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THE TRANSLATOR AS MEDIATOR: INTERPRETING 'NON-STANDARD' FRENCH IN SENEGALESE WOMEN'S LITERATURE

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Negotiating Nations

Senegal may have gained independence half a century ago, but it seems the impact of French migration and colonisation will forever be present as part of its cultures — cultures that no longer represent only the lives, beliefs and values of their ancestors, but hybrid cultures that have appropriated many of the principles, behaviours and customs of the former colonisers. Francophone Senegalese women writers take inspiration from the diverse cultures and identities they come into contact with, and this hybridity is reflected in their literature, a literature written in 'non-standard' French which poses unique challenges for the translator.¹ This paper investigates the clash of identities triggered by the meeting of nations — France and Senegal, analysing the opinions of Senegalese writers regarding the concept of hybridity and showing how Francophone Senegalese women writers' hybrid identities are expressed through language and literature. The paper defines and examines different types of linguistic hybridity exhibited in their writing. And it further demonstrates how recognition of these hybrid forms can impact upon translation strategies, drawing upon extracts from the works of the Senegalese writer, Mame Seck Mbacké.

It is inevitable that Francophone Senegalese writers' hybrid identities are drawn from multiple cultures due to the postcolonial world they live in. The writers have at least two different histories — African histories and French history often taught at school. Many Senegalese women practice Islam, a few Christianity, but the majority still follow traditional Senegalese beliefs at the same time. Most have been educated in French to a high level in the classroom, but they have also learned Wolof, the lingua franca, and sometimes other less widely spread local languages in the home. Their lives are a blend of tradition and modernity: for example, the *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 it is possible to see someone on a laptop in a village with no running water. Many women writers highlight the difficulty in balancing the two sides of their life — being high-profile, academic, working women and yet following the time-

consuming traditional role that is expected of them in Senegalese society. And many of these women have travelled widely, studying or working in France, or taking a break from their duties at home to write while they are out of the country (Fall, Interview 4–5).

This paper mediates between these realities and what is written on the page, between the views of women writers and the opinions of Western and non–Western academics, and most prominently in translation, between cultures and languages, specifically Wolof, French and English. The paper draws on a number of resources, including research undertaken at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar and interviews conducted with writers and academics during this period. It must be added at this point that due to constraints of space it is only possible to touch upon a few aspects of hybridity here, and this research forms part of a wider thesis on the translation of Francophone Senegalese women’s literature. However, this paper does draw upon some of the most significant issues in the process of translating Francophone Senegalese women’s literature. Moreover, it highlights the importance of the translator’s role as negotiator between languages and cultures in her quest to discover whether and how cultural signs and implications are transformed when crossing borders through translation into English.

Language and Local Realities

In an article for a book on *Postcolonial Subjects*, Keith Walker asserts 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)

Sherry Simon states that the translator can find answers to her translation problems in her understanding of how languages are linked to these local realities, including changing identities (138). One reason for spending time in Senegal was to truly understand cultural realities — in the interviews conducted with writers while I was there, many expressed the need for the translator to follow in their footsteps (Seck Mbacké,

Interview 11) to work alongside them (Sall 5; Benga 11) or else risk ‘mistranslation’ (Fall, Interview 13). It could be debated at this point whether or not the translator is in fact rewriting a source text in a target language, or writing an original piece of work which only takes another text as its inspiration. However, in this paper a standard literary approach of ‘semantic translation’ is being taken — closely interpreting the contextual meaning of the source text whilst allowing for aesthetic value and cultural understanding (Newmark 46). So, understanding cultural realities for translation purposes means understanding hybridity — hybrid identities, hybrid cultures, hybrid literature and hybrid language. The unfixed identities of Francophemme Senegalese women writers are formed through a type of cultural *métissage* which has emerged due to historical transformation (Bhabha, *Location* 3) following colonialism (amongst other factors) in Senegal.²

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 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 151–52). 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), and as a result, many suffered a form of insecurity due to their writing in the coloniser’s language (Clavaron 108). But despite these views, many Francophemme 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 an individual's own advantage — in effect, colonising the coloniser.

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). It is this identity which is translated into the works of Francophone Senegalese writers. The challenge for the translator into English necessitates a 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 canon.

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' (31), Homi 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 Yves 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, incessement confronté à une double alterité pour constituer une identité à la fois individuelle et collective. (117)

(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.)

Much work has been done within this field with regards Anglophone writers and also in relation to Negritude authors such as Senghor, or

more recent male authors from Senegal. However, it is informative to the translator to investigate how this concept of hybridity can be applied to female Senegalese authors.

