



Master

2010

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How to cite

CHATELAIN, Kristin. Translation into english of excerpts from Faïza Guène's 'du rêve pour les oufs'.
Master, 2010.

This publication URL: <https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:12730>

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**TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH OF EXCERPTS FROM FAÏZA GUÈNE'S
« DU RÊVE POUR LES OUFES »**

Mémoire présenté à l'Ecole de traduction et d'interprétation pour l'obtention
du Master en traduction, mention traduction spécialisée

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Université de Genève
juillet 2010

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Big City Cold

It's freezing in this town. The wind is making my eyes water and I'm tearing around, trying to warm up. I think, I'm not living in the right place. I wasn't built for weather like this. 'Cause when you get right down to it, it's all about climate, and this morning the out-of-control French cold has me frozen stiff.

My name is Ahlème and I'm walking in a sea of people—people who run, bump into things, are late, argue, talk on the phone, and don't smile. I see my brothers who, like me, are very cold. I can always pick them out—something about their eyes isn't the same. It's like they wish they were invisible. Or someplace else. But they're here.

At home I don't complain, even if they cut off the heat, otherwise Dad'll say, "Hush, you should've seen the winter of '63." I don't answer him—in '63, I wasn't born yet. So I make my way forward, slipping and sliding on the icy French streets. I pass by rue Joubert where some hookers on the sidewalks call out at each other from across the street. They're like old, worn-out dolls who aren't scared of the cold anymore. Prostitutes are weatherproof. It doesn't matter where they are, they don't feel anything anymore.

My appointment at the temp agency is at 10:40. Not 45, not 30. Time is precise in France. Every minute counts and I just can't get used to it. I was born on the other side of the Mediterranean, and African minutes have plenty more than sixty seconds.

On the advice of Mr. Miloudi, the counselor at the local outreach center in my neighborhood, I checked out this new joint—Interim Plus.

Miloudi's an old hand at this. He's been running the local outreach center in my neighborhood, the *cit  de l'Insurrection*, for years, and he must've seen all the *cassos*^{*} in the neighborhood come traipsing through. He's efficient. Also in a hurry. He sure didn't take much time with my interview.

"Sit down, young lady."

"Thank you, sir."

"And next time, knock before you enter, OK?"

"Sorry, sir, didn't think about it."

"I'm telling you this for your own good. That kind of thing can make a bad impression in an interview."

"I'll remember that."

"Okay now, let's not waste any time, we only have twenty minutes. Fill out the work skills questionnaire that's in front of you. Write in the boxes in capital letters and don't make any spelling mistakes. If you're unsure about a word, ask me for the dictionary. Did you bring your r sum ?"

"Yes. Five copies, like you said."

"Good. Here's the questionnaire, fill it out carefully. I'll be back in five minutes."

He took a box of kitchen matches and a package of Marlboros and left the room, leaving me face-to-face with my fate. There were tons of files on the desk; papers stacked a mile high, taking up all the space. Not to mention the enormous clock hanging on the wall. Each tick of the second hand reverberated in me like my own death knell.

* "Welfare junkies" in French.

All of the sudden, the room got hot. I was drawing a blank. Those five minutes went by faster than a TGV and I only managed to write my last name, first name and date of birth.

I heard Mr. Miloudi's dry cough in the hallway. He was coming back.

"So, how's it going? Did you finish?"

"No, not finished."

"You didn't fill anything out!" he said, bending over the piece of paper.

"Didn't have the time."

"There are tons of people waiting for appointments. I have to see other people after you, you saw them in the waiting room. We barely have ten minutes left to get in touch with the SREP because it's useless going through the AGPA this time of year, there aren't any places left. We'll try the FAJ, paid training... Why can't you fill it out? It's simple, really."

"Dunno what to put under 'career goals'..."

"You must have *some* idea..."

"No."

"But on your résumé, it says you have plenty of professional experience. You must have enjoyed *something* you've done."

"Those were just odd jobs that I've taken as a waitress or a salesgirl. They were to earn money, sir, they weren't my career goals."

"Okay, forget the questionnaire, there's no time. I'll give you the address of another temp agency while we wait to get in touch with the FAJ."

Johanna, the front desk girl at Interim Plus, looks about sixteen and mumbles in a painfully shaky voice. I catch that she's asking me to fill out a questionnaire. She hands

me a pen with their joint's stupid logo on it and asks me to follow her. Mademoiselle is wearing super-tight skanky spandex jeans that advertise just how hard she fell off the Weight Watchers bandwagon. She shows me a seat next to a small table where I can sit. I'm having a hard time writing, my fingers are so numb with cold that I can barely move them. That reminds me of when Dad—the Boss, we call him—would come back from work. It always took him awhile to be able to open up his hands. “It's from the jackhammer,” he would say.

I scribble, I fill out their boxes, I check, I sign. Everything is teeny on their form, and the questions are driving me up the wall. No, I'm not married, I don't have kids, I don't have a driver's license, I haven't been to college, I'm not considered disabled by adult services, I'm not French. So, where's the “my-life-is-a-failure” box? I'll just check yes, and it'll be over and done with.

Johanna, her jeans so tight they give her the worst case of camel toe I've ever seen, offers me my first temp mission in a compassionate voice. It cracks me up that they call them missions. Like an adventure. Yeah, right.

She offers me a job taking inventory at the home improvement store next Friday evening. I say yes right off the bat. I'm so desperate for work that I'll take almost anything.

I leave, satisfied, proof that it doesn't take much to make me happy.

Then I go to meet up with Linda and Nawel at La Cour de Rome, a pub in the Saint-Lazare quarter, near the agency. They've been wanting to hook up with me for a few weeks already, and I'll admit it, I shy away from going out when I'm short on cash. And lately, the girls are usually glued to their boyfriends and I'm getting a little sick of it.

I feel like the fifth wheel being stuck there between them. I'm about to be crowned African and European Fifth-Wheel Champion.

The girls are sitting on the bench in the back of the pub. I knew it, they always do that. I know their old smoke-sneaking habits by heart. Back in our *zone*^{*}, they even set up an HQ. They always snuck behind the stadium to light up a smoke, and the code to meet there was, "Wanna go play ball?"

As usual, they're dressed to the nines. I've noticed that they always look classy, and I wonder how they manage to spend so much time getting dressed, putting on makeup, fixing their hair. Nothing is left to chance. Everything is coordinated, calculated and chosen with care.

On the rare occasions that I make an effort, it wears me out. Too much work. What a chick wouldn't do to attract even a sympathetic glance or a compliment in her days full of doubt... And to think some say that if they drain themselves like that, it's just for fun. Fun, my foot!

When I reach the girls, they light up their cigarettes in sync and welcome me with a warm, smoky "Hey there."

And same old, same old, it's followed immediately by "What's up?" and we give each other a few seconds to think before our discussion starts up.

Then comes the inevitable question that I still dread.

"And *les amours*?" One shake of the head says it all. They get my drift. And why, I wonder, do they ask the question with "love" in the plural. It's already hard enough to find love in the singular, so why complicate things?

^{*} Paris and its suburbs are divided into concentric "zones".

Then, for the umpteenth time, “How is a pretty girl like you still single? It’s because you don’t want to... It’s your fault, you’re too difficult... We’ve introduced you to gobs of guys, heaps of handsome men, there’s nothing else we can do for you. You’re just not interested.”

I have a hard time making them understand that it’s not as bad as they think. If everything goes according to plan, menopause isn’t exactly around the corner. But there’s nothing to be done about it, they’re bound and determined to introduce me to hicks. Mental retards who show off like nobody’s business, pretentious guys, guys who can’t carry on a conversation, chronically depressed guys.

So I take an amazing rotating sidestep that I’m very proud of to change the subject—I’m very talented at that, triple African and European Obstacle-Jump and Problem-Dodge Champion.

I think that like most people, they already have their lives planned out. All the components are there, like the pieces of a puzzle waiting to fall into place. They split their time between work and play, go on vacation in the same place every summer, always buy the same brand of deodorant, have cool families and longtime sweethearts. Even their friends are perfect, boys that I like but that I personally wouldn’t go away for the weekend with. Not a thing wrong with them, ever. They come from the same village that the girls do, the exact same *bled*. That’ll make their parents happy. You might say we’re living a sort of return to incest. At least you know your brother comes from the exact same place you do, just ask Mom. The girls think it’s practical this way because if traditions are different, families don’t agree on everything and then it gets complicated for the kids’ education if you’re not on the same page... Personally, I think it’s

ridiculous to sort through details like that when you're deciding who to marry and have kids with.

Nawel just got back from vacation; she was visiting her father's family in Nigeria. I tell her she's lost a lot of weight, at least ten pounds.

"Yeah? I really lost weight?"

"You've shrunk! You're pitiful, *miskina* *!"

"It's the back-to-*bled* effect."

"A diet vacation, huh."

"Yeah, that's it... The heat, the stringy green beans at every meal, grandmother's jokes, Chilean soap operas... you're bound to lose weight."

"But how'd you do it? Two whole months in the *bled*, I'd have been depressed in no time," said Nawel, curious.

"Aw, you get over it. The TV was a real bore, though, there's only one channel. Even *Mister Bean* is censored over there."

"At least like that there's no tension like when the whole family's in front of the TV and bam! there's a scene that's a little sexy or a commercial for body wash. That's when the old man starts to cough and you gotta be quick, you grab the remote and change the channel fast. That's why we have a receiver dish at my place now. It saved our lives 'cause French TV shows naked babes just for the hell of it a little too much."

"And how'd it go with your family?"

"My family of *crevards* ** ... The first week, they liked us too much because our suitcases were full. As soon as we handed out all the presents, it was over, they didn't

* "Poor thing" in Arabic.

** "Skinflints" in French.

pay attention to us any more. I told my mother, ‘On the Koran, next summer we’re taking Tati as a chaperone, it’s better that way.’”

And then it’s time for the neighborhood buzz with Linda.com. She is just too much, a real magpie. Linda knows everything about everybody. I don’t know how she does it; sometimes she knows other people’s business before they do.

“You know Tony Lopez?”

“No, who’s he?”

“Yeah you do, the new guy in number 16.”

“The blond guy?”

“No, he’s tall with dark hair. Works at Midas.”

“Yeah, what about him?”

“He’s going out with Gwendoline!”

“The little one? The redhead in your building?”

“No, not her. The anorexic girl with tons of unfinished tattoos. Nawel, you’ve gotta know her.”

“Yeah, I know who you’re talking about, I see her on the bus every day on my way to work. Speaking of which, I’ve always wondered, do you know why none of her tattoos are finished?”

“How do you expect her to know that?” I ask naïvely.

“Hold it, hold it, I know.”

“Damn, you’re such a gossip, a real busybody. Spill the beans.”

“She was with a shady guy before, a tattoo artist. Well. He started her tattoos and never got the chance to finish them ‘cause he dumped her for another girl.”

“A real bastard. He could’ve at least finished the job.”

“So, the anorexic girl’s going out with Tony Lopez, and...?”

“Well, he wanted to break up with her. According to my sources, it’s because he’s screwing the accountant at Midas. And since Gwendoline’s so into him, she’s been putting a lot of psychological pressure on him to stay with her. So he ended up staying, and it came back to bite him in the ass...”

“And? Cut the suspense already, spill the beans!”

“That *bouquette** saddled him with a kid. Now she’s about to pop. Ain’t that crazy?”

And each time, she finishes up with, “Ain’t that crazy?”

We share two or three more hush-hush stories before saying goodbye with a smile that leaks some of our secrets and shelters me from the outside world and its cold.

The platform is packed; there’s disruptions on the line. One of every four trains is running, I think. That’s what they said on the radio, anyway.

So I’m stuck hugging the pole in my train compartment. This RER is stuffy, and people are pushing me, crushing me. The train itself seems to be sweating and I feel stifled by all these sad silhouettes in search of color. It’s like all the life of Africa wouldn’t be enough for them. They’re phantoms, they’re all sick. They’ve been infected with sadness.

I’m going back to Ivry to help my neighbor Tantie Mariatou and her kids. My asthmatic train spits me out in my *zone*, where it’s even colder. There are days like that when you don’t know where you’re going anymore. You think you’ve got the worst of luck, and too bad for you. It’s true that it’s sad. Happily, though, there’s always that

* “Girl” in French.

little thing deep down inside that helps you get up in the morning. There's no guarantee, but you think that one day, things will get better. Like Tantie says, "The best stories are the ones that start off badly."

The Rainbow After Weeks of Rain

Today's the Boss's birthday. To celebrate, I made my grandmother Mimouna's karentita recipe—she taught me back when I lived in Algeria. It's a cake made from chickpea flour, a local specialty in western Algeria. I still remember when the karentita boy would ride around the block on his old bicycle early in the morning and call, "Karentita! Come and get it!" My cousins and I would run out of the house to buy some, barefoot, dressed only in our *gandouras**. We didn't give a damn, but our Uncle Khaled would go nuts. "Get back in here this instant, crazy girls! Do you want to be seen? The men are going to look at you, for shame! Get inside!"

That always cracked us up, but if we stayed out too long it wasn't a laughing matter anymore because he would throw his legendary plastic sandal at us. I still haven't figured out his technique, but he never missed his mark. It never mattered where he threw it from, he put a curve on it and it would wind up landing exactly where he wanted it to. Smack in the middle of your back, usually. Uncle Khaled had serious game! After years of training, he was the African Champion of Plastic Sandal Throwing.

"So how old am I?"

"Sixty-one, Dad."

"Oh my, no. No, we can't celebrate that!"

"Why not?"

"You'd be crazy to celebrate that! That's the kind of thing white people celebrate—being one step closer to the grave..."

"No, don't say that. It's a chance for the three of us to celebrate together."

* Light houserobes.

I handed him his nicest suit and his most handsome tie. The Boss was really happy. Foued and I pulled out all the stops—cake, candles, and even singing. Our little party prompted our witch of a neighbor to start banging on the ceiling with her broom. Does she really think she's going to keep me from singing? If she doesn't bug off, I'm going to go downstairs and rip her a new one. At any rate, we didn't give a damn. I'm sure we sang even louder just to bug her, that bitch. It made all three of us happy. I love those rainbow moments after weeks of rain.

After that, I went and shut myself in my room to give a good listen to the Diams CD I stole at Leclerc last week. That said, I need to back off on this klepto stuff. I'm a little too old for that now. I'm in front of my mirror using my roll-on deodorant as a mike and I'm singing like crazy. If anybody saw me! It doesn't take much to make me content. Feeling happy, I tell myself that it never lasts for long, but it's great when it happens. I'm going nuts, singing louder and louder, and I turn up the volume on the hi-fi stereo and jump up and down like a maniac. I get carried away with the music and start imagining a Diams concert. She invites me onstage for a duet, we're rapping in front of a euphoric crowd, I'm really digging this, I raise my hands, I'm giddy, my heart is beating like crazy. She lets me steal the show a little, and she gets the audience to chant my name, so everybody yells, "Ahlème! Ahlème!" When it's all over, we go backstage, worn out but crazy happy. Diams is classy; her mascara didn't run and she's not sweating. As for me, three roadies run to bring me a washrag and baby wipes to take my makeup off. Then we compare notes while sipping a glass of Tropicana fruit juice in one of the boxes.

