Translating the Québécois Sociolect for Cinema
The Creation of a Supertext in *Bon Cop Bad Cop*

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Abstract

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This thesis addresses the subtitling of the Québécois sociolect into English. In the bilingual comedy film *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* although the meaning of the Québécois dialogue is rendered, the flavour of the original sociolect is lost. This thesis posits that the failure to render the Québécois sociolect in the English subtitles of *Bon Cop Bad Cop* gives rise to understatement, thereby creating a "supertext" for bilingual movie-goers who read the subtitles that actually enhances the humour of this comedy. Examples of the supertext will be drawn from *Bon Cop Bad Cop* to illustrate this hypothesis. Dialogue and subtitles from *Bon Cop Bad Cop* will be compared and contrasted with those from *De père en flic/Father and Guns*, a film whose subtitles successfully render the Québécois sociolect and thus do not create a supertext. This analysis will serve to determine the types of adaptation and compensation that were used in *Father and Guns* to render the sociolect. The findings from this project will be of interest not only to subtitlers but all translators of the Québécois sociolect.

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Dedication

For Julie and Alex

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FOREWORD

I am an English Quebecer who learned standard, international French (if there is such a thing) in elementary school, in Canada's first French-immersion programme. The teachers were primarily European: French, Belgian and Swiss. It was not until high school, when I spent one year in a *polyvalente,* that I was exposed to the richness and earthiness of Québécois. *Tu peux-tu?, bolé, câline de bin* and *kétaine* were just some of the turns of phrase that were new to me. I was fascinated. I think it was at that time that my love affair with dialect, colloquialisms and turns of phrase, in both French and English, began.

It was during my undergraduate degree in translation that I was first exposed to Michel Tremblay, in courses on Quebec civilization and translation. I was immediately smitten with Tremblay's rendering of joual. In our advanced literary translation class, we had to render a short passage from *Les Belles-soeurs* and then read it out to the class. It was a monologue by Marie-Ange Brouillette that begins: "C'est pas moé qui aurais eu c'te chance-là! Pas de danger! Moé, j'mange de la marde, pis j'vas en manger toute ma vie!" (Tremblay, 1972, 14). I remember my translation was rife with profanity, and "shit" and "fuck" in particular. I suspect my professor thought I had overdone it just a bit. But I could feel that this text was calling out for some sort of reaction to its rich colloquial expressions, vocabulary and syntax particular to Québécois.

And so it should come as no surprise that I was drawn to see the bilingual movie *Bon Cop Bad Cop* when it was released in the summer of 2006.

INTRODUCTION

Bon Cop Bad Cop is the first bilingual feature-length fiction film in Canadian history. When it was released in the theatres, it was available in a French version that provided subtitles of the English dialogue and an English version in which the French dialogue was subtitled. I saw the English version, and although I didn't need to read the subtitles and would have enjoyed being able to see the movie without any subtitles (an option that was not available in theatres but is with the DVD), trying not to read the subtitles for this bilingual movie-goer (and translator!) proved virtually impossible. At first, I was struck by the quality of the subtitling. But later, when I was able to examine the script and subtitles at a more leisurely pace, I discovered that the English subtitles, which were rendered in such correct, Standard English, in comparison to the colourful dialogue of the French actors, actually made the movie funnier. One aspect the English subtitles failed to capture was David Bouchard's profanity-laced Québécois. When David says, in reference to his Toronto counterpart, "C'est pour ça qu'y est chiant de même," and it is rendered in the English subtitles by "That's why you're such a snobby pain in the ass," Bouchard's sociolect (the dialect used by a specific social group) and thus part of his character – his rebelliousness, his social class and total lack of respect for authority – have been lost. One can imagine Bouchard calling Ward "a pain in the ass," but snobby? Hardly. Perhaps "a goddamn pain in the ass" would be more his style.

For those viewers who do not understand French, or Québécois for that matter, and who are counting on the subtitles alone to tell them not only what the character is saying but *how* he is saying it, the subtitles fall short. On the other hand,

the rendering of Detective Dave Bouchard's Québécois into Standard English adds to the humour of this comedy for those viewers who understand the French dialogue and read the English subtitles, for the use of understatement is a classic form of humour in the English-speaking world. In the English version of *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, the subtitling of the Québécois sociolect into Standard English has created a "supertext" for bilingual audiences and added a degree of sophistication to the film. This specific audience was invited to enjoy the disparity between the grittiness of the Québécois and the "plain Jane" drawing-room English offered up as a translation in the subtitles. So although there may have been a loss in the rendering of the sociolect for the non-French-speaking audience, those viewers who not only understood the Québécois but also read the English subtitles were treated to yet another take on the cultural stereotypes of the English and French in Canada.