Francophone Senegalese Voices

The term ‘hybridity’ is one readily used, but often debated, in postcolonial studies, so it was interesting to analyse the concept with Senegalese writers interviewed for this research. There was a mixed response. Mame Seck Mbacké stated in no uncertain terms that cultural hybridity does not exist (Interview 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)

(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 as far as to succeed in altering our behaviour, our way of living, etc.)

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 stated ‘bien sûr il y a cette hybridité’: ‘Of course there is that hybridity’ (9). She declared that everyone should take from their own cultures to enrich their universal civilisation. Seck Mbacké believes that the very concept of hybridity is a negative one, that holding on to traditional cultures, society and values is of immense importance, and the idea of Senegalese culture being diluted in some way by other cultures was not permissible in her eyes.

However, cultural or linguistic hybridity is not about the dilution or betrayal of traditional cultures, but instead 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’, her texts should be analysed deeply by the translator for the varying cultural signs that Mame Seck Mbacké has coded in her literature due to her contact with different cultures.³ Further, if what she has said is acknowledged and respected, it must also be added that this should be the case whether literature is being translated that has been written by a ‘postcolonial writer’ or 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, 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 Mame Seck Mbacké, Sokhna 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 (7). However, again it is the concept of hybridity in a global context that is embraced by both Amadou Lamine 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:

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)

(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....)

Khadi 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 hybridité’ (‘live hybridity’) in their works of literature anymore, because we live in a multicultural world

(Interview 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 (Interview 12). And accordingly the language of her text, whilst primarily in French embodies the multicultural nature of her novel, and is interspersed with Arabic, Sotho and many words from Fall's first language — Wolof (Fall, *Senteurs*). So, the issue is not whether there is hybridity in Francophone Senegalese works — it is inevitable from the standpoint that the writers draw upon more than one culture and language in their literature. The issue is how it is defined, what it is called, and then how it is applied.

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', words which in human terms are insulting and often associated with racism. Whilst the term 'hybrid', in a literary context, is not as strongly negative 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 stressed in their plurality and the term 'bidentity' is often associated with sexuality. 'Cross-cultural' is a term used by Ashcroft et al. in *The Empire Writes Back* (35), but again this may have negative connotations, and Homi 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'.⁴ 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. 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 common globalisation.

The term 'hybrid' can be substituted with words such as 'united', 'joined', 'tied', or 'coupled', but the truth is that at present academia does not appear to have yet found a satisfactory substitute for a concept which in today's world is becoming ever-more prolific. The writers

interviewed for this research 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 and to consider this cultural mixture enriching rather than limiting. So, for the purposes of this paper, 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 academics decide to term this notion of hybridity, from reading a number of theorists such as Bhabha, Clavaron or Bandia, postcolonial writers are considered to be ‘in-between’, or ‘not-quite’ in one world or in another (Clavaron 107). Clavaron also believes they suffer from ‘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 (106–8). 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. (5)

Bandia asserts that this goes against traditional translation theory which is based on binary oppositions (5). So, 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 doubt that the translator must be a cultural and linguistic negotiator in the process of rewriting, and recognise the need for a new approach which takes into account the writers’ nonconformity to the norms and conventions of standard French.

Translating ‘Non-standard’ French

For the translator to form a strategy for dealing with texts that draw from multiple languages and cultures, such as those by Francophone Senegalese women writers, it is first necessary to define the specific ways in which this type of hybridity may be communicated within the writers’ works. Hybridity can manifest itself in the form of genre, perspective, subject–matter and language, and this paper will focus on the latter. Both overt linguistic hybridity (switching between two languages) and discreet linguistic hybridity (one language or its structures, grammar and idioms articulated in another), have been discussed at length by theorists and can be broken 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, Maweja 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’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.

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 Homi Bhabha (*Location* 248) or Kwaku 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). 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,⁵ which uses structures or

grammar from one language and expresses them in another. All these forms of hybridity can be found in the works of Mame Seck Mbacké.

Firstly, code-switching is 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 half-way through the book (33). The rest of the poems are written almost entirely in French. The use of the Wolof language and the unusual layout of the poetry, which is justified with each line running into the next, mean the genre is unclear. Is this Western-style poetry or oral poetry more reminiscent of African tradition? By translating the poem literally at first, the genre 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 translate the entire collection, it is only by understanding a few words of Wolof that 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 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 was evident in the 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)

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. While 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. Not wanting to over-domesticate the English version, that part of the sentence has been translated almost word for word:⁶

Along the pavement, in the snow and biting cold, there is a trail of *sabadors*, flaming boubous which have been thrown from the windows...