Repeated thumping brings me back to reality. Our stupid neighbor—a bitch *and* a government employee, it's a bit much—is beating on the ceiling again. I pissed her off with my little rap concert, but I don't give a damn. She can throw her shoulder out for all I care, or even call the cops. I'll invite them to dance with me. We'll play the remake *Dances with Po-Pos*.

Then the phone rings and I come crashing back down to Earth. It's that little twerp who won't quit calling to talk to Foued, again. I always say that he's sleeping, that he's taking a shower or that he's not home, even if he's in his room. Her nonstop calls get under my skin. I don't like her voice and I've got a bad feeling about her. She sounds like a little slut who stuffs her bra and calls her mother a stupid bitch. I don't trust her. Sometimes Foued asks me, "Who was on the phone?" So I swallow my spit and lie, saying, "City hall," or "My friend Linda." You should always swallow your spit before you lie, it helps.

I can't explain why I do it. Maybe I shouldn't, but I can't help it. I think I always act right with my little brother. There's no hurry in the girl department. Right now he needs to be thinking about school. He can have girlfriends in the summer when he's away from home at summer camp or whatever. That way, at least I won't know anything about it. By then he'll have a couple more gigs in his hard drive. For the moment, though, the stupid girl can keep doing her little personality quizzes and leave my little brother the hell alone.

Things are tough for him at school right now. Just last week, the school counselor called me for a meeting, and it didn't go very well. I don't know, we just didn't click. First of all, I don't need a lesson off of anybody. And I hated the way the poor woman

with her too-ironed shirt went about it. She was full of good feelings and ready-made sayings that you find in books, like “working in difficult neighborhoods,” “changing the world,” or “outreach to the poor.” She seemed to take personal pleasure out of reading me some of the discipline reports from teachers that kicked Foued out of their classes. “Insolent,” “violent,” and “disrespectful” were the three adjectives used the most. I couldn’t believe they were about my little brother, but when I took a closer look at some of the reports, I recognized his style. I’ve gotta admit, it was pretty funny.

Foued Galbi urinated in the paper recycling bin in the back of the classroom when my back was turned, and a foul odor overtook the room. I will no longer tolerate such animal behavior.

M. Costa, math teacher

Foued G. is a troublemaker. He is the class clown and dedicates his time to entertaining his classmates instead of working. He waits until the room is quiet during tests and then alters his voice to say vulgar and shameful things such as “DICK” or “COCK.” Then the entire class bursts into laughter and I have to discipline them to calm the ruckus.

Mme Fidel, Spanish teacher

Report from M. Denoyer, Earth science teacher

Foued Galbi has been threatening me during class. I quote: “I know where you live, bastard!” “I’m going to break your face, you fag!”

What’s more, yesterday, Wednesday the 16th, hiding in the hallway behind a pole like a sneak, he insulted me grievously. I quote: “Denoyer, you asshat,” “Denoyer’s a lardass,” “Denoyer has a fat wife.”

Before that, on a test day, he stuck a wad of chewing gum in the lock on the classroom door. I could not open the door and I had to postpone the test. I demand that the young man be punished in accordance with the gravity of his acts and, above all, his words—at the very least, by a disciplinary hearing leading to his expulsion.

I asked the poor, misguided school counselor if expelling a fifteen-year-old kid because he noticed that his professor has a big ass wasn't a bit extreme. She just answered that at any rate, in a few months, school wouldn't be mandatory for him anymore and that if he continued on this track, expulsion would be the only option left.

I ended the meeting by telling her exactly what she wanted to hear—that I was going to take him down a notch, that it would never happen again, and even that in a week, he'd be at the top of the class in algebra. Swear it on my mother's life. Geez, already.

These teachers, I swear... I had the same kind of killjoys who chose this job because they like their vacation and whose favorite part of the day is their sacrosanct coffee break.

I finally left that awful office with walls plastered in publicity posters and pictures of housepets. After spending a half hour in there, I understood everything about that woman. It's crazy how she's all alone when it comes right down to it, watching all her illusions about her job get shattered. I can tell she's grasping at straws, trying to convince herself that she really is useful here. She still believed it a few days ago. Just before they found the body of Ambroise, the school goldfish that she fed so lovingly. Dead in the back of that slut the gym teacher Madame Rozet's locker. With a little luck she'll be transferred to a nice rural district and everything will be OK.

Once You've Loved, You Stop Counting

Now I see the men in green coming dangerously close.

"You're mental! We told you it had to be stamped! You're in deep shit now..."

"I know, I know. Don't rub it in. I get it. I'll deal—end of story. I forgot, okay?"

It was an accident, I wasn't thinking."

"I hope you know that this is crazy shit. It was stupid of you, you had one on you! All you had to do was stick it in the machine! You don't even have the money to pay up. What're you gonna do?"

"Yeah, okay, thanks. Too late now. Lay off, it's not gonna change anything. I'll get by, it's fine."

The girls are right, I screwed up. I'm in deep shit now. It's too late to fix my dumbass mistake. I'm gonna have to pay the price for my carelessness.

"Ticket, please."

I give him my ID right off the bat so he can give me his fine. It's not worth arguing. I can already tell from his depressingly blank face that there's no way out.

Linda and Nawel, model kiss-ass citizens that they are, quietly hand over their bus passes. Then they take them back with prim little law-abiding smiles.

I give in and hand the ticket-taker my glorious green passport that justifies my existence. He stares blankly at the exotic lettering that says "People's Democratic Republic of Algeria." I can see him getting worried. His head's spinning, he's anxious, he needs a Xanax now.

"You don't have any papers in French?"

“Why don’t you start off by opening it? You’ll see it’s bilingual, your language’s on the inside.”

“Don’t you take that tone with me or you’ll regret it. Don’t forget you’re in violation of the law.”

All because I didn’t stick a damn piece of purple cardboard in their goddamn machine.

So I shut my trap, ‘cause here, like everywhere, you shut up when you’ve broken the law. I don’t have the faintest desire to spend my afternoon at the station because the cops are another story altogether...

The bus agents leave, happy with a “job well done”. And now I’m left here with a little blue slip fining me seventy-two euros. Here I am, required to shoot up our government with this ridiculously large cash fix. They always want more. The girls offer to help me pay. I turn them down—it just isn’t done—but at the same time, I notice they don’t insist, either. Then they start talking about their Valentine’s dates, their candlelight dinners, their presents, and other things that you don’t normally talk about on the bus, especially at this hour on a market day.

At first, I listen and talk some. Then, when the conversation turns to love, I bail. While the little fashion plates share their spoiled-rotten valentine notions, I notice a young couple on my right. They’re well-dressed and smell like perfume. The guy has a dab of gel in his hair and the girl is wearing eyeliner. They’re in a state of osmosis that’s impossible to describe. It’s striking how much they love each other. They’re looking deep into each other’s eyes. Seeing them like that, I’d bet they could keep it up for hours on end. They touch each other some, discreetly, and they smile at each other. So he

starts kissing her neck and she starts flapping around like a chicken—it looks like she’s enjoying herself. The guy starts eating her tonsils like an orphaned baboon. It’s like watching a wildlife documentary.

I was in love once, too, but not in public. Not like that. At least, I don’t think so, or maybe I just don’t remember anymore. That was a long time ago...

I’ve been seeing couples around everywhere lately. They start coming out *en masse* when the weather starts getting nice. They go to parks, cafés, the movies, and they fit right in. Those places are teeming with people in love. They act like they’re the only people in the universe.

When people are crazy in love, so little is left of their sanity that they’d do just about anything. I’d guesstimate they lose at least half of their brain capacity, maybe even more.

It’s true that if people are crazy in love, then they’re even crazier in heartache... You spend your time blubbering, you sob so much that you don’t even have a square inch of free space on your Kleenex, and then you start losing weight, you burn an incredible number of calories.

It’s amazing how effective the sadness diet is. It’s ten times better than all those miracle diets like "Lose 10 pounds by summer" that are plastered all over magazine covers.

At times like these, your friends really worry about you and won’t stop asking you if you’re doing *better*—not just how you’re doing, like before.

Your coffee, cigarette, alcohol and maybe even drug use skyrockets... You also start listening to sad songs, watching sad movies. You need to talk a lot, and you wind

up with ten-page-long phone bills. You can't think of anything else. At work, you get into trouble, maybe even come close to being fired. It's weird how you almost wish it would happen. At home you break the dishes, often you fuck up the nicest place setting in the cupboard, the one that was a present from your family. In front of the mirror, you have a hard time looking at your face. Puffy from crying, you've never looked uglier. And when you force yourself to make a little effort, you can't even put on lipstick without going over the edge. Then, one day you finally find it in you to tell the gossipy neighbor who's put a knot in your tail for years that in all actual fact, you don't give a rat's ass about the saga of her sick uncle in Brittany and her cat's heat cycles that are so out-of-control that even the vet can't do anything about them.

You don't give a damn about that or anything else.

And then one blessed morning you realize that it's OK. It's not such a heavy burden anymore. You feel better, you sleep at night, you go out during the day and you muster up enough courage to make it through.

And then a short while later, you run into the concerned party in the street. And on that very day, you're just plain ugly. I mean the kind of ugly that only rolls around once a year. Yeah, that's when you run into him.

It always happens like that. Nothing at all like the moment you'd imagined a million different ways, the little reunion film you'd replayed hundreds of times in your mind and remade over and over again, rewind without forgetting even the slightest of details. No screenplay could capture such catastrophic reality. You're dressed in a sack with under-eye circles down to your cheeks and an 80s TV haircut. That's how it is, like Murphy's law. Just as true as "the next line over is always faster" or "the food at the next

table over looks better”. So there’s no other choice than running away, dodging him at all cost and praying to the heavens that he didn’t see anything.

So I vaccinated myself to keep from falling so low. I swore that from now on, I would avoid nice men—guys who hold the door, pay the bill, are on time for dates and listen when you talk—because surely there’s something hiding behind all that. I avoid those guys like the plague. They’re the ones who mess you up the worst, who rip your heart and your Kleenex to shreds.

He says he loves you, then he shows you the picture of his wife and kids that holds the place of honor in his wallet with all his credit cards.

He says you’re the love of his life, then he breaks up with you because you’re supposedly too good for him. You don’t get it until the day you see him walking around openly with his ex—except that now, you’re the ex.

He thinks you’re pretty, intelligent, sweet and funny. Often he borrows money from you, but when you’re in love, you don’t keep count. Then one morning, like every other morning, you call him to say you love him, but surprise—it’s the cold, cynical voice of his lady telephone operator who answers. She tells you that the number isn’t in service anymore. You’ll never hear from him again.

Or he comes to pick you up downstairs in his metal gray Ford Focus, opens the door for you, asks you if you had a good day, and compliments your choice of clothing. You feel pretty, you look at him lovingly and you think to yourself that you two are a good match. When you get out of his ride, he does a full north-south-east-west adjustment and belches. You think it’s revolting, but oh well, you’re into him. Then he uses the automatic lock on his keychain, *beep beep*, over his shoulder. You think it’s

super classy. He's glamorous, you like it—long story short, you're in love. He tells you he's taking you out—hey, that doesn't happen very often. Since you're a fan of mushy Sunday afternoon made-for-TV movies, you think he's going to propose to you. But in the middle of your diet-fare salad, he explains that he's met someone else, that she's a great chick and that he's leaving for Grenoble with her. He's packing his bags next week, so it'd be nice if you returned the drill he lent you and all his Barry White records. And by the way, how 'bout we split the bill?

I've cried a lot over guys. I often regret it after the fact, telling myself they're all SOBs—all girls say that—and that none of them are worth even a single tear. But then again, I cry at the drop of a hat. I cry over stupid TV shows—kids reunited with their mom or the unemployed guy who finds a new job, it all makes me tear up.

The day Tantie Mariatou gave birth, not only was I the only white girl in the clinic waiting room, but I was the only one to cry, too. Everybody else was looking at me out of the corners of their eyes, wondering if I was there for the same reason they were. It's like I was making up for all my dry-eyed years.

When Mom died, I didn't cry. I think I just didn't understand what was going on, that's all.

It was Fat Djamila's wedding day. She was a distant cousin who lived in a neighboring village. Mom took it upon herself to sew all the dresses for the wedding. I can still see myself kneeling by her side, watching her. I could spend hours watching her work. She fascinated me. With her long, dainty fingers she embroidered the *veston algérois** with golden thread, carefully following the precise curves of the pattern. Never

* traditional Algerian wedding garment

a stitch out of place, never having to start over. That's how she created the bride's seven traditional dresses over the long months.

I remember the long afternoons when the women from the village talked of nothing but the big day. Especially Zineb and Samira, the cooks who were always making fun of Djamila, just gossiping.

"You'll see, it'll rain all day the day of the wedding. You know what they say—if young ladies sneak food before meals behind their mother's back, it brings them bad luck and it rains on their wedding day. She must've done it lots, you know, she's fatter than Belbachir's cows."

"Yeah, that's true, I wonder if she'll be able to squeeze into the dresses that Sakina is killing herself to make for her..."

And then they laughed like hyenas. I thought that was pretty shitty of them. I wondered how they dared make fun of Djamila so cruelly and had no qualms about opening their venomous mouths with only a few rotten teeth. Mom got on to them and told them that they were just two old bitter, jealous magpies and that God would punish them for saying those things. She would shout in the middle of the courtyard, "One day, you're going to wake up without your tongues, *inshallah*."

I would have done anything to go to the celebration, I wanted to so bad! I was only eleven, and I begged Mom to take me. But she refused. Period, end of conversation. I had even offered to sort her piles of ribbons and all her cloth scraps, to clean the stable, to milk the cow every morning, to go to Aïcha the witch's house to pick up the wool, but there was nothing to be done. I had to take care of my little brother who was nothing more than an infant and besides, she wouldn't have been able to watch me.

She would be too busy dressing the bride. And the long journey to the village made her worry even more. “These days the roads aren’t safe anymore, the whole country is overrun with fake road blocks, and I don’t want anything to happen to you.”

And she thought that nothing could happen to her? I could feel that the atmosphere was tense. I remember that we couldn’t listen to our music too loud, especially love songs, and that you couldn’t say certain words outside the house. People were always afraid. Curtains had been taken down from windows and replaced with bars. Uncle Khaled didn’t even want us to go outside anymore, not even to buy our helpings of karentita. At any rate, the traveling salesman didn’t come by our place anymore.