This research project examines a perennial question in the field of Canadian translation studies – the translation of the Québécois sociolect into English – from a fresh perspective, that of subtitling. I will argue that the English version of the film *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* with English subtitles, is a film that demonstrates the existence of a "supertext" that enriches the humour in a comedy film for a bilingual audience that reads the subtitles. This "supertext," or "added-value," is created by the great disparity that exists between the very colourful spoken Québécois and the "drawing-room English" in the subtitles. The supertext created by the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* actually enhances this film for a bilingual audience, as it serves to reinforce the cultural stereotypes of Canada's two solitudes – the English and the French – which are very much at the heart of the film. It is as if the English subtitles were created by

an uptight, turtleneck-wearing anglo just like Colm Feore's character, who is unable to render the Québécois sociolect and who simply throws in the towel when it comes to rendering some of the more colourful profanity.

"Supertext" is the term I use to identify the "added value" created by the English subtitles, which do translate the meaning of the film's dialogue but fail to render the sociolect, for a bilingual audience conversant in English and Québécois who reads the subtitles. I could have used the prefix "epi" (above or in addition to), as in "epitext," but it was "supertext" (with the prefix "super," i.e., over, above, in addition to) that first came to mind. Texts have subtext, films have subtitles, and operas have surtitles, so what could I call subtitles that did more than simply translate the film's dialogue, that actually enriched the viewing experience by adding another layer of meaning to the film? "Supertext" seemed appropriate.

Another Quebec buddy-cop movie, *De père en flic/Father and Guns,* a drama/comedy with a similar sociolect to *Bon Cop Bad Cop* and subtitled in English, was released in 2009. When I watched *Father and Guns*, I was struck by the quality of the subtitles and how much a part of the movie they were. For me, there was no disconnect between the actors' dialogue and the English rendering at the bottom of the screen – hence, no supertext. This movie provided the perfect counterpoint against which the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* could be compared.

The English subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* were created by the film's producer, Kevin Tierney. The subtitles in *Father and Guns* were done by Danielle Gauthier for the Centre national de sous-titrage (CNST). Gauthier, a seasoned translator with fifteen years' experience, has a vast array of film and TV subtitles to

her credit, including *Filière 13; Une vie qui commence; André Mathieu, L'enfant prodige; C.R.A.Z.Y.; Magique!; Le grand départ, Babine; Ma fille, mon ange; Minuit le soir; Les appendices; Virginie; Étoiles Filantes; Un Gars une fille...*

The failure to render the Québécois sociolect in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* gives rise to understated subtitles, which creates a supertext for bilingual movie-goers who read the subtitles. I will demonstrate my hypothesis by providing examples of supertext with dialogue and subtitle samples from *Bon Cop Bad Cop.* To demonstrate the disparity between the French dialogue and the English subtitles, I will provide some back translations of the English subtitles and offer some suggestions as to how the Québécois sociolect could have been more successfully rendered in the subtitles. I will also compare the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, which have not succeeded in rendering the Québécois sociolect, with those in *Father and Guns*, which have. A sampling of examples of the successful rendering of the Québécois sociolect from *Father and Guns* will allow me to identify strategies used by the subtitler to render the sociolect and propose versions of the subtitles that use these strategies. I will examine the use of contractions, slang, colloquial expressions and profanity in both films. As my thesis puts forward the hypothesis that the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* actually make the film funnier, I will also look at understatement and irony and see how these can be applied to the subtitles in this film.

In this analysis of the subtitles in the two films, *Bon Cop Bad Cop* (in which the failure to render the sociolect resulted in understated subtitles that created a supertext) and *Father and Guns* (in which the successful rendering of the sociolect did not create a supertext), I will attempt to demonstrate that the subtitler of *Father*

and Guns exercised a greater creative licence than the subtitler of *Bon Cop Bad Cop* to meet the challenge of rendering the sociolect. To compare and contrast the subtitles in both films, I have selected three aspects of the dialogue and subtitles to serve as data for my analysis: the translation of Québécois vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions; the translation of anglicisms; and the translation of profanity. These three categories were chosen because they represent aspects of the Québécois sociolect that traditionally pose problems for translation into English. This analysis will provide a basis for an examination of the different approaches taken in the English subtitling of the two films.

