europhone poetry.

²⁰⁹ "It is constant, and sometimes there are repetitions. But it's done deliberately. It's a way of showing that poetry can't be locked in a vice. Poetry doesn't have restrictive boundaries. Do you see what I mean? Poetry is free."

Eloubaline Son de Cora²¹⁰

Eloubaline Mille échos Eloubaline

Île de la joie caressant Les replis de mon
âme

Eloubaline Île du Tourment

Eloubaline Île perdue dans le tourment de
la nature

Eloubaline Pirogues chargées de canaris²¹¹

Dans la brise du soir À la recherche d'eau
douce

(*Pluie 31*)

Firstly the page layout must be noted, where the spaces are perhaps indicative of breaths or pauses in speech, then there is the clear repetition of Eloubaline throughout, as well as that of “île” and “tourment.” The idea of orality is further supported by the reference to the traditional musical instrument, the “kora.” Then there are unusual rhythms which vary constantly with no standard pattern. And finally there is the sound of the poem, which stands out for its multitude of plosive consonants – p, b, t, d, c, alliteration – dans, d’eau, douce, and assonance with a focus on the phonetic ‘i’ sound

²¹⁰ Eloubaline is an island village in the southern Casamance region of Senegal, where Seck Mbacké was originally from. The village is situated on the delta of the Casamance river near the Atlantic Ocean. It only has access to saline water in the immediate vicinity, so has developed an innovative way to catch fresh rainwater by inverting the rooves of some of their thatched buildings (Steen 341; Schwartz-Bart 60).

²¹¹ A “canari,” or “canary” in English, is “a type of jar used for carrying water” (Dao).

– Eloubaline, mille, Île, replis, Pirogues, canaris, brise. Clearly, as a poem influenced by orality, these characteristics, where possible, should be transferred to the target text or replaced with equivalent features eg the alliteration replaced by the ‘s’ of “search” and “sweet:”

Eloubaline	Sound of the Kora
Eloubaline	A thousand echoes Eloubaline
Island of joy caressing	The recesses of my soul
Eloubaline	Island of Torment
Eloubaline	Island lost in the torment of nature
Eloubaline	Pirogues loaded with canaries
In the evening breeze	In search of sweet water

Reading Senegalese women’s literature in general, it is evident that orality is not relevant in every single piece of writing. Conversely, it is clear that many pieces of poetry show signs of orality because the very nature of poetry in today’s modern world is very free and creative, qualities which lend themselves to many traditional oral stylistic devices. And it would be imprudent to assume that oral devices are not used in other written genres of Francophone Senegalese women’s works such as novels and theatre.

In “Correspondance et création littéraire: Mariama Bâ’s ‘Une si longue lettre,’” Larrier notes the way in which Bâ’s novel echoes orality, providing support for this

theory that orality crosses the boundaries of text type and genre. Larrier believes the very nature of a letter is close to the soul and close to the voice, “the spoken voice,” she says “reminds the reader of the traditional African ‘conteur’ whose telling of the story can be as significant as the story itself. By representing the voice, Ramatoulaye/Bâ establishes the continuity between ‘oraliture’ and ‘literature’” (Larrier, *Correspondence* 751). She also believes that the book is divided into temporal breaks (as is orality), and that “Bâ has fashioned a narrative designed to imitate the ‘voice’ of the narrator” (747). In addition, the concept of passing on stories through orature from one generation to the next was undertaken by their grandmothers and is now being accomplished in written form by Ramatoulaye and Aïssatou as the first generation of women who can write. Both the oral form and the letter are to be heard by others, whereas a diary is not (748). Larrier also notes a number of ways in which the narrative discourse demonstrates elements of orality, firstly by addressing the audience directly, eg “Aïssatou, mon amie”²¹² and “tu le sais.”²¹³ And secondly, she asserts that Bâ also imitates speech: “with its short sentences, virtual absence of verbs, and many exclamation points, it mimics the jerky, halting rhythm of someone who is agitated, out of breath” (751), and she cites the following passage:

Un taxi, héhé! Vite! Plus Vite! Ma gorche sèche. Dans ma poitrine
une boule immobile. Vite! Plus Vite! Enfin l’hôpital! L’odeur des
suppurations et de l’éther mêlés. (Bâ, *Si* 12)

²¹² “Aïssatou, my friend.”

²¹³ “You know.”

Consequently, the translator's responsibility should be to replicate these elements of orality in translation. This will be relatively easy with those aspects of orality which can be transferred directly into the target text, such as temporal breaks. What is more complex is recognising the way in which Bâ imitates speech with her jerky rhythms.

In the English text, Bodé-Thomas writes:

A taxi quickly hailed! Fast! Faster! Faster still! My throat is dry.

There is a rigid lump in my chest. Fast: faster still. At last, the hospital:
the mixed smell of suppurations and ether. (Bâ, *So* 2)

Bodé-Thomas at first successfully renders the jerky rhythm and the breathlessness of Ramatoulaye as she speaks, more effectively achieved by the extra "faster," although it may not be entirely necessary. Unfortunately then, the halting rhythm goes astray a little by the addition of verbs where there were none, slowing down the pace of the passage, and also the unnecessary insertion of colons to join phrases which would otherwise happily have stood alone, as well as the loss of exclamation marks. He also abandons the effect of oral repetition between the two refrains – "Fast! Faster!" To create the true oral effect, the passage can be translated as follows:

A taxi hailed! Fast! Faster! My dry throat! And a rigid lump in my chest. Fast! Faster! At last – the hospital! A smell of suppurations and ether mixed.

A strict word-for-word translation has not been done, but many of the important oral effects which did not appear to be considered in Bodé-Thomas's translation have been retained. In her article, Larrier also comments on elements of oral syntax in the questions that Ramatoulaye poses herself, such as "Où me coucher?" (13), or "Partir?"

Recommencer à zéro...” (78). These oral elements are part of the history and culture of the writer, so it is highly significant to render these oral effects in translation, but also noting the phrasing in French. Bodé-Thomas writes “Where to lie down?” (2), “Leave? Start again at zero...” (39). An alternative translation that renders the oral qualities of the text as well as phrasing in English, could be: “Where shall I lie?” “Leave? Start again from scratch?” Here, the sound, phrasing and perhaps more general meaning are more important than the direct translation of each individual word.

In his essay: “On the Art of Translation,” Hugo Friedrich discusses the “rendering into French by Malherbe of the Lucilius letters of Seneca at the turn of the seventeenth century.” He says that “hardly anything remains of Seneca’s stylistic features. His short unconnected sentences with their somewhat idealistic laconisms are dissolved and transformed into a totally different style that until then had been unknown or little known in French literature.” (13). In the case of the Lucilius letters, introducing a new style into the French language is both commendable and fascinating. However, if Francophone Senegalese women’s literature is being translated into English, rendering the source text style in translation is also about communicating something new. To change the style of the literature completely, as did Malherbe, is to lose key stylistic qualities of a corpus that has not previously been analysed in great detail by Anglophone readers. Adaptation is an exciting and creative strategy, but in this case, it may be argued that semantic translation that renders the stylistic qualities of the source text is most appropriate, and especially with a letter, which brings into play the oral nature of the narrative voice.

Benga states that whilst there are fewer elements of orality in prose, as opposed to poetry, there are certain paragraphs in Senegalese novels that are very poetic and lyrical indeed (*Personal* 11). And while she does not claim to have a strong link to orality (see Part I page 283), she does maintain that her novel entitled, *La balade du sabador* speaks frequently of griots and the power of the traditional tale, drawing from the mysticism of orality in order to write her novel (*Personal* 11). Nord states that literary codes not only include stylistic features such as “rhythm, prosody, syntax, macrostructure, metaphors and symbols” but also “characters, ideas, expressiveness and atmosphere” (*Translating* 88). And in referring to the griot and traditional tale in *La balade du sabador*, Benga is clearly employing the latter group of devices to infuse her work with orality. Reminiscent of an oral text, her expressiveness and the atmosphere she creates (see extract page 289, for example), are just as important as more blatant stylistic devices for the translator to render in her work. Fall believes that traditional tales or short stories embrace certain devices such as songs or flashbacks to appeal to the listener, but that the novel is much more restrictive than other genres and therefore uses fewer stylistic devices such as alliteration or rhyme (*Personal* 11-14). But a story that follows the oral recordings of a boy who may lose his voice, is inevitably going to employ some sound devices as discovered in *Madema*:

Je voyageais dans un **énorme** navire en **forme** de **pagode** en **compagnie** de mes **parents**. Nous étions tous superbement habillés. Que l’on ne me demande pas où nous allions, même dans le rêve je ne savais pas. Ce dont je me souviens, c’est que nous étions **riches**, très **riches**. Nous avions navigué **longtemps**. J’ai eu ensuite l’**impression** que nous

tournions en **rond**. Nous n'avions plus de boussole. **P**ersonne ne **posait** de questions. (Fall 9)

Note here the short sentences, the rhyme of "énorme" and "forme," the consonance of "pagode," "compagnie" and "parents," the repetition of "riches," the assonance of the "o" sounds in "longtemps," "impression," "tournions," "rond" and "avions," and the alliteration of "personne" and "posait," all of which should be considered in translation as seriously as these findings would be if discovered in a poem or a song.

André Lefevere speaks of the complex nature of poetic translation in that the translator can render meaning but only at the expense of sound and vice versa (*Translating* 4-5), and this claim is supported by the words of Walter Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator" when he states that "it is self-evident how greatly fidelity in reproducing the form impedes the rendering of the sense" (79), but this is not always the case. In the extract from *Mademba*, the translator is able to render both form and sense in such a way that neither impedes the other in the target text:

I was travelling with my **p**arents in a massive **ship shaped** like a **p**agoda. We were all beautifully dressed. No one asked me where we were going. Even in the dream I did not know. What I do remember is that we were **rich**, very **rich**. We had been sailing for a **long** time.

Then I had the **feeling** we were **floating** round in circles. We no longer had a compass. No one asked any questions.

There has been no need to compromise on meaning when rendering the extract's stylistic qualities in translation. Whilst the sounds have not been translated exactly, they have been replaced with similar sounds where possible in different parts

of the text – consonance and alliteration with the “sh” and “ss” sounds as well as the “p,” “f” and “ng” sounds later in the piece. What appeared strange was the use of “l’on” in an oral text which sounds literary, so to compensate for that “did not” has been employed instead of “didn’t” etc, to retain a more formal register in English. The repetitions remain, and so do the short sentences and snappy rhythm which gets faster as it reaches the end of this extract.

According to Lefevere, “since African poetry has become established, and since its oral ancestry is acknowledged, it has become admissible to parody oral literature and to write ‘mock orals’” (*Translation* 137). On a more positive note, Lilyan Kesteloot asserts that many modern day African poets write verse which is meant to be sung or recited aloud due to a renewed contact with orature (340). Okpewho also compares oral poets with writer-poets, claiming that they are motivated by the same factors and issues and are likely to respond in a similar way to situations and experiences despite the fact that their backgrounds are very different (*Introduction* 20).²¹⁴ And d’Almeida also draws comparisons between oral and written narratives:

...from words and expressions in African languages to the use of proverbs and folk stories, to the organization of narrative structures. This use of orature is not at all a decorative ploy, a way of creating a certain *couleur locale*. It is in some instances, a narrative strategy, a structural device. (*Francophone* 172)

²¹⁴ Larrier goes so far as to say that the traditional form of storytelling from one woman to the next is the foundation for African women’s works in general (*Francophone* 51), and that whether oral or in writing, both forms of expression are essential for the emotional support and survival of women (87).

Thus, whether parody, representation of African realities, or narrative strategy, there is clearly a link between the writing of African literature and that of orature. And if this is the case, with orality generally taking a very creative and poetic form, does this mean that when translating not only Senegalese women's poetry, but also Senegalese women's prose, the translator should draw upon not just standard literary translation theory, but specifically poetry translation theory?

For instance, the translator could use Robert Bly's eight stages for translating poetry when working through a novel or short story which has been highly influenced by the oral form.²¹⁵ And other poetry translation theories could be combined with Bly's strategy. For instance, in "Culture and Ideology in the Translation of Poetry," Campbell discusses the importance of language density in poetry and the significance of the reader in interpreting this language (140). Evidently, Campbell means both the translator as reader and the target text reader, for whom the translator must attempt to render the multiplicity of possible readings present in the source text. This concept of the translator with skill in reading as well as writing is one reinforced by Bassnett who also stresses the inseparable nature of content and form (*Constructing* 66). Bassnett gives other sound advice on the translation of poetry, including the usefulness of exploring extratextual as well as textual features as discussed in Chapter Three, Part V

²¹⁵ Bly recommends eight different stages in poetry translation: set down a literal version, find out what the poem means, combine the literal version with the meaning whilst focusing on the English language structure, translate the poem into the correct dialect to provide the energy of the spoken language, look at the tone and mood of the poem, pay attention to sound, ask someone born into the language to check the translation over, and lastly make a final draft whilst reviewing earlier drafts and correcting any errors (*Eight*).

(60), but in this process the translator should always be aware of the value of a “sense of play;” Bassnett believes that the translator should not decode rigidly seeking a “correct” translation, but should be flexible in her approach (65). If the translator is looking for a strategy for texts influenced by orality, then these ideas and processes that stem from poetry translation theory can certainly be used as a base.

The translator can also find solace in the theories of Ezra Pound,²¹⁶ the approaches of Holmes,²¹⁷ or the strategies of Lefevere,²¹⁸ amongst other well-known

²¹⁶ Pound finds it valuable to analyse “three kinds of poetry:” melopoeia (the “musical property” of words), phanopoeia (“a casting of images upon the visual imagination”) and logopoeia (“the dance of the intellect among words”) (25). The last type of poetry Pound describes as a complex mode that is near impossible to translate, encompassing the aesthetic content embodied not only the direct meaning of the words, but an understanding of habits of usage, expected context, associations, acceptances and ironical play, for example (25-26).

²¹⁷ Holmes supplies four different approaches for verse translation which are “mimetic form” (recreating the form of the source text in the target text), “analogical form” (reproducing the function of the source text form), “content derivative form” (prioritising the content over the form, allowing the form to develop once the semantic material has been dealt with) and “extraneous form” (a new form which does not stem from the source text form or content) (26-27). Semantic translation initially would favour a content derivative form due to its preliminary focus on meaning; however the translator should also learn from the other strategies which highlight the significance of the relationship between source and target text forms as well as functions, and attention to these would benefit the translator of Francophone Senegalese texts.

²¹⁸ Lefevere details seven different strategies for translating verse: phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, prose translation, rhymed translation, blank verse translation and interpretation (*Translating*), but clearly only some of these methodologies would complement a strategy of semantic translation. Instead, the translator can begin researching and reading texts influenced by

academics. In fact, much has been written on poetry translation, and there are so many classifications and methods that it is impossible to detail them all in this thesis. Instead, what is important to take from this discussion is that the translator of oral-influenced texts can draw upon various aspects of the different theories of poetry translation, and this can form part of her methodology for translating Francophone Senegalese women's literature. Whichever text type or form Senegalese women's works take, many draw upon common devices present in traditional orality. And if orality has many similar characteristics to poetry (such as musicality or rhythms), the translator can make use of poetry translation theory not only in her translation of verse, but also of prose, including novels, short stories and theatre.

Newell states that "writers who choose to publish in the European languages are not cut off from their oral and vernacular literary heritage simply by their choice of linguistic medium" (124), and whilst the very nature of the novel as a genre was "the most 'alien' form to enter the continent" of Africa (127), there is still much evidence of orality at play in many works, whether this is language, grammar, style or form related. Newell claims that the way in which people set orality and written works apart from each other masks the way in which the two fields can merge (72).²¹⁹ So whilst a

orality by looking for qualities that fit in these categories, this would provide a basis for pre-translation analysis. And then she can find a balance between these strategies; translating meaning whilst allowing for sound and metre, rhyming where possible whilst considering form.

²¹⁹ Bandia also comments on the "infusion of European languages with African oral artistry to better reflect their own reality" (*Translation* 4), and Green et al. describe the way in which the "inscription of oral forms...has become a useful strategy in francophone women's writings for representing historical traditions in which women have had little access to the written word" (xii).

distinction between the written and the oral has often been drawn, creating a hierarchical opposition (Moura 93) where written language is considered in some way superior, this division is no longer so clear-cut (Goody 80). The role of the translator of Francophone African women's literature is to throw aside prior preconceptions of genre and text type, of oral and written, and regard Francophone Senegalese women's texts as being new and unique, considering poetry translation theory as appropriate for all tasks under consideration, whichever form the source text may at first seem to take.

At this point it is necessary to quieten the critics who may believe that orature is a dying art and any possibility of a relation between postcolonial Senegalese literature and the traditional spoken-word art form is pure speculation and unlikely as Senegalese society moves, along with the Western world, into an age of media and technology.

But this is not the case:

...far from dying under the impact of Western ways, oral literature remains a vigorous art, rooted in rural communities but flourishing too in the towns. It is adapting to modern circumstances just as it adapted to and reflected change in the past. (Mapanje, *Oral* 1)

And whilst tales and histories continue to be passed down from one generation to another, a more modern form of storytelling has been created by the present-day griots: popular musicians such as Viviane N'dour and Youssou N'dour use the strong and vibrant beats of mbalax,²²⁰ Senegal's popular genre of music, and often infuse it with their own political or social lyrics.

²²⁰ Mbalax is infused with heavy rhythms often played on traditional drums such as the sabar and tama, whilst today drawing upon the more 'Western' sounds from electric guitars and keyboards (Tang 157).

Other well-known singers such as Baaba Maal use contemporary rhythms like Yela, which reflects the rhythms used by Senegalese kings to congregate their people, and the sound of pounding grain (Gritzner 98). And modern-day oratory is not just the realm of men; women such as the singer Fatou Guéwel blend the traditional and the modern in their music, and her modern-day praise songs have increased her popularity (99). Janet H. Gritzner states that “the base of all music in Senegal is traditional” (97), but these sounds have captured a new generation, ensuring that the culture, including the music and rhythms of Senegal continue on, just in a new and exciting way. In 2003, aged 29, Nafissatou Dia Diouf published her first collection of poetry entitled *Primeur: Poèmes de jeunesse*. Far from rejecting oral devices, she embraces them; note the song-like form of “Fragments de paradis,” for example, along with its regular refrain, the varying rhythm, the rhymes, the alliteration, the repetitions and consonance (40-41) (see appendix O, page 409, for poem). Orality clearly is not a dying tradition but a thriving art which is present in the works of authors past, present and most likely – future. It may have changed in form, but orature is as strong today as it always has been, and modern-day literature is affected as much by today’s orature as it was by yesterday’s arguably ‘original’ words.