The day of the celebration came and death rained down. It came with a firing squad and set its sights on that little village where, for at least that one night, joy had reigned. It was an absolute massacre. No more whooping, only screams. They killed everybody, even the kids. Babies as tiny as Foued. And it wasn’t the only village that was razed. So people didn’t celebrate weddings so much anymore. Everybody was traumatized by the scenes of mutilated bodies and bloody baby bottles. I remember dreaming that the dresses that my beloved mother had sewn so carefully had pools of blood spreading over them. Mom’s the one who chose to name me Ahlème. My name means “dream” in Arabic. Mom’s dream was to see me have my turn to wear the seven traditional wedding dresses one day. I’ve never gone back to Algeria. I don’t know whether it’s from fear or something else. I hope that I’ll have the strength to go back someday, to smell the earth in the *bled*, to feel the heat of the people and to forget the smell of blood.

Downstairs

I went to go see Tantie, defeated. I felt like a worn-out mop. I told her the whole story, crying—I looked really pitiful. She made me coffee with the drip coffee machine that Papa Demba gave her for her birthday. Ever since she got it, she makes coffee all day, every day. She told me to calm down and breathe, since according to her I looked like a Kenyan at the end of a marathon.

Everything I told Tantie about the fight seemed to shock her. She could hardly believe it. At one point, I even suggested sending Foued to the *bled* to get him straightened out, but it was obviously a dumb idea.

“That’s no good. He’s never been to that country. He shouldn’t discover it as a punishment. You haven’t even been back there for at least ten years, right?”

“Yeah... You’re right. I just don’t know what to do. At first I told myself that his screwing around was normal. It’s no big deal, he’s a teenager. But now he’s already chasing after money. I don’t get it.”

“If he keeps it up and gets caught by the police, they won’t go easy on him. He’s grown now. Don’t you know he could be deported?”

“I know, Tantie. It drives me nuts because he just doesn’t get it. He can’t see what he’s getting himself into. He’s just interested in making a buck.”

“He’s been dragged into a vicious cycle, that’s all. Hold onto him. Stand by him. Talk to him.”

“He’s not stupid. My brother’s a good guy, but he wants to be part of the gang, he wants to be rich. It doesn’t matter what I say, I can’t do anything about it. The more he gets, the more he’ll want.”

“Like they say in Africa, ‘money calls money’.”

“I swear...”

“Money calls money, but rich people call the police.”

She’s managed to worm a smile out of me.

At that very moment, her daughter Wandé came in the living room with her little school notebook, carefully wrapped in brown paper.

“Ahlème, can you help me with my French homework, please? I’m having a hard time conjugating verbs...”

Tantie reacted in the blink of an eye—I wasn’t in any fit state to help her.

“Go back to your room and figure it out yourself! Do you think we haven’t got enough problems here? Keep yours to yourself!”

For the rest of the evening, Tantie Mariatou tried to talk me out of going down to the bottom of the building to talk to the gang. I’m not the kind to sit on my laurels, waiting for the shit to hit the fan. At the same time, though, she’s right—it’s not really a good idea to get mixed up in all this.

I’m calmed down. I thank dear Tantie for always being there for me and I leave. I’m like a bag lady with my flea market flip-flops and my light dress that I wear as pajamas, torn at the hip. I have a terrible headache. My eyes are red and swollen, and I feel like I’ve drunk gallons of liquor. Drunk girl walking.

And, of course, instead of going home, I head downstairs.

I go straight to building 30, the bad part of the neighborhood where people are usually afraid to go. Even the BAC* think twice about going there when people are hanging around.

I step hesitantly into the dimly-lit hallway. There are three guys leaning against the wall. I stand there in front of them for a few moments, petrified, not knowing what to say or, at least, where to start. The smell of weed is already choking me, mixing with the smell of the wide-open garbage cans. I think I'm gonna puke. One of the guys, his head just below the graffiti tag "Fuck Sarko,"** looks up at me.

"What're you looking for? What're you doing here?"

"I'm looking for some people."

"What do you want?"

"It's about my little brother."

"Who's your little brother?"

"His name's Foued."

"Oh, the little *rebeu****, the Orphan?"

"His name's Foued."

"Who do you wanna see?"

"Magnum, the Leper, Roach, whoever..."

This guy's weird. He seems stoned and he looks me over from head to toe with a strange look on his face. I don't know what got into me, coming down here so late at night. They're gonna think I'm down here looking for trouble.

* Police brigade that deals with petty crimes.

** Name for a conservative politician unpopular with the immigrant communities around Paris; now President of France.

*** French street slang for "Arab".

Then one of the guys in the back lowers his hood and comes towards me. The second he steps into the dirty neon light, I recognize Didier, the ice cream man's son. A kid I grew up with, cheated at school with, stole in the supermarket with, and even had my first French kiss with. My jaw hits the floor, and he seems shocked, too.

"No way! Just like old times! Ahlème la Bastos! What the hell are you doin' here?"

"What the hell are *you* doing here? I haven't seen you in ages."

"I was in the slammer..."

What's happening to me down in this building is like a bad made-for-TV movie script, but that's exactly how it went. Then he landed a friendly kiss full of friendship and good memories on my cheek. This is all getting a little sticky. I'm not really sure how to broach the subject now.

"You know this *djouf*^{*}, Roach?"

"Yeah, yeah, I know her. Chill."

As though he couldn't tell. And I hate it when people talk about me like I'm not there.

"So you're the one they call Roach?"

"Yeah."

He hangs his head, a little embarrassed.

"I see... so when people call you 'Roach' you answer them?"

"Well, yeah... I dunno."

"Where'd you get that nickname?"

* "broad"

He starts cracking up, and the other guys laugh, too. One of them asks Didier for rolling papers. He takes two out of his pocket and hands them to him, a little shamefaced in front of me.

“‘Roach,’ it’s crazy, see, they’ve called me that for a long time... ‘Cause those bastards, one day, we were messin’ around with each other and a little old roach came out of my jacket, see. It’s the apartments here... since they stopped sendin’ out the spray guys, there’s tons of ‘em. Then after that, it just got worse... But that don’t mean I’m crawling with ‘em, I ain’t dirty, we’re just trippin’. They’ve got street names, too—he’s Stray Dog, and the other one back there is Escobar.”

“Escobar? Like Pablo Escobar?”

“Yeah, that’s right, but... his name’s really Alain, big phony!” he said, cracking up. “Don’t that fuck up his image! Hey, Alain, brother!”

“*Ta race*^{*}, bastard, you’re a hell of a one to talk, your name’s Didier!” the other shoots back.

“Alain’s worse! And your mother’s name is Bertha.”

“Shut the hell up. I didn’t drag your mother into it, back off...”

“He’s right, it’s worse! It’s true!”

The other guy who was minding his own until then gets into it, too.

“You’re a fine one to talk, Mouloud, you’ve got a spice seller’s name!”

“Fuck you.”

“Fuck you, too!”

“Uh... Hey, Didier, can I talk to you about something?”

^{*} An insult to one’s ethnic background.

We find a little space to ourselves outside the building. It's cool tonight. My clothes are pretty thin, and I'm shivering a little.

"Don't be afraid. What's up?"

"I'm not scared."

Tonight I'm not talking to Roach. I'm talking to Didier. I explain the situation to him in plain terms, with just enough anger and indignation. I tell him all of my worries and fears. I tell him how my brother and I are walking on eggshells in this *bled* because we have to be discreet, we weren't born here. He must have heard all the stories about people getting deported, too. The stories going around are true, they're not make-believe. If Foued doesn't straighten up now, the cops won't go easy on him. And I'm not up on my soapbox just for my brother. I'm asking for Didier and his buddies to keep from ruining kids' lives like they ruined their own. I know that I'm not going to change the whole system, it's "bizness," but Foued's just sixteen for crying out loud.

Didier's not trash. I'm sure he's done trashy things, but trash doesn't hang out in the hallway of building 30. The real trash are the people who, sitting in comfortable armchairs, decide *who* gets to hang out in the hall of building 30. They're the ones who can decide to kick a kid like Foued out of France for one stupid move too many. Didier can understand that. He had hopes and dreams and that sort of thing... Surely he doesn't remember telling me—he wanted to sail boats with white sails. He'd always wanted to, ever since the time when his dad would give us Italian ice cream out of sight of the other kids. It's just that Didier didn't think he could ever sail boats because there's no sea in Ivry*.

* City on the outskirts of Paris

When we get down to the details, I realize that he's been involved in all the stuff my brother's getting mixed up in. He apologizes, swears on his mother's life that he's sorry, and promises that he didn't know that Foued was my brother. I wonder whether it's all just empty promises—maybe it's just the weed he's smoking that's making him say all that. But I think that deep down, he's sincere.

"You're right. We'll leave your little brother out of all this. I swear I'll make sure of it. Everybody here knows who I am, and don't worry, they listen. Roach ain't just anybody. I swear I'll watch out for him, swear it on my life. I give you my word, Ahlème. Nobody'll bother him, nobody'll mix him up in our biz. Sorry. I didn't know you were the Orphan's sister..."

"And stop calling him the Orphan, he's got a name."

"It's butt ugly... okay. Sorry."

I leave, frozen stiff. We decided I'd come back tomorrow at the same time to bring Didier the money and all the crap that's at my house. I thank him from the bottom of my heart, and I thank God, too. I thank him for letting me deal with Didier instead of the other shady guy called Escobar, because to get Foued away from their biz he could have asked me for compensation, something disgusting in return. I'd do anything for my brother, even the worst, so I'm glad I wasn't faced with that.

Introduction

Choice of project

I chose to write an annotated translation for my Master's thesis because it seemed like the most natural, logical close to my three years at the ETI in training as a professional translator. But in a world where technical, medical, economic and legal texts make up the bread and butter of most professional translators' work, why pick a literary translation as a final project?

Having studied both translation methodology under H  l  ne Chuquet at the University of Poitiers and translation theory at the ETI, I came to the personal conclusion that a theory-based approach is best suited to literary translation, whereas a methodological approach is better suited to the rest. Given that I already used a methodological approach to translation in my Bachelor's thesis, I decided that a change of pace was in order, hence the theory-based approach to literary translation that I decided to take in this project.

The choice of a text to translate was relatively simple. Most of the French-language literature to which I was exposed over the course of my Bachelor's degree was taken from the classic French literary canon. I felt that it would be fun to explore translating a work that broke with this narrow take on French literature; a work that employed slang, grammatical constructions that are "incorrect" from a prescriptive point of view, and other nonstandard usage. I remembered a book called *Kiffe kiffe demain* that I read in a *beur* literature course at Middlebury College, but upon finding that an English translation of the novel had already been published, I decided that its newly-released companion novel, *Du rêve pour les oufs*, would fit the bill instead.

About the author: Faïza Guène



Faïza Guène is a young Franco-Algerian writer in the *beur* movement. She was born in 1985 in Bobigny, France. Her parents immigrated to France from Oran, Algeria before her birth. She lives with her parents in the Cité des Courtilières, Pantin, Seine-Saint-Denis, a housing project on the outskirts of Paris. Her father is a retired construction worker, and her mother, who only received schooling to age 13, is a housewife.

After graduating high school, Faïza Guène briefly enrolled in sociology at l'Université Paris VIII but put her studies on hold in order to devote more time to writing and to producing films.

Faïza Guène began to seriously pursue writing at the age of 13. While she was on the staff of her school's newspaper, she was assigned to a story about "Les Engraineurs," a local writing and film workshop for young adults created in 1997 by a language arts

teacher from the neighborhood middle school. She became a member of the workshop while reporting on it in 1998 and has remained a member ever since.

To date, Faïza Guène has four short films, one documentary, and two novels to her credit. She wrote and produced her first short film, “La Zonzonnière,” at the age of 14. Her latest short, “Rien que des mots,” received €60,000 of grant money from the European Social Fund and the Centre national de la Cinématographie. Guène’s first novel, *Kiffe kiffe demain*, has sold upwards of 220,000 copies in 22 languages and 27 countries. The second, *Du rêve pour les oufs*, was released in a British English edition in 2008 and will be released in an American English edition in 2010. Guène also writes a column for Respect magazine.

Fans of Guène’s work call her “la Sagan des banlieues” or “la Sagan des cités.”

Collected works

Faïza Guène is the author and producer of five films: “La Zonzonnière” (1999), “RTT” (2002), “Rumeurs” (2002), “Mémoires du 17 octobre 61” (2002), and “Rien que des mots” (2004), as well as the author of two novels: *Kiffe kiffe demain* (2004) and *Du rêve pour les oufs* (2006).

Major themes in her work include the struggle for first- and second-generation immigrants to define their cultural identity, the difficulty that second-generation immigrants experience when trying to break away from their parents’ cultural expectations, racism, social injustice, the particular problems that immigrant women face in the quest for integration, and the different coping techniques that young people develop in the face of poverty.

Guène’s novels are characterized by first-person narration from ordinary young women living in the projects, characters that use sharp, sometimes self-deprecating humor in the face of everyday troubles, and biting social commentary.

Some of the scenes in Guène’s films echo similar scenes and storylines from her novels. For example, the short film “La Zonzonnière” is echoed in a scene in *Kiffe kiffe demain*, where a young woman’s family keeps her locked in their apartment. Similarly, the fight between the mother and her eldest son in “RTT” is echoed in Ahlème’s fight with her little brother, Foued, in *Du rêve pour les oufs*.

Guène has stated in several interviews that she disagrees with the media’s stereotype-perpetuating approach to covering life in the housing projects on the outskirts of Paris and that her writing is one way to counter those stereotypes and present readers with a more balanced look at the day-to-day life of the people living there.

Du rêve pour les oufs

The novel *Du rêve pour les oufs* takes a fresh, humorous look at day-to-day life in the *cit  de l'Insurrection*, the housing projects of Ivry-sur-Seine, one of the southeastern suburbs of Paris. The narrator, Ahl me, is a 24-year-old Algerian immigrant who, along with her then baby brother, came to France at age 11 to live with her father, a construction worker, after her mother was attacked and killed in Algeria. Since her father's work-related accident, which left him partially mentally incapacitated, Ahl me has taken over as head of the family, taking care of her father and doing her best to keep her now 16-year-old brother out of trouble. As a high school dropout, Ahl me has trouble finding work that pays well, bouncing instead from one low-paying job to another. She also runs through a whole list of potential suitors, none of whom ever quite meet her high standards.

Ahl me and her brother, Foued, develop vastly different coping strategies to help deal with the economic difficulties and the discrimination with which they are faced. Ahl me takes a more responsible approach to the problem, taking work whenever she can find it and searching for a stable job, as well as trying to encourage her little brother to stay in school. Rather than turning to anger or frustration over her situation, she uses her penchant for daydreaming and her sense of humor (at times self-deprecating) to help get her through the day. Foued, on the other hand, is frustrated by his family's lack of money and wants to make quick cash, so he becomes a runner for a local gang, trading in stolen goods. Watching his sister struggle to make an honest living fills him with anger, and he frequently acts out in school and even winds up in police custody at one point in the novel.

Despite the characters' daily struggles, the novel ends with a positive outlook on life—Ahlème finds a steady job and manages to extricate her brother from his involvement with the street gangs, while Foued gains new appreciation for his cultural heritage during his first trip back to Algeria to visit family and looks set to continue with school at the end of the summer, repeating the grade from which he was expelled.