In Chapter 1, I will introduce "that most persistent and intriguing problem of translation" (Simon, 1995, 10) – the translation of sociolects. This will include defining sociolects – and Québécois in particular – and examining whether the authors of texts that use sociolects use authentic sociolects. Some of the challenges posed by translating sociolects will be examined. This section will review the literature for translators' reflections on this subject and look at the different strategies they have employed to meet the challenge of rendering sociolects in translation. This chapter will conclude with a look at what can happen when the sociolect is not rendered: the creation of understatement, which gives rise to a supertext that enhances the humour in a comedy film. I will also examine dramatic irony and see how it can be applied to the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop.*

In Chapter 2, I will examine the specificities of subtitling. This section will provide an overview of the process by examining the literature for industry standards. It will also examine the challenges inherent in subtitling, such as translating

sociolects and profanity, and some of the strategies used to deal with these challenges. This overview of subtitling will conclude with a look at the use of subtitles as a source of humour.

Chapter 3 will focus on the analysis of the subtitling in the films. I will begin by providing an overview of *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, including details about its commercial success and an overview of one of the film's main themes, the play on the French and English stereotypes in Canada. The critical and popular reception of *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* Canada's first bilingual feature-length film, will also be examined. I will then introduce *Father and Guns* by looking at the film's storyline, theme and central characters to establish parallels between the films that justify the choice of *Father and Guns* as a suitable film to be compared to *Bon Cop Bad Cop.* The analysis portion will begin with a presentation of examples of supertext from *Bon Cop Bad Cop.* I will then compare and contrast the subtitles in the two films by examining how the subtitlers dealt with the following aspects of the Québécois sociolect: Québécois vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions; lexical anglicisms in the Québécois dialogue; and profanity. This analysis will reveal strategies used by the subtitler of *Father and Guns* to render the sociolect and propose ways in which these strategies could be applied to the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop*.

I will then draw conclusions from this contrastive analysis of the subtitling of *Bon Cop, Bad Cop* and *Father and Guns* that can be applied to the English subtitling of the Québécois sociolect in films in order to avoid creating a supertext. Of course, the findings will also be relevant to translating Québécois into English in other mediums.

Before we proceed any further, I would like to acknowledge that translation criticism is by its very nature subjective. The fact that I am analyzing and commenting on subtitles in regard to the success or failure of rendering the Québécois sociolect and then examining the juxtaposition of dialogue and subtitles for supertext makes this exercise even more subjective and open to criticism. Whether or not I am able to make a convincing case for the hypothesis that the failure to render the Québécois sociolect in the English version of the film *Bon Cop Bad Cop* creates a supertext for bilingual movie-goers who read the subtitles that actually enhances the humour in the movie for this audience, I believe this study will benefit the field of translation studies in regard to the translation of the Québécois sociolect, for the contrastive analysis carried out on the subtitles of these two films has revealed several points of interest. By comparing the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* with those in *Father and Guns*, I have discovered certain strategies used in the subtitling of *Father and Guns* to successfully render the Québécois sociolect and therefore avoid creating a supertext. It is my hope that this reflection will shed some light on the translation of Québécois into English that will prove helpful to both translators and researchers in the field of translation studies.

Of course, it must also be said that subtitles are meant to be read once, on the screen, as the film is being shown. Subtitles are by their very nature different from literary works where readers can go back and re-read passages as often as they like. And so, it is somewhat unfair to disrupt the flow of the film and dissect each subtitle in reference to the dialogue uttered in the film.