III Performance and the Fluidity of the ‘Original’

The griot tells histories of a people, women may sing songs as they pound the grain, and mothers tell age-old stories to their children. Like folklore transmitted orally from one person to the next, uncensored and unstoppable (Dundes, *Preface 2*), these histories, tales or songs are written by others to be performed again and again. And

over time they change – slightly different words or content, structure, facial expressions or tone, for example (Okpewho, *Introduction* 29; Finnegan, *Literature* 7), whether due to the impact of time on memory (Vansina 40),²²¹ a new individual adding his or her own touches, or audience participation. And in his well-known work on oral literature, entitled *The Singer of Tales*, Lord states that:

The truth of the matter is that our concept of the ‘original,’ of ‘the song,’ simply makes no sense in oral tradition... We might as well be prepared to face the fact that we are in a different world of thought, the patterns of which do not always fit our cherished terms. In oral tradition the idea of an original is illogical. (101)

If a fixed source text is difficult to pinpoint in traditional orature and an ‘original’ text does not exist, surely this means that it is possible to view the translation of postcolonial texts embedded in orature in the same way. Hence, the analysis of Part III is founded on the idea of moving into another realm of thought in which, as Lord states, the notion of an original text is “illogical.” If translation is no longer viewed in terms of a static ‘original’ source text but instead as a more fluid font of inspiration, can this take translation of Senegalese women’s literature on a new journey of orality, performance and originality?

²²¹ Memory has been seen as a crucial element of orality throughout history, and in past studies considered a notion that separates the oral mode from the written medium of articulation (Ong 12-13), especially in analysis of Ancient Greek oral literature in which Mnemosyne was deemed to be “Memory personified” (Rose 16) and “goddess in the theology of oral peoples” (Notopoulos 466).

For many years Western culture has been obsessed with literalism and a fixed written text, the ‘original’ being deemed the author’s self-expression, part of her personality or intention, “an unchanging monument of the human imagination (‘genius’) transcending the linguistic, cultural, and social changes of which the translation is a determinate effect” (Venuti, *Rethinking* 3).²²² But this is a problematic and restrictive viewpoint. Tymoczko asserts that:

In ignoring and failing to account for interlingual oral literary translation, the terms of our very discourse about literary translation presuppose a framework about literature and the workings of literature that fails to account for the position of literature through most of human history. (*Oral* 53-54)

...that of an eternally moving and changing text.²²³ By putting orality into writing female Francophone Senegalese writers are conserving their stories, but because they

²²² Translated literary texts themselves have always been considered far more unstable than ‘original’ works (Snell-Hornby, *Translation* 14), where the translation is often considered to be a mere copy that dates and the ‘original’ is deemed to be eternal (Venuti, *Rethinking* 3).

²²³ For example, when speaking of the two basic orientations in translation, Nida relates both types of translation to some form of ‘original.’ Formal equivalence, he asserts, “is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message” (*Toward* 165), and dynamic equivalence necessitates that “the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message” (159). And whilst these may be seen by other theorists to be old-fashioned viewpoints (as further analysed above, especially with regard to orality), some individuals may still want to read a text that they personally feel is a good representation of the ‘original.’

have appropriated a traditionally Western genre, the translator may assume the text to be as fixed and stable as previous written works could have claimed to be. Perhaps this is not the case. Certainly, in terms of oral literature in general, Ruth Finnegan believes that the scope of the artist to improvise or create may vary, but there is almost always *some* opportunity for ‘composition’ (*Literature* 9). Unlike written texts, extemporisation or elaboration are far more common, she asserts, and there is no concept of an “authentic” version as there often is in traditional written literature (10). Clearly there appear to be a very different list of priorities for oral texts as opposed to written ones, and this must be considered by the translator.

Further, in her article on “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation,” Lori Chamberlain comments on the often cited notion of the creative male ‘original’ text and the female derivative ‘translation,’ that can only be faithful or beautiful but not both (306-307). However, from an oral perspective this all changes. If the original does not exist, every text is feminine, and if the concept of faithfulness is much more fluid, texts can be both beautiful and creative in their faithfulness, if that is what the artist intends. Further, if a poststructuralist notion of translation is considered, the whole fixed and binary opposition of the ‘original’ versus ‘translation,’ is broken down:

Rather than elevate the translation to the level of the original, poststructuralists see the translation as a work in its own right. For Derrida and de Man, neither the text to be translated nor the translation can be said to be an original semantic unity since both are derivative,

heterogeneous and consist of diverse linguistic and cultural materials.

(Gyasi, *Francophone* 11)

This viewpoint, founded on the perspectives of Jacques Derrida²²⁴ and Paul de Man,²²⁵ firstly challenges the traditional tripartite view of translation as outlined by Jakobson (see Chapter Three, page 248), for it is not possible, based on the views expressed here, to separate translation between different languages from rewriting or the translation of signs. Further, if literary creation is viewed from this standpoint, the translation of texts is simply another stage in a creative process in which the 'original' is uncertain. And surely this means that the constantly transforming 'source' text makes translation far more 'acceptable' as an activity because the text has already been rewritten many times over. If the translator accepts the lack of an 'original' (because orality is unfixed and the written 'source text' is not the first 'version' of a text for it is already a translation of the linguistic and cultural materials that surround it), then this opens up creative possibilities for the translator of Francophone Senegalese women's literature.

²²⁴ Derrida comments that the supposed 'original' is in debt to the translation, and its survival is dependent on a "demand and desire for translation," insisting on a departure from the traditional understanding of the translated work as a feminine derivative of the masculine 'original' (*Ear* 152; *From* 227).

²²⁵ In response to Benjamin's essay on "The Task of the Translator," in which he discusses the interdependency of 'original' and 'translation' (73-74), de Man comments that translation and all forms of critical and literary theory can be seen as failures due to their secondary nature to the 'original.' However, he states, these secondary activities reveal an essential disarticulation in the original text, thereby killing the original by discovering that it is already dead (36).

In other words, because of this lack of ‘original,’ she may feel less inclined to dutifully represent all features of the written ‘source text’ in her translation.

For example, if the translator applies to her work the above ways in which the oral text can change from one performance to the next, ie different words, content, structure, facial expressions, tone, composition, extemporisation, elaboration, a text could undergo some radical changes in translation as in the following extract from “Hommage à une jeune paysanne” by Ndiaye Sow:

Source text: Mère de la terre
 De ta sueur pétrie,
 Souffle chaud des savanes,
 Ton pas, rythme de Xalam

(17)

Literal translation: Mother of earth
 Kneaded by your sweat,
 Hot breath of the savannahs,
 Your pace, the rhythm of the Xalam

Rewritten text: MOTHER OF THE EARTH
 And your sweat
 Beats your brow
 In the burning Savannahs
 Of the Jolof.

Your steps chase the rhythm

As the Griot strums the Xalam²²⁶

Whilst clearly an off-shoot of the alleged ‘source text’ above it, the rewritten text has used new words, its content has been elaborated upon with further historical and cultural references to the Jolof kingdom and the traditional player of the Xalam. Its structure now includes a refrain which breaks up the poem, lengthens it, and can be repeated by the audience after each verse, thus building on the performative nature of the poem. The capitalisation may be read as a change in tone – perhaps an indication that the performer should shout or announce these words in a different way to the rest of the poem. Certainly, this is one way of translating a poem influenced by orality, and in a song such as this, which in itself talks of the rhythm of the xalam, a consideration of the performance element of the poem could well be one that the translator takes.²²⁷

²²⁶ There is an ambiguity in the original text whereby it is not clear if “pétie” refers to “mère” or “terre.” In context, it makes more sense that pétie refers to “terre.” In support of this, the word “pétie” is known to have Biblical resonances – God needed the clay to create man (note Job 10:9; *New* 383). However, for argument’s sake the ambiguity has been retained in translation. “Sueur” also recalls a passage of the Bible in which God condemns sinful humans to work by the sweat of their brow for survival in Genesis chapter 3:9 (*New* 3). In many ways the religious undertones to the poem are captured more in the second translation, demonstrating that a freer translation does not necessarily lead to a greater degree of inaccuracy.

²²⁷ A traditional view of translation argues that nothing should be added to (or taken away from) the ‘original’ by the translator, and this is deeply ingrained in many translation teachers. Instead, this view should be more flexible. It should firstly be dependent on the skopos of the text, ie is this a creative text or a technological text? And what has been requested in the translation commission? Secondly, this

The aim of such a translation is not simply to approximate how the text might be performed in the source language or even in the target language of those it is translated for, but also to change the restrictive way in which translation is often viewed, by opening up creative possibilities to the rewriter of Senegalese women's literature, creative possibilities that have for a long time been accepted in the source text culture.

This may be hard to comprehend on paper, for the whole concept of a permanent written original is firmly embedded in the post-Renaissance Western psyche.²²⁸ The advent of the written word in a visual world brought about homogeneity and uniformity (McLuhan 58), but in a culture that embraces orality this can appear uncreative and close-minded. Orality is about heterogeneity through performance. Newell states that:

If a boundary exists at all between oral and written texts, it does not relate to structure and form, but to the different ways in which these genres interact with their audiences. Oral texts invoke or imply the accompaniment of musicians and dancers, and the presence of live audiences who participate in events. (73)

By analysing an extract from a poem by Seck Mbacké, it is possible to demonstrate how this boundary can be overcome by the recognition of the "live" notion of orality,

depends on an individual's perspective, and here it is argued that the griot as traditional African translator had more artistic licence to manipulate language and style upon communication.

²²⁸ "Post-Renaissance" is stated here, for the concept of the 'original' was not firmly embedded in earlier Western literature, where past written or oral forms, such as the Arthurian cycles, were regarded as material for rewriting and transformation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Meister 30-31).

the idea of the audience and the performance of oral-inspired postcolonial texts, an exercise which can assist the translator in her task:

LËL²²⁹

Écoute les lourds sanglots du Tam-tam

Dioung.-Dioung...

Écoute-Écoute Un circoncis est mort!

Dioung!

Les fusils de traite se sont tus

La chèvre aux deux têtes Dont une seule
visible aux humains La chèvre aux quatre
yeux Dont deux visible aux humains La
chèvre aux huit pattes Dont quatre visible
aux humains Et qui plane Quand la terre

²²⁹ According to the poet and anthologist, Hamidou Dia, Seck Mbacké's Francophone works are heavily influenced by traditional initiation rites and her animist roots (445). This particular extract appears to be a political text that criticises the dangers of circumcision when performed as part of initiation rites in Africa. The poem continues to describe the funereal ceremony, including procession, chanting and call for vengeance by the spiritual ancestors, following the death of the boy.

accouche de ses nains La chèvre aux deux
nez A saccagé une âme à l'épreuve Dans le
Bois sacré

This is how the poem appears on the page in the printed version published by L'Harmattan – it is a 'hybrid' text that follows the mixed cultural and linguistic qualities discussed in the previous chapter, mostly written in the language of the colonisers, about African culture and incorporating strong influences of oral tradition. Gyasi asks if a foreign language is “capable of translating in an entirely satisfactory manner an imagination that has its roots in an alien culture?” (3), but his point regarding a 'satisfactory translation' is based upon the assumption that a translator will attempt to retain features of the source text in translation. However, whilst that notion may stray from the idea of a 'fluid original' in translation, it also highlights the importance of the performative nature of the oral-inspired text as one of the key features that must be retained in translation.

In fact, according to Ronald Rasser: “The analysis of oral narrative begins with the rhythm of the narrative” (234), and rhythm can be added to the poem by performing it, as is the tradition with native African works. If the poem is read out loud, the first half is very disjointed, with large gaps on the page between words and phrases, whereas the second half of the text has quite an obvious rhythm; the length of the lines and number of syllables allow the poem to move at a regular pace, and each line flows into the next because the text is written in a way that stops the reader from pausing between phrases. When performed, this section of the poem demonstrates “sprung rhythm,” a term first used by Gerard Manley Hopkins (107) to describe a

rhythm in which the number of stressed syllables in a line remains the same but the number of unstressed syllables is indeterminate (“sprung rhythm”), for example:

˘ ˘ , ˘ , ˘ ˘ ,

Les fusils de traite se sont tus

˘ , ˘ , , ˘ ˘ , ˘ ˘ , ˘ ˘ ,

La chèvre aux deux têtes Dont une seule visible

˘ ˘ ,

aux humains

Despite the fact that there is some regularity in the stressed syllables, the rhythm of the poem is constantly fluctuating, and Femi Oyebode also uses the term in relation to African orality to acknowledge that:

...pauses properly timed are part of the construction meter. Regular meter has a monotonous quality to the African ear; there is a felt need to alter the rhythm both within lines and between lines probably because the African ear demands rhythmic complexity. (93)

Whilst this is far from a formula in the Parry/Lord sense: “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea” (Parry 272; Lord, *Singer* 30), and that is used across a number of works within a canon (Lord, *Singer* 30-67), this type of research is essential as it can directly affect translation. Awareness of a rhythm that wavers between free verse and regular metre (or perhaps read: traditional African orality and traditional French literature), can only assist in translation analysis. Further, these timed pauses are not only relevant to

the “sprung rhythm” of the second half of the extract, but also to the disjointed introduction which could be read as an announcement, thereby interpreting the large spaces between words and phrases as pauses. Although these pauses can only be judged according to the translator’s own readings and not always exactly as the ‘source text’ author may have ‘intended’ them, the idea of individual interpretation is reminiscent of orature.

As already indicated, oral tradition is passed on from one generation to the next via word of mouth, and it is accepted that in time elements may change and individual performances will differ according to the character who is relating the tale. It should therefore be accepted that each translator will also vary and interpret the pauses slightly differently, similar to an individual actor performing a text according to personal style (discussed further in Part IV) or a musician playing and interpreting a piece of music. On the page it seems that Seck Mbacké has recreated the pauses that would naturally occur had this been orature. Nevertheless, this only works to a degree. According to Oyebode, the eye cannot register certain elements such as the variation in vowel length or tempo, and on the page it is impossible to see the facial and hand gestures that would be observable in an oral performance (93). These would only be replicable if the writer were willing significantly to distort the standard language of the text or turn it into a dramatic piece with stage directions. However these pauses within Seck Mbacké’s works are interpreted: if the translator wishes to keep all possible interpretations open to the target reader, it is important that they are preserved.

Interestingly, Jack Mapanje and Landeg White state that “it is the curse of oral literature that translators cannot resist the urge to tidy up the text!” (6), often altering

form, so it appears more Westernised (see appendix P for an example of a Westernised layout, page 411). But if form is indicative of rhythms and pauses, a change such as this could mean naively sacrificing an integral part of the text. At this point, it is necessary to state that the translator's urge to adhere to source text features contradicts the fluid nature of the original oral work, discussed previously. However, here the translator's choices rather than obligations are being highlighted. Further, not all African texts are written to be performed, so it is the translator's role to judge the degree to which the text has been written with a performance element in mind, making a decision on the importance of form. In the translation below, the form of the text written in French has been kept in translation to preserve the introductory announcement. And in the second half, words were chosen carefully to replicate the sprung rhythm:

LËL²³⁰

Listen to the intense sobs of the Tom-tom

Boom-Boom...

²³⁰ The native African language of Wolof plays a large role in the works of Seck Mbacké, the title of this text, Lël, meaning "circumcision" in Wolof. This has not been translated, for if the strategy of foreignisation is continued, it should be as foreign to an English reader as it is to a French one.

Listen-up, listen-up A circumcised boy is
dead!

Boom!

The trade guns have died down
The goat with two heads Just one visible to
humans The goat with four eyes Just two
visible to humans The goat with eight legs
Just four visible to humans And it hovers
When the earth gives birth to its runts The
goat with two snouts Has destroyed a soul on
trial In the Sacred Wood

Moreover, when a strong element of orature is detected in a poem, repeated phrases can often be a key feature of the source text under consideration, as touched upon at the end of Part I in relation to the poetry of Mbaye d'Erneville. Use of repetition varies greatly amongst writers and from culture to culture, and translators may be tempted to amend repeated lines to give texts more variation. However, what may appear to be the dull repetition of lines such as "Just one visible to humans," "Just two visible to humans" etc, is not dull to the ear in performance, and besides it is not the translator's role to impose Western values or judgments upon the text, as discussed in Part V of Chapter Two. And in relation to orality, Appiah also stresses the need to challenge Western assumptions of cultural superiority and instead acquire "a thick and

situated” understanding of oral literature in order to access the truth inside the material being translated (*Thick* 400). Whilst Appiah is discussing the translation of African texts written in local languages, it has already been established that postcolonial texts often contain many of the same features as traditional orature and therefore the translator of Seck Mbacké’s works may wish to cast aside any preconceived ideas and biased opinions based upon Western ideals.

Rhyme is also a crucial ingredient. Bly states that he believes in working as much as possible with internal rhymes, whilst not insisting on reproducing end-rhymes (44). I disagree with his obvious imbalance between the importance of formal elements of the ‘source text,’ and think that the same consideration should be given to both – attention to detail including sound and tone within the sentence cannot be insisted upon, if it is only to be disregarded at the end. Further, when the text does not take a Western form, where are the internal rhymes and where are the end rhymes? It may not always be possible to translate rhymes, but the translator should not be defeatist. For the purpose of this translation, the need to find a suitable substitute rhyme for “nez, saccagé and sacré” was considered. Although they are ‘eye rhymes’ and not exact auditory rhymes, the words “destroyed, Sacred and Wood” perform this function, because the endings of the words provide a consistency in sound, allowing the lines of the target text to flow as well as those of the source text. It is also necessary to be aware that writing can encourage elaboration (Goody 285). So, the temptation may be to poeticise in translation by substituting ‘accoucher’ with, for example, ‘bring forth,’ or ‘Dont une seule visible aux humains’ with ‘one of which is visible to humans.’ Clearly here, in English the register is being moved up a level,

which is unnecessary if the translator wishes to retain the oral form in the English language.

And as discovered in Chapter Three, language is one of the keys to studying postcolonial women's literature. If the translator thinks in oral, performative terms, and considers that Wolof has a very strong and intense sound, this influences the translation in places. For example, the phrase "Just two visible to humans" was continued, instead of "two can be seen by humans," which sounds much weaker. Mapanje and White talk of women's oral tradition in which words fit the rhythm of pounding grain: "Without that regular thud-thud-thud of pestle on mortar the songs lose the very basis of their form," he says (4). This idea of words fitting the rhythm of a real act is evident in the line "Les fusils de traite se sont tus," where the short single-syllable words mimic the abrupt sound of guns spitting out bullets. Therefore, the words: "The trade guns have died down" were chosen in the English translation, because they also mimic the sound of the guns using similar plosive consonants as were present in Seck Mbacké's poem.

Finally, to translate the poem properly, the meaning has to be clear, and researching the possible background to the poem within the field of orature helps the translator make crucial decisions. The text by Seck Mbacké is about the death of a boy during initiation, with the references to circumcision, the goat (often sacrificed at initiations), and the Sacred Wood, where boys would gather with spiritual leaders during the initiation process ("Bukut"). The beginning of the poem is a call for individuals to listen to an important announcement as the drums begin, and before launching into a rhythmic performance. This may remind translators who research

orature of the griot who arrives in the village with an important story to tell. For this reason, the second time that “Écoute” has been used, it has been translated as “listen-up” rather than just “listen.” It may appear less formal in translation, but in fact it is more apt in this situation for the phrase fulfils the role of a ‘call for attention.’

In an article entitled *Telling Tales*, Bassnett talks of bringing the work of a writer to a new reading public, and trying to “ensure that the pleasure of reading is reproduced in the second language” (114). Much of the pleasure gained from orature and postcolonial writings influenced by it can be lost in the ‘target text’ if the translator does not fully research traditional African works. It has been demonstrated already how orature can impact upon translation, but what happens if orature, the native language and tradition are not considered? The end result would produce a poem that appears something like this:

CIRCUMCISION

Listen to the intense sobs of the Tom-tom

Boom, boom!

Listen, listen

A circumcised boy is dead

Boom!