Target Audience

As the first step in my translation process (besides reading the source text), I carefully considered who might be the most likely target audience for my translation so as to make translation choices that best serve their needs.

Hans J. Vermeer's *skopos* theory states that because translation is an action and because every action has an aim or purpose, every translation must therefore have an aim or purpose, otherwise known as a *skopos* (221). Over the course of his defense of this theory, he acknowledges that some claim that "the translator has no specific addressee or set of addressees in mind" and that therefore, not every translation can be assigned a purpose or intention, especially when it comes to literary translation. In response to this claim, he states that even when the text-producer and translator are not thinking of a specific addressee or addressees, "[a]s long as one believes that one is expressing oneself in a 'comprehensible' way, and as long as one assumes, albeit unconsciously, that people have widely varying levels of intelligence and education, then one must in fact be orienting oneself towards a certain restricted group of addressees; not necessarily consciously—but unconsciously" (227). The specification of a target audience forms part of the translation's commission, even if it is the translator himself who has to set the commission (228, 230). Once the commission is specific enough, he argues, "the decision can then be taken about *how* to translate optimally, i.e. what kind of changes will be necessary in the *translatum* [target text] with respect to the source text" (230). It follows, then, that the best way to make defensible choices in a translation is to first determine who the target audience is and what their reading preferences are.

In order to determine who the target audience is and what their reading preferences are, I examined the websites of 10 public libraries in major metropolitan areas across the United States (Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver, Minneapolis, Chicago, San Antonio, Miami, Washington DC, Boston and New York City). I chose these libraries for their geographic distribution (three in the West, two in the Midwest, three in the South and two in the Northeast) and for the quality of the teen section on their websites. These libraries also serve a wide cross-section of the American public, including significant immigrant populations, as demonstrated by the fact that each website is published in English and Spanish and some are also published in Chinese, French, Polish, Russian, and Vietnamese. I also examined the official site for The Nation's Report Card, the government program that tracks standardized testing results for 4th, 8th and 12th graders across the United States.

I began my research with the assumption that the novel *Du rêve pour les oufs* would appeal mostly to a teenage and early twenties audience. To test this assumption, I searched the catalog of each of the 10 chosen libraries to see whether they had copies of Guène's novels on their shelves and, if they did, which section of the library they were stocked in. All 10 libraries owned copies of at least one version of Guène's two novels, most often *Kiffe Kiffe Tomorrow*, the American English translation of *Kiffe kiffe demain*, the novel that Guène published two years before *Du rêve pour les oufs*. Of the 10, only two classified the novel as "young adult fiction." The Seattle Public Library tagged *Kiffe Kiffe Tomorrow* as young adult fiction in their catalog but stocked the novel in the adult fiction section of the library, and the Boston Public Library stocked the novel in both the young adult and adult fiction sections of the library. The only two libraries to have

copies of *Du rêve pour les oufs* in stock, New York and Chicago, shelved the book in the adult fiction section.

This surprising result prompted me to try to get a better idea of what “young adult fiction” consists of. I took a look at the books that staff members and young adults recommended on each library site, as well as the books that each site listed as award winners in young adult literature. All of the books that I saw listed had narrators between the age of 11 and 25. Common themes included school difficulties, social struggles (including drug use, delinquency and gender identity issues), family struggles (including the death or disability of a family member and authority-related conflicts), struggles related to immigration and dual-culture identity, religious differences and boyfriend/girlfriend relationship issues. Ahlème, the narrator of *Du rêve pour les oufs*, is 24 years old, and all of the themes listed above figure in the novel’s storyline at one point or another. Therefore, I believe that despite most libraries’ choice to shelve the novel in the “adult fiction” section, it has the broadest appeal amongst a teenage and early twenties audience. Furthermore, I believe that I may know why many libraries choose to shelve the novel in the adult section. A public high school librarian from New Jersey told me, “Anecdotally, I can tell you that a lot of what kids want to read aren't in their school libraries due to content! [...] The content in them is too racy for a school library. The covers alone make them inappropriate. This is the one thing that has always bothered me, not being able to always have what I know the kids want” (re: Reading statistics?). While *Du rêve pour les oufs* does not contain any content that I find particularly “racy,” it does contain some instances of vulgar language and references to drug use, which is generally considered inappropriate for young adult audiences in the United States. Since

the young adult websites at some of the libraries I looked at contained content geared towards children as young as age 10, I believe that they may have chosen to err on the side of caution in excluding the book from their young adult sections. “[I] always cross my fingers that no one will complain [about the books I stock],” says the school librarian.

Once I determined that the core target audience was, indeed, teenage and early twenties readers, I decided to read the book reviews provided on the young adult section of each library’s website to see what (other than an engaging plot) these readers found appealing in a book. The first thing that I noticed was that teens enjoyed books that they could relate to. Teenage reviewers on the New York Public Library site said, “The characters were so believable and the issues they went through were normal teenage issues.” “This book is also very real in the way that readers can easily connect to the character.” A teen reviewer on the Chicago Public Library site said, “The reality the book creates is unbelievable. I can relate to it very well,” while the staff review section of the Los Angeles Public Library site says, “You are not alone. Other people have similar experiences to you and write about them.” Teens also enjoyed books that used humor: “This book is [f]antastic and funny and at the same time,” wrote a reviewer in Denver. A teen in San Antonio valued a book’s “saucy and witty commentary that keeps the reader interested,” while another in Seattle gave a favorable review to a book that was “incredibly funny and very real.” Finally, teens enjoyed books that used language similar to the language that they themselves use. A review on the New York Public Library site said, “The dialogue sounded a lot like teenage dialogue. [...] I think the voice was incredibly accurate for the characters.” “Even the vocabulary helped to pull the reader into [the main character’s] world!” said another.

Given young adults' desire to read books containing characters and situations to which they can relate, I believe that immigrant or dual-culture teens, as well as teens struggling with economic hardship or discrimination of any sort, would be particularly interested in *Du rêve pour les oufs*.

Statistics show, however, that these teens are the most difficult to reach through literature. According to the latest results (2007 for 8th graders and 2005 for 12th graders) of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the only nationwide assessment of American students, many students do not read for pleasure and there are significant gaps in reading achievement between different demographic groups. The reading report for 8th graders (13- and 14-year-olds) shows that only 43% of students say that they read for fun on their own time at least once a week (Reading 2007, 19). Overall results show that 74% of all students tested at "basic" level, 31% at "proficient" and 3% at "advanced" (3). White students, however, have above-average achievement with 84%, 40% and 4% reaching each respective level, while black and Hispanic students have below-average achievement, with 55% and 58% of students, respectively, reaching "basic" level, 13% and 15% reaching "proficient" and <1% and 1% achieving "advanced" (9). Students of any race participating in the National School Lunch Program (i.e. those students whose family income is at or below 185% of the poverty line) also had below-average reading scores, with 58% at "basic" level, 15% at "proficient" and 1% at "advanced," while all other students had above-average scores, with 83% at "basic" level, 40% at "proficient" and 4% at "advanced" (12). Finally, an even wider gap separated English Language Learners (presumably immigrants and children of immigrants who speak a language other than English at home) from non English Language Learners. 76% of non-ELL

students scored “basic” and 33% “proficient,” while only 30% of ELL students scored “basic” and only 5% scored “proficient” (15).

Results for 12th graders (17- and 18-year-olds) show similar achievement gaps in reading: 79% and 43% of white students achieved “basic” and “proficient” levels, while only 54% and 16% of black students and 60% and 20% of Hispanic students did so (Reading Grade 12, 5). Furthermore, 74% and 37% of non ELL students reached “basic” and “proficient” levels, while only 31% and 5% of ELL students were able to reach the same levels (9).

In order to reach an audience of teenagers who, on average, read for pleasure less than once a week and who underperform on national reading assessments, I believe that particular attention must be paid to preserving the elements that teens like in a book (relevance, humor and realistic language and dialogue, as noted above) when translating. This has led me to adopt an at times aggressive translation strategy to preserve the tone of the narration, the sociolect used by the characters and the fluency of language present in the original. Marginalized groups in both France and the United States face similar hardships in their day-to-day lives, however, so major content localization was not necessary in order for readers to find the subject matter of the book relevant.

Domestication and Foreignization

Over the course of the novel *Du rêve pour les oufs*, the narrator uses a certain amount of foreign terminology with which the translation's target audience is unlikely to be familiar. While it is important to keep a sense of foreignness about the text in order to keep it from sounding like a book written by an American author and set in the United States out of deference to the author's goals in writing the novel, it is also important to present the foreign elements in the text in a manner which does not alienate the target audience by creating a gulf of difference between them and the author's prose.

In his book *The Translator's Invisibility*, Lawrence Venuti describes two approaches to translation—domestication and foreignization. He calls the domestication approach “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values,” that, through its emphasis on fluency, “masquerades as a true semantic equivalence when it in fact inscribes the foreign text with a partial interpretation, partial to English-language values, reducing if not simply excluding the very difference that translation is called on to convey” (20-21). Foreignization, on the other hand, is “an ethnodeviant pressure on [target-language cultural] values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text” (20). He actively promotes foreignization as opposed to domestication, saying that although both approaches “are equally partial in their interpretation of the foreign text,” translations that use a foreignizing approach “tend to flaunt their partiality instead of concealing it” (34). Given the central role of “foreignness” in the source text even within its own source language context, there are questions that any translator of Faïza Guène must address. But before making any decisions as to whether to use a domesticating or foreignizing strategy in the translation

of *Du rêve pour les oufs*, it is important to first analyze the reasons behind the author's own use of language to demonstrate each character's degree of integration in their host culture.

Striking a balance between cultures

The central theme of the novel *Du rêve pour les oufs* is the struggle to define personal identity. The narrator, her little brother and two generations of immigrants in their neighborhood all struggle to strike a balance between the two cultures that influence their lives (host culture and culture of origin) and to define themselves while dealing with outside pressures from groups both in France and their countries of origin.

The most well-developed search for identity in the novel is that of Ahlème, the narrator. She has spent almost exactly half her life in Algeria and half in France, and since arriving in France she has never returned to Algeria, not even to visit her family. This rupture with her country of origin comes with the death of her mother, the village seamstress whose work and whose dreams for Ahlème's future embody Algerian tradition. After her arrival in France, she describes her adjustment period by saying that she was a "parfaite modèle d'intégration" (Guène, 61), but in reality, she has spent her entire time in France the same way her father has, "[à tenir] toute sa vie en équilibre" (33), balancing integration with maintaining Algerian cultural identity. She avoids asking other immigrants to say where they are from because she dislikes being asked to do so herself. Rather than define herself as a particular nationality, she describes herself using ellipsis, calling herself "championne d'Afrique et d'Europe" (13, 15), "citoyenne non-française" (37), "presque française" (61), and "pas né[e] là" (144), with "là", a word that can mean either "here" or "there", meaning "in France" in this instance.

Ahlème has chosen Tantie Mariatou, a Senegalese woman who seems to have settled permanently in France with her husband and four children, as her mentor. Tantie Mariatou and her husband both have stable jobs in France (she as a hairdresser and he as a schoolteacher), but despite their ostensible integration, they still face racism from the French authorities. Tantie Mariatou is also a storehouse of traditional African wisdom, which comforts Ahlème in times of difficulty. Ahlème seems to look up to Tantie Mariatou precisely because Tantie Mariatou has found a comfortable balance between her host culture and culture of origin while succeeding at life in France, something that Ahlème is still working to achieve.

Over the course of the novel, Ahlème evokes her frustration with the French authorities' treatment of her and other foreigners several times, yet she also wonders whether she would feel just as foreign in Algeria should she choose to return there. Ironically, Ahlème ends up finding a stable place for herself in France thanks to her position in the immigrant community and her fluent Arabic, which are both parts of her Algerian heritage. Her balancing act between her host country and her country of origin will never end, though, as underscored in the last sentence of the book. "Il est 6 heures du matin et je suis devant la préfecture," she says (Guène, 211). She has returned to France after her trip to Algeria, which was meant to help the entire family reconnect with and better understand their Algerian heritage. While her father and her brother are staying behind in Algeria for one more week, she is applying for yet another renewal of her French residence permit, restaking her claim to her place in France.

Ahlème's little brother, Foued, also struggles with defining his identity, even though he was so young when he left Algeria that he can no longer remember his time in

that country. He struggles with reconciling his more French attitudes towards school, dating and friends with the rules set by his sister, who was inculcated with more traditional Algerian values as a child. He speaks poor Arabic and writes poor French, and he is very nervous about the prospect of returning to Algeria for a two-week visit to better understand where he and his family come from. Upon their arrival in Algeria, Ahlème has to explain several cultural and linguistic norms to him, and although he decides to extend his trip by a week to spend more time with his new friends and family, his cousins call him “le Migré” and “le Franssaoui”, Arabic for “French” (194, 201). He, unlike his other immediate family, is clearly more at home in France than in Algeria.

Finally, Ahlème’s father has been liberated from his identity struggle by the work-related accident that robbed him of part of his cognitive function three years before the events occurring in the novel. However, up until his accident, Ahlème says that “il a tenu toute sa vie en équilibre”, just as he balanced up on the scaffolding at work every day (Guène, 33), and his loss of balance at work causes his figurative loss of balance in determining his identity. He has lost control of his own identity and that of his family, and his daughter has had to assume that role in his place. However, in order to give the reader a picture of what her father’s struggle to strike a balance between integration with his host country and maintaining a link with his country of origin was like before his accident, Ahlème relates the stories of other Algerian migrant workers in France. She describes her failure to understand the sense of respect and duty they have towards their host country when the authorities there have such open disrespect for them and her desire to set the record straight when it comes to the embellished stories migrant workers tell their friends and family back home about their work and life in France. She also relates a

conversation between two migrant workers her father's age that very clearly depicts the unique dilemma they are faced with: confronting their desire to return "home" to their extended family in Algeria once they reach retirement age, and their children's desire to stay "home" in France, the only country they know. These men have a clear sense of their identity as Algerians but may have to remain in a country where they so clearly feel foreign out of a sense of duty to their assimilated children.

The role of language in asserting cultural identity

Just as the struggle to define oneself by striking a balance between two cultures, that of their host country and their country of origin, is the central theme of the novel *Du rêve pour les oufs*, the characters' use of language is central to their identity struggle. When describing her work in an interview with *The Observer*, Guène stated, "I always like to show the duality. [...] Through the characters, through the language. There is the opposition of childhood and adulthood, of France and the land of someone's origin [...]" (Burke).

The author has each character use language differently in order to help demonstrate the degree to which they have integrated with their host culture or maintained a connection with their culture of origin. Although Guène says that her dialogue is never a verbatim transcription—in an interview with *The Guardian* she states, "If I'd wanted to create a ghetto language, [the reader] wouldn't have understood anything - there'd be too many Arabic words," (Adams)—I believe that the differing frequency with which each character uses Arabic words or expressions, along with French idiomatic expressions and slang, is telling.