CHAPTER 1: The Translation of Sociolects

1.1 Defining Sociolect

The Oxford Companion to the English Language defines sociolect as "a social dialect or variety of speech used by a particular group, such as working-class or upper-class speech in the UK" (McArthur, 1992, s.v. sociolect) and refers the reader to dialect, a term that is perhaps more familiar to many of us. Annick Chapdelaine and Gillian Lane-Mercier (1994) introduce sociolect as a relatively recent term to designate the language spoken by a specific social group or sub-group. They explain that sociolects are "définissables à partir de critères proprement sociaux, culturels, économiques et institutionnels" (1994, 7). They consist of both form – pronunciations, syntax, lexemes and expressions that differentiate them from the linguistic norms in a given society – and content, which reflects values, beliefs, "des constructions identitaires, des compétences et des pratiques, qui, connotés par l'emploi de telle unité linguistique non standard, signalent l'appartenance à un (sous-) groupe précis. Se dessine de la sorte un dichotomie entre la langue officielle, correcte, non marquée et des langages « illégitimes », incorrects, marqués – dichotomie à la base de la mise en place et du maintien de hiérarchies et de divisions langagières socialement pertinentes" (1994, 7-8).

> On peut dès lors considérer le terme de sociolecte comme un terme générique qui recouvre ceux, plus spécifiques car fondés sur un ensemble plus restreint de paramètres, de *vernaculaire,* qui désigne le parler d'un groupe ethnique en marge de la langue officielle comme des instances de pouvoir, de *patois,* qui renvoie au seul parler paysan, de *pidgin* et de *créole*, basés surtout sur des critères de formation linguistique et d'appartenance ethno-géographique, de *dialecte,* enfin, où les déterminations géographiques impliquent en règle

> générale des déterminations socio-culturelles (Chapdelaine and Lane-Mercier, 1994, 8).

1.2 Translating Sociolects

The translation of sociolects is a perennial problem for translators. According to literary translator Clifford E. Landers, "Dialect is always tied, geographically and culturally, to a milieu that does not exist in the target-language setting. Substitution of an 'equivalent' dialect is foredoomed to failure" (2001, 117).

Eugene Nida explains that it is a common error for writers and translators to home in one only one aspect of language when searching for an appropriate sociolect:

> More frequently the dialect forms used by writers are either horizontal (geographical) or vertical (socioeconomic) dialects, and rarely do authors or translators consistently represent all the details of such dialects, but at least certain easily recognized features are selected that serve to signal the type of dialect being used… The problem for the translator is to find in a foreign language a dialect with approximately the same status and connotations. Rarely is the dialect match fully successful, for the values associated with a particular dialect are often highly specific" (Bandia, 1994, 102-103 quoting Nida, 1976, 55).

The literature dealing with the translation of sociolects and the insight provided by translators and translation scholars, including Annie Brisset, Ray Ellenwood, William Findlay, Sheila Fischman, Linda Gaboriau, Judith Lavoie, Sherry Simon, Philip Stratford and Agnes Whitfield, will be examined.

How can a sociolect be rendered in translation? Do you translate bits and pieces into an equivalent sociolect in the hope that the reader will get the message and then carry on in the standard target language (TL)? Judith Lavoie revealed that this was the approach used by some translators of Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1994, 124). Or do you substitute another dialect to reflect the sociolect in the

source language (SL)? (This is referred to as lateral translation.) And if so, which dialect would you choose?

The prime example for substituting one sociolect for another in the canon of Québécois theatre is Martin Bowman and Bill Findlay's rendering of Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs* in Scots. Bowman explains that there are many parallels that can be drawn between Québécois and Scots:

> Scots is not a debased form of English, but occupies its place in the Scots psyche as a language in its own right. If the urban Scots dialects are atrophied, as some claim, they are degraded forms of Scots (with English intrusion) in the same way as the so-called *joual* might be seen as an impoverished demotic of French (with English intrusion).
>
> When Bill Findlay and I decided to translate Tremblay, we chose *Les Belles-Soeurs* because it was a manifesto declaring the legitimacy of vernacular language in theatre… Of course, Tremblay comes across in Scots for cultural as well as linguistic reasons. A political agenda, however, is a luxury that theatre only affords when the play lives in its language. A translated play must have a living voice (Bowman, 1994, 25).

Findlay and Bowman's translation of Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs* into Scots is a perfect fit in so many ways. But what would be an equivalent North American English dialect for Québécois?