The trade rifles have subsided

The goat with two heads

Only one of which is visible to humans

The goat with four eyes
Two can be seen by humans
The goat with eight legs
Four of them are visible to humans
And it glides
When the earth brings forth its dwarves
The goat with two noses
Has destroyed a tested soul
In the Sacred Forest

Whilst neither version is strictly incorrect, and this translated poem has been created deliberately for the purpose of this argument, some of the decisions made in the second version could easily be made by a translator not considering the full cultural background of the source text author, orality and its performative nature. It is evident that Gyasi's idea of a 'satisfactory translation' is more closely achieved in the first translation. It is also apparent that a focus, not only on the fluctuating nature of the source text but also on performance and the role of the audience, is of paramount importance in translating texts such as Seck Mbacké's, which are undoubtedly founded upon orality. And to explore this further in terms of translation, it is necessary to turn to the theatre.

IV Theatrical Dimensions of Orality and Translation

It is unmistakable that Francophone Senegalese women's literature takes on a whole new aspect when it is read aloud and acted out, and this is relevant to both

poetry and poetic prose. And in Part III of this chapter, it was shown how an understanding of the performative nature of these texts can influence translation strategies. Hence, Part IV takes this further: to consider Francophone Senegalese women's works as theatre through a more in-depth analysis of performance and the varying dimensions (influencing multiple senses)²³¹ of theatre and theatre translation theory. Whilst there are very few plays by Francophone Senegalese women writers in existence (*Qui est ma femme?* by Seck Mbacké has been studied for this thesis),²³² this part of Chapter Four will investigate whether other text types can also be explored from a theatrical perspective, by analysing extracts of poetry in relation to a selection of features of theatre translation. It will consider the primacy of performance, collaboration, gesturing, audience impact and music, including drum language. Bassnett describes the way in which a play is a blueprint to an actual performance rather than a final product. She states that the translator must rewrite the text in order

²³¹ Bassnett states that "theatre is a form that comes into existence on several dimensions, and words are only one component. An experience of theatre involves listening and seeing, and can sometimes involve other senses as well" (*Playing* 10).

²³² Apart from *Qui est ma femme?* by Seck Mbacké, very few pieces of theatre have been published by Senegalese women. Khadi Hane has published a play entitled *Il y en a trop dans les rues de Paris*, Hadja Maï Nian has written a piece of theatre entitled *Au nom de Sanar! ou l'étudiant rouge*, and Senegalese writer Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine (born in Haiti) has also published a play entitled *La ligne de crête*, however all three of these texts are difficult to acquire at present. On the other hand, Prix Goncourt winner, Marie Ndiaye (born and raised in France, but whose father is Senegalese) has published many plays, including *Hilda*, which is also available in translation. Further details of all these texts can be found in the Bibliography of Senegalese Women Writers. Sow Fall has also edited a collection of essays on theatre, entitled *Le théâtre négro-africain: Actes du colloque d'Abidjan*.

that it is a finished piece of literature in another language, whilst providing an incomplete text that is on its way towards its final realisation on the stage (*Playing* 11). This means the translator must work on two levels – creating a new text in a new language, but also one which can be read aloud and interpreted in different ways.

To begin, Alain Piette remarks that theatre and theatre translations are meant to be performed before they are published, and some are never published at all if they are not successful on the stage (115). Hence, the translator of the Francophone Senegalese oral-inspired text should reverse her priorities by analysing the spoken word before the written word and raising the importance of all aspects of performance in her array of linguistic devices. This may seem an impossible challenge for the translator of prose, because rarely do translators consider the way in which the words may be read out loud beyond the most obvious devices such as alliteration or repetition, and seldom do they contemplate how a poem or novel may be acted out.

It should also be noted that different cultures have different styles of performance with some cultures focusing on a more physical delivery, whilst others concentrate on the vocal delivery, for example (Bassnett, *Playing* 11). Finnegan claims that “within a set culture, there may be many set styles of performance designed to suit the different literary genres recognized in the culture. Indeed these genres are sometimes primarily distinguished from each other in terms of their media of performance rather than their content or purpose” (Finnegan, *Literature* 7).

Subsequently, it is valuable for the translator of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature analysing the poem or novel and assessing whether the text can be related to a specific oral genre, to ask whether the text is related to or representative of a praise

song or an epic, a funeral dirge or a folktale, for instance. The translator can then listen to related oral recordings to understand the way in which each type of oral genre is performed – what is the tone, the emotion, the phrasing of the text, for example, and can any of these characteristics be found in the written text being translated?

Seck Mbacké’s poem, “Élégie pour Jean Brierre”²³³ takes the form of a funeral dirge, a genre often performed by African women (Finnegan, *Literature* 147). Whilst part of the bigger epic, the style of which Seck Mbacké relates to *Pluie-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer* (see page 298), this section can also stand alone and contains many of the features characteristic of elegaic oral poetry – the deceased as the focal point of the poem, his name as well as by-names and terms of endearment, his qualities, his ancestry, his historic home etc etc (Finnegan, *Literature* 152-161):

Le Fils du Morne²³⁴ est parti Pleuré par
Toute la Terre Haïti Pleure la Paix
Il s’en Est allé L’exilé serein éniévré par
Son âme De POÈTE Pour doucement

²³³ Brierre was born in 1909 to Fernand Brierre and Henriette Desrouillère, and became a famous Haitian poet and dramatist. In 1962, after nine months in prison under the dictatorial régime of François Duvalier, he fled to exile in Senegal where he worked in various positions for poet-President Senghor, including special assistant to the Minister for Culture (Wolitz 5), where he met Seck Mbacké and wrote the preface to her collection of poetry, *Pluies-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer*. He returned to Haiti in 1986 and passed away in 1992 (Kauss).

²³⁴ This most likely refers to the mountainous Gros-Morne municipality of Haiti in the north of the country (which may also link to the “cimes” or “summits” at the end of the extract), but “morne” also means glum, mournful or dismal in French, luckily it has similar resonances in English.

Sucer le Sein De la Mère Dame Derouillère
Il est Parti Jean-François Brierre Le Fauve²³⁵
D'Haïti à la démarche paisible L'homme
Des rues de Dakar La tête bourdonnante
De Rimes Cigarette aux lèvres Dodélinant
De la cime Oui L'HOMME des CIMES

(Seck Mbacké, *Pluie* 54-55)

Jean-François Brierre as the deceased is the focal point of the poem, and by-names are used such as “Le Fils du Morne” or “L’homme Des rues de Dakar” and there are also terms of endearment such as “Le Fauve.” Brierre’s historic home is “Haïti,” and in this extract one of his qualities is named in that he has a poet’s soul: “Son âme De POÈTE.”

In her analysis of the Akan people of West Africa, Finnegan also highlights the specific characteristics of funeral dirges, and this knowledge can also be used to underline features that are clearly important to the performer of the French version of this text before transferring them to the English translation. For instance, Finnegan emphasises the importance of features such as name clusters, the repetition of key words, and the straightforward language, as well as tonal and phonological patterns.

²³⁵ There is a possibility that Seck Mbacké wanted to draw parallels to “Fauvism,” the modern artistic movement of the early 1900s of which Matisse and Derain were members (“Fauvism”). Although this school was short-lived and soon abandoned for Cubism, it has been related to the naturalist movement in their focus on landscape or sensual images of human figures (Barris 2-3). To date, no allusion to this has been discovered in the aforementioned texts or other works about or by Jean François Brierre (Dia 43-50).

On the other hand, she affirms that stress is not important nor is the systematic use of syllables or tones. Finnegan does, however, assert that the performer will often pause, sob or wail and will often make up a tune as she proceeds through the dirge (*Literature* 162-163). A dirge is often also accompanied by drumming or guns (note the drums and guns of Lël in Part III when the death of a boy is announced) and the singing, speaking or wailing of others, but there is no dancing during such performances, she states, just gesturing or the rocking of the speaker's head (Finnegan, *Literature* 164-165).

Through the knowledge of the theatrical style of performance in elegaic or funereal orality, the translator can isolate the features she deems to be most important and transfer them, if she chooses, to the target text. For example, whilst translations of some Senegalese women's work may include an analysis of syllabic count, in this instance, it may not be as important as other elements. This is a slow poem that does not embrace the jaunty beat of oral works such as the praise poem. The gaps in the extract clearly form pauses in the piece and there are phonological patterns, specifically that of the related "ère," and "erre" and "èvres" sounds which may signify a wail or sob. Further, by dividing the poem up into sections and reading aloud, it is far easier to hear automatically the sound devices used by Seck Mbacké and aim to render these in translation once the form has been recreated (see appendix Q, page 412). A possible translation that has benefited from a theatrical analysis could be:

The Son of Morne has departed The whole
World in despair Haïti Mourns for Peace
He is no longer there Serene exile

intoxicated by His POET's soul To softly
Suckle the breast of Mère Lady Derouillère
He has Left Jean-François Brierre Wildcat
Of Haiti on a peaceful walk The man
Of Dakar streets Head buzzing
With Rhymes Cigarette in his lips Swaying
the summit Yes THE MAN of SUMMITS

Progressing to the second aspect of theatre to be discussed here, Bassnett comments that theatre translation should be collaborative, involving other parties such as writers, actors and directors (*Playing 10*). The translator of orality can also benefit from collaboration. Orality is also not a solitary act, and the translation of literature (especially that influenced by orality), should involve others to make sure that all possible interpretations of a text are considered, that there are no elements of the text that have been overlooked, there are no errors and no homogenising effect on the translation.²³⁶

Thirdly, there is a more complex issue of theatre – gesturing. This is underlined as one of the more critical aspects of theatre translation due to the diverse

²³⁶ In translating Francophone African women's poetry for the anthology, *The Other Half of History*, it was essential to discuss the poems and their interpretations with a variety of different people, both French and English speakers. Everyone reads a poem in a unique way, and by considering the varying perspectives and multiple readings, I was able to avoid the possible homogenising effect that a single translator may have upon a collection of poems, as well as benefiting from the collaborative nature of oral discussion by incorporating these different readings into the poems in translation (Collins, *Other* xxvi).

meanings of certain gestures across different cultures. Thus, theatre translation may require amending or clarifying gestures in some way for different audiences (Bassnett, *More* 35). And whilst gesturing may not be overtly relevant in most postcolonial texts under discussion here due to the fact that they are rarely written into poetry but rather added upon performance, Seck Mbacké's play does use many examples of gesturing. For instance, the first scene includes a stage direction where Daouda is instructed to snap his fingers. In Senegalese terms, the snapping of the fingers is to grab someone's attention and should be done with the right hand, as the left is considered unclean and using it in this way would therefore be socially unacceptable (Foster, *Global* 120). This stage instruction should therefore be clarified in some way in translation, if it were to be performed by an Anglophone group who would not naturally understand the implications of this simple gesture. Thus, "en claquant des doigts," instead of being rewritten as "snapping his fingers" could perhaps be rewritten as "snapping the fingers of his right hand to grab Aida's attention." Of course, the length of the phrase is not important (as long as it is not ridiculously long), what is crucial is that the stage direction accurately describes what the performer should do. Further, if this play were performed by a French group, it could also need elaborating in this way for the performers fully to understand their instructions.

The significance of cultural gesturing, such as the rolling of a person's eyes, is exemplified in *Une si longue lettre* (see Chapter One, page 82) where explaining the gesture may be considered an overelaboration of the text. On the other hand, that is entirely the choice of the individual translator; a translator working on a schools text with study notes may wish to add further footnotes to explain these culturally

embedded gestures as integral part of learning. In the writings of Bassnett, specifically her seminal text on *Translation Studies*, she provides excellent guidelines for translators of interpretative texts in her discussion of theatre translation,²³⁷ which are a particularly useful starting point in the analysis of texts of this type. In fact, by viewing Francophone Senegalese women's literature, whether theatre, poetry or prose as an interpretative text which requires a more open mind in its approach, many of the theories of theatre translation can be of great use to the translator of oral-inspired texts. What the semantic translator must do is combine this flexible approach with one which still translates the meaning of the words and phrases in front of her.

Fourthly, theatre cannot be discussed without considering the contribution of the audience. Bassnett states that "by taking into account so prominently the needs of the audience, the language into which plays are translated is usually very much of its own time. Given that language is dynamic and constantly changing, this means that a play dates more quickly than other genres" (*Playing* 10). It can be argued, therefore, that a text influenced by oral literature must be constantly updated, due to the speed at which the spoken word changes in comparison to the written word.²³⁸ Also

²³⁷ Bassnett's guidelines for translators of interpretative texts: to accept the untranslatability of the source language phrase on a linguistic level and the absence of a similar convention in the target language, to consider available target language phrases whilst respecting such aspects as the presentation, status, age, sex of speaker, their relationship to the listener and the context of meaning, and finally to replace the invariant code of the source language phrase in the target language, considering its two referential systems – the text and the culture from which it has come (*Studies* 22).

²³⁸ Most great literary works have been updated over time, note for example the many different translations of Anna Karenina (for print, film, theatre and voice), including the latest award winning

considering the audience, Newell states that: “West African audiences participate noisily and bodily in some genres, commenting upon the poet’s style and the behaviour of fictional protagonists; in other genres, they are required to be silent while drummers set the rhythm and the syntax for performers to follow” (59), and the performer will adjust the show according to the audience (61). The audience will also continue to debate the performance, its interpretations and transformative meaning long after the performance has taken place (64). These insights demonstrate how important it is to draw upon the views of others in translating Senegalese women’s literature, thereby employing the communal nature of orality as inspiration for the rewritten text.

Okpewho comments that:

...because there is no live audience to please or account to, there is frequently an abstract, impersonal element in written poetry. The spirit of sharing and participation for which traditional culture is well known is noticeably lacking in modern literate culture. (*Introduction* 28)

However, this does not have to be the case with Francophone Senegalese women’s works if the texts are viewed in oral terms and the elements of sharing and participation are introduced. Okpewho also observes that:

version by Pevear and Volokhonsky (Tolstoy). Old translations may still exist alongside the Russian source text, but the literature lives on in different forms as well. Hence, it does not follow that the translation must only be updated if the source text is updated. Further, in today’s technological era translations can easily be revised online, or through smaller publishing organisations a printed publication of poetry can be updated far more regularly. Again, the evidence of previous written versions cannot be destroyed (and this is not the aim anyway), but with the now popular recording of the voice, neither is it possible to completely destroy older oral forms.

...unfortunately the alphabetic script used in writing is a set of symbols representing only sounds, and is not equipped to convey some of these dramatic moments that arrest the attention of the audience of an oral performance. (*Heritage* 29)

It is essential that the translator reaches beyond the words to hear the orality that may be conveyed to a live audience. And where there is an audience, there is often music.

This leads to the final theatrical dimension to be considered here – that of musicality and drums. However, not only has the Western written genre taken the sound from traditional orality by confining it to the page, but the colonisers in some cases have literally removed the sound from traditional storytelling. At interview, Fall explained her childhood memories of listening and learning from the traditional storytellers by an open fire in the evening in her district, where a master storyteller would recount a tale and that was followed by each of the apprentice taalibés repeating the story, but in his own way (see page 133 for an explanation of the term taalibé). Fall says that the evenings were stopped by “le colonisateur” due to what was described as noise pollution because of the sound of the drums. Fall states that these evenings were not just about entertainment, but also education (*Personal* 11), but it seems that some in the West find it difficult to associate the sound of African music and the griot surrounded by drums and traditional instruments such as the balafon or kora (Leymarie 33-34) with education and the words of literature. Newmark also states that the link between literature and music is often ignored, especially by high culture and academia

(51 32).²³⁹ It can be argued, therefore, that music should be allowed back into the world of literature, so that discussions of oral-inspired, theatrical texts (not just traditional oral texts) and their translations are not rare discussions but more common discourse.

In the discussion of a recitation of William Blake's poem – "The Tyger," Newmark criticises the narration because it was done without any reference to the accompanying music/setting by Benjamin Britten. He says that the poem to him is not the same unless he hums it simultaneously (51 32). If the translator considers the musicality of a text, the text will come to life in a totally different way than if the work is considered only to be that one-dimensional set of words on the page. Thus, if Francophone Senegalese women's literature is considered to be inspired by oral literature, "the verbal content now represents only one element in a complete opera-like performance which combines words, music, and dance" (Finnegan, *Literature* 4). It cannot be stated that every word, phrase or even paragraph of this canon under discussion is filled with musicality and performance-related language – this would be taking the argument too far. However, the translator of these texts should be on the

²³⁹ In his article on music in translation written for *The Linguist*, Newmark asserts that the "English intelligentsia" often ignore music, and he expresses two conflicting academic views on the subject: that "music is abstract and undecipherable" versus "music is a more accurate and nuanced means of translating/interpreting thought than language" and he also expresses two opposing views on lyrics – "a lyric is self-sufficient and does not need music" and "a lyric progressively becomes inadequate and incomplete without the music," demonstrating the uncertainty that the academic world has about discourse on music in relation to literature (52 32).

lookout for features which have been inspired by orature, and theories of theatre translation may assist the translator in working through these challenges in translation.

In one of her books on orality, Finnegan discusses drum literature which is popular in West Africa (*Literature* 484), and in which the instruments represent the tones and rhythms of speech (481). This form of communication uses extensive repetition to make meaning clear, and stereotyped phrases for rhythmic patterns (483), but most importantly, Finnegan sees the art as much more suited to a tonal language than alphabetical script (484), truly highlighting the importance of the points under discussion here. In short, Finnegan is underlining the significance of rhythm, tone and performance, but her research also draws attention to the fact that there are strong reasons for the repetition and stereotypical nature of certain words or phrases. Prejudice against reiteration and clichés must be cast aside. The translator of Francophone Senegalese literature must understand that orality, whether epic tale, praise song or drum language, is the history and foundation of African women's writing, whether incorporated in their works deliberately or subconsciously.

Whether drum language or orality using the voice, almost all African oral literature is designed to be performed to music, making the verbal elements dependent on music and vice versa. For this reason, Finnegan states that the impact or subtlety of orality cannot be understood if only the words on the page are analysed without any knowledge of the music that inspires them (*Literature* 4). Thus, the translator should attempt to understand not just the verbal nature of orality, but the music to which it may have been written. Comprehending the rhythms of both traditional and modern Senegalese music and dance is a fundamental part of the Francophone Senegalese

literary translator's task of pre-translation analysis. Not only should the translator consider the realm of theatre translation in her understanding of orality, but the whole event of performance and its accompanying moves and sounds. In a poem entitled "Xarit" (friend) by Aminata Ndiaye, there is no doubting the performative nature of the piece of work:

Vivre au rythme du temps
C'est vivre au rythme de la vie
Vivre au rythme de la vie
C'est vivre au rythme de ton coeur
Vivre au rythme de ton coeur
C'est vivre au rythme de l'éternité
C'est à ce rythme que bat mon coeur,
Pour toi,
Pour toi... uniquement,
*Xarit, sama sopé.*²⁴⁰

(7)

Living the rhythm of time
Is living the rhythm of life
Living the rhythm of life
Is living the rhythm of your heart
Living the rhythm of your heart
Is living the rhythm of eternity

²⁴⁰ In Wolof – this means “friend, my beloved.”

Is this rhythm that my heart beats,

For you,

For you...exclusively,

Xarit, sama sopé.