Ahlème uses the widest variety of types of language of all the characters in the novel, partly because she is both the narrator and a character participating in dialogue, but also because of all the characters in the novel, she is the most evenly divided between her country of origin and her adopted country. Ahlème's French is at times standard, even leaning towards literary at certain points in her narration, although at times it seems that this is the author's own voice bleeding into Ahlème's narration. In a moment full of alliteration on her way to the temp agency, for example, she says, "Alors, j'avance et je glisse sur les rues lisses de France, je passe rue Joubert où quelques putes se parlent d'un trottoir à l'autre," (Guène, 8). This is mixed in with more familiar, slangy, sometimes grammatically incorrect and vulgar French that is common among youth Ahlème's age, especially during her conversations with her friends. "Ouais, OK, merci, c'est fait, arrêtez de m'engueuler, ça changera rien. Je vais me démerder, c'est bon..." she tells them when she gets caught riding public transportation without a valid ticket (Guène, 74). The narration also contains certain French expressions that seem to be particular to Ahlème's neighborhood, which the author has chosen to annotate with definitions in order to make them comprehensible to a wider French-speaking public, and words and expressions in Arabic, also annotated with French translations. These Arabic and nonstandard French words are, for the most part, employed when the narrator is describing concepts specific to Algeria or her neighborhood and where there is no French word that correlates 100% with the concept. Occasionally, though, certain Arabic expressions seem to explode out of Ahlème simply because she is angry or frustrated.

Foued, on the other hand, uses French that is much narrower in scope than Ahlème's. It is almost exclusively familiar and slangy, and he uses many more vulgar

words and expressions than his sister, reflecting his integration with other people his age in his host country. He only uses one Arabic expression over the course of the entire novel, which comes during a highly confrontational encounter with his older sister in which she questions his lifestyle and the identity he is trying to create for himself (Guène, 129). The fact that he does not use more Arabic in the novel reflects his poor grasp of the language and his tenuous connection with the country of his birth. Likewise, none of his friends or associates use any Arabic in the novel.

Tantie Mariatou uses language very different than that of Ahlème and Foued. Her French is perfectly correct, with no familiar expressions or slang. This is most likely due to the fact that she has become integrated into French society through the world of work—Guène has noted that historically, those immigrants with jobs “integrated through work and things outside the home, speaking with other people who all spoke French; their colleagues, or their boss” (Wolfreys). Mariatou uses two non-French expressions in the novel, one in Arabic and one in Soninke, both during a discussion with her husband following a racist encounter he has had with the French police (Guène 111, 113). What makes Tantie Mariatou’s use of language stand out from all the other characters, though, is her use of expressions of traditional wisdom that she seems to have translated word-for-word from either Arabic or Soninke into French. “La planche de bois peut rester cent ans dans le fleuve, elle ne sera jamais un caïman,” she tells Ahlème, who is nervous that she will feel like a foreigner in Algeria after all the time she has spent in France (Guène, 195). By doing so, she blends her cultural heritage with her new country and language.

Finally, the differences in the language used by Ahlème’s father and his friends, who have the same background, are noteworthy. Ahlème’s father uses French much like

Tantie Mariatou and for much the same reasons, and no familiar expressions or slang are present in his speech. However, for someone of his background, there is surprisingly little Arabic in his speech—the only two incidences are when he sings the Algerian national anthem and when he cries out for joy upon setting foot on Algerian soil for the first time in over a decade (Guène, 102, 196). His two former friends, however, use four Arabic words over the course of one short conversation with Ahlème—the highest concentration of Arabic use in the entire novel (172-174). This difference is most likely explained by the fact that Ahlème’s father seems to have resigned himself to spending the rest of his life in France after his accident, whereas his friends still hope to return to Algeria permanently someday and identify themselves primarily as Algerian.

Domestication, foreignization and text analysis

Although Venuti decries domestication and valorizes foreignization, I believe that it would be a mistake to adopt a foreignization-only approach in my translation of *Du rêve pour les oufs*. The author has struck a careful balance in the source text between language denoting integration with the characters’ host culture and language that maintains a link with their culture of origin. As such, using a “marginal discourse” or “disturbing the fluency of the language” by using a “heterogeneous mix of discourses” (1995: 20, 24, 29) would, at many points throughout the novel, upend the author’s strategy. Therefore, I have attempted to recreate as closely as possible a balance reflecting that which the author has struck by adopting a unique approach to domestication and foreignization for each character, based on my assessment of their use of language in the source text and the manner in which it reflects upon the degree to which they identify with their host culture and culture of origin.

The first step that I have taken to preserve the balance the author has struck in the source text is to foreignize in the target text all the Arabic and nonstandard French words and phrases that the author used in the original. In a country like the United States, where English-only programs have enjoyed widespread support in school systems and local legislative bodies for much of the 20th century, the literary valorization of a language spoken by a minority population certainly qualifies as “ethnodeviant pressure” on “target-language cultural values” (1995: 20). The following is a table showing all the instances in which the author has used Arabic or nonstandard French words and expressions in the source text and highlighted their cultural significance either with the aid of footnotes or italics, side-by-side with my translation into English. While it would be easy to naturalize these terms in the English translation (and, when taken in isolation, perhaps more satisfying and less awkward than including footnotes), this would not fit in with the translation strategy I have just described.

Page	Foreignized Word	Target Text Translation	Source Text Footnote	Target Text Footnote
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iv	cassos	cassos	Cas sociaux.	“Welfare junkies” in French.
Guène, 16 Chatelain, ix	miskina	miskina	« La pauvre » en arabe.	“Poor thing” in Arabic.
Guène, 17 Chatelain, ix	crevards	crevards	« Radins ».	“Skinflints” in French.
Guène, 19 Chatelain, xi	bouquette	bouquette	« Fille ».	“Girl” in French.
Guène, 65 Chatelain, xiii	gandouras	gandouras	Robes légères qu’on porte dans la maison.	Light houserobes.
Guène, 83 Chatelain, xxiv	inchallah	inshallah	(none)	(none)
Guène, 140 Chatelain, xxviii	BAC	BAC	Brigade anti-criminalité.	Police brigade that deals with petty crime.

Four of these expressions serve to foreignize the voice of Ahlème, while the others foreignize the voices of Ahlème’s mother and Ahlème’s friends, Linda and Nawel. In the footnotes for the nonstandard French words (*cassos*, *crevards* and *bouguette*), I have added the expression “in French” after my translation of the standard French definition given, adopting the style of the author’s footnotes for Arabic words and expressions used in the source text. *Inchallah* was italicized in the original, with no footnote given. I have kept the word in italics in the translation and have chosen to change the spelling to the most widely accepted transliteration of the word into English. Finally, instead of translating the words for which the acronym *BAC* stands, I have chosen to give the reader a short explication of the concept, for which there is no commonly used word in English.

The next step in the process of foreignization was to use one of the foreignization strategies proposed by Venuti—the calque (1995, 34). I deliberately gave literal, word-for-word translations of Tantie Mariatou’s African words of wisdom into English, since it appears that in the source text, Tantie Mariatou has herself used calque renderings of them either from Soninke or Arabic into French. This is a successfully foreignizing translation act that enriches the target language.

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Guène, 20 Chatelain, xii	« Les plus belles histoires sont celles qui commencent mal. »	The best stories are the ones that start off badly.
Guène, 137 Chatelain, xxvi	[...] d’après elle, je ressemblais à un Kenyan en fin de marathon.	[...] according to her, I looked like a Kenyan at the end of a marathon.
Guène, 138 Chatelain, xxvii	Comme on dit en Afrique, “l’argent appelle l’argent”.	Like they say in Africa, ‘money calls money’.

I decided that this translation strategy was applicable even in the case of the second expression featured in the table, despite the fact that it differs in format from all the other adages that Tantie Mariatou employs. It is reported speech rather than a direct quotation, and unlike all of Tantie Mariatou's other sayings, it does not have an underlying lesson. However, it makes a specifically African reference that I did not want to domesticate in English, so I decided that the simplest solution would be to foreignize it in the same manner that I foreignized all of Tantie Mariatou's other expressions.

The final step that I took to foreignize the translation was also the least straightforward. I felt that it was important to remind the reader that the narrator and her friends and family are immigrants in France, not the United States. So rather than content myself with merely foreignizing in the target text the words and expressions that the author had already used to highlight her characters' cultural heritage in the source text, I went one step further and foreignized some standard French words and expressions from the source text in the target text.

Page	Source Text	Target Text	Target Text Footnote
Guène, 7, 85 Chatelain, viii, xxxi	bled	bled	(none)
Guène, 82 Chatelain, xxiii	veston algérois	veston algérois	traditional Algerian wedding garment
Guène, 13, 20 Chatelain, vii, xi	quartier, zone	zone	Paris and its suburbs are divided into concentric "zones".
Guène, 140 Chatelain, xxviii	rebeu	rebeu	French street slang for "Arab".

I chose to foreignize each of these words and expressions and keep them in French in the target text for the same reason that the author chose to keep certain words

in Arabic in the source text—because there is no equivalent in the target text language. The first three expressions help foreignize the voice of Ahlème as narrator, and the last, in a break from my overall translation strategy, foreignizes the voice of one of Foued’s associates.

I decided that given the context surrounding its use in the novel, *bled*, like *inshallah*, needed no footnote, and I imitated the style of the author’s footnote for *gandouras* in the footnote for *veston algérois*. *Zone* and *rebeu* proved to be more difficult to annotate. *Rebeu* is the only word in *verlan* that I have chosen to foreignize in the target text, openly breaking with my strategy of domesticating the French slang that is heavily used by the characters who identify more with their host country than with their country of origin. I made this decision based on the difficulty I had during the sensitive task of finding an equivalent, commonly understood expression to describe Arabs in English that did not have overtly pejorative, offensive or racist connotations. *Zone* posed a problem because urban spaces are divided up differently in France than they are in the United States. The concept of “suburbs” is positively connoted in English, as they are highly desirable places to live in the United States. The suburbs of Paris, on the other hand, are associated with images of poverty, immigration and youth violence. I briefly considered the possibility of translating *ma zone* by “on my side of the tracks,” given the popular American concept of “the wrong side of the tracks,” which carries a slightly negative connotation, but I abandoned the idea because the expression is generally used in rural areas. Once I decided to use *zone*, I also made the choice to explicitate the word with a footnote so that the target text reader would not mistake it for the English word “zone,” which delimitates a different concept.

According to Venuti, “Anglo-American culture [...] has long been dominated by domesticating theories that recommend fluent translating” (1995, 21). Although he finds that domestication is a mostly unthinking choice for most translators working into English, I have carefully thought out my domestication strategy and have deliberately used it in certain circumstances to maintain the linguistic balance that the author has created in her source text.

The first step that I took in the domestication process was to translate idiomatic expressions in French used by Ahlème, Foued and their friends with idiomatic expressions in English. The following table contains a non-exhaustive list of these expressions in the source text with their respective translations in the target text:

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iv	Miloudi, c’est un vieux de la vieille	Miloudi’s an old hand at this.
Guène, 13 Chatelain, vii	championne d’Europe et d’Afrique de la tenue de chandelle	African and European Fifth-Wheel Champion
Guène, 19 Chatelain, xi	elle est enceinte jusqu’aux yeux	she’s about to pop
Guène, 66 Chatelain, xiv	on a sorti le grand jeu	Foued and I pulled out all the stops
Guène, 72 Chatelain, xvii	j’allais lui remonter les bretelles	I was going to take him down a notch
Guène, 73 Chatelain, xvii	Promis, juré, craché	Swear it on my mother’s life
Guène, 83 Chatelain, xxiv	Mais elle a refusé, avec impossibilité de négocier	Period, end of conversation
Guène, 138 Chatelain, xxvii	Elle a réussi à me décrocher un sourire	She’s managed to worm a smile out of me.
Guène, 141 Chatelain, xxix	J’étais au placard	I was in the slammer...
Guène, 142	c’est juste un délire	we’re just trippin’

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Chatelain, xxx		
Guène, 143 Chatelain, xxx	Ferme ta gueule	Shut the hell up
Guène, 146 Chatelain, xxxii	Je le remercie chaleureusement	I thank him from the bottom of my heart

My goal was to employ target-language expressions that are commonly used by target-text readers in similar situations to those described in the novel. I wanted the expressions to sound as natural and fluent in the target text as they do in the source text, creating a cohesive discourse that does not jar the target text reader.

After long consideration, I also decided to make the translation of words in *verlan* (French reverse street slang) used by Ahlème and her friends a part of my domestication strategy. I felt that an attempt to foreignize a whole system of speech that does not exist in English would ultimately fail, because as Venuti rightly notes, “an ethics that counters the domesticating effects of the inscription [in an attempt to restore or preserve the foreignness of the foreign text] can only be formulated and practiced primarily in *domestic* terms, in domestic dialects, registers, discourses, and styles” (2004, 483). To avoid the release of a “domestic remainder” (2004, 485) as much as possible, I have specifically chosen not to use dialects specific to certain regions or ethnic groups, taking particular care to avoid locutions reminiscent of Black American English. Instead, I have tried to use words and phrases with which the average American reader can identify, having used most of them at one time or another.

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Guène, 7 Chatelain, iii	ce matin, le froid ouf de France me paralyse	this morning the out-of-control French cold has me frozen stiff
Guène, 13	Qu’est-ce qu’on ne ferait pas, nous les	What a chick wouldn’t do

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Chatelain, vii Guène, 17 Chatelain, ix	meufs à la télé française, ils kiffent trop foutre des meufs à poil pour un oui ou pour un non	French TV shows naked babes just for the hell of it a little too much
Guène, 16 Chatelain, ix	juste ce qui était un peu relou , c'est la télé	The TV was a real bore , though
Guène, 18 Chatelain, x Guène, 146 Chatelain, xxxii	Elle était avec un type chelou avant je lui rends grâce d'avoir eu affaire à Didier plutôt qu'à l'autre chelou	She was with a shady guy before I thank him for letting me deal with Didier instead of the other shady guy
Guène, 68 Chatelain, xv Guène, 75 Chatelain, xix	Danse avec les keufs les keufs , c'est encore une autre histoire	Dances with Po-Pos the cops are another story altogether
Guène, 145 Chatelain, xxxii	–Et arrêtez de l'appeler l'Orphelin, il a un prénom. –C'est cheum	“And stop calling him the Orphan, he's got a name.” “It's butt ugly ...”

As the reader can tell from the table, I chose not to assign one specific English equivalent to each word in *verlan*. Instead, I chose to translate as idiomatically as possible, leading *keufs* to be translated as “Po-Pos” in one instance and “cops” in another, and *meufs* as “babes” and “chick”.

The principal downside to this particular translation strategy is the loss of continuity of register between the source text and the target text. The example that stands out the most is the translation of *relou*, a slang word used only in familiar language in French, by “a real bore”, which is a perfectly standard English expression that is acceptable for use in most contexts. This is not a translation choice that I am entirely satisfied with, but I made this choice for lack of a better alternative.