In the case of *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* it is completely out of the question to translate the Québécois into a Newfie sociolect or African-American Vernacular English (AAVE, or Black English),[1] as the setting is obviously Central Canada – Montreal and Toronto to be exact – and the protagonists are an English Canadian and a francophone Quebecer. Is there a North American slang as rich and colourful as

[1] "Black English Vernacular, also African-American English,… Black English. Terms in sociolinguistics for English as used by a majority of US citizens of Black African background, consisting of a range of socially stratified urban and rural dialects. The most non-standard varieties are used by poor blacks with limited education, who have restricted social contact beyond their native communities. Standard varieties are influenced by regional norms: black standard English in the South

Québécois? Linda Gaboriau, who has translated some forty Quebec plays from French to English, thinks not:

> If you were to read the originals of plays by Michel-Marc Bouchard and by René-Daniel Dubois and then read my translations, I'm quite sure you'd see more variety in colour and level of language than I was able to capture in so-called Standard North American English. There is a range of differences available within English, but it is difficult to capture the striking variety of hues of the original (Gaboriau, 1995, 87).

And then of course we have to keep in mind that subtitling a film is not the same as translating a play. When a play is translated, it can be adapted to a new setting, as is the case in the adaptation of Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs* into Scots, *The Guid Sisters*, by Bowman and Findlay. Subtitlers are not granted as much artistic licence, as the visuals and dialogue remain the same, and the subtitles are superimposed on the existing film.

As Brisset explains, translation is always struggling with the fact that two different codes are involved in the operation and that the target language does not always have an equivalent of the source language:

> Such deficiencies can be clearly identified as, for example, lexical or morpho-syntactic deficiencies or as problems of polysemy. More often, however, the deficiency in the receiving code has to do with the relation between signs and their users, a relation that reflects such things as individuality, social position, and geographical origin of the speakers: "Thus the relatively simple question arises, should one translate or not translate argot, a patois by a patois, etc…" (Brisset, 1996, 162-163).

In *Culture in Transit,* Simon states that translators must have cultural knowledge of both the source and target cultures to render a translation:

> The solutions to many of the translator's dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to *local* realities, to literary forms, and to changing identities. Translators must

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is different from the African-American standard in the North, and each in turn reflects colloquial usage among educated whites in the same areas" (McArthur, 1992, s.v. Black English Vernacular).

> constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhabit are "the same." These are not technical difficulties; they are not the domain of specialists in obscure or quaint vocabularies. They demand the exercise of a wide range of intelligences (Simon, 1995, 10-11).

In "Aspects culturels de la traduction : quelques notions clés," Jean-Louis Cordonnier (2002) explains that translation is not merely an interlingual operation, but one that involves social and cultural interrelations, in both the translator's culture and the foreign culture. Cordonnier explains that this is not a new concept: it was alluded to by Mounin in *Problèmes théoriques de la traduction* in 1963, and Henri Meschonnic put forward the concept of "language-culture" in the 1970s, in which he proposed seeing translation in a wide cultural framework that includes history, literature, language and politics.

Cordonnier believes that the degree of translatability of a text is directly proportional to the degree of intermingling of the cultures: "Le degré de traduisibilité est directement proportionnel au degré de fréquentation des cultures. Plus la fréquentation est faible plus le degré d'intraduisibilité paraîtra grand" (Cordonnier, 2002, 46). Cordonnier's thoughts about the translatability of a text are of great interest in the case of *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* which involves Canada's two official languages, which are constantly in contact. According to this hypothesis, because of the high degree of interaction, or dare I say *frottement,* between French and English in Canada and in Quebec in particular, the Québécois in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* is very translatable into English.

1.3 Examining the Authenticity of the Sociolect

A question that comes up in the translation of sociolects is whether or not the original work is an authentic sociolect. This was the case in the translation of the work of American author Mark Twain, which has proven very challenging to translate into French. There has been some concern by translators and literary scholars as to whether or not the sociolects Mark Twain used in the dialogue in the novel *Huckleberry Finn* are authentic. According to Gillian Lane-Mercier in *La Parole romanesque,* the study of dialogue in novels can reveal two tendencies ("tendances esthético-cognitives divergentes"), that of trying to render "le réel discursif, au moyen d'effets de mimésis soigneusement aménagés, de métadiscours visant l'exhaustivité" and a more artistic approach that forges "des mondes verbaux possibles, des discours-limites, qui font néanmoins connaître, en creux, les ouvertures paradigmatiques, l'aspect mouvant, créateur de la parole réelle" (Lavoie, 1994, 117 quoting Lane-Mercier, 1989, 21).