To translate this poem literally, for instance by rewriting the first line as “to live to the rhythm of time / It is to live to the rhythm of life” unfortunately involves losing that very rhythm and musicality present within the text. During my time in Dakar, I was witness to many a spontaneous outbreak of music and dance, always upbeat, with short sharp, often frenetic beats which are translated into the jaunty rhythms of many poems written by Senegalese women writers.²⁴¹ This poem is an example of that, and to translate too literally would mean losing one of the driving forces of the poem as a theatrical performance.

The very notion of theatre provides the literary translator with a very different perspective in working with other text types; the translator must safeguard the authenticity of the ‘original’ whilst making the text accessible to the audience watching and listening (Anderman, *Europe* 320). She should keep an open mind and not follow any prescribed translation rules (Howell 7), and she must be aware that “some betrayal is necessary” – that for a dramatic performance to work in translation, the text may have to be adapted in order to be convincing and natural (Zatlin 1). And whilst some performance-related texts may seem impossible to translate, pure determination and a resolve to understand the source text culture will prevail; in “Translation and National

²⁴¹ Note, for example “Qui est tout” by Kirama Fall (*Chant* 20), “Ce soir” by Ndiaye Sow (31) or “Une valse pour l’harmattan” by Seck Mbacké (*Alizés* 26-27).

Cultures,” Piette talks of the plays of Belgian playwright Crommelynck who was hugely popular in Europe and Latin America but failed dismally when his plays were translated into English and performed in America and England in the 1920s and 1930s. Literary critics said that this issue was linguistic and cultural and that his lyricism did not work in English, but Piette, as exclusive translator of Crommelynck today, disagrees. He states that “All things considered, my translations did not so much fill a gap as establish that there is no such thing as one culture ‘foreign’ to another if one is willing to try and understand it” (117). And this research into performance, theatre and music provides a further step forward in the journey of discovery and understanding of Senegalese women’s literature and its translation. But this journey cannot be completed without turning once more to issues of gender, and the unique way in which women writers connect with their oral past and present.

V Taking a Gendered Approach to Orality

Clearly, much of the discussion so far could be applied both to male and female writers, but this is a study which refers to gender, and it is interesting to find out whether a gender-specific knowledge of orality can assist the translator in her analysis of Francophone Senegalese women’s writing. Part V of this Chapter on Orality therefore focuses upon women’s specific use of verbal art, investigating whether women participate or excel in particular genres of orality, and analysing the characteristics of the genres in question. For women in traditional society, orality has often been linked to the home, accompanying daily tasks such as pounding grain, fetching water, feeding a baby or relating bed time tales to children (Sidikou 82). Part

V will therefore ask: to what extent does gendered orality impact on the literature of Francophone Senegalese women writers of today? How do gendered oral qualities feature in their works? And how can the translator benefit from this knowledge in her task of rewriting? This final part of the chapter will draw upon the analysis of previous sections, applying findings to textual analysis in relation to gender.

Sidikou claims that under the constraints of a patriarchal or colonial society, women have found oral literature both oppressive in its representation of daily toil, but also liberating as an outlet for expression, providing “a site for presenting the daily internal struggles aimed at subverting the authority that oppresses them” (171). This concept of “subverting authority” is also present in women’s literature where constraints are imposed on the French language by the Académie Française and lack of critical attention is disheartening, whilst at the same time writers are liberated through the use of a ‘global’ language, stamping their mark on a piece of work through manipulation of language, form, sound and subject-matter. And whilst the male griot is offered much more critical space (Adeghe 123) due to his prestigious role as guardian of history and genealogy (Stringer 11), his learnings often stem in the feminine rather than masculine art.

Many griots say they are children of their mother as primary carer, and only have a distant relationship with their father who often must share his time between different families (Leymarie 45). Stringer also underlines the traditional role of women as educators of children, and their role of handing down “the collective ancestral wisdom to the younger generation, particularly through the art of storytelling” (11). Adeghe too stresses the “primary duty of the female members to pass down traditional

wisdom, cultural mores and value systems” (118), often playing “a significant role as guardians of the moral, political, and religious traditions in their societies” (Sidikou 9). Further, Boyce Davies states that while men and women may have specialised in different types of orality, each group had an equal billing in oral tradition and “there was no large scale exclusion of one group from the creative process” (*Introduction 2*).

Thus, it appears that women, whilst less vocal and more modest, have played a significant function in orality, despite the fact that much of this is not collected, written, or published as historical vocal recordings (Sidikou 11). It has only been the impact of the West and Western genres of literature that has seen women retreat from the mainstream of creative expression. For example, in South Africa, there has been a disappearance of women from the literary scene because Western influence has diminished the importance of the oral tradition where women formerly flourished (Brown 14). And this diminishing of the worth of orality has also influenced West African countries such as Senegal. It is crucial, therefore, to look in more detail at the genres of orality which had a profound impact upon the women of yesteryear and how the values and traditions may have been passed down through previous generations of women to the writers of today. As has been established, there are few analyses of women’s orature, and the figure reduces more so when it comes to looking at women’s orality in specific countries such as Senegal.²⁴² However, some information has been

²⁴² In her book entitled *Recreating Words, Reshaping Words*, Sidikou does state that Nafissatou Diallo and Bugul both use the verbal art in their texts (20), but she is amongst only a very small number of academics (McNee, Stringer, d’Almeida, Hitchcott) to touch upon this area in relation to Francophone Senegalese women’s literature.

collated throughout this research which is helpful in refining the category of orature and the themes and stylistic characteristics which distinguish women's orality from that of their male counterparts.

In *Oral Poetry from Africa: An anthology*, Mapanje and White include transcribed women's orature in the following five categories – firstly 'praise poetry,' including a Ghanaian praise poem for a home-coming warrior (16), a Ugandan poem praising their herd of cattle (13-14), and general women's praises such as Zulu women's self-praises (19). The second category is that of 'survival' orality, including pounding songs (55 and 59), and thirdly there are 'relationship' poems for wedding occasions such as the bride's arrival (88) and departure (87), and pounding songs once more (93). Tijan M. Sallah also highlights women's provocative and entertaining ribald songs during marriage ceremonies (54). Women also take part in community choruses or prayers which centre around the 'gods and ancestors, and finally there are more pounding songs (Mapanje 139), included in the category of 'protest and satire.' This analysis is useful as it highlights the importance of rhythm due to the inclusion of pounding songs in more than one thematic category, as well as underlining the ceremonial nature of some women's songs, which supports the high value that has been placed on performance in Parts III and IV of this chapter.

Looking more closely at West Africa, Sidikou who has researched women's orature from Niger, Mali and Senegal, stresses the fact that women's orality consists of several genres including the "ceremonial song," the "praise-song" which can be both ritual and non-ritual, and songs about the "construction and celebration of the female body" (22). And one of the most insightful studies into Senegalese women's orature is

that undertaken by Edris Makward. In Makward's analysis of a recording of orature by a female Senegambian griotte called Haja M'Bana Diop, different "modes" in which Diop communicates verbal art are defined. The first mode is the "memorised story" or tale, in which accuracy, control of delivery, tone and varied intonations of voice are all significant. Secondly, there is the "praise-singing" mode based upon good knowledge of genealogy and historical facts and events and in which the rhythm is essential, and finally there is a "singing" mode in which pitch, tone, ability to hold the right notes, control of delivery and also memorisation are again imperative (*Two* 28-29). For the purposes of this study, a selection of the genres highlighted by these researchers will be analysed in conjunction with Senegalese women's literature in translation.

The most cited female genre is the praise song, in which the language "signifies transcendence of the social problems that confront women," where the artists' mind and spirit are revealed through structure, form and content and possibly female language (Sidikou 22). Mariama Ndoeye Mbengue also offers insightful details of the praise-song, which she says is not fixed, may include a refrain, and will to a greater or lesser extent adapt or modify certain words or phrases from the 'original' version (Mbengue 52). Kirama Fall includes a praise poem in her collection, *Chants de la rivière fraîche* entitled "Des louanges nouvelles" (see appendix R, page 413). There she has four or five line verses with a short two-line refrain, only written after verse one:

Tendez l'oreille à mes chants, Seigneur,
Répondez à mon amour.

(61)

Lend an ear to my songs, Lord

Respond to my love.

Whilst features such as spirit are complex to communicate, this is a spiritual poem and this is evidently translated through the simplicity of the words and content. As in a traditional oral text, the translator could choose to rewrite this refrain after each four or five line verse, as the praise song may actually be sung or chanted. And the very nature of the praise song as an embryonic art form, which transforms with time, gives the rewriter (if choosing to follow the lack of rigidity of orality) the opportunity to bring their personality to the poem. Then the question might be whether or not any alterations to the source text should follow an African style or otherwise. For instance, the rewriter can play with oral devices found in African texts, such as internal and external rhymes, using a free form and perhaps engaging with other sound devices such as alliteration or assonance and perhaps some experimentation with rhythm, or repetition. If an example is taken from the same poem:

Source text: Je veux chanter pour mon Dieu

Des Louanges nouvelles

Qu'aucune lèvre n'a dites

Aucune oreille entendues

Literally : I want to sing for my God

New praises

That no lips have spoken

No ears have heard

Rewritten: I want to sing for my God
I want to sing him new praises
That no lips have spoken
That no ears have heard

In this example the rhythm has been changed and more repetition has been added, and in this way, the poem has progressed as an oral praise song may do as it is passed on from one woman to the next through generations, each individual adding her own touches.

But whilst Kirama Fall's poem is clearly labelled as a praise song, other examples of orality in Senegalese women's literature can be more discreet. For instance, Walker cites a passage from *Une si longue lettre* that has been written as prose, but which he maintains is "a praise song to domesticity and cleanliness" (250).²⁴³ This may not be clear at first glance, but the influence of orality is clearer if the prose is rewritten as follows:

Nous sommes vendredi.
J'ai pris un bain purificateur.
J'en ressens l'effet vivifiant qui,
à travers mes pores **dégagé**,
me soulage.

²⁴³ See appendix S, page 415, for the source text passage. Walker cites the passage but with some omissions; the omissions have been included here.

L'odeur du savon m'enveloppe.

Des habits propres remplacent
mon accoutrement **chiffonné**.

Cette **netteté** de ma personne m'enchante.

Point de mire de tant d'yeux,

je pense que l'une des **qualités** essentielles de la femme
est la **propreté**.

La plus humble des chaumières **plaît**

si l'ordre et la **propreté** y règnent;

le cadre **le plus** luxueux ne séduit pas

si la poussière l'encrasse.

Les femmes qu'on appelle 'femmes au foyer' ont du mérite.

Le travail domestique qu'elles assument

et qui n'est pas rétribué en monnaies sonnantes

est essentiel dans le foyer.

Leur récompense reste

la pile de linge odorant est bien **repassé**,

le carrelage luisant où le pied glisse,

la cuisine gaie où la sauce embaume.

Leur action muette est ressentie

dans les moindres détails qui ont leur **utilité**:

là, c'est une fleur épanouie dans un vase,

ailleurs un tableau aux coloris **appropriés**,
accroché au bon endroit.

L'ordonnement du foyer requiert de l'art.... (Bâ, *Si* 119-120)

Here, not only can the language be observed much more clearly, but also the stylistic devices used in praise songs. Some of the devices used throughout this passage are highlighted in bold. Bâ uses a short, jumpy rhythm in the first verse or paragraph, there are internal and external rhymes throughout, the 's' consonance in verse two and the repetition of "le/la" and "le/la plus" later in the passage. Reading once again the translation by Bodé-Thomas (see appendix T, page 416), the thumping short sharp rhythm of the first verse appears somewhat lost in translation, but with the transformational feature of orality, it cannot be said that this is particularly wrong. Bodé-Thomas has kept most of the repetitions in his version of the text, but he has failed to render some of the internal rhymes of the passage. However, what he loses in this instance, he gains in his poetic language, which is filled with beautiful alliteration and consonance such as "the most humble of huts," or "the smell of soap surrounds me," "clean clothes replace my crumpled ones," and "a **p**ainting with **app**ropriate colours, hung **up** in the right **p**lace" (Bâ, *So* 63). Bodé Thomas has successfully rewritten the passage as a praise song disguised in the form of prose, and with that he has taken the source text, transforming it into a new version which too uses oral devices, sometimes different than before, but allowing the text to move on in time and style as does orature of this kind, where the 'original' is fluid.

The second category that has been highlighted on a number of occasions by the theorists analysed for this study is “pounding songs,” and whilst there are no clear poems labelled as such, the main features of pounding songs are repetition and rhythm, which are not only found in Senegalese women’s poetry, but also in prose. In an interview, Bugul comments upon the influence of orality in her novels, saying:

My maternal language was oral and my cultural environment was initiatory and oral too. My writing is thus a transcription of my environment...the cultural ambiance affects everything. In the north of my country, they look for the meaning of words in symbols. (Azodo 11-12)

In an example from Bugul’s first novel, *Le baobab fou*, she writes:

Ce matin-là, nous nous faisons nos adieux. Je partais.
Les autres restaient.
Je partais très loin. Je m’arrachais pour tendre vers le Nord.
Le Nord des rêves, le Nord des illusions, le Nord des allusions,
Le Nord référentiel, le Nord Terre Promise. (43)

There really is no doubting here that Bugul’s writing is oral in its nature; she is not hiding behind the mask of Western fiction, but blatantly manipulating its structures and language to that which she is familiar with; an embodiment of her environment. The form (five separate lines), repetitions, rhymes, rhythms, semi-homophones are unmistakable features of a ‘pounding song,’ and the poetic nature in which she speaks of the North could be also be deemed ‘ceremonial’ in style. These oral features are what makes her literature unique, and the novel would lose much of its charisma and

charm if a rewriter chose not to render these characteristics in translation. In her translation, Marjolijn de Jager writes:

That morning we said our goodbyes. I was leaving. The others were staying. I was leaving to go very far away. Tearing myself away to head North.

The North of dreams, the North of illusions, the North of allusions. The frame reference North, the Promised Land North. (Bugul, *Abandoned* 23)

Whilst her translation cannot be faulted in general, in oral terms it misses a number of features; the five-line poetic form is now two, the fourth sentence has been extended and in that way the extract loses its rhythm, the third repetition of “I” is no longer there, and the final two sentences about “the North” have been inverted and therefore lose their repetitious and ceremonial effect. An alternative translation that encompasses these features could be:

That morning we said our goodbyes. I was leaving.

The others were staying.

I was leaving to go far. I was tearing myself away to head North.

The North of dreams, the North of illusions, the North of allusions,

The North of the compass, the North of the Promised Land.

However, whilst praise songs, pounding songs and ceremonial features are traditional in nature, female orality has also progressed beyond many of these traditional forms. As a modern-day griotte, Haja M’Bana (recorded by Makward in 1990) has a modern approach to orality, and whilst she may still perform songs that are

traditionally female such as ceremonial wedding songs, she also recites a “chant du développement,” (to enhance her country’s development and government), as well as performing political songs (Makward, *Two* 34), formerly a male genre. And Sidikou also underlines the fact that women have branched out beyond traditionally female oral genres, asserting that women now excel in the art of the epic (23), despite the fact that this is thought to be a male-only domain.

The women’s epic, Sidikou maintains, is called the “subversive epic” as it challenges customs and the traditionally male definition of the genre (145). And women may further subvert the form, content, and structure of their own epics in order to be different from that which has gone before, finding solutions to their own ‘female-oriented’ problems and confronting aspects of history (145). This can be seen in the epic tale, *Pluie-poésie: Les pieds sur la mer* by Seck Mbacké, which reads like a Wolof epic tale, whilst appropriating the concept of Western poetry (page 298), combining the historical story of “Eloubaline” (page 299) with erratic rhythms and strong sounds, and juxtaposing the political nature of Lël (page 319) with the ceremonial funeral dirge of the “Élégie pour Jean Brière” (page 331). It is evident, therefore, from Sidikou and Makward’s analyses, amongst others, that women have carved their own genre within a genre, drawing upon traditional orality and modern themes to express creativity as well as beliefs and values which may challenge those previously assumed by their male counterparts.

Clearly, the key to the pre-translation analysis of Francophone Senegalese women’s writing is the skopos; not just the translator’s skopos, but the purpose of the

Senegalese writer in creating written works inspired by orality.²⁴⁴ According to the analysis discussed in this final part of Chapter Four, women write to entertain, to praise, to subvert, provoke, survive, celebrate, protest, worship, recall history, find solutions, express opinions and pass values or wisdom to future generations. If the translator can ascertain the skopos of the writer of the oral-inspired text, she can associate text type with certain stylistic characteristics and in turn transfer these features to the target text. Lefevere comments on the way in which the translator, just like the “source text” writer must find an “ideal combination” of “‘illocutionary strategies’ or ways to make use of linguistic devices” in order to achieve the desired effect on the reader (*Translation* 99), and by comparing written texts to oral devices the translator is more likely to get this balance right as regards the canon in question. Further, Hatim and Mason comment on how the difference in function of a translation can produce different outlooks (20), so to obtain similar points of view between source and target texts, there has to be some sort of parallel between their functions, even if they are being produced for very distinct cultures.

So in conclusion to this final chapter, the study of gendered orature is crucial in making translation decisions, for certain features of oral genres popular to women are apparent in female literary works. This chapter has demonstrated that women have

²⁴⁴ In an article about oral narrative and film in Africa, Mbye Baboucar Cham comments on filmmaker Sembène, whose movie *Mandabi* displays characteristics of African orature, asserting that Sembène sees himself as “the *griot* in society of today” (268). The way in which women incorporate orality into their works demonstrates that they too take on the role of the *griot* in communicating facts, thoughts, beliefs and emotions to their public.

always played a powerful role in verbal art forms, especially in praise poetry or ceremonial songs where they can be very creative in their expression, often subverting standard forms to challenge the orators that have preceded them. Common features of orality, such as repetitions, refrains, rhythm and pausing can be discovered in Senegalese written literature, and through an increased awareness of these features, the translator can attempt to preserve them in translation. On other occasions, orality takes a more discreet form, whether consciously or otherwise, and can be disguised in prose, including theatre. And whilst some academics may relate orality to articulacy, this cannot be corroborated, and the translator must remain open-minded in her research into the oral qualities of specific texts and writers. By embedding orality in their works, women writers are frequently transforming norms of genre and text type by representing conventions of both oral and written traditions in their literature. It is the translator's responsibility to represent both traditions.

Throughout history, oral works have not been as fixed as written texts, often changing over time, as different pieces are performed to various audiences, so much so that the concept of an 'original' work in the analysis of orality is highly debated. Oral literature has always allowed for composition or elaboration, so if Senegalese women's works are viewed from this perspective, the creative role of the translator is opened up, allowing her to build upon the performance element of a text when rewriting it in English. By reading aloud or performing a text herself, she can discover elements of a work that may not have been so clear on paper, such as timed pauses and sprung rhythm. These features are important if the translator wishes to preserve all possible readings of a text in translation. And while some theorists may believe that fidelity in

form impedes meaning, this is not always true. Moreover, the imagination should be more important to the translator of Senegalese women's literature than literal meaning. As a poet in her own right, the translator can be highly creative, only this creativity may be subject to judgements of accuracy or quality in translation. Nevertheless, these adjectives are matters of perspective and if the translator remains open to an oral viewpoint, then finding a balance between the oral and the written can result in a translation that is of a professionally high standard.