Despite my best attempts to avoid the overt “release of a domestic remainder”, or “the production of textual effects that signify only in the history of the receiving language

and culture” (Venuti 2004, 485), I have not always been able to circumvent such textual effects, which mainly affect Ahlème’s narration. Upon reviewing my translation, I first noted the use of three baseball references in the target text:

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Guène, 12 Chatelain, vi	sans la moindre hesitation	right off the bat
Guène, 13 Chatelain, vii	On va faire du sport?	Wanna go play ball?
Guène, 66 Chatelain, xiii	elle faisait des tours et des détours	he put a curve on it

It was not my intention to make use of multiple baseball references throughout the text. However, the coincidence is not particularly extraordinary, given that two of the three source text expressions have to do with sports in general. Since baseball is “America’s sport,” it is hardly surprising that baseball references have turned into everyday American idiomatic expressions. As modern baseball originated in the United States, though, and as it is primarily an American pastime, there is a domestic remainder released with the use of these expressions.

The second manner in which a significant domestic remainder was released in the target text was through the use of expressions that contain U.S. customary units of measurement.

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Guène, 9 Chatelain, iv	de la paperasse à perte de vue	papers stacked a mile high
Guène, 77 Chatelain, xx	on chiale à en ruiner les moindres recoins de son kleenex	you sob so much that you don’t even have a square inch of free space on your Kleenex

This choice would have been more easily defended if I were simply changing metric units into U.S. customary units in order to facilitate reader comprehension, but there are no units of measure in the source text excerpts. Instead, I used U.S. customary units because they were a part of the most idiomatic expressions I could think of in the target language for the idiomatic expressions used in the source text. As such, a layer of meaning has been introduced that does not exist in the source text and would be completely foreign to the source text reader.

Finally, there are three expressions releasing domestic remainders that do not fit into any particular broader category.

Page	Source Text	Target Text
Guène, 74 Chatelain, xviii	il lui faut ses gouttes immédiatement	he needs a Xanax now
Guène, 79 Chatelain, xxi	C'est comme ça, théorie vérifiée aussi vrai que [...]	That's how it is, like Murphy's Law. Just as true as [...]
Guène, 139 Chatelain, xxvii	Je me sens comme une cuite qui marche.	Drunk girl walking.

In the first, a nameless medication in liquid form turns into a specific American brand-name drug used to treat panic attacks. The decision to refer specifically to Xanax arose from the fact that the generic term “drops” would mean nothing to an American reader in this context. Rather, in day-to-day American life and in American literary tradition, when a person is perceived as having a mental breakdown due to anxiety, reference is usually made either to Xanax or Valium as a method of treatment.

In the second expression, a nameless theory becomes “Murphy’s Law”, a piece of American conventional wisdom that dates back to the 19th century. I chose to steer away from the concept of a generalized “proven theory” because in many conservative

Christian areas in America, the phrase is a major part of the debate on evolution. I felt that adding a layer of meaning with Murphy's Law was both more idiomatic in English and closer to the concept expressed in the source text than the alternative.

In the last expression, a sentence explaining the narrator's state of mental disarray becomes a reference to the American movie "Dead Man Walking". This is the "domestic remainder" with which I am most comfortable in the translation, given that the narrator makes references to American movies, songs and artists throughout the novel and that French audiences come into contact with American movies on a regular basis.

When taken together, these expressions that release strong domestic remainders tip the balance in the translation slightly further towards domestication than I had hoped. However, I decided not to edit out these expressions because I felt that they lend a sense of concreteness to the text, balancing out the effect of substituting generic target language equivalents for specifically French references in the source text, as described in the following chapter. Furthermore, they contributed towards creating a snappy, witty, idiomatic narration in keeping with the style of the source text and the target readership's expectations of an authentic-sounding voice for the characters in the novel, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Explicitation and Substitution

Explicitation is an integral, unavoidable part of my foreignization strategy as described in the previous chapter. Bombarding young adult readers with unfamiliar elements in a novel runs the risk of causing them to disengage from the plot, setting or characters, while providing simple explanations for unfamiliar elements can help them feel more at ease with foreign material. Explicitation is not, however, unique to my translation of *Du rêve pour les oufs*.

Many translation theorists hold that explicitation is a universal phenomenon in translation. Vinay and Darbelnet appear to have been the first to introduce the concept, defining it as “[a] stylistic translation technique which consists of making explicit in the target language what remains implicit in the source language because it is apparent from either the context or the situation” (342). Kinga Klaudy goes further, subdividing explicitation into four distinct types: obligatory, optional, pragmatic, and translation-inherent. Obligatory, optional, and translation-inherent explicitations are, respectively, born out of “differences in the syntactic and semantic structure of language,” “differences in text-building strategies [...] and stylistic preferences between languages,” and “the nature of the translation process itself [...], namely the necessity to formulate ideas in the target language that were originally conceived in the source language” (82-83).

However, I am more interested in exploring pragmatic explicitation, or explicitation that is “dictated by differences between cultures” when “members of the target language cultural community may not share aspects of what is considered general knowledge within the source language culture” (83). This type of explicitation is not the result of differences between two separate languages, but rather the result of differences between

two culturally different audiences. Its use requires careful thought on the part of the translator, who must have a firm idea in mind of who the target audience is, what the extent of their knowledge of the elements in the source text is likely to be, and how willing they will be to engage with ostensibly foreign elements.

It follows, then, that the main factor that I took into account when determining my explicitation strategy was the needs of the target audience. As has already been determined, the target audience for the translation falls more or less along the older end of the spectrum of the young adult readers. These are readers who have not necessarily completed their formal education, who have not yet acquired the breadth of knowledge of the average adult, and who are not necessarily proficient readers. Bearing this in mind, a higher level of explicitation than would be necessary for an adult audience is required to ensure that the young adult audience understands certain important nuances in the text. Care must be taken, however, not to underestimate the reader's level of intelligence—Vermeer warns, for example, against unconsciously using “one's own (self-evaluated) level [of intelligence and education] as an implicit criterion [in determining what to explicitate],” and assuming that “the addressees are (almost) as intelligent as one is oneself” (227). Readers who feel that their level of intelligence is being insulted or that they are being condescended towards are unlikely to stick with a translated text to the end, and the overuse of explicitation can clutter the text and interrupt its flow with unnecessary extra information that is either already known to the reader or not essential to understanding the text.

As Shoshana Blum-Kulka states, “[w]riters themselves may be aware of the fact that their reference network is not shared by their readers and take pains to explain it in

footnotes or otherwise. In translation the translator becomes the judge as to the extent to which he or she finds it necessary to explain the source text's reference network to the target-language audience" (306). In *Du rêve pour les oufs*, Faïza Guène uses language specific to her neighborhood, but as the novel is geared towards a wider French audience, chooses to explain her reference network in footnotes so that her readers may understand what she is talking about. Therefore, the first step I took in determining my explicitation strategy was to examine the elements of the text that the author decided to further explain to the source text reader in footnotes. These include words in Arabic and words in French that are not commonly used outside the narrator's community, words for clothing worn in the narrator's country of origin but not in her host country, and abbreviations for things not commonly seen outside the narrator's community. As shown in the table below, my translation has preserved the explanations made by the author in the original text.

Page	Original	Footnote	Translation	Footnote
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iv	Il [...] a dû voir défiler tous les cassos du secteur.	Cas sociaux.	he must've seen all the <i>cassos</i> in the neighborhood come traipsing through.	"Welfare junkies" in French.
Guène, 16 Chatelain, ix	Tu fais pitié, <i>miskina</i> !	« La pauvre » en arabe.	You're pitiful, <i>miskina</i> !	"Poor thing" in Arabic.
Guène, 17 Chatelain, ix	Ma famille de crevards	« Radins ».	My family of <i>crevards</i>	"Skinflints" in French.
Guène, 19 Chatelain, xi	Elle lui a fait un gosse dans le dos, la bouquette.	« Fille ».	That <i>bouquette</i> saddled him with a kid.	"Girl" in French.
Guène, 65 Chatelain, xiii	on sortait de la baraque en courant, pieds nus, vêtues de simples gandouras	Robes légères qu'on porte dans la maison.	My cousins and I would run out of the house to buy some, barefoot, dressed only in our <i>gandouras</i> .	Light houserobes.

Page	Original	Footnote	Translation	Footnote
Guène, 140 Chatelain, xxviii	là où même la BAC redoute de passer	(Brigade anti- criminalité)	Even the BAC think twice about going there	Police brigade that deals with petty crimes.

Although my intent was strictly to preserve the author's explanation for the target text reader, the footnotes explaining "cassos," "crevard" and "bouguette" have been explicitated by adding the phrase "in French" after their definitions. The decision to make this explicitation was twofold. First, I wanted to preserve the format used by the author in the footnote to "miskina," and second, I wanted for it to be perfectly clear to the reader that "crevard" and "bouguette" are words in French. Had the language to which these words belong not been specified, a young reader with no knowledge of foreign languages might assume that they belong to Arabic just as "miskina" does, as per the author's explanatory footnote. The footnote explaining "BAC" has been explicitated in the translation as well. Since I was unable to find an equivalent division of the police force in the United States, I instead chose to provide a short explanation of what this particular division of the police does so that the reader might understand who they are and why they are supposed to patrol in a given area of the neighborhood.

The next step in the translation process was to leave some additional French words in the target text as an extra reminder to the reader that the novel is set in France. In order to help keep the reader from feeling overwhelmed by unfamiliar expressions, I chose to explicitate them by mimicking the author's style in the original and providing short explanatory footnotes to explain the source text's reference network.

Page	Original	Translation	Footnote
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iv	Il tient la mission locale de la cité de l'Insurrection depuis des années et a dû voir	He's been running the local outreach center in my neighborhood, the <i>cité de l'Insurrection</i> , for	"Welfare junkies" in French.

Page	Original	Translation	Footnote
	défiler tous les cassos du secteur.	years, and he must've seen all the <i>cassos</i> in the neighborhood come traipsing through.	
Guène, 13 Chatelain, vii	Au quartier	Back in our <i>zone</i>	Paris and its suburbs are divided into concentric “zones”.
Guène, 20 Chatelain, xi	Mon RER asthmatique me crache dans ma zone	My asthmatic train spits me out in my <i>zone</i>	(none, already explicited)
Guène, 82 Chatelain, xxiii	De ses doigts fins et délicats, elle brodait le veston algérois	With her long, dainty fingers she embroidered the <i>veston algérois</i>	traditional Algerian wedding garment
Guène, 140 Chatelain, xxviii	Ah, le petit rebeu, l'Orphelin?	Oh, the little <i>rebeu</i> , the Orphan?	French street slang for “Arab”
Guène, 141 Chatelain, xxix	Tu la connais cette djouf, Cafard?	You know this <i>djouf</i> , Roach?	“broad”

My primary concern was to keep the footnotes as short and concise as possible, including only the information that is strictly necessary for understanding each term. The longer the footnote, the longer the target reader's attention is diverted from the main body of the translated text. Too many interruptions of too great a length could have an adverse effect on comprehension of the text, causing the reader to lose his train of thought and become lost in the text and requiring him to reread certain passages. The source text does not require such efforts—it is, on the whole, a relatively easy read. A distracting approach to footnoting the target text, then, would produce an entirely different reading experience. Most of the terms that I left in French were able to be explicited in short footnotes in much the same style as that used by the author in the original. The word “zone” posed the biggest problem, since the urban geography of France and the United States is so different and difficult to convey in just a few words. I originally included a longer footnote for this term: “Paris and its suburbs are divided into concentric ‘zones’. The higher the number of the zone, the farther away it is from downtown.” After some

consideration, however, I decided that the sentence “The higher the number of the zone, the farther away it is from downtown” was not necessary to understanding the text, since the number of the narrator’s *zone* is not mentioned in the narrative. Since it distracted the reader from the main text for a longer period of time without providing relevant information, I decided to delete it. Creating footnotes for the target text reader that provide full equivalence of meaning of the cultural resonances that are clear and present for most source text readers becomes ponderous and, therefore, destroys equivalence of style. There is, consequently, an inevitable remainder of meaning in the source text that is not communicated in the target text.

Explaining foreign words was not the only motivation for explicating certain elements of the source text in the translation. I also used pragmatic explication to explain other elements of the text whose importance might be lost on the reader due to a lack of awareness of the relevant context. First I added another footnote to the target text in order to explain the significance of the use of a prominent person’s name in the novel.

Page	Original	Translation	Footnote
Guène, 140 Chatelain, xxviii	juste en dessous de l’inscription “Fuck Sarko”	just below the graffiti tag “Fuck Sarko”	Name for a conservative politician unpopular with the immigrant communities around Paris; now President of France

In this instance, the narrator is describing an unsafe part of the neighborhood where she is about to confront the delinquent young men who have been using her little brother to hide the stolen goods and cash from their shady dealings. These young men are all sons of North African immigrants to France, and over the course of the chapter it becomes apparent from their tense teasing exchanges that they are all grappling with how

to reconcile their North African heritage with their life in France. It is not by accident that the narrator comments that one of the young men is standing under graffiti reading “Fuck Sarko”. This particular piece of graffiti provides an important commentary on the attitudes of the people present in the scene and of the wider community. While Nicolas Sarkozy has received a decent amount of media coverage in the United States since his election as the president of France, I still felt it important to provide some extra clarification: first because the target audience readers probably are not familiar with the nickname “Sarko” and might not make the connection with Nicolas Sarkozy, and second because while the target readers might know that Sarkozy is the president of France, they are likely unaware that he is unpopular in immigrant communities, including with some members of the immigrant community in the novel.

In addition to explicating the names of important people in the text, I also added explanations to the text that help the reader get a better sense of the geography of certain spaces, as shown in the following table.

Page	Original	Translation	Footnote
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iii	Je suis née de l’autre côté de la mer	I was born on the other side of the Mediterranean	(none)
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iv	Il tient la mission locale de la cité de l’Insurrection depuis des années	He’s been running the local outreach center in my neighborhood, the <i>cité de l’Insurrection</i> , for years	(none)
Guène, 144-45 Chatelain, xxxi	Seulement, Didier, il pensait qu’il ne pourrait jamais faire du bateau parce qu’à Ivry, il n’y a pas la mer.	It’s just that Didier didn’t think he could ever sail boats because there’s no sea in Ivry.	City on the outskirts of Paris.

First, “mer” becomes “Mediterranean”. This serves a twofold purpose: to help the target reader visualize the location of Algeria in relation to France by specifying which

body of water separates them and to break up the alliteration that would be formed by “the other side of the sea”, which gives too poetic a feel to the narrator’s statement.

Second, “de la cité de l’Insurrection” becomes “in my neighborhood, the *cité de l’Insurrection*” so that the target reader can understand why the narrator would choose to go to this particular outreach center. Third, a footnote has been added to explain that Ivry is a “[c]ity on the outskirts of Paris” so that the target text reader can easily find Paris on a map and see that it is, indeed, too far away from the Atlantic Ocean or the Mediterranean Sea to be able to sail boats.