Hans Bungert also noted that Twain used the part for the whole, even though he said in his preface that he painstakingly noted all the nuances of the dialect (Lavoie, 1994, 118). Above all, Twain gave a general idea of the African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), for his depiction of this sociolect is partial, approximate and arbitrary. According to Twain specialist David R. Sewell, Twain "created a literary simulacrum of linguistic diversity that exaggerates and stylizes the heteroglossic interweaving of speech types in real societies" (Lavoie, 1994, 119 quoting Sewell, 1987, 109).

Lavoie believes that Twain was limited in his rendering of Black English by readability. This is in keeping with Agnes Whitfield and Gregory Lessard's study of the Québécois used in novels: "Ils… 'n'utilisent en fait qu'une sous-classe des caractéristiques linguistiques du parler populaire québécois, qu'il s'agisse de phénomènes phonétiques, lexicaux, syntaxiques ou sémantiques'" (Lavoie, 1994, 122 quoting Whitfield and Lessard, 1991, 145). Lane-Mercier's research also bears out this same theory. She explains: "Tout dialogue romanesque ne contient qu'un nombre plus ou moins limité de particularités pragmatico-linguistiques caractéristiques du parler réel représenté, et ce en raison d'un tri tout à fait conscient effectué par l'auteur parmi ces dernières" (Lavoie, 1994, 122 quoting Lane-Mercier, 1989, 61, n. 10).

Similar revelations were made by Philip Stratford, who discussed the challenges of rendering Antonine Maillet's Acadien in *Pélagie*:

> Antonine Maillet doesn't write pure *acadien* at all. *Acadien* is just her base. To this she adds, instinctively, her own accent, images, rhythms, expressions. The product is an imaginative equivalent of *acadien*, heavily laced with Rabelais, Perrault, Molière, folk tales, the Catholic missal, Jean Giono and other sources that have influenced her. What she writes is an amalgam of all these parts, not academic *acadien*, but a new language. To give it its true name one should call it Antoninais or Mailletois, which gives credit to the most important ingredient, her own originality. That new language was what I would have to translate (Stratford, 1995, 95).

Knowing that the author took artistic licence with the sociolect freed up the translator in his rendering of the text. "After much reflection, trial and error, the primary decision that any translator of Antonine Maillet must reach is what English idiom to imitate or invent to try to capture that droll, earthy, salty, poetic, archaic, innovative language that is the essence of her work" (Stratford, 1995, 94). Once Stratford realized that Maillet's *Acadien* wasn't "pure," he felt justified in translating

her “Mailletois” into “Stratfordese,” with a base of what linguists refer to as “Low Standard North American English”:

> If Antonine Maillet had created a language of her own, I was not only entitled but bound to create my own language as well. If she had marvellous linguistic resources in her oral *acadien* tradition, so did I with my own Anglo-Irish-Scots-American-South-Western-Ontario heritage. As far as literary background was concerned, for her Rabelais, I had Chaucer; for her Molière, Shakespeare; my Bible for her missal, nursery rhymes and Lewis Carroll for her Perrault and folk tales, and Hardy and Twain for her Giono. My task was not to be translation in the vulgar sense but the invention of a language of my own appropriate to the book. I was to translate her Mailletois into Stratfordese (Stratford, 1995, 95-96).

“An inevitable ambivalence is involved: on the one hand, one must absolutely respect the integrity of the author’s text; on the other, one must be perfectly true to one’s own idiom” (Stratford, 1995, 99).

1.4 The Québécois Sociolect

Québécois is a sociolect. It can be defined broadly as the French spoken in Quebec and exists along a vast continuum. For our purposes, we will define Québécois as Québécois populaire, the distinctive non-standard sociolect spoken by *le peuple*, replete with its own vocabulary, syntax, colourful profanity and anglicisms. In an email entitled “Le langage coloré du Québécois!” that made the rounds in recent years, the following examples were given:

> Le Québécois n’a pas d’ennui : Yé dans marde.
> Le Québécois n’est pas un menteur : C’T’un esti d’crosseur.
> Le québécois ne s’en fout pas : Y s’en colisse.
> Le Québécois ne te dit pas non : Y t’envoye chier.
> Le Québécois ne descend pas de l’auto : Y débarque du char (anon.).