Finally, the translator must challenge Western assumptions of superiority, the urge to tidy up the text, place meaning over sound and the adherence to the fixed nature of a written piece of work. Performance and the audience are evidently essential elements in many oral works, therefore it is worth the translator considering not only poetry translation theory, but also the multiple dimensions of theatre and theatre translation to create a text that can work both upon paper and performance. This means an understanding of translation as collaboration, adaptation, the expectations of the audience, tone, emotion and phrasing as well as gesturing. The translator can listen to oral recordings to gain further understanding of performance and allow the idea of music to transcend her translations. Further, as oral texts and theatre are often regularly updated, this could also be considered in the translation of Senegalese women's works. And whilst not every word is embedded in the oral, there is no doubting orality is very common to Senegalese women's literature, and being creative in translation is not a matter of taking liberties, as Campbell states (151), but rather an essential strategy in translating this literary genre.

CONCLUSION

Connaître une culture suppose une pénétration dans la réalité de la société, de même que connaître un langage implique une entrée dans la réalité de la parole. La comparaison des deux processus n'est pas un hasard, car parler est un acte social, et l'originalité d'un langage est une originalité d'ordre culturel. (Pairault 3)²⁴⁵

I Methodological Review

This thesis began with the words of Seck Mbacké who stressed the importance of the translator following in the footsteps of the 'creator.' In the poem "Martyrs," she writes of the Lebou from the shores of Ngor, and when sitting on Ngor's beach by the pirogues, and later on the rocks of Ngor island, I was literally treading the same pathway as Seck Mbacké. But her phrase is both literal and figurative. Just as the translator's journey may take her across the oceans to research the background of a text and meet and discuss the literature of a source text writer, she also undergoes a sort of voyage of discovery, as often alone at home she translates, rewrites or writes afresh a brand new piece of work. In this thesis, an affinity with the writer was not simply achieved by travelling to Senegal and meeting Seck Mbacké in her home, but also by

²⁴⁵ "Knowing a culture presupposes a penetration into the reality of society, just as knowing a language implies an entry into the reality of the word. Comparison between these two processes is not a coincidence, for speaking is a social act, and the originality of a language is an originality of a cultural nature."

acquiring an understanding of a more generalised cultural background, political setting and linguistic understanding, and by shifting the perspective of this research away from Western ideologies with regard to translation strategies. This thesis has been possible due to a combination of reading literature and theory, experiencing life and culture, learning languages and customs and questioning writers and academics. Each one of these actions has fed into this research which follows in the footsteps of the writer, while opening up creative possibilities to the translator, as well as contributing a first step towards making Francophone Senegalese women's works accessible to a wider audience.

The methodology used for this research was found to work efficiently and effectively. By structuring the thesis thematically, it was possible to bring together the many issues raised in the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's works, whilst focusing on linguistic and translation matters throughout and taking into account issues of gender wherever appropriate. Considering the methodology as a series of research questions was a direct approach that served to facilitate the structure of each chapter and individual section. Further, beginning with a general cultural chapter and then delving deeper and deeper into more specific and perhaps radical translation thought through each stage of the thesis allowed for a general feeling of progression throughout this written work.

From day one, the sourcing of texts was extremely difficult, despite a broad search in the UK and France as well as online, often due to small publishers or print runs and general unavailability beyond the borders of Senegal. However, the trip undertaken to Dakar and time spent at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop allowed for the

introduction of a broader range of source texts to the thesis, although it was not possible to include analysis of every text found in the course of this research due to time and space constraints and the potential weakening of arguments through an attempt to cover too much material in one thesis. This research trip, which formed an integral part of the methodology from the inception of this thesis, provided an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Senegalese cultures, as well as the chance to interview writers and academics regarding those exact cultures, literature and translation. The background information, opinions and feelings regarding work and culture that were gained from these interviews formed an integral part of this research, offering original insight into the minds of those who put pen to paper. Moreover, the research trip allowed further study of Wolof so that it could be applied to the analysis of Senegalese literature, a rare undertaking in relation to postcolonial African translation, and essential considering that the Wolof language is rapidly becoming the country's *lingua franca*.

As initially stated in the methodology, a variety of extracts were taken from the aforementioned source texts, that represented different typologies, eras, styles and writers' backgrounds. This allowed for the contextualisation of different theoretical concepts, a direct analysis of cultural influences upon women's writing, and the practice of various translation strategies. It was then possible to draw relevant conclusions from these examples with regard to the use of particular methodologies for different texts during translation practice. In respect of these extracts, the introduction to this thesis outlined an initial methodology for translation from which all further strategies would develop. Snell-Hornby's "top-down" approach and Reiss's text-type

theory both allowed for a strong consideration of cultural factors in translation, as did Newmark's method of semantic translation. However, as the thesis developed, it was found that the boundaries of these initial strategies could be stretched, whereby a consideration of cultural factors also incorporated viewing the very act of translation through the eyes of another culture. This is where, in Western terms, there was a departure from the initial methodology to consider the relevance of different versions of a text and even adaptation.

In a paper on orality and textuality, Quayson states that:

...whatever theory it is we apply in analyses is one which must itself foreground new *processes* and *procedures* of investigation located at the meeting place of different disciplines...to help us grapple with the full complexity of both orality and of literature. (115)

From the start, like Quayson, this thesis methodology underlined the intention to draw upon different disciplines in its analysis, not only of orality but of Senegalese women's literature in general. And indeed this study has employed carefully selected and relevant theories and models from a range of fields including Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Francophone Studies and Comparative Literature. Theories from these different disciplines helped to improve translation strategies by expanding insight into the cultural, literary and linguistic background of different texts, which may not have been possible with a more limited disciplinary study. So, just as the postcolonial writer and the translator mediate between two or more cultures, it has been demonstrated in this thesis that the translator of Senegalese women's literature must negotiate between disciplines in order to establish the most effective methodology for translation. Use of

an interdisciplinary methodology should therefore form an essential part of the translator's preliminary strategy in rewriting postcolonial women's texts of this nature.

However, as this is a Translation Studies thesis, the main focus was translation theory and its application to practice. And throughout, this research effectively drew upon the analyses of academics such as Lefevere, Venuti or Nord, amongst others, in order to develop the most effective way of translating Senegalese women's works. But the very essence of the thesis methodology was immersed in the notion of the 'cultural turn,' and each deliberate step throughout this work attempted to engage literary texts with their cultural framework through deep analysis of the social and linguistic features embedded in a particular text. Further, this thesis drew upon the works of academics such as Bassnett, Tymoczko and Gentzler in order to join the field of postcolonial translation with that of Francophone African women's studies, explored by theorists such as Hitchcott, d'Almeida or Boyce Davies. This unique contact zone between the theories of different disciplines produced new research questions beyond other studies of Senegalese works such as those by McNee and Stringer.

II Critical Evaluation

The objectives of this research were many, but they all focused around the central notion of realising an affinity with a source text writer. This thesis demonstrated that by studying culture alongside literature it is possible to gather information that in one respect may simply change the way a translator works by influencing her particular choices in vocabulary, exemplified in the translation of extracts from "Mame Touba" in Chapter One. And in another respect, it can totally

redirect translation strategies from a semantic approach to one in which a text is completely and creatively rewritten in light of a more fluid source text (Chapter Four). Further, in testing the hypothesis that an in-depth knowledge of source cultures is essential in order to translate, while it may be possible to translate in some form without this comprehension, it has been demonstrated throughout this thesis and in the context of cultural change, power relations, mediation and linguistic hybridity, as well as the influence of orature, that the outcome is often very different if a broad cultural approach is used.

The introduction to this thesis expressed the intention of challenging a statement by Snell-Hornby in which she comments on the translatability of a text being dependent upon the distance between source and target cultures in regard to time and place. Chapter One highlighted the importance of embracing these two concepts when attempting to situate a text in its cultural framework prior to translation. And Chapter Three built upon this by broaching the concept of untranslatability, asserting that no text, even one stemming from a totally different time and place, is in fact completely untranslatable if Appiah's "thick translation" is practiced within or outside of the text. This involves negotiating between cultures and languages and finding innovative solutions, whether glossary or embellishment for example, that still render the key features of the work in question.

This thesis also raised the possibility of a 'theoretical turn' in translation practice, and this research has clearly demonstrated that a literary translator who is well read in the intricacies of translation theory will find this knowledge of great use in the practicalities of translation. This 'theoretical turn' emerged in a overt form, for

example by suggesting the application of poetry translation strategies, outlined by theorists such as Bly and Lefevere, to a range of text types influenced by orality (Chapter Four), or by using von Flotow's analysis of feminist translation strategies to reassert in the target culture what may be seen as womanist or feminist texts in the source culture (Chapter Two). Alternatively, this 'theoretical turn' may originate from the utilisation of more general observations by a variety of theorists, for instance in the application of theatre translation theories to the rewriting of Senegalese women's works (Chapter Four), or with reference to gendered language, drawing upon the theorising of Steiner, amongst others, to attempt to define a women's language thereby reevaluating the translator's list of priorities (Chapter Two).

And with regard to the application of cultural theory underlined as an objective in the introduction to this thesis, Bhabha's insight into the nature and notion of hybridity as well as the importance of mediation in the function, meaning and values of cultural capital, highlighted the translator's need to stray from the norms and conventions of standard language in order to inhabit the same world as the source text writer – a world inbetween (Chapter Three). This further led to proving the importance of local language learning in the translation of Senegalese women's texts, where being bilingual and bicultural is simply not enough – in translating these texts into English, the translator must know the French and English cultures and languages as well as at least one other African language, overtly or subtly embedded in the literature (Chapter Three). The aforementioned learning of the Wolof language whilst in Senegal emerged as an essential process in the writing of this thesis, and clearly this approach of 'local

language learning' could also bring new insight to the translation of other postcolonial texts involving different language combinations.

As initially planned, this research used examples of works that have not been translated before to introduce particular issues in translation, such as the religious resonances of Fall's *Mademba* (Chapter Two) or the sprung rhythm of "Lël" by Seck Mbacké (Chapter Four). As outlined in the introduction, this thesis also set out to analyse previously translated works in order to support arguments, and this was undertaken throughout. Case studies in Chapter Two, such as Blair's *Scarlet Song*, served to demonstrate how early translations of postcolonial literature perhaps over-domesticated texts thereby losing some of their cultural character. And analysis of Mayes's translation of Seck Mbacké's "Martyrs" demonstrated how knowledge of historical and cultural specificities rather than African generalities is essential, further supporting the "individual parts" approach outlined in Chapter One. The case studies allowed for a comparison between these translated texts and those rewritten using different theoretical approaches that utilise a dynamic cultural approach to the rewriting process.

Snell-Hornby commented on the situational and cultural barriers between text and reader, in this case the translator. And as anticipated, this thesis successfully demonstrated that it is possible to overcome these restrictions, whether through an understanding of the structures and sounds of the Wolof language (Chapter Three) or the historical and political events that may have provoked women to write, and form the metatexts or subtexts of the novels, poetry and theatre they have written (Chapter Two). This research has demonstrated that the translator should be the most thorough

reader a text can have (Chapter One), one that delves into every aspect of the literature in question, in a process that can be enlightened through the use of semiotics, for instance, as a structured way to approach a text that is firmly embedded in foreign cultures (Chapter Three). The translator then acts as go-between connecting source and target texts, linking the global with the local (Chapter One), the written with the oral, and inner thought with external performance (Chapter Four).

As proposed at the outset of this body of research, this thesis touched upon the sacrifices that many Senegalese women writers have made in order to follow a writing career, to voice their beliefs and values and to reconstruct their own identities and those of others in literature (Chapters Two and Three). At present the corpus of Senegalese women's writing in English translation is incredibly small, with only a handful of novels and individual poems available. This thesis has stressed the responsibility of the translator towards the development of this body of literature in the English language (Chapter One). This responsibility is founded on two points; firstly, because in the past those writers whose novels are translated have received critical acclaim, thus translation can lead to commendation, and secondly, because the translator is the key to recommunicating to a wider (possibly international) audience those very identities so carefully constructed by the Senegalese writer before her. Being translated can mean being read and being heard on often a global platform (Chapter Two).

This thesis has therefore established that introducing a piece of Senegalese literary work to a brand new readership is highly significant, and much of the weight of this task lies on the shoulders of the translator as has been illustrated throughout this

research. However, it has been suggested that publishers and editors not only have control over text selection and print runs, but also how that text is presented visually, perhaps even shaping translation strategies (Chapter Two). And whilst the translator has to battle with the many powers and influences upon her work, she is expected to create not only a piece of literature that is faithful to the source text and culture, but also one that reads well in the target language, for it has been established that a foreignising strategy may sometimes be judged negatively if it does not adhere to target culture expectations (Chapter Two). Further, it has been illustrated that the translator is often expected to create a new and even ‘original’ text in the target language (Chapter Three), balancing foreignisation with domestication (Chapter Two), visibility and invisibility (Chapter Three), demonstrating excellent writing ability, offsetting linguistic losses with gains, maintaining a balance between different viewpoints (Chapter One), and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by poetry and theatre which allow her to be truly a creative writer (Chapters Three and Four).

One of the objectives of this research was to devise a range of translation strategies for rewriting Francophone Senegalese women’s literature in English, and a contribution made by this thesis is the logical categorisation of theoretical concepts and strategies in each chapter and individual part. This thesis began with a basic translation approach and then in each section of the thesis, new concepts were introduced that would enable the translator to build up and enhance that initial strategy. This was accomplished by drawing upon both specific theoretical concepts and more universal ideas. For example, this thesis analysed how the far-reaching notions of cultural change (Chapter One), historical interventions (Chapter Two), hybridity (Chapter

Three) or theatrical performance (Chapter Four) may influence a writer and translator. And more precise theories contributed to the development of the strategy, including a consideration of the translation skopos (Chapter One), Liu's Representational Justice (Chapter Two), the norms and conventions of language (Chapter Three), as well as exploring the characteristics of orality (Chapter Four).

A key aim of this research was to add to critical work and rouse further dialogue in the field of Francophone African women writers, of Senegal in particular. This thesis has achieved this to some extent through its documented research and analysis, although it will have to be published if it is to contribute fully to current academic debate. To this point, the corpus of Francophone Senegalese women's literature had only been investigated by a small number of academics in comparison with studies of male writers or Anglophone literature, and because of this, detailed analysis of texts had been limited to a narrow selection of works. This thesis has widened this selection. Further, despite the number of high-profile Senegalese writers coming to the fore, until now there had been little analysis of their works from the perspective of Translation Studies and the resulting impact on translation methodologies. This thesis has therefore made a great step towards filling another part of that critical space, raising the profile of the genre by contributing to theoretical works within and beyond the field of Translation Studies.

Moreover, the introduction to this thesis stated an intention to redress the unrepresentative nature of previous studies, and whilst this research has indeed succeeded in rectifying some of the gender and geographical shortfalls of Bandia's or Gyasi's texts, for instance, by focusing on the feminine and the Senegalese, in doing so

this study has also introduced shortfalls of its own – the authors that could not be included due to space or time, or the texts that could not be acquired because they are out of print. In her “Introduction” to *Ngambika: Studies of Women in African Literature*, Boyce Davies asserts that:

Any exposition of a critical approach such as this one must lay claims to incompleteness. It is a step towards a larger end rather than the end itself. (17)

And this is inevitably the case with this study too, where the field remains relatively untouched compared to many others. Therefore, just as Bandia and Gyasi inspired debate within this thesis, it is hoped that this research will also stimulate further critique within this embryonic field of postcolonial African Translation Studies.

III An Original Contribution

The initial reason for approaching the topic of translating Senegalese women’s literature was genuine interest in the authors and their works, for the texts of some of the writers within this thesis have never been studied before, such as Awa Ndiaye or Aminata Ndiaye. Others have only been briefly referred to in theoretical texts, like Seck Mbacké or Ndiaye Sow, and most have never been studied in relation to translation, such as Khadi Fall, Kirama Fall or Benga. Further, this thesis has made a contribution to knowledge by analysing different text types such as poetry and theatre, therefore progressing beyond most other research into Senegalese women’s literature. And distinctively, this thesis has drawn parallels between female Francophone Senegalese writers and translators, both of whom may have lived in the shadows of

their male or source text writer counterparts. This thesis uniquely demonstrated how each have a choice with regard to their visibility; while the Senegalese writer has reclaimed her identity and representations, the translator may use interventionist techniques such as feminist translation strategies to right the wrongs of past derisory images of African women, translators and translation itself.

But beyond this and beyond previous studies that have also highlighted women's former silence, this thesis demonstrates the immense range of work available in the Francophone Senegalese women's corpus, promoting the wide subject matter and styles within the body of literature. And by not simply analysing translations of the past, but creating new translations and rewriting texts in English that have never before been translated, this thesis offers a unique perspective on translation and translation theory within Francophone Studies. Further, the original primary research material collected for this thesis, including interviews carried out whilst studying at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, provided exclusive case studies from women whose views have so often been confined to their works, and whose intentions may not have always been clear.

Moreover, this thesis exemplified the importance of continued research into African languages in a postcolonial context, for rarely is the native language studied in relation to postcolonial African translation. Wierzbicka claims that "a person's conceptual perspective on life is clearly influenced by his or her native language" (5). Here it has been established that this is more relevant than ever in postcolonial research, where characteristics of local languages often remain hidden amongst the words of the coloniser, and need to be teased out of the source text and represented in

translation. This thesis has demonstrated that issues of translation are not simply binary. Taking the concept of cultural translation to a new level, research for this thesis involved time spent speaking both Wolof and French whilst living with families in Dakar and Ndiobène, allowing for a unique insight into Senegalese cultures. This was a rare approach to translation that directly influenced the ways in which texts were read and rewritten in English.

Lefevere and Bassnett state that in translation:

We need to find out how to translate the cultural capital of other civilisations in a way that preserves at least part of their own nature, without producing translations that are so low on the entertainment factor that they appeal only to those who read for professional reasons.

(11)

And it is hoped that this thesis more than adequately demonstrates that it is possible to translate this “cultural capital” whilst producing enjoyable and publishable translations. The translations of today do not need to be over-domesticated in order to be read, and translations of the past can be rewritten to ensure that more of that cultural capital is retained in translation. However, whilst other studies may highlight that the translator needs a broad general knowledge, this thesis argues that cultural translation cannot simply be done using books and the Internet, but only by embedding oneself in the multiple cultures that inspire a piece of work.

This research is also valuable for it makes a significant contribution to an ongoing interdisciplinary focus in Translation Studies, drawing upon research from a number of fields, as outlined, and thus enhancing studies in various disciplines. And it

is hoped that this thesis provokes new thought in the field of Translation Studies in particular, for the very concept of meaning in postcolonial African translation is questioned within this thesis. Sometimes the sense of words may not be as important as the meaning of form or the significance of sound or lack of sound, of tone or of oral typology. In fact, this thesis has uniquely illustrated that, in Senegalese women's poetry and prose, the meaning of words is only one facet in a multitude of features that make up each individual element in Francophone Senegalese women's literature. Hence, the translator must not become so smitten with semantics that the sounds, music and theatre vanish in translation.

As a broad thesis on the study of Senegalese women's literature and translation, this seminal project opens up a number of different areas for future research. Potential studies could delve deeper into the works of specific writers such as Khadi Fall or Benga (who is becoming increasingly revered in Senegal). Alternatively, a future study could focus on poetry translation, or a comparative analysis of male and female Senegalese works. Some of the areas of this thesis could also be expanded in future research, for instance, by exploring further the concept of the 'original' text to discover the boundaries of acceptability in translation, or by undertaking closer studies regarding Senegalese 'women's' language to see if further light can be thrown on ways of writing and translating.