Finally, I explicitated certain elements of the text not by adding an explanation, but rather by substituting a generic equivalent that is already familiar to the reader for a specific thing or place mentioned in the novel.

Page	Original	Translation
Guène, 12 Chatelain, vi	je ne suis pas titulaire du permis B, [...] je ne suis pas reconnue invalide par la Cotorep	I don’t have a driver’s license, [...] I’m not considered disabled by adult services
Guène, 12 Chatelain, vi	Elle me propose un inventaire à Leroy Merlin	She offers me a job taking inventory at the home improvement store
Guène, 72 Chatelain, xvii	Avec un peu de chance cette pauvre conseillère sera mutée dans la Sarthe	With a little luck, she’ll be transferred to a nice rural district
Guène, 74 Chatelain, xviii	montrent sagement leur carte Navigo	quietly hand over their bus passes

“Le permis B,” “la Cotorep,” “Leroy Merlin,” “la Sarthe,” and “la carte Navigo” could have each either taken a footnote or had a two- or three-word explanation added within the text itself, but I was afraid that this might feel like information overload to the reader at some point. Instead, I decided to delete each of these items from the text, since they are not things that are particularly well-known outside of France. The reader does not need to know what each of these specific things or places are, since he or she may

likely never read about them again. I felt that ease of comprehension and readability were the most important factors to take into account given the profile of the target audience, so I substituted generic equivalents that the reader would be able to identify with immediately. Thus, “driver’s license,” “adult services,” “the home improvement store,” “a nice rural district” and “bus passes” come to be used in the translation instead. Once again, there is a certain remainder of meaning from the source text that is not communicated in the target text, which in this case removes a certain sense of specificity, locality and concreteness in the target text. However, it avoids the problem of weighing down the narrator’s voice and style with repeated explanations of concepts that may be unfamiliar to the target text reader.

The choice of what not to explicitate is just as important as the choice of what to explicitate and how to go about the explicitation. Too many instances of explicitation can interrupt the reader’s concentration and come across as being too didactic. In the following cases, the author gives enough context in the sentence for older young adult readers to figure out unfamiliar words:

Page	Term	Original	Translation
Guène, 8 Chatelain, iii	rue Joubert	Alors, j’avance et je glisse sur les rues lisses de France, je passe rue Joubert où quelques putes se parlent d’un trottoir à l’autre.	So I make my way forward, slipping and sliding on the icy French streets. I pass by rue Joubert where some hookers on the sidewalks call out at each other from across the street.
Guène, 15 Chatelain, viii	bled	Ils viennent carrément du même village qu’elles, au bled	They come from the same village that the girls do, the exact same <i>bled</i> .
Guène, 16 Chatelain, ix	bled	C’est l’effet retour au bled.	It’s the back-to- <i>bled</i> effect.
Guène, 20 Chatelain, xi	zone	Moi, je rentre à Ivry aider ma voisine, Tantie Mariatou, et ses enfants. Mon RER asthmatique me crache dans ma zone	I’m going back to Ivry to help my neighbor Tantie Mariatou and her kids. My asthmatic train spits me out in my <i>zone</i>

Page	Term	Original	Translation
Guène, 137 Chatelain, xxvi	bled	A un moment, j'ai même suggéré d'envoyer Foued au bled	At one point, I even suggested sending Foued to the <i>bled</i>
Guène, 144 Chatelain, xxxi	bled	nous marchons à cloche-pied dans ce bled	my brother and I are walking on eggshells in this <i>bled</i>

In the first case, the narrator is describing her itinerary as she walks to the temp agency.

In the translation, she talks about the “icy French streets” and the hookers on “rue Joubert” who “call out at each other from across the street,” so I feel that it is fairly simple for the reader to deduce that rue Joubert is a street.

In the second case, the word “bled” on page 15 is already more or less defined in the sentence as a village (understood to be a village back in Africa). The word turns up again on pages 16 and 137 with the same meaning, so further explanation would be redundant. On page 144, though, the meaning is slightly different—the narrator uses “bled” to refer to her and her brother’s neighborhood in France. The shift to “ce bled/this bled” from “le bled/the bled,” though, is enough in my opinion for the reader to be able to understand the new meaning of the word without further explanation.

Finally, the decision not to explicitate “Ivry” follows along the same logic as the decision not to explicitate “bled”—the following sentence makes it clear that Ivry is a place in the narrator’s *zone*, which has already been described in a footnote on page 13 that says, “Paris and its suburbs are divided into concentric ‘zones’.” From this, the reader can deduce that Ivry must be one of Paris’ suburbs.

A presumed ability of the reader to deduce meaning from context was not the only factor that played into my decision not to explicitate certain terms. Three other reasons were behind my decision not to explicitate the terms in the following table.

Page	Original	Translation
Guène, 9 Chatelain, v	les cinq minutes passèrent comme un TGV	Those five minutes went by faster than a TGV
Guène, 10 Chatelain, v	Il nous reste dix minutes à peine pour contacter la SREP, parce que ça ne sert à rien de passer par l'AGPA à cette période de l'année	We barely have ten minutes left to get in touch with the SREP, because it's useless going through the AGPA this time of year
Guène, 83 Chatelain, xxiv	Un matin, vous vous réveillerez sans votre langue, <i>inchallah</i> .	One day, you're going to wake up without your tongues, <i>inshallah</i> .

First, I decided not to explicitate “TGV” despite the lack of context clarifying what it is because the TGV has received enough mainstream media attention in the United States for teenagers to have heard of it and to know that it is a fast train.

Second, I decided not to explicitate “SREP” and “AGPA” to create the same sense of confusion in the target text reader that the narrator feels during the scene. When Ahlème is applying for work at the temp agency, she is overwhelmed by all the different things that have to be done in such a short time, and the director has given her little explanation as to why she is filling out the mountain of forms before her. He does not explain to her what the “SREP” and “AGPA” are, and few, if any, American teenagers would recognize these acronyms. Failing to provide the target text reader with an explanation, then, helps create the same incomprehension on the part of the reader that the narrator herself feels.

Finally, I decided not to explicitate “inshallah” because the narrator chose not to explicitate it in the original text. While French teenagers may be more familiar with the term than American teenagers because of the presence of a larger Muslim minority in France, I still believe that young adult readers in the United States can more or less work out what the term means without any additional explanation.

Functional Adequacy

In part, I chose to translate *Du rêve pour les oufs* because I felt that it had not only an important message to communicate to the source text audience, but also a message that could resonate with the target text audience (American readers in their teens and early twenties). In order for the novel to speak to these readers, the translator must preserve the function of the text inasmuch as possible.

In the 1970s and 1980s, theorists developing functional theories of translation gradually evolved from thinking in terms of functional equivalence to thinking in terms of functional adequacy. Katharina Reiss' work develops the idea of equivalence as being something to achieve at an overall textual level and classifies texts according to the function of their language, working towards considering the communicative purpose of translation. Her three functional categories are "informative", where texts involve "plain communication of facts", "expressive", where texts contain "creative composition", and "operative", where texts seek to "induc[e] behavioural responses" (Munday, 73, 76). As *Du rêve pour les oufs* is a novel, according to Reiss' model, it has primarily an expressive function. However, informative and operative elements are also present in the work. In order to help readers who did not grow up in the suburbs understand some of the Arabic and nonstandard French words and concepts present in the novel, Guène uses informative footnotes to provide the reader with the missing background knowledge needed to comprehend what is being said. Guène has also stated in several interviews that part of the aim of her work is to combat media stereotypes and invite her readers to adopt a new perspective on life in the Parisian suburbs, which corresponds to Reiss' operative function. "La parole est rarement donnée aux gens du quartier. J'essaie de l'utiliser du

mieux que je peux. J'essaie d'être cohérente, de dire des choses intelligentes et de changer ce schéma sans nuance qu'on a des quartiers,” she says in an interview for *evene.fr* (Carpentier). While Reiss believes that “the transmission of the predominant function of the ST is the determining factor by which the TT is judged” (Munday, 75), I believe that during the course of the translation process it is important not to lose sight of the operative and informative goals that the author also has for the text.

In his skopos theory, Hans Vermeer moves past the idea of “equivalence” and instead considers “adequacy” as the measure of translational action. Vermeer states that “a *translatum* [target text] is primarily determined by its skopos or its commission, accepted by the translator as being adequate to the goal of the action” (230). A translation is “adequate” when the target text fulfils the skopos and there exists a relationship between the source text and the target text based on the skopos (Reiss, Vermeer, 1996: 124). In Vermeer’s model, it is thus my job, in the joint role as commissioner and translator of the text, to decide what the skopos of the translation is. In this case, my goal was to create an aesthetically pleasing translation that appeals to the same age demographic (mid-teens to mid-twenties) as the source text. This is, however, a fairly broad commission that could lend itself to more than one translation approach.

Christiane Nord builds upon Vermeer’s skopos theory, stating that “[t]ranslation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the target text (translation skopos)” (2005, 32). In this functional approach to translation, “the translator [establishes] the function-in-culture of a source text [...] [b]y means of a comprehensive model of text analysis [...]. This is then compared with the (prospective) function-in-

culture of the target text required by the initiator, identifying and isolating those ST elements which have to be preserved or adapted in translation” (2005:24).

As has been demonstrated with Reiss’ model, the source text has several different functions: to appeal to an audience of (mostly French) young adult readers, to introduce them to people from a different culture (in the case of those readers who do not have an Arab background and were not raised in the Parisian suburbs’ housing projects), to get them to identify with these characters on some level, and to invite them to break away from stereotypes and adopt a new, more positive view of life in the suburbs.

In the case of *Du rêve pour les oufs*, the functions of the target text in the target culture cannot match up exactly with the functions of the source text in the source culture. This means that instead of functional equivalence, the translator must strive for functional adequacy, or creating an equivalent effect with target text readers as is experienced by source text readers. While it is possible to create a translation that appeals to the same age group as the source text, target text readers in the United States are unlikely to have any familiarity with the projects on the outskirts of Paris, much less be biased in their view on life there as a result of stereotypes cultivated by the media. However, there are many immigrant (and non-immigrant) communities in the United States comprised of people from minority ethnic and religious backgrounds, and I feel that the American media often portray some of these communities in a sensationalized or stereotypical fashion. Therefore, if the translation is able to recreate the source text function of getting the reader to identify with characters from a different cultural/religious background, it may be possible to create a response in the (presumably

American) target text reader where he or she comes to view similar communities in the United States through a more positive lens.

The main vehicle Guène uses to communicate her message and help her readers identify with her characters is humor. She states that what is important in her work is that she describes day-to-day life “sans pour autant que ce soit misérabiliste. Avec humour” (Carpentier). It follows, then, that a functionally adequate translation would preserve this humor in order to bridge the cultural gap between the characters and the target text reader. But what makes people laugh, and is this different from culture to culture?

In her book “The Language of Humour”, Alison Ross explains that much of humor comes from “incongruity”, or “a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs” (7). She goes on to subdivide humor into several categories, including humor at the expense of a target or butt, self-deprecating humor, humor that explores the boundaries around what is taboo, and observational humor. All of these different types of humor are present in Guène’s work, as demonstrated in the following table.

Page	Original	Humor type
Guène, 11	Johanna, l’employée de bureau d’Intérim Plus, a l’air d’avoir seize ans, elle a la voix qui tremble et articule douloureusement. Je saisis qu’elle me demande de remplir un questionnaire, elle me donne un stylo portant le logo ridicule de leur boîte et m’invite à la suivre. La demoiselle porte un jean ultra-moulax qui laisse apparaître tous les écarts de son régime Weight Watchers et lui donne des allures de femme adultère.	Target
Guène, 11-12	Je gratte, je remplis leurs cases, je coche, je signe. Tout est minuscule sur leur formulaire et leurs questions sont presque vexantes. Non, je ne suis pas mariée, je n’ai pas d’enfants, je ne suis pas titulaire du permis B, je n’ai pas fait d’études supérieures, je ne suis pas reconnue invalide par la Cotorep, je ne suis pas française. A la rigueur, où se trouve la case « Ma vie est un échec » ? Comme ça, je coche directement oui, et on n’en parle plus.	Self-deprecating
Guène, 70	<i>L’élève Foued Galbi a uriné dans la corbeille à papier au fond de la salle de classe alors que j’avais le dos tourné, une odeur infecte a envahi mon cours. Je ne tolérerai plus ce comportement animal.</i>	Taboo

Page	Original	Humor type
	<i>M. Costa, professeur de mathématiques</i>	
Guène, 80-81	Ou alors il vient te chercher en bas de chez toi dans sa Ford Focus gris métal, t'ouvre la portière, te demande si tu as passé une bonne journée, et te complimente sur ta tenue vestimentaire. Toi, tu te sens belle, tu le regardes amoureusement en te disant que tu es bien avec lui. Quand vous sortez de la caisse, il se remet les burnes en place et il rote. Toi tu trouves ça dégueulasse, mais tant pis, tu le kiffes. Ensuite, il utilise le verrouillage centralisé à distance, <i>tut-tut</i> , par-dessus son épaule. Tu trouves ça super-classe, il est glamour, ça te plaît, bref tu l'aimes. Il t'annonce qu'il t'emmène au resto – tiens, ça n'arrive pas souvent. Comme tu es une habituée des films à l'eau de rose du dimanche après-midi à la télévision, tu crois qu'il va te faire sa demande en mariage. Mais au milieu de ta salade minceur, il t'explique qu'il a rencontré quelqu'un d'autre, que c'est une nana géniale et qu'il s'en va avec elle à Grenoble. Il plie bagage la semaine prochaine donc tu serais sympa de lui rendre la perceuse qu'il t'a prêtée et tous ses disques de Barry White. Et en passant, on partage l'addition ?	Observational

The first excerpt demonstrates humor at the expense of a target. Johanna, who staffs the front desk at the temp agency where Ahlème is registering to find work, has exactly what Ahlème wants—a stable, permanent job that presumably affords her a certain amount of financial security. In this respect, Ahlème feels inferior to Johanna, so in order to feel better about herself she laughs at Johanna's shortcomings—her physical appearance, her ability (or lack thereof) to do her job, her sexuality, and her clothing. Ahlème uses the term “la demoiselle” to describe Johanna, which reinforces her and the audience's sense of superiority over her. In these two examples, the humor translates well because holding a steady job is something that both cultures value, and women in both cultures often define themselves by the way they look and dress, by their ability to do their job and their ability to attract men; often putting others down in order to feel better about themselves. Part of the humor depends on audience recognition of the cultural reference to Weight Watchers, which is not a problem in this case as the company was founded in the United States and is well-known to Americans.

The second excerpt is an instance of self-deprecating humor. The author is in a situation (applying for temporary work in an establishment frequented by “cassos”, or “welfare junkies”) where she feels that other people will look down on her and judge her. In an attempt to control when and how she is judged, she ticks off her shortcomings in a rapid-fire list, just as they appear on the questionnaire, then proclaims her life a failure before Johanna and the audience have the chance to do so. In this way, she invites the audience to laugh at her at the time of her choice and on her own terms, rather than letting them draw their own conclusions about her and laugh at her behind her back. Again, the humor works cross-culturally because American audiences also look at being married with children, having a driver’s license and a higher education, and holding citizenship as signs of success in life.