Léandre Bergeron, the author of the *Dictionnaire de la langue québécoise,* describes Québécois thus:

> La langue québécoise est si riche qu'elle comprend tout le français moderne *et* des milliers de mots, d'expressions, de tournures syntaxiques qui lui sont propres, sans parler, il va de soi, de toute la créativité quotidienne dont font montre les Québécois pas trop influencés par le conformisme stérilisant qui paralyse la plupart des sociétés occidentales trop bien *éduquées*" (Bergeron, 1980, 7).

Lorenzo Proteau, who compiled the dictionary *La parlure québécoise*, explains: "Avec ses milliers d'expressions savoureuses, qui n'ont de modèle nulle part ailleurs, le *québécois* est une langue particulière, un peu comme l'américain n'est pas l'anglais que l'on parle à Oxford" (Proteau, 1982, 7).

In *A Sociocritique of Translation*, Brisset explains that Québécois is the language of an oppressed group: "The demand for territorial and political autonomy was logically extended to a demand for a distinct native language" (Brisset, 1996, 168). From 1968 to 1988, the translation of plays in Quebec into Québécois reflected a desire to hide the foreignness and invent a "Québécois self" and "native language." In this strategy of naturalizing foreign plays, the translator used the play to depict the Québécois identity and make it a vehicle of national liberation. She explains that language is a question of identity for the Québécois: "Language 'distinguishes' the Québécois from the English and from the French" (Brisset, 1996, 196-197).

Québécois really came into its own in the 1960s, when plays and novels using this sociolect were published and produced. Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs* (1968) was the first play to use joual exclusively. (I use the terms Québécois and *joual* here. Québécois is the French spoken in Quebec. There is a vast spectrum of registers. *Joual* is a more specific term that refers to the sociolect spoken by Montreal's working class. Rather than being perceived as a sub-standard language, it was reclaimed and celebrated in the 1960s by Quebec novelists, poets, playwrights,

scriptwriters and lyricists, many of whom were associated with the literary and political journal *Parti pris*.) Also in 1968, Éloi de Grandmont translated Shaw's *Pygmalion* into Québécois, with the vernacular used for the Cockney. Brisset gives these events as the birth of Québécois theatre (Brisset, 1996, 59).

1.4.1 Profanity

An important aspect of this brand of Québécois is profanity, or *sacres*. Diane Vincent, a professor at Laval University, explains that the use of religious vocabulary appeared in Quebec in the mid-nineteenth century, when the clergy took control of local institutions (n.d., 2). Jean-François Vallée explains that Québécois profanity focusses on the Eucharist, thereby including not only Christ but the host (*hostie)* and the receptacle for the wine *(calice)*, which symbolize his body and blood. As the items named become more peripheral to the Eucharist, such as tabernacle *(tabernak)* and ciborium *(ciboire),* the seriousness of the *sacre* is reduced (2007, 1). Similarly, minced oaths, or more euphemistic versions, are not considered as rude, for example "câline" for "câlice" or even "câline de bine"; "mautadine" for "maudit"; or "esti" for "hostie" ("Quebec French profanity," 2). As Josh Freed explains, "The more religious terms you string together, the worse the curse. So '*saint ciboire de saint sacrament'* is somehow a terrible expletive when it really sounds like a blessing" (2006, A-2). It is interesting to note that "fuck" and "fucké" have been adopted as part of the vocabulary of Québécois profanity. However, "the word *fucké* (with meanings varying from 'crazy, disturbed' to 'broken down'; cf. English *screwed up)* is much

milder than 'fuck' is in English, and is routinely used in, for instance, TV sitcom dialogue" ("Quebec French profanity," 3).

1.4.2 Anglicisms

Anglicisms are an important aspect of Québécois. "Un anglicisme est un mot, une expression ou une acception que l'on emprunte, légitimement ou non, à la langue anglaise" (Forest and Boudreau, 1998, ix). Forest and Boudreau explain there are six types of anglicisms: semantic, lexical, syntactic, morphological, phonetic and orthographic. They explain that the lexical anglicism includes a "mot ou expression anglaise empruntés tels quels (*kick, flowchart)* ou auxquels on donne une terminaison française (*checker, timer*)" (xi). Anglicisms are generally frowned upon if a word in French with the same meaning exists: "D'un point de vue normatif, les anglicismes qui font double emploi avec un mot de la langue d'arrivée sont jugés inutiles et généralement critiqués" (Delisle, 2003, 27).