And with the increasing emancipation of women in Senegal (*Personal Mbow* 3), the body of works is bound to extend even more rapidly than ever as traditional roles become less restrictive. Women may begin to take bigger linguistic risks in prose and poetry, and it will be interesting to see how some of the third generation writers

develop, empowered further through literature and by means of translation. And as the effects of colonisation become more distant memories, a fourth generation of writers will emerge as a growing number of women receive increasingly higher levels of education. These women will have new focuses, different objectives and perhaps will be influenced even more by the effects of globalisation and travel, and even less by issues of gender. And whilst the English language is little used in Senegal at present, this could possibly change, and will pose interesting dilemmas for the multilingual translator.

Despite Mbow's positive outlook, however, from a social and linguistic perspective, Fall describes a bleak future of French cultural domination in Senegal from which there appears to be no escape. She asserts:

Cette domination culturelle...la culture est véhiculée par une langue, c'est la langue française, nous sommes dominés par la France sur le plan culturel, et cela va de soi que nous soyons dominés, continuons à être dominés.... (*Personal 5*)²⁴⁶

There is no doubt that until now individuals have almost always had to write in French in order to have their work published, and education has been swamped by the French language and culture. But the effects that local cultures have already had on the French language must not be forgotten, and neither should the fact that women have developed

²⁴⁶ "This cultural domination...culture is conveyed through one language, that's the French language, we are culturally dominated by France, and it goes without saying that we are dominated, and will continue to be dominated..."

their own unique brand of French, influenced by their own cultures and languages, and undeterred by the restrictions of establishments such as the Académie Française. It will be intriguing for the translator and literary critic to analyse the ways in which Senegalese women continue to subvert or claim the French language as their own, opening fascinating windows into worlds of culture often unknown to readers in the West.

Further, there is no denying that Wolof speakers by far outnumber those who speak French, and the process of wolofisation does not appear to be halting. And as women's voices become stronger en masse, and writers such as Khadi Fall, Seck Mbacké or Benga continually promote the use of local languages, especially for education purposes, there will perhaps be a shift in the way these languages are used. Consequently, what will the continued effects of wolofisation be upon Senegalese literature, and how will the translator deal with this? There may also be a proliferation of other local language texts, written in Pular, Jola or Mandinka for example, but conversely influenced by French language sounds and structures. This could also be a future area for research. In addition, if writers begin to publish more in these local languages, translation nationally is also likely to become more important, so that Wolof speakers can read the works of Peul writers, for example. This may generate potential for new academic studies into the rewriting of African language texts within Senegal.

Moreover, whilst it may appear that African women writers have plenty of publishing opportunities, the reality is that they often struggle, not only to find a publisher, but also for their texts to receive the marketing required for the book to reach an audience beyond the colonially educated minority in their own country who

can read French. This may change as women increasingly seek publishers beyond the country's borders. And if more of these women writers are translated, success in English translation may also mean international success, as well as providing a higher platform upon which these women can voice their own opinions, beliefs and cultures. Adeghe states that "to register socially and acquire value and meaning writers have to be discussed and this involves publishers, critics – activities and institutions beyond the individual writers" (123). And translators, just like these critics and publishers, play a highly significant role in intervening in the creation of literary trends and manipulating words to achieve their desired objectives (Billiani 153-54). Thus, resulting trends will be fascinating to investigate further as the field of Senegalese women's literature expands over time.

And as this body of literature grows, so will the field of Translation Studies, a discipline that is constantly developing, is unrestrictive and allows the translator to go beyond basic theories to develop new methodologies and concepts. And as it does so, and translators are always freshly informed, perspectives may change, and so, therefore, may translations. The best works of poetry and prose have been translated many times over, for there is no strict right and wrong in literary translation. And the development of the discipline in this manner is vital for the survival over time and beyond the nation's borders, of the literature of a fast-developing country such as Senegal. Hence, this research goes beyond theory.

The richness of the works within this canon has served to demonstrate its wonderful potential for translation. This thesis has not only stimulated new theoretical thought in the study of translations and the development of translation methodologies,

but it has revealed the potential for a trilingual Wolof, French and English collection of Senegalese women's poetry. It has further highlighted the immense literary focus and talent of many of these writers whose novels have not yet been translated, but whose intriguing extracts have intermittently coloured this thesis. There is therefore a need for further engagement with these literary works and in many cases full translations, in order that they do not simply become lost in the increasing number of published texts worldwide. And finally, immersion in the cultures of a source text and writer not only provides direct knowledge of an author's world for the purpose of translation, but it may also initiate an intangible connection to those cultures, creating a stimulus for future work within and beyond the field of Translation Studies.

**Translating Francophone Senegalese
Women's Literature: Issues of Change,
Power, Mediation and Orality
(Volume 2 of 2)**

by

Georgina Collins

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies

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APPENDICES

The appendices include texts necessary to support the arguments of this thesis. Translations have also been included if required to substantiate points of view where needed. Full translations of some texts have been included in these appendices to give the reader an idea of how complete texts may appear in translation. It is not possible to include all poems in translation due to constraints of space.

I Supporting Texts and Charts

A. CHAPTER 1, PART III, PAGE 71: “INITIATION” BY ANNETTE MBAYE D’ERNEVILLE, FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATION

Initiation

Don de nous guérisseur

Don des miettes de notre jeunesse

Jeunesse gaspillée dans les nuits de Lutèce

Virginité sacrifiée dans l’alcôve

Anonyme d’un hôtel sans étoiles

Initiation sans rites ni prières

Sans bain de feuilles et de notre mère

Sans bénédiction de l'aïeule

Sans pague-témoin de sagesse

Maudite la solitude des nuits d'hiver

L'exil était trop lourd au cœur gourmand de nos vingt ans

Ah! ses yeux sur notre nudité cuivrée

Ses mains palpeuses de chair neuve

Son sexe insolent fouillant nos entrailles

Était-ce l'Amour dont rêvaient nos têtes folles?

Étaient-ce les noces promises?

Ce sang était-il la rançon de la liberté?

Fallait-il mourir pour savourer la volupté d'être femme?

(Dia 158)

Initiation

Gift from our healer

Gift of the crumbs of our youth

Wasted youth in the nights of Lutetia

Virginity sacrificed in the anonymous hole

Of a no-star cheap hotel

Initiation without rites or prayers
Without our mother's bath of leaves
Without grandmother's blessing
Without a grass skirt – evidence of virtue

Cursed is the solitude of winter nights
Exile was too heavy on the greedy heart of our twenty years

Oh! his eyes on our coppery nudity
His hands groping new flesh
His arrogant loins probing our insides

Was this the love of which our foolish heads dreamt?
Were these the promised nuptials?
This blood, was it the price of freedom?
Must one die, to savour the pleasure of being a woman?

(Collins, *Other* 103-105)

**B. CHAPTER 2, PART II, PAGE 140: “MARTYRS” BY MAME SECK
MBACKÉ, FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATION**

Martyrs

(À ceux qui n’ont pas vécu Thiaroye.

Pour Ousmane Sembène.)

Thiaroye à l’aube!

Dans un grand silence

L’Afrique endeuillée recueille ses fils

Thiaroye à l’aube!

Une aube où l’Afrique a porté sa robe de nuages.

Orphelins mosis de Nouna

Bambaras Dogons des grottes de Sanga

Lébous des rivages de Ngor

Orphelins du Levant et du Couchant

Orphelins des bords du Bénin

Orphelins des lagunes

Tournez la face!

Thiaroye à l'aube!

Le sang pleure d'avoir souillé la terre mère.

Thiaroye à l'aube!

Quand le sang rouge a giclé sur la peau noire

Le grand baobab a frémi

Ont vagi les crocodiles du Djoliba

Et le sabre du Moro Naba²⁴⁷ a sué dans son fourreau.

Thiaroye à l'aube!

Les armes ont craché leurs flammes

Les hommes ont craqué

Ces hommes qui

Laissant froide la cendre du foyer

Incultes les champs

S'étaient écriés d'une seule voix

Vive la France!

Aux armes citoyens

²⁴⁷ The Moro Naba is the supreme ruler of the Mossi people. The Moro Naba's seat is located in Ougadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso ("Morho Naba").

Citoyens noirs Tirailleurs d’Outre-mer

Reposez sous le sceau des baïonnettes.

Thiaroye à l’aube!

Les veuves se sont décoiffées

Pour ne plus regarder

Les médailles gagnées “au champ d’honneur”.

Dans les rizières de sang

Sillonnant les routes de ma chair

Cent canons ont tonné

Pour rejoindre la clameur du jazz à l’agonie de l’aube.

Et les fils de Rufisque

Chantent encore ces hommes du grand sommeil.

(Dia 447-449)

Martyrs

(To those who did not survive Thiaroye.

For Ousmane Sembène).²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Sembène is a Senegalese writer and film director. He produced a film in 1987 entitled *Camp de Thiaroye*, which tells the true story of the massacre of African troops by French soldiers who they fought

Thiaroye at dawn!

In great silence

Africa in mourning gathers its sons

Thiaroye at dawn!

A dawn where Africa has dressed in clouds.

Mossi²⁴⁹ orphans from Nouna²⁵⁰

Dogon Bambaras from the caves of Sanga

Lebous from the shores of Ngor²⁵¹

Orphans from the East and from the West

Orphans from the banks of Benin

Orphans from the lagoons

About turn!

Thiaroye at dawn!

alongside during World War II. Over thirty African soldiers were killed at Thiaroye and many more were injured, simply because they had asked for a payrise (*Camp*).

²⁴⁹ Mossi, Bambara, Dogon, Sanga and Lebou are different ethnic groups of West Africa.

²⁵⁰ Nouna is the capital of the province of Kossi in Burkina Faso.

²⁵¹ Ngor is a Lebou village just outside Dakar, and also the name of the island off the coast of Ngor village.

Blood weeps at having sullied mother earth.

Thiaroye at dawn!

When red blood sprayed on Black skin

The great baobab shuddered

The Djoliba's²⁵² crocodiles wailed

And the sabre of the Moro Naba sweated in its scabbard.

Thiaroye at dawn!

The weapons spat out their flames

The men collapsed

These men who

Leaving the embers cold at home

And the fields uncultivated

Had cried out as one

Long live France!

To arms, citizens

Black citizens, Overseas Troops

Rest beneath the seal of the bayonets.

Thiaroye at dawn!

²⁵² The Djoliba is the Bambara name for the Niger river that flows through West Africa ("Niger River").

The widows bared their heads
So they no longer had to look at
The medals won in “the field of honour.”
In the rice-fields of blood
Furrowing through the pathways of my flesh
One hundred canons roared
Reuniting the clamour of jazz with the death rattle of dawn.

And the sons of Rufisque²⁵³
Still sing about these men of the big sleep.

(Collins, *Other* 109-111)

**C. CHAPTER 2, PART II, PAGE 144: “ÉLÉVATION” BY BAUDELAIRE
FOLLOWED BY “IL FAUT COMPRENDRE BY KIRAMA FALL**

NB. Words common to Baudelaire and Kirama Fall’s poem have been highlighted in bold.

²⁵³ Rufisque is a town and small port situated to the east of the Senegalese capital of Dakar (“Rufisque”; “Rufisque – Senegal”).

Élévation

Au-dessus des étangs, au-dessus des vallées,
Des montagnes, des bois, des nuages, des mers,
Par delà le soleil, par delà les éthers,
Par delà les confins des sphères étoilées,

Mon **esprit**, tu te meus avec agilité,
Et, comme un bon nageur qui se pâme dans l'onde,
Tu **sillonnes** gaiement **l'immensité profonde**
Avec une indicible et mâle volupté.

Envole-toi bien loin de ces miasmes morbides;
Va te purifier dans l'air supérieur,
Et bois, comme une pure et **divine** liqueur,
Le feu clair qui remplit **les espaces limpides**.

Derrière les ennuis et les vastes **chagrins**
Qui chargent de leur **poids l'existence brumeuse**,
Heureux celui qui peut d'une aile vigoureuse
S'élancer vers les champs lumineux et sereins;

Celui dont les penses, comme des alouettes,
Vers les cieux le matin prennent un libre essor,
— Qui **plane sur la vie, et comprend sans effort**
Le langage des fleurs et des choses muettes!

(Fleurs 17-18)

Il Faut **Comprendre**

De la douleur logée
Au fond de mon âme
Je veux qu'elle me quitte pour toujours
O souffre
Aspire en moi tout mal
Et l'emporte à l'autre rivage du monde

Et je remonte au seuil
De là où je garde mes rêves
Au fond de mes yeux
Afin d'entrelacer le printemps

O pensée

Envole-toi loin

Sillonne l'immensité profonde

Va te purifier dans l'air supérieur

De l'espace limpide de la divinité

Derrière les chagrins les ennuis

Et les poids brumeux de l'existence

Heureux celui dont l'esprit s'élance

Vers les cieux

Pour planer sur la vie

Il faut comprendre sans effort

Le langage des fleurs

Et des choses muettes.

(Élans 58)

**D. CHAPTER 2, PART II, PAGE 144: TRANSLATION OF ÉLÉVATION BY
WILLIAM AGGELER**

Elevation

Above the lakes, above the vales,

The mountains and the woods, the clouds, the seas,

Beyond the sun, beyond the ether,

Beyond the confines of the starry spheres,

My soul, you move with ease,
And like a strong swimmer in rapture in the wave
You wing your way blithely through boundless space
With virile joy unspeakable.

Fly far, far away from this baneful miasma
And purify yourself in the celestial air,
Drink the ethereal fire of those limpid regions
As you would the purest of heavenly nectars.

Beyond the vast sorrows and all the vexations
That weigh upon our lives and obscure our vision,
Happy is he who can with his vigorous wing
Soar up towards those fields luminous and serene,

He whose thoughts, like skylarks,
Toward the morning sky take flight
Who hovers over life and understands with ease
The language of flowers and silent things!

(Baudelaire, *Flowers*)

**E. CHAPTER 2, PART III, PAGE 157: ENVOÛTEMENT BY ANNETTE
MBAYE D'ERNEVILLE, FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATION**

Envoûtement

À Paulette Folly, l'Antillaise.

Danse, Nègresse marron!

Le Blanc applaudit

Le Blanc rit de bon cœur

Danse, Nègresse marron

Retrouve les pas de la danse du fouet!

Tes reins souples tu les dois

À ton aïeule guinéenne que tu ne connais pas

Le Blanc rit à se tordre

Et sa femme applaudit

Danse, mauresque aux attaches fines,

Offre ton ventre nu,

Aux mains avides et blanches

Qui pour violer ta mère n'étaient pas aussi tendres.

Ballet, danse, rythme

Saoulé par le rires
A trempé son tam-tam
Dans le sang blanc du Blanc qui rit.

(Dia 156-157)

Bewitchment

To Paulette Folly, from the West Indies

Dance, maroon Negress!
White man applauds
White man laughs heartily
Dance, maroon Negress
Recover the steps of the whip dance!
Your supple back you owe
To a Guinean grandmother you never knew

White man is in stitches
His wife applauds
Dance, Moorish woman with delicate ankles
Offer your naked stomach,
To White, greedy hands
That were not so tender violating your mother.

Ballet, dance. Rhythm
Drunk with the laughter
Has soaked its Tom-tom
In White blood of White man who laughs.

(Collins, *Other* 103)

F. CHAPTER 3, PART II, PAGE 225: SENEGALESE NATIONAL ANTHEM

NB. Words written by Léopold Sédar Senghor.

Pincez tous vos coras, frappez vos balafons
Le lion rouge a rugi. Le dompteur de la brousse
D'un bond s'est élancé dissipant les ténèbres
Soleil sur nos terreurs, soleil sur notre espoir.

Refrain:

Debout frères voici l'Afrique rassemblée
Fibres de mon cœur vert épaule contre épaule
Mes plus que frères. O Sénégalais, debout!
Unissons la mer et les sources, unissons
La steppe et la forêt. Salut Afrique mère.

Sénégal, toi le fils de l'écume du lion,

Toi surgi de la nuit au galop des chevaux,
Rends-nous, oh! rends-nous l'honneur de nos Ancêtres
Splendides comme l'ébène et forts comme le muscle!
Nous disons droits — l'épée n'a pas une bavure.

Sénégal, nous faisons nôtre ton grand dessein:
Rassembler les poussins à l'abri des milans
Pour en faire, de l'est à l'ouest, du nord au sud,
Dressé, un même peuple, un peuple sans couture,
Mais un peuple tourné vers tous les vents du monde.

Sénégal, comme toi, tous nos héros,
Nous serons durs, sans haine et les deux bras ouverts,
L'épée, nous la mettrons dans la paix du fourreau,
Car notre travail sera notre arme et la parole.
Le Bantou est un frère, et l'Arabe et le Blanc.

Mais que si l'ennemi incendie nos frontières
Nous soyons tous dressés et les armes au poing:
Un peuple dans sa foi défiant tous les malheurs;
Les jeunes et les vieux, les hommes et les femmes.
La mort, oui! Nous disons la mort mais pas la honte.

(“Symbolique”)

**G. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 240: “TIMIS” BY MAME SECK MBACKÉ,
FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATION**

Timis

Ndeye bootal sa doom Naaj wi nelew na

Maam a nga took ca buntë ba

Asamanna si lëndëm di takk ca sowu jant

Ndey bootal sa doom

Nodd gi jib na jakka ya ngay riir Julitt

ya jubblu pinku Di màggal sunu boroom

Ndeye bootal sa doom Bidéw ya ngay

Melax Curray la ngay xéen Cere ji

simuna

Ndey bootal sa doom Rab yi jôg nanu

Balaa nguiy Wënddélu Guddi Jottna

Ndey bootal sa doom

(Pluie 33)

Twilight

Mother, carry your child on your back

The sun's warmth sent him to sleep

Grandma sits in the doorway watching

The darkened sky, the horizon's flame

Mother, carry your child on your back

The call to prayer is resounding

Mosques are buzzing with believers

Paying homage to our Master in the East

Mother, carry your child on your back

The stars are sparkling

The incense is fragrant

The couscous is welcoming.

Mother, carry your child on your back

The spirits ascend

A carousel of curses

Now is night

Mother, carry your child on your back

H. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 242: “CRÉPUSCULE” BY MAME SECK

MBACKÉ

Crépuscule

(à toutes les mères qui espèrent un enfant)

O mère Dépose ton enfant sur ton dos

Le soleil s'en est allé dormir Assise sur le

Seuil Grand-mère contemple le ciel Qui

s'assombrit O Flamme vive à l'horizon

O mère Dépose ton enfant sur ton dos

C'est l'invite du muezzin Tournés vers

l'Est Les fidèles rendent Hommage à leur

seigneur

O mère Dépose ton enfant sur ton dos

C'est la valse des étoiles La fragrance de

l'encens Le Couscous qui accueille

O mère Dépose ton enfant sur ton dos

C'est la danse des diables Le carrousel
des malédictions Le temps de la nuit

O mère Dépose ton enfant sur ton dos

(Pluie 34)

**I. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 247: COMMON INTRODUCTORY
CONVERSATION IN WOLOF**

Na nga def?

Maa ngi fi rekk.

Sa yaram jàmm?