In other examples, a Wolof word or phrase is followed by a translation into French in brackets. Chantal Zabus describes this technique of tagging or explaining an African word or phrase with its Europhone equivalent as ‘cushioning’ (158–59). 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, 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 translation, the modern standardised version prescribed by the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée de Dakar has been used, so it can be pronounced correctly by the well-informed (Malherbe 25). Seck Mbacké’s transcription is too firmly embedded in the French language.

With regard to ‘semantic hybridity’, a number of examples can be found in Seck Mbacké’s text, *Le Froid et Le Piment*. For instance:

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 the 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’ (*Salamalecs*), and online it has similar pejorative translations. 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 authors from the Asian community writing in English who may already have familiarised the Anglophone reader with common Islamic terms, including forms of greeting, and therefore to use *Salamaalekum* would be acceptable.⁷ Nevertheless, this translation does not seem to work well in this context, as it sounds awkward in English. Instead, in a more fluent translation, the word ‘greetings’ can be employed, and the translation for salutations can be switched to ‘hellos’:

The traditional, symbolic handshake and lengthy hellos, the greetings weren't lacking in news about old friends and their health.

In Seck Mbacké's text, there are far fewer examples of syntactic or grammatical hybridity, but there are some very subtle signs of Senegalese influence on the French language. In a book on Senegalese writer Aminata Sow Fall, postcolonial theorist Trinh Minh-hà comments on the way Sow Fall speaks a Senegalised 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* similar effects can be seen:

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. (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 to attempt to retain them in translation, which has been accomplished in this version.

The ways in which Senegalese women writers 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 the 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 suggests 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.

Redefining the Translator's Approach

In conclusion, an in-depth analysis of texts, their writers and their cultural context is clearly essential in the translation of Francophone Senegalese women's literature into English. The writer's hybrid identities, due to their unique histories, education, travel and local realities, are played out upon the pages of their literature. There, the language often takes a non-standard form due to the merging of French and Senegalese cultures. It is the translator's task to mediate between these different languages, cultures and realities, as well as her own. Field research, including interviews with authors, was insightful, both with regard to the meaning of literature and also the way in which it is discussed — by looking again at the term 'hybridity', for example. And because these texts draw upon more than one culture, the translator working into English does not simply need to be bilingual and bicultural, but multilingual and multicultural. Further, the practical translator can learn much from the theories of Translation Studies which often promote the translator's role as negotiator, and can redirect and redefine the translator's approach.

Through examples taken from writer, Mame Seck Mbacké, it is apparent that digressions from the norms and conventions of the French language are revealed through Senegalese women's prose and poetry in both explicit (code-switching or selective lexical fidelity), or more concealed ways (semantic, or syntactic and grammatical hybridity). The translator can benefit greatly from learning not just French but local languages such as Wolof, including norms of transcription. This gives the translator a more enlightened perspective on the meaning of individual words and phrases, and enables her to recognise non-standard French and replicate it in translation. Adhering to a method such as 'semantic translation' enables the translator's approach to remain consistent; no method is incorrect but maintaining the same strategy throughout a text is important. This includes decisions as to the degree to which the translator 'foreignises' or domesticates a text for example, whether footnotes or explanations of foreign terms are included, or whether target text readers are left to research unfamiliar language for themselves. There is no doubting that cultural signs and implications are transformed when crossing borders through translation, but this journey can be made much smoother by in-depth research into the unique ways that languages are used in diverse cultures. Hybridity is not about weakening someone's culture, but drawing from multiple cultural resources. And if the translator intends to follow in the footsteps of the

writer, as desired by Mame Seck Mbacké, she too must draw upon and mediate between all dimensions of culture and language in translation.

NOTES

¹ Joanne Collie uses the term ‘non–standard’ to discuss the translation of Canadian patois in an article written for the journal *Rencontres*. She claims that the ‘occasionally impossible yet essential’ job of translating a non–standard language is crucial in its recognition of diversity of voices and cultures in an ever–more global world (186).

² Christiane Makward employs both the terms ‘franco–femme’ and ‘francophemme’ to describe Francophone women writers.

³ It must be added that this paper is not suggesting that ‘pure’ pre–colonial cultures existed, a view that is supported by postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha (*Location* 114), or the academic Salman Rushdie who celebrates hybridity, rejecting ‘the absolutism of the pure’ (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.

⁴ 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).

⁵ The term ‘relexification’ is discussed in detail by Chantal Zabus in *The African Palimpsest* (101–55) and was 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).

⁶ ‘Domesticating’ a translation indicates an adaption to the target language and style, creating a text that is often more appealing to the target language reader. Conversely, ‘foreignising’ a 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.

⁷ 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).

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