The third excerpt mentions a taboo subject. Ahlème’s little brother, Foued, performs a private bodily function in front of his teacher and classmates, angering the teacher. The outraged reaction from the teacher reinforces social norms while causing the reader to laugh due to its direct approach to describing the situation and its slightly formal register, both of which are unusual when dealing with taboo subjects in both the source and target cultures. The reader can laugh because the social norm has been reinforced—a clear line has been drawn and there is no uncomfortable moral grey area—but also because the teacher’s over-the-top reaction allows the reader to identify with Foued and the rest of his classmates.

The fourth excerpt is an instance of observational humor. The narrator describes an event that nearly everyone in France and the United States can relate to—a date that does not turn out as planned—and helps female readers identify with the situation by

turning them into the main character in the sketch through the use of “tu” and “toi” (“you”). The humor comes from the author’s choice of details to include; for example, the juxtaposition of the reader/character’s opinion of her boyfriend as “glamour” (“glamorous”) and the less sophisticated behavior of the boyfriend (touching his private parts and belching).

While similar cultural attitudes towards the categories and content of the humor in Guène’s novel allow the subject matter to be translated without needing to be adapted, there are still other aspects to take into account during the translation process—most notably, sentence structure and choice of vocabulary. Consider the following examples from two English-language novels directed at a young adult audience: *The Broke Diaries*, a story about an African-American senior in college earning barely enough money to scrape by, and *Does My Head Look Big In This?*, a story about a 16-year-old Australian-Palestinian girl deciding whether or not to wear hijab to school.

Page	Excerpt
Nissel, 62	Anyway, I’m supposed to be telling you about how I made this effin’ stupid cheesecake. Everything started off fine, especially since Carmen lent me her springform pan. (Yeah, like I’m going to buy a pan that limits itself to the preparation of one food! Frying pan: cool. Pot: cool. Springform pan: yeah, right.)
Nissel, 64	Okay. I have no more bowls. Point-blank. Next question: what do I have that looks like a bowl? What do I have that can hold liquid like a bowl does? Nothing. I even contemplate pouring it on a paper plate. Naw, I can’t do that. Ganache has won. I look down at the floor. No, I can’t do that. I <i>can’t</i> ... I have no choice. I empty my cat’s water bowl and clean it out. Awww! Stop your whining and cringing. Let’s be rational about this. Cats are clean. And the cat never actually touches the bowl. The <i>water</i> touches the bowl, the cat laps at the water. When you eat in a restaurant, how can you be sure the person who drank out of your cup last didn’t have a cold sore or anything? How do you know how well they clean their cups and bowls? I cleaned the bowl thoroughly, and in the process cleaned my conscience of all guilt.

Page	Excerpt
Abdel-Fattah, 2-3	At this stage you should probably also know that my name is Amal Mohamed Nasrullah Abdel-Hakim. You can thank my father, paternal grandfather, and paternal great-grandfather for that one. The teachers labelled me slow in preschool because I was the last child to learn how to spell her name.
Abdel-Fattah, 8	But why should I be scared? As I do my all-time best thinking through making lists, I think I should set this one out as follows: 1. The Religious/Scriptures/Sacred stuff: I believe in Allah/God's commandments contained in the Koran. God says men and women should act and dress modestly. The way I see it, I'd rather follow God's fashion dictates than some ugly solarium-tanned old fart in Milan who's getting by on a pretty self-serving theory of less is more when it comes to female dress.
Abdel-Fattah, 12	School from Year Seven to Year Ten was Hidayah – The Guidance – Islamic College. Where they indoctrinate students and teach them how to form Muslim ghettos, where they train with Al-Qaeda for school camp and sing national anthems from the Middle East. Not.
Abdel-Fattah, 51	“Maa! I'm not a kid! I've spent every last minute in these past four days thinking through every single potential obstacle. I've predicted all the smart-arse comments people can throw at me. Nappy-head, tea-towel head, camel jockey and all the rest. Yeah, I'm scared. OK, there, happy?

There are two main points to consider when examining the way the sentence structure affects audience response to humor: the length of the sentences and the use of punctuation, both of which affect the rhythm of delivery.

As is demonstrated in the examples above, longer pieces of humor in English often consist of a mix of long, medium and short sentences, with shorter sentences often being used to drive a point home. In the first excerpt, the narrator uses three medium-long sentences (12 to 17 words each) to give the reader situational information—she is making a cheesecake and does not own all the necessary baking utensils to do so. But she drives home her point about what does and does not constitute a worthy investment for a broke college student to make by using very short sentences (2 to 4 words each) whose rhythm is further broken up by colons: “Frying pan: cool. Pot: cool. Springform pan: yeah, right.” Similarly, in the fifth excerpt, the narrator launches into a 29-word sentence that describes the stereotypes that many people hold about Muslims with

dripping sarcasm before adding a sharp, one-word refutation of their point of view: “Not.”

Shorter sentences can also be interspersed with longer sentences in order to help keep the rhythm of the narrator’s humor moving at a quick pace or to provide a small break to give the reader an opportunity to laugh. In the second excerpt, the narrator presents her dilemma to the audience using three very short sentences and two medium sentences, before breaking to a one-word paragraph expressing the gravity of the problem she finds herself in: “Nothing.” Putting this sentence in a paragraph of its own creates a small break where the reader has time to laugh before the narrator begins to explore possible solutions to her problem.

In terms of punctuation, very few commas are used in these examples: only 18 over the course of 47 sentences containing 439 words. They serve four purposes: to separate list items, as in the third excerpt (“You can thank my father, paternal grandfather, and paternal great-grandfather for that one.”); to separate an interjection from the complete sentence following it, as in the sixth excerpt (“Yeah, I’m scared.”); to separate a subordinate clause from a complete sentence, as in the second excerpt (“When you eat in a restaurant, how can you be sure the person who drank out of your cup last didn’t have a cold sore or anything?”); and to separate two complete sentences with parallel structures, as in the second excerpt (“The *water* touches the bowl, the cat laps at the water.”) Unlike other forms of punctuation, such as semicolons, colons and em dashes, commas allow sentences to flow and do not generally serve to break up their rhythm into smaller chunks.

Choice of vocabulary also influences audience response to humor. Teenagers and young adults are at a developmental stage where they seek to take greater control of their lives and often seek to assert their independence from traditional authority figures. As a result, they often experiment with the use of profanity, language that imitates profanity or refers to taboos, and irreverent language describing figures that society respects or looks up to. No profanity is used in the examples above, but the first and sixth excerpts contain language that comes close to profanity (“effin” and “smart-arse”), while the fourth excerpt uses the irreverent and disrespectful phrase “old fart” to describe male fashion designers in Italy. Teenage language can vary greatly from region to region, though, and choosing words from a different region may leave the target reader feeling disconnected from, or confused by, the vocabulary used. Consider the use of “nappy-head” in the sixth excerpt as an insult towards a hijab-wearing Muslim girl. This is perfectly understandable to an Australian reader, as the word “nappy” refers to a diaper in British English, creating the image of a young woman with a cloth diaper pinned around her head. An American reader, however, might well be confused by this insult, as diapers are not usually called nappies in the United States and as “nappy-headed” is a rude expression in American English used to describe the hair of African-Americans.

As is demonstrated in the table below, the sentence structure in the humor from *Du rêve pour les oufs* is different from that in the preceding examples from parallel texts in English in two respects: sentence length and use of commas.

Page	Original	Translation
Chatelain, v-vi Guène, 11	Johanna, l’employée de bureau d’Interim Plus, a l’air d’avoir seize ans, elle a la voix qui tremble et articule douloureusement. Je saisis qu’elle me demande de remplir un questionnaire, elle me donne un stylo portant le logo	Johanna, the front desk girl at Interim Plus, looks about sixteen and mumbles in a painfully shaky voice. I catch that she’s asking me to fill out a questionnaire. She hands me a pen with their joint’s stupid logo on it and asks me

Page	Original	Translation
	ridicule de leur boîte et m'invite à la suivre. La demoiselle porte un jean ultra-moulax qui laisse apparaître tous les écarts de son régime Weight Watchers et lui donne des allures de femme adultère. (3 sentences, 4 commas)	to follow her. Mademoiselle is wearing super-tight skanky spandex jeans that advertise just how hard she fell off the Weight Watchers bandwagon. (4 sentences, 2 commas)
Chatelain, vi Guène, 12	Johanna, le jean serré jusqu'à la déchirure de l'utérus, me propose d'un ton compatissant une première mission intérim. C'est marrant d'ailleurs qu'ils appellent ça des missions. Ça donne aux sales boulots des aspects d'aventures. (3 sentences, 2 commas)	Johanna, her jeans so tight they give her the worst case of camel toe I've ever seen, offers me my first temp mission in a compassionate voice. It cracks me up that they call them missions. Like an adventure. Yeah, right. (4 sentences, 3 commas)
Chatelain, xviii-xix Guène, 74	Je capitule et tends au contrôleur mon magnifique passeport vert justifiant de mon existence. Ses yeux d'oiseau malade se posent sur les inscriptions exotiques « République démocratique et populaire algérienne ». Je le vois qui s'angoisse, la tête lui tourne, il est perturbé, il lui faut ses gouttes immédiatement. « Vous n'avez pas un document écrit en français ? » « Commencez par l'ouvrir, vous verrez qu'il est bilingue, y a votre langue à l'intérieur. » (5 sentences, 5 commas)	I give in and hand the ticket-taker my glorious green passport that justifies my existence. He stares blankly at the exotic lettering that says "People's Democratic Republic of Algeria." I can see him getting worried. His head's spinning, he's anxious, he needs a Xanax now. "You don't have any papers in French?" "Why don't you start off by opening it? You'll see it's bilingual, your language's on the inside." (7 sentences, 3 commas)

In the English parallel text excerpts, sentence length varied from one to 37 words, with shorter sentences often interspersed with longer sentences to break up the rhythm of the humorous incident being recounted. The sentence length in these French excerpts from *Du rêve pour les oufs* varies considerably less, however, the shortest sentence being 8 words and the longest being 26 words. Furthermore, comma splices are used to separate two complete sentences from one another, which is not correct usage in English, and commas are used more frequently in French than in English (an average of one per sentence in the excerpts from *Du rêve pour les oufs*, as opposed to an average of only 0.38 per sentence in the excerpts from the English-language parallel texts). If the

translation into English preserved the source text's structure, both of these factors would slow down the rhythm of the humor and the reader might well be bored or frustrated by the dragging pace. Removing the commas and replacing them by periods creates a rhythm more akin to the one present in the examples taken from the English-language parallel texts; thereby preserving the function-in-culture of the source text in the target text. In the third excerpt, a ticket-taker has caught the narrator in the Metro without a valid ticket. Two sentences can be broken up by replacing the comma splice with a period. "Je le vois qui s'angoisse, la tête lui tourne, il est perturbé, il lui faut ses gouttes immédiatement." becomes "I can see him getting worried. His head's spinning, he's anxious, he needs a Xanax now." This creates a much more snappy rhythm, as "I can see him getting worried" is separated from the narrator's three rapid-fire observations, "His head's spinning, he's anxious, he needs a Xanax now," which are able to stand alone as a separate sentence. Similarly, "Commencez par l'ouvrir, vous verrez qu'il est bilingue, y a votre langue à l'intérieur." becomes "Why don't you start off by opening it? You'll see it's bilingual, your language's on the inside." This keeps the narrator's sass towards the ticket-taker from getting lost in what would be a clumsy comma-splice sentence structure in English.

In the second excerpt, a more aggressive translation strategy is used to deliver a punch at the end of the paragraph and convey the narrator's opinion about calling the second-rate temp jobs offered at the temp agency "missions". "C'est marrant d'ailleurs qu'ils appellent ça des missions. Ça donne aux sales boulots des aspects d'aventures," she says, which I have rendered as, "It cracks me up that they call them missions. Like an adventure. Yeah, right." The concept of "sales boulots", or "crappy jobs", is no

longer explicit in the translation, but rather made implicit in the narrator's commentary: "Yeah, right." The two back-to-back short sentences drive home the narrator's point in a way that readers expect, unlike a translation along the lines of "That gives crappy jobs an aura of adventure," which fails to convey the narrator's disdain. This echoes the refutation "Not." issued by the narrator from *Does My Head Look Big In This?*, which is typical in English-language prose addressed at a young adult audience.

The vocabulary used in *Du rêve pour les oufs* is similar to the vocabulary used in the excerpts from the English parallel texts. In the first excerpt, Ahlème uses the term "la demoiselle" to refer to Johanna, a mocking reference tinged with classism. I have translated this as "Mademoiselle", which also has a mocking, classist tone in English. In the first and second excerpts, Ahlème also uses very blunt and vivid imagery to describe the fit of Johanna's jeans. "La demoiselle porte un jean ultra-moulax qui [...] lui donne des allures de femme adultère," she says, noting that the jeans are "serré jusqu'à la déchirure de l'utérus". Mentioning adultery and the uterus in a description of how clothes fit gives the description shock value that resonates well with teens who are not accustomed to having adults give them such liberty with their language use in everyday life. I have translated these highly original descriptions with more set phrases commonly used by American teens, turning "qui [...] lui donne des allures de femme adultère" into the adjective "skanky", an offensive word used to indicate that the jeans make the wearer look promiscuous, and exchanging the image of the uterus squeezed to the point of rupture for the image of "camel toe", a rude expression used to describe the clear outline of a woman's genitalia that is caused by wearing too-tight pants. The use of such vocabulary gives the young adult reader an extra thrill and an extra incentive to laugh,

since it falls outside the scope of standard language use as promoted by the authority figures against which they tend to rebel.

As humor is the main tool Faïza Guène uses to elicit the desired reader response towards the subject matter of her book, a functionally adequate translation must preserve the humor in the target text, ensuring that the content is culturally appropriate and that the sentence structure and vocabulary used are conducive to keeping the target audience's attention and making them laugh. This may, at times, require the use of aggressive translation strategies, such as altering sentence structure or creating alternative imagery in the target text. These changes may keep the target text from being functionally equivalent to the source text, but the translation is adequate in that it elicits a comparable response in the source text and target text readers.

Conclusion

Translating a young adult novel such as *Du rêve pour les oufs* requires using a fairly innovative translation strategy in order to meet the needs of the target audience while preserving the intent of the author and the overall effect of the source text. While young adult readers do not have as broad a reference network as adult readers and must therefore have more cultural references explained to them, care must be taken not to overexplicitate or underestimate their intelligence and their ability to glean meaning from context. A customized translation strategy for dialogue that mixed elements of domestication and foreignization proved necessary in order to preserve the author's method of demonstrating each character's level of integration in society, one of the major themes of the work. Finally, it was necessary to make aggressive translation choices in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure to maintain the humor of the text, which was the central vehicle used to convey the author's message.

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