Jàmm rekk.

Literally:

How are you doing?

I am only here.

Your body peace?

Only peace.

Meaning:

How are you?

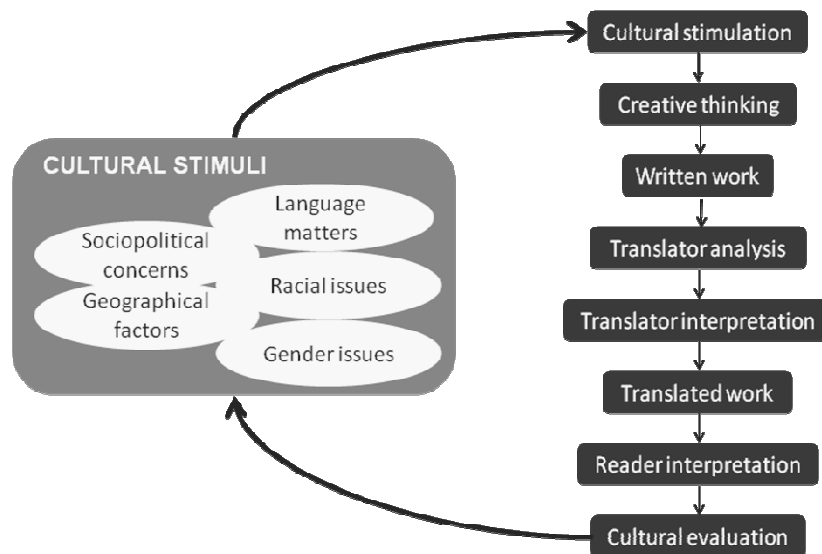
I am fine.

Are you well?

Very well.

**J. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 248: SENEGALESE WOMEN'S
LITERATURE – A JOURNEY OF CULTURE AND TRANSLATION**

(Figure 2)



The cultural stimuli in this chart are based upon Hitchcott's and Derive's criteria for discussing cultural identity in an African context (see Introduction, page 24).

**K. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 250: “APPROCHE DE LA TERRE
GAULOISE” BY MAME SECK MBACKÉ, FOLLOWED BY
TRANSLATION**

NB. Prepositions have been highlighted in bold.

Approche **de** la Terre Gauloise

Le tabac fume ma bouche

Qui pleure **de** solitude

La rosée **du** mariage

Occulte les fruits

Du plaisir

Mes pieds **de** cognassier

Sur la pluie **du** souffle

La vache siffle

Ses sottises

Sur l'échine **du** vent

C'est la danse

Des prairies rouges

Dans mes feux

De savane

Et j'en cueille les saisons

Évidées

Dans le miel

De la raison

Le corbeau s'habille

Pour la touterelle

Esmeralda

Devient chèvre

Pour porter Notre Dame

Sur ses cornes

Où est Quasimodo

Assis **sur** une moto

Il circule

Sur l'Abbé Frolo

Au nom **des** Papillons

Épris **de** pavillons

Le champ **de** Mars

Bascule la Tour Eiffel

La Seine visite

La Marne

Quand les peupliers

S'en vont dormir

(Alizés 24-25)

Approach of the Gauls

Tobacco stains my mouth

Which cries **of** solitude

The dew **of** marriage

Hides the fruits

Of pleasure

My quince tree feet

On the rain **of** breath

The cow swallows

Its stupidity

On the wind's spine

It's the dance

Of red prairies

In my savannah

Fires **from** which

I gather the seasons

Emptied

In the honey

Of reason

The crow preens

For the turtle dove
Esmeralda
Becomes a goat
To carry Notre Dame
On her horns
Where is Quasimodo
On his motorcycle
He circles
Priest Frolo
For all those Butterflies
Besotted **by** the chimes
The Champ **de** Mars
Topples the Eiffel Tower
The Seine reaches
The Marne
When the poplars
Head off to sleep

(Collins, *Other* 111-113)

**L. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 252: THE SOUNDS OF THE WOLOF
LANGUAGE**

Ana waa kër ga?

Ñu nga fa.

Naka sa jabar?

Mu ngiy sant Yàlla.

Meaning:

How is your family?

Everyone is well.

How is your wife?

Well, praise Allah.

**M. CHAPTER 3, PART III, PAGE 252: “CE SOIR” BY FATOU NDIAYE SOW,
FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATION**

Ce Soir

J’entends des sons célestes

Et une douleur infinie

Pénètre mon âme.

Est-ce le souffle divin

Cette imperceptible caresse
Qui rend tout si calme
Si beau, si beau
Ce soir?
L'horizon est vêtu
De pourpre et d'or
Et se mire dans la mer
Pour parfaire ses plis
Spectacle grandiose
À nul autre pareil,
Offert chaque soir
Par l'ARTISTE éternel.

(31)

Tonight

I hear celestial sounds
And an infinite pain
Penetrates my soul.
Is it the divine breath
This imperceptible caress
That makes everything so calm
So fine, so fine
Tonight?

The horizon is clothed
In crimson and gold
And is mirrored in the sea
Perfecting its pleats
A magnificent show
Unparalleled,
Presented each evening
By the eternal ARTIST.

(Collins, *Other* 107)

**N. CHAPTER 3, PART V, PAGE 270: “SI L’ESPOIR NE MEURT...” BY
FATOU NDIAYE SOW, FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATION**

Si l’Espoir ne Meurt...

Le rêve bousculait la patience de mon regard
Souhais multiples adressés à Dieu le Père
De maintenir toujours le cycle des saisons
Pour des semilles de survie
En pousses vertes de bonheur
Où nulle fièvre ne bouscule
La gloire des moissons des Soleils
Et j’arroserai de sueurs ardentes

Horizons et mirages

De mon Sahel Brûlé.

Et je danserai au Tam-Tam des semailles;

Et je danserai.

(41)

Hope, If It Die...

The dream disturbed the patience of my gaze

So many wishes sent to God the Father

Always to maintain the cycle of the seasons

For the seeds of survival

In green buds of happiness

Where no fever upsets

The glory of the Suns' crops

And I will water with ardent sweat

The horizons and mirages

Of my burning Sahel.

And I will dance to the Tom-tom of the seeds;

And I will dance.

(Collins, *Other* 107)

**O. CHAPTER 4, PART II, PAGE 311: “FRAGMENTS DE PARADIS” BY
NAFISSATOU DIA DIOUF**

I

La rivière Zem Zem
Chante sa poésie d'eau
Paradisiers et tisserins
S'y abreuvent à l'envi
Aux Sources des Sources
Par un matin béni
Gorgé de fougères

II

La rivière Zem Zem
Chante sa poésie d'eau
L'Astre de vie
Ruissèle de couleurs
Dans les jardins suspendus
Tel un immense drap
Tenu par des anges.
Un affluent de miel
Un affluent de lait

La rose et le pommier
Des bosquets de jasmin
Chantent la vie éternelle

III

La rivière Zem Zem
Chante sa poésie d'eau
L'Astre de vie se désaltère
Au terme de sa folle course
Et s'enroule
Dans un manteau pourpre
Pour aller s'éteindre dans la mer
La nuit s'habille peu à peu
Du fourreau lisse de sa peau noire
Parée des lucioles vespérales
Qui la guideront
Dans son trajet nocturne

IV

La rivière Zem Zem
Chante sa poésie d'eau
Paradisiers et tisserins
Oiseaux orpailleurs du ciel

Ironent cueillir les étoiles
Pour illuminer leurs nids
Mille éclats constellent
Le Grand Écran de Dieu
Sur quelques notes de luth
La mère des courtisanes
Shéhérazade murmure
Une mélodie muezzine
En attendant la folle méharée
Du marchand de sable
La nuit coule doucement
Jusqu'au petit matin

(40-41)

**P. CHAPTER 4, PART III, PAGE 323: TIDYING UP THE TEXT - EXTRACT
FROM "LËL" BY MAME SECK MBACKÉ**

LËL

Écoute les lourds sanglots du Tam-tam

Dioung.-Dioung...

Écoute-Écoute Un circoncis est mort!

Dioung!

Les fusils de traite se sont tus
La chèvre aux deux têtes
Dont une seule visible aux humains
La chèvre aux quatre yeux
Dont deux visible aux humains
La chèvre aux huit pattes
Dont quatre visible aux humains
Et qui plane
Quand la terre accouche de ses nains
La chèvre aux deux nez
A saccagé une âme à l'épreuve
Dans le Bois sacré

(Pluie 28-30)

**Q. CHAPTER 4, PART IV, PAGE 333: EXTRACT FROM “ÉLÉGIE POUR
JEAN BRIERRE” BY MAME SECK MBACKÉ - DIVIDING THE POEM
UP AND READING ALOUD HIGHLIGHTS SOUND DEVICES**

Le Fils du Morne est parti
Pleuré par Toute la Terre
Haïti Pleure la Paix
Il s'en Est allé

L'exilé serein
éniuré par Son âme De POETE
Pour doucement Sucer le Sein De la Mère
Dame Derouillère
Il est Parti Jean-François Brierre
Le Fauve
D'Haïti à la démarche paisible
L'homme Des rues de Dakar
La tête bourdonnante De Rimes
Cigarette aux lèvres
Dodelinant De la cime
Oui L'HOMME des CIMES

(Pluie 54-55)

**R. CHAPTER 4, PART V, PAGE 347: "DES LOUANGES NOUVELLES" BY
KINÉ KIRAMA FALL**

Des Louanges Nouvelles

(Chant)

Je veux chanter pour mon Dieu

Des louanges nouvelles

Qu'aucune lèvre n'a dites

Aucune oreille entendues.

Tendez l'oreille à mes chants, Seigneur,

Répondez à mon amour.

Si vous restez sourd à mes plaintes,

Qui pourra me consoler?

Regardez-moi, souriez-moi, Seigneur,

Puisque vous êtes mon Tout.

Dans mes douleurs, mes angoisses,

C'est vers vous seul

Que je tends les mains.

Où voulez-vous que j'aille?

Je n'ai personne d'autre que vous.

Inconsolable sera mon cœur

Si je ne puis vous plaire,

Noyé dans la joie

Sera mon cœur

Si votre regard se pose sur moi.

Faites-moi l'aumône de votre sourire,

Oh! mon Bon Seigneur,
Et je hurlerai mon bonheur
Pour que le vent l'emporte
Dans tous les coins de la terre.

Seigneur Dieu, mon Tout,
N'oubliez pas, dans votre miséricorde,
Que je vous aime de toute mon âme
Et que je n'ai personne d'autre que vous
Puisque vous êtes mon Tout.

(Chants 59-60)

S. CHAPTER 4, PART V, PAGE 349: PRAISE SONG IN *UNE SI LONGUE*

LETTRE BY MARIAMA BÂ

Nous sommes vendredi. J'ai pris un bain purificateur. J'en ressens l'effet vivifiant qui, à travers mes pores dégagé, me soulage.

L'odeur du savon m'enveloppe. Des habits propres remplacent mon accoutrement chiffonné. Cette netteté de ma personne m'enchanté. Point de mire de tant d'yeux, je pense que l'une des qualités essentielles de la femme est la propreté. La plus humble des chaumières plaît si l'ordre et la propreté y règnent; le cadre le plus luxueux ne séduit pas si la poussière l'encrasse.

Les femmes qu'on appelle 'femmes au foyer' ont du mérite. Le travail domestique qu'elles assument et qui n'est pas rétribué en monnaies sonnantes est essentiel dans le foyer. Leur récompense reste la pile de linge odorant et bien repassé, le carrelage luisant où le pied glisse, la cuisine gaie où la sauce embaume. Leur action muette est ressentie dans les moindres détails qui ont leur utilité: là, c'est une fleur épanouie dans un vase, ailleurs un tableau aux coloris appropriés, accroché au bon endroit.

L'ordonnement du foyer requiert de l'art...

(119-120)

T. CHAPTER 4, PART V, PAGE 351: BODÉ-THOMAS TRANSLATION OF A PRAISE SONG IN *SO LONG A LETTER*

Today is Friday. I've taken a refreshing bath. I can feel its revitalizing effect, which, through my open pores, soothes me.

The smell of soap surrounds me. Clean clothes replace my crumpled ones. The cleanliness of my body pleases me. I think that as she is the object of attraction for so many eyes, cleanliness is one of the essential qualities of a woman. The most humble of huts is pleasing when it is clean; the most luxurious setting offers no attraction if it is covered in dust.

Those women we call 'house'-wives deserve praise. The domestic work they carry out, and which is not paid in hard cash, is essential to the home. Their compensation remains the pile of well ironed, sweet-smelling washing, the shining tiled floor on

which the foot glides, the gay kitchen filled with the smell of stews. Their silent action is felt in the least useful detail; over there, a flower in bloom placed in a vase, elsewhere a painting with appropriate colours, hung up in the right place.

The management of the home is an art...

(Bâ 63)

II Biographies of Writers and Interviewees

The biographies below comprise details of the Senegalese women writers whose works feature in this thesis, as well as those individuals who were interviewed for the purpose of this research. Where referenced, biographical information has been taken from the anthology, *The Other Half of History*, which was published towards the end of 2007 as part of this study. Other facts were obtained from the website of the *University of Western Australia* which holds much information on Francophone African women writers in general due to an ongoing research project (“Welcome”). Further information has been given by the authors themselves, or taken from other referenced sources.

Bâ, Mariama

Mariama Bâ was born in 1929 in Senegal and was brought up by her grandparents. She gained a teaching diploma in 1947 and taught for a number of years before working at the regional office for teaching inspection. She married Obèye Diop, a Member of Parliament, but they divorced after having nine children. Although Mariama Bâ received the first Noma award for Publishing in 1980 for *Une si longue*

lettre, she died shortly after in 1981, before her second novel, *Un chant écarlate*, was published. She was therefore not able to see the growth in popularity of her work. Her books are now studied worldwide and feature on many university curricula across the disciplines, including French Studies, Gender Studies and Cultural Studies. According to her official biography of 2007, her first novel has been translated into 17 languages (Ndiaye, *Mariama* 178-179), and a new Wolof translation now makes it 18. Her second novel has been translated into seven languages (180). She received the posthumous title of Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Pléiade from the *Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) and in 2003 her daughter received an award from the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) on her behalf, for writing one of the "Top Twelve" best African books of the twentieth century (255-256) ("Mariama Bâ;" Ndiaye, *Mariama*).

Benga, Sokhna

Sokhna Benga (originally Mbengue) was born on 12 December 1967. She studied law at Dakar's Université Cheikh Anta Diop and specialised in Maritime Law (DESS DROIT des activités maritimes) at university in Brest, France. She previously worked as Head of Publishing for the Nouvelles Éditions Africaines du Sénégal (NEAS), but now works for the Senegalese Ministry of Maritime Economy in Dakar. She is a novelist, poet, scriptwriter and editor and has won many awards for her work, including the prestigious "Grand prix du Président de la République" for her book entitled *La balade du sabador* ("Sokhna Benga;" Benga, *Balade*; Benga, *Personal 2*).

Bugul, Ken (Mariétou Mbaye Biléoma)

Mariétou Mbaye Biléoma was born in Maleme Hodar in Senegal in 1947. She took the pen name, Ken Bugul (meaning “nobody wants it” in Wolof) on her editor’s advice, due to the controversial and semi-autobiographical nature of *Le baobab fou*. She went to secondary school in Thiès before attending the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. She received scholarships to study in Belgium and France as well as a publishing grant in 1995 from the Centre National du Livre in France. To date, she has written eight novels and a number of short stories. Her most famous work, *Le baobab fou*, has been translated into English, Dutch, German and Spanish. Mbaye Biléoma is now a specialist in development and family planning and lives in Benin (Garane, *Afterword* 161-162; Bugul, *Baobab*).

Dia Diouf, Nafissatou

Born in Dakar in 1973, Dia Diouf has written many works of prose and poetry, including a number of children’s books. She completed her Baccalauréat at a private Catholic school in Senegal before travelling to France to study at the Université Michel de Montaigne in Bordeaux. Dia Diouf has won many prizes for her work, including two awards from the Léopold Sédar Senghor Foundation, and the “Lauréate du Prix du Jeune Écrivain Francophone” was presented to her in Muret, France in 1999. Today Dia Diouf travels extensively and divides the rest of her time between writing and her job in Sales and Marketing for a Telecommunications company in Dakar. She is married with two children (“Biographie;” “Nafissatou;” Dia Diouf).

Fall, Khadi

Khadi Fall (also known as Khadidjatou Fall) was born on 13 December 1948 and spent her childhood in Dakar before moving overseas to study. She took history and German at Toulouse University and achieved her PhD from the University of Strasbourg. She became a Minister in the Senegalese government in 2000 before working as a Professor at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar where she still teaches German language, cultures and literature. She writes in her spare time, and her first novel, *Mademba* was awarded the “Grand Prix du Roman” by “Sénégal Culture.” Khadi Fall has written two novels, a collection of prose poetry, and published a collection of conference papers and articles in French and Wolof (“Khadi Fall;” Fall, *Mademba*; Fall, *Personal* 2).

Kirama Fall, Kiné

Kiné Kirama Fall was born in Rufisque in Senegal in 1934. She did not go to school or university, nor did she receive a religious education. When commencing her career, she was given support from other established Senegalese poets of the time, including Birago Diop. And her first collection of poetry, entitled *Chants de la rivière fraîche*, was published in 1975 and included a preface by Léopold Sédar Senghor. Kirama Fall followed this with *Les élans de grâce* in 1979. She also worked as a local news journalist and appeared on Senegalese television in the 1970s (Kiba; Kirama Fall, *Élans*; Collins, *Other* 127).

Mbaye d'Erneville, Annette

Mbaye d'Erneville was born in Senegal in 1926 and started writing poetry in the 1950s. She was primarily educated in Senegal, and received her teaching degree from the École Normale de Rufisque in 1945. Later, she travelled to Paris, where she worked towards a diploma in journalism. On her return, Mbaye d'Erneville launched the newspaper, *Femmes de soleil*, which in 1963 became the successful journal, *Awa*. She also worked as the Programme Director at Radio Sénégal and was one of the founders of the Senegalese women's movement. She published a number of collections of poetry for both adults and children, although her most famous work, *Kaddu* (also titled *Poèmes Africains*) is very difficult to acquire ("Annette;" Collins, *Other* 128; Dia 155).

Mbengue Diakhate, (Adjaratou) Ndèye Coumba

Mbengue Diakhate was born in Rufisque and was one of the first teachers to be trained at the École Normale de Rufisque. She actively promoted socio-cultural issues, including women's rights and the education of mothers and children through a number of organisations including the women's Association for Social Action in Rufisque. She only published one collection of poetry, which was launched in 1980 and entitled *Filles du soleil*. Mbengue Diakhaté passed away in 2001. (Fall, *Auteur*; "Ndèye")

Mbow, Penda

Penda Mbow was born in Dakar in April 1955. She grew up there and studied history at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop, but gained her PhD in France from the Université Aix-Marseille. She a well-known political and gender activist and currently runs a

movement on youth and citizenship. Mbow has also won awards for her work in society including a prize as one of the “Femmes pionnières” of 1997. In 2001 she became Senegal's Minister for Culture and in 2005 was made an Honorary Doctor at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. She is now an Associate Professor at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar where she teaches Islamic and European history, and history of the Middle Ages. Penda Mbow has presented many papers and written numerous articles on African socio-political issues during her career (Mbow 2; Bâ, *Femmes* 102).

Ndiaye, Aminata

Ndiaye was born in Dakar in 1974. She studied in France, receiving her PhD from the Sorbonne in Paris, and since 1995 she has been teaching at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD) in Dakar. Ndiaye has contributed poems to the anthology: *Saison d'amour et de colère: Poèmes et nouvelles du Sahel* published in 1998, and in 2005 published her own collection entitled *Brumes et brouillards* (Ndiaye, *Brumes*; Diop, *Saison*).

Ndiaye, Awa

Awa Ndiaye was born in Dakar in 1956. She gained her BA, MA and teacher training qualifications at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD) and was a teacher for two years before travelling to Paris to study for her PhD in French Literature at the Sorbonne. She later returned to UCAD to work as an Assistant Lecturer. Since 1993 she has held several positions working for the Senegalese government, including

advisor to the President on matters of culture and education, and Minister of Family Affairs, Women's Entrepreneurship and Micro-finance. In 2005, she organised a ceremony to celebrate the launch of President Abdoulaye Wade's book, *Un destin pour l'Afrique*, and later that year her first collection of poetry, entitled *Hymne(s) à l'amour*, was published ("Awa N'Diaye;" "Profil;" Ndiaye, *Hymne(s)*).

Ndiaye Sow, Fatou

Ndiaye Sow was born in 1956 in Tivouane, Senegal but lived most of her life in Dakar. She was raised by her grandparents as her parents died when she was very young. Fatou Ndiaye Sow studied to be a teacher at the École Normale de Rufisque and was a teacher for most of her life. She wrote numerous stories and collections of poetry for children, as well as promoting literature for young people. Her most famous collection of poetry is *Fleurs du Sahel*, written for adults. During her lifetime she was a member of a number of family and women's associations, and she participated in poetry events worldwide. Fatou Ndiaye Sow died in 2004 ("Fatou;" Ndiaye Sow; Collins, *Other* 128-129).

Sall, Amadou Lamine

Amadou Lamine Sall was born on 26 March 1951 in Kaolack, Senegal and studied both in France and in his home country. He is well-known for his poetry throughout Francophone Africa, and was hailed as the best poet of his generation by former President of Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor. He is a founding member of the "Maison Africaine de la Poésie Internationale" for which he is now President, and has

received many honours and prizes for his work, including the Académie Française “Grand Prix.” Sall also works as Advisor to the Minister for Culture and is the Organiser of the UNESCO-sponsored Gorée Memorial Project. He regularly presents at conferences and takes part in television debates. Sall has published numerous poems and collections of poetry, many of which have been translated into other languages (Sall 2; “Biobibliographie”).

Seck Mbacké, Mame

Mame Seck Mbacké was born in Gossas, Senegal in October 1947. She studied Economic and Social Development at the Institut des Hautes Études Internationales in Paris. Following her studies she worked as a diplomat in France and Morocco before turning to social work at the Senegalese Consulate in Paris, often dealing with the problems of Senegalese immigrants, including issues of language. Whilst doing social work, she continued her studies, including a degree in International Relations at the Sorbonne, and postgraduate studies in Public Health and Nutrition at the Université de Paris I. Seck Mbacké has won awards for her work, including the “Premier Prix de Poésie” from the Ministry of Culture in 1999. She has also written five collections of poetry, a short story, play and a novel. She now lives in Dakar where she continues to write whilst working for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Collins, *Other* 130; “Mame;” Seck Mbacké, *Personal* 2).

Sow Fall, Aminata

Aminata Sow Fall was born in Saint-Louis in Senegal in 1941. She went to secondary school in Dakar before travelling to France to study for a degree in modern languages. She married in France in 1963 before returning to Senegal to become a teacher. She worked for some time in the Ministry for Culture as Directrice des Lettres et de la Propriété Intellectuelle and received an honorary doctorate from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, amongst many other achievements. She is now Director of the *Centre Africain d'Animation et d'Échanges Culturels*, as well as running the *Khoudia* publishing house that she founded in Dakar. She is one of the most famous writers in Senegal and has published a number of works, including eight novels. Of these, only *La grève des bàttu* is available in translation, and it was also adapted for cinema by Cheikh Oumar Cissoko in 2000 (“Aminata;” Sow Fall, *Grève* 7).

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BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SENEGALESE WOMEN WRITERS

This list is up to date and more extensive than other bibliographies of Senegalese women's works. However, other bibliographies have been used as sources, including *Femmes au Sénégal* by Amadou Bâ et al., *Women Writers in Francophone Africa* by Hitchcott, Stringer's *The Senegalese Novel by Women*, and the *Encyclopedia Of African Literature* edited by Simon Gikandi. The database on African women writers edited by Jean-Marie Volet of the University of Western Australia, and entitled *Lire les femmes écrivains et les littératures africaines*, was also very useful. These bibliographies have been expanded through my own research, including contact with publishers and writers, searches at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop library, Dakar bookshops and the women's museum on Gorée island. Included in this bibliography are women who have been born in Senegal, have Senegalese parents or a parent who is Senegalese (such as Marie Ndiaye), or individuals who have lived in Senegal and made it their home for a considerable period of time (eg. Molly Melching).

Writers are listed alphabetically as well as their individual works. Unpublished texts or forthcoming texts have not been included as it is impossible to be factually reliable with such information. The list comprises all 'creative source texts' written in French or local languages by Senegalese women writers. The phrase 'creative source texts' defines authored or co-authored poetry, novels and short stories, children's literature, published theatre, memoirs, autobiographies and biographies, and are labelled as such throughout. Translations of these works into English as well as local Senegalese languages, such as Wolof, are listed directly below each source text and

have been indented and marked with an asterix so they stand out. However, films, screenplays, CDs, essays, academic papers, textbooks, newspaper articles, promotional booklets, leaflets or other art such as paintings have not been included (unless accompanied by a creative source text), due to time and space constraints and because they are less relevant to this thesis. If any of these have been referred to, they can be found in the above Works Cited / Consulted.

Writers' Works

A

Abdoulaye, Maïmouna [also Fatou-Binetou Maimouna Kane Fall] (1949 -)

Un cri du coeur. Dakar, 1986. (Novel)

Aguessy, Dominique (1937 -)

Comme un souffle fragile. Paris: Parole et Silence, 2005. (Poetry). One poem

translated:

* "Like a Fragile Breath." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis

A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 16-17. (Poetry)

* "Your Light, Lord." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis

A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 14-15. (Poetry)

Contes du Bénin: L'oracle du Hibou. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2004. (Short stories)

L'aube chante à plusieurs voix. Namur: Alcanthe, 1999. (Poetry). Three poems translated:

* "The Poem Seeks Its Own Way." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in Francophone Africa.* Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 10-11. (Poetry)

* "To All the Women of Algeria." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in Francophone Africa.* Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 8-9. (Poetry)

* "When Sudden Passion Comes." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in Francophone Africa.* Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 10-11. (Poetry)

La maison aux sept portes: Contes et légendes du Bénin. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996. (Short stories)

La soif des oasis. Paris: Du Cygne, 2008. (Poetry)

Le caméléon bavard: Contes et légendes du Sénégal et du Bénin. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994. (Short stories)

Le gué des hivernages. Paris: La Porte, 2002. (Poetry). Two poems translated:

* "I Entered Poetry." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 14-15. (Poetry)

* "Undocumented." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 12-13. (Poetry)

Les chemins de la sagesse: Contes et légendes du Sénégal et du Bénin. Paris:

L'Harmattan, 2000. (Short stories)

Armstrong, Clotilde (1927 -)

"Le nègre de Noël." *La descente aux enfers*. Ed. N.Ndjekery. Paris: Hatier, 1986.

(Short story)

B

Bâ, Mariama (1929 - 1981)

Un chant écarlate. Dakar: NEAS, 2005. (Novel). Translated as:

* *Scarlet Song*. Trans. Dorothy Blair. New York: Longman, 1986. (Novel)

Une si longue lettre. Monaco: Motifs, 2005. (Novel). Translated as:

* *Bataaxal bu gudde nii*. Trans. Maam Yunus Jeŋ and Aram Faal. Dakar:

NEAS, 2007. (Novel)

* *So Long a Letter*. Trans. Modupé Bodé-Thomas. Oxford, Heinemann, 1981.

(Novel)

Barry, Mariama

La petite Peule. Paris: Mazarine, 2000. (Autobiographical novel). Translated as:

* *The Little Peul*. Trans. Carrol F. Coates, Virginia: Virginia UP, 2010.

(Autobiographical novel)

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Bassine Niang, Mame (1951-)

Mémoires pour mon père. Dakar: NEAS, 1997. (Biography)

Benga, Sokhna [or M'Bengue] (1967 -)

Anthologie de la poésie sénégalaise. Ed. Sokhna Benga et al. Dakar: Maguilen, 2003.

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J'avais quatre heures. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007. (Autobiographical novel)

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D

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Dieng, Mame Younousse (1940 -)

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Jeneer. (Poetry in Wolof)

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Dieng, Salla (1987 -)

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Dieye, Yaram

Barça ou Barsakh (Barcelone ou la mort) Paris: Manuscrit, 2007. (Short story)

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* *The Belly of the Atlantic*. Trans. Lulu Norman and Ros Schwartz. London:

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Pa'Gauloises. Paris: Flammarion, 1991. (Novel written with Guy Franquet)

Diouf, Coumba

La chaumière des bugari. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000. (Novel)

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* *Bintou’s Braids*. Trans. Sylvanie A. Diouf. San Francisco: Chronicle, 2004.

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F

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Faye, Nathalie

Les anges n'ont pas d'ailes. Dakar: Feu de Brousse, 2004. (Poetry)

G

Gassama, Absa (1969 -)

Hoa ou les portes de la vie. Paris: Les 3 Orangers, 2001. (Novel)

Gavron, Laurence

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Hivernage. Paris: Masque, 2009. (Novel)

John Cassavetes. Paris: Rivages Cinéma, 1986. (Biography with Denis Lenoir)

Marabouts d'ficelle. Paris: Baleine, 2000. (Novel)

H

Hane, Khadi (1962 -)

“Aïcha.” *Les Balançoires*. Ed. Ananda Devi. Yaoundé: Tropiques, 2006. (Short story)

“Désarroi.” *Je suis vraiment de bon foi*. Ed. Janis Otsiemi. Libreville: Ndzé, 2001.

(Short story)

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Sous le regard des étoiles... Dakar: NEAS, 1998. (Novel)

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K

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Lagon, lagunes: Tableau de mémoire. Paris: Gallimard, 2000 (Poetic prose)

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Partis trop tôt, trop loin: L'exil. Montreal: Phoenix, 2009. (Novel)

Khady (1959 -)

Mutilée. Paris: Oh!, 2005. (Autobiography written with Marie-Thérèse Cuny)

Kilchenmann Bekha, Beatrix

Échange culturel: Récit d'un voyage au Sénégal. Paris: Publibook, 2005. (Illustrated Novel).

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Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 142-145.

(Poetry)

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African Women’s Poetry. Trans. Georgina Collins. Coventry:

Heaventree, 2007. 100-101. (Poetry)

* “Wounded Land.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d’Almeida. Trans. Janis

A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 138-143. (Poetry)

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L

Lake, Ayavi (1980 -)

N'Dakaru, fragments d'amour. Roissy-en-Brie: Cultures Croisées, 2007. (Novel)

Souffles étranges: métissages. Roissy-en-Brie: Cultures Croisées, 2002. (Poetry and
short stories)

Lô, Sanou (1957 -)

De pourpre et d'hermine. Dakar: NEAS, 2005. (Novel)

M

Maiga Ka, Rokhaya Aminata (1940 - 2005)

Brisures de vies. Saint-Louis: Xamal, 1998. (Short story)

“De rêve en rêve.” *La nouvelle sénégalaise: Texte et contexte*. Ed. James Gaasch.

Saint-Louis: Xamal, 2000. 97.

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La voie du salut, suivi de: Le miroir de la vie. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1985. (Short stories)

“Le transfert.” *La nouvelle sénégalaise: Texte et contexte*. Ed. James Gaasch. Saint-

Louis: Xamal, 2000. 97.

Mandeleau, Tita [also Danièle Saint-Prix, married name – Brigaud] (1937 -)

Signare Anna. Dakar: NEAS, 1991. (Novel)

“Vieux Djo.” *Textes inédits*. 1999. The University of Western Australia/French. 10

Jun. 2010 <<http://aflit.arts.uwa.edu.au/FEMECOriginal.html>>. (Short story)

Mbaye d' Erneville, Annette (1926 -)

Chansons pour Laïty. Dakar: NEA, 1976. (Children's poetry)

Kaddu. Dakar: NEA, 1966. (Poetry, new edition of *Poèmes africains*). Eight

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* “Bewitchment.” *The Other Half of History: An Anthology of Francophone*

African Women's Poetry. Trans. Georgina Collins. Coventry:

Heaventree, 2007. 102-103. (Poetry)

* “Independence.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry*

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Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 110-111. (Poetry)

- * “Initiation.” *The Other Half of History: An Anthology of Francophone African Women’s Poetry*. Trans. Georgina Collins. Coventry: Heaventree, 2007. 103-105. (Poetry)
- * “Kassacks.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s Poetry in Francophone Africa*. Ed. Irène Assiba d’Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 106-109. (Poetry)
- * “Kassacks.” *The Heinemann Book of African Women’s Poetry*. Trans. Brian Baer. Ed. Stella Chipasula and Frank Chipasula. Oxford: Heinemann, 1995. 113-114. (Poetry)
- * “Labane.” *The Heinemann Book of African Women’s Poetry*. Trans. Brian Baer. Ed. Stella Chipasula and Frank Chipasula. Oxford: Heinemann, 1995. 112-113. (Poetry)
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- * “Requiem.” *The Heinemann Book of African Women’s Poetry*. Trans. Brian Baer. Ed. Stella Chipasula and Frank Chipasula. Oxford: Heinemann, 1995. 112. (Poetry)

La bague de cuivre et d’argent. Dakar: NEA, 1983. (Short story)

Le Noël du vieux chasseur. Dakar: NEA, 1983. (Children’s literature)

Motte de terre et motte de beurre. Dakar: NEAS 2003. (Children’s literature)

Picc l’oiseau et lëpp-lëpp le papillon. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Poèmes africains. Dakar: Centre National d’Art Français, 1965. (Poetry)

Mbengue Diakhaté, Ndèye Coumba (- 2001)

Filles du soleil. Dakar: NEA, 1988. (Poetry). Four poems translated:

* “Griot of My Race.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s*

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A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 118-121. (Poetry)

* “Jigeen reck nga.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d’Almeida. Trans. Janis

A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 116-119. (Poetry)

* “Seasons of Life.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s*

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A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 120-121. (Poetry)

* “Young Woman Dead.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s*

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A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 122-123. (Poetry)

Melching, Molly

Anniko. Dakar: NEA, 1976. (Children’s literature). Translated as:

**Anniko*. Trans. Charlotte Blake Alston. *More Ready-to-Tell Tales from Around*

the World. Ed. David Holt and Bill Mooney. Little Rock: August, 2000.

Montplaisir, Isabelle

L’oiseau de cuivre incarnat. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006. (Short stories)

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Mordasini, Diana

La cage aux déesses 1: De fil en meurtres. Paris: Société des Écrivains, 2002. (Novel)

La cage aux déesses 2: Les yeux d'Ilh'a. Paris: Société des Écrivains, 2002. (Novel)

Le bottillon perdu. Dakar: NEAS, 1990. (Novel)

N

Ndèye Boury Ndiaye, Adja [married name – Gueye] (1936 -)

Collier de cheville. Dakar: NEA, 1983. (Novel)

Diaxai l'aigle et niellé le moineau. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children's literature)

“Mère au foyer.” *Textes inédits*. 1996. The University of Western Australia/French. 10

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Ndiaye Sow, Fatou (1956-2004)

Adorable Makan. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children's literature)

“Caali, fille du Saloum.” *Textes inédits*. 1998. The University of Western

Australia/French. 10 Jun. 2010

<<http://aflit.arts.uwa.edu.au/FEMECOriginal.html>>. (Script)

Comme Rama, je veux aller à l'école. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children's literature)

Fleurs du Sahel. Dakar: NEAS, 1990. (Poetry). Three poems translated:

- * “Hope, if It Die.” *The Other Half of History: An Anthology of Francophone African Women’s Poetry*. Trans. Georgina Collins. Coventry: Heaventree, 2007. 106-107. (Poetry)
- * “On the Threshold of Nothingness.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s Poetry in Francophone Africa*. Ed. Irène Assiba d’Almeida. Trans. Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2009. 240-241. (Poetry)
- * “Tonight.” *The Other Half of History: An Anthology of Francophone African Women’s Poetry*. Trans. Georgina Collins. Coventry: Heaventree, 2007. 106-107. (Poetry)

Jéréjéf. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Kiwo et Timosa. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

La graine. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Le ballon d’Aly. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Le mariage de Ndella. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Le mouton d’Aminata. Abidjan: NEI, 1996. (Children's literature)

Le rêve d’Amina. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Mamita. Dakar: Falia, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Marième, ma fille. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Mon quartier, un miroir. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Natou ou le rayon de soleil. Dakar: NEAS, 2003. (Children’s literature)

Papy et Cocori. Dakar: Clairafrique, 2001. (Children’s literature)

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Two poems translated:

* "The Drum." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in*

Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A.

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* "The Key." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in*

Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis A.

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Takam-tikou (J'ai deviné). Dakar: Maguilen, 1991. (Children's poetry). Two poems

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* "A Day on Gorée." *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's*

Poetry in Francophone Africa. Ed. Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Trans. Janis

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P

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“Maro.” *Textes inédits*. 1999. The University of Western Australia/French. 10 Jun. 2010 <<http://aflit.arts.uwa.edu.au/FEMECoriginal.html>>. (Poetry)

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Louis: Xamal, 2000. 187. (Short story)

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Louis: Xamal, 2000. 187. (Short story)

T

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Thiongane, Oumy Baala.

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* “Evening at Mbelelane.” *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s*

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Traore Kemgné, Abibatou (1973-)

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Trolet Ndiaye, Marielle

Femme blanche, Afrique noire. Paris: Grasset, 2005. (Autobiography)

Turpin, Marie-Rose (1957 -)

“HLM/P.” *Trois nouvelles*. Dakar: NEA, 1982. 31-68. (Short story)

V

Vieyra, Célia (1983 -)

Une odeur aigre de lait rance. Paris: Chorus, 1999. (Novel)

W

Warner-Vieyra, Myriam (1939 -)

Femmes échouées. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1988. (Short stories)

Juletane. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1982. (Novel)

“L'accident.” *Textes inédits*. 1996. The University of Western Australia/French. 10

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Le quimboiseur l'avait dit. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1980. (Novel). Translated as:

* *As the Sorcerer Said*. Trans. Dorothy S. Blair. Harlow: Longman, 1982.

Wheatley, Phillis (1753-1784)

Wheatley is believed to have been born in Senegal before she was enslaved. A number of collections of her works are available, including:

The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley. Ed. John C. Shields. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.

Y

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Noirs de France. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2007. (Novel)

Z

Zaaria, Aminata (1973 -)

La nuit est tombée sur Dakar. Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2004. (Novel)

La putain amoureuse d'un pèlerin juif. Paris: Peninsules, 2007. (Novel)