1.5 Translating the Québécois Sociolect

> My main concern here will be with the theoretical problem of confronting a text so regionally and linguistically centred as this one [Jacques Ferron's *Le Ciel de Québec*], and making it readable in another language, by another culture, without betraying it (Ellenwood, 1995, 101).

Successfully translating Québécois, or any other sociolect, involves rendering not only what the characters are saying, but *how* they are saying it. Seasoned translator Gaboriau believes that language remains the main character of many Quebec plays: "Of course, I have to relay the content accurately, but that's easier. It's the how, not the what, that gets tricky" (1995, 83).

> No author has come to represent the *joual* era more forcefully than Michel Tremblay. His play *Les Belles-soeurs* launched the linguistico-ideological battle of *joual* on the stages of Quebec in the late 1960s. That the echoes of this debate have far outlived their ideological usefulness is now a truism. On the other hand, the communal, inward-turned language of Quebec theatre remains a challenge to translators who wish to transport this work, and its sometimes contradictory messages, to foreign stages (Simon, 1995, 12).

In spite of the success of Tremblay's plays in English in North America, there is a general consensus that English audiences were seeing a "poorer" version of the original. In reference to the wildly successful English production of *Hosanna* in Toronto in 1974, "Tremblay himself claimed that 'the folkloric aspect of the language was missing' and that his plays will 'never be as good in English as in French'" (Koustas, 1992, 8, quoting Usmiani, 1979, 37).

According to William Findlay, one of the translators of the acclaimed adaptations of several of Tremblay's plays into Scots:

> We [Findlay and Martin Bowman] were aware that some critics had expressed dissatisfaction with English language translations of Tremblay's plays, not because of the competence of the translations but because Standard English lacked the qualities needed to convey fully Tremblay's genius in Québécois. As one critic wrote, in an article in the Canadian magazine *Saturday Night*, "In English, Tremblay's plays reveal little of the colour, resonance and musicality of the originals." The theatre critic of the Montreal newspaper *The Gazette* also remarked in a feature: "As has always been the problem with translations of Michel Tremblay's play, contemporary homogenized English offers no obvious equivalent to the various accents and locally rooted vocabulary of Canadian French" (Findlay, 1995, 153-154 quoting Ackerman, 1988, 45 and 1986).

Betty Bednarski, in her reflections on translating Jacques Ferron, notes that there is more to *joual* than vocabulary and syntax: there is a rhythmical, musical aspect that is "above all diction, accent, rhythm" (1995, 116). She goes on to explain that "writing in joual represents a kind of shameless avowal, a flaunting of something previously considered unworthy of literature" (Bednarski, 1995, 115).

Given the importance of profanity to the Québécois sociolect, and its particular religious aspect, one problem that inevitably pops up in the translation of Québécois is profanity and the question of how it should be rendered in English. Sheila Fischman broke new ground in her translation of Roch Carrier's *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* when she opted to leave the original *Baptême!*, *Hostie!* and other Québécois expletives in her translation (Grant, 2006, 171).

Anglicisms are another feature of Québécois presenting a challenge to the translator:

> From the hybrid, anglicism-studded dialogues and narratives of the literature of joual to truly bilingual works like Michèle Lalonde's "Speak White," the combinations vary, but they are always politically charged. This is because language, as Simon has pointed out, is still seen as the foremost marker of cultural identity in Quebec, and because French, despite its prestige, coexists there with English in a relationship of fundamental inequality. The resulting diglossia is reflected, and at times subverted, in texts that become the site of bilingual tensions and interactions. When English translators step onto this sensitive terrain, delicate balances can be disrupted and distortions inevitably occur (Bednarski, 1995, 111).

Translators are limited in the ways in which they can convey to the reader the fact that specific words and expressions were in English in the source text. They use quotation marks or italics or sometimes add footnotes. Sheila Fischman and Ray Ellenwood sometimes create markers for the reader, such as "this was said in English." "But while all of these devices do make the original English stand out, none can replicate the texture of differentiation that results when English actually occurs alongside French" (Bednarski, 1995, 112).

An English sociolect that is of interest in this study is the one presented by David Fennario in *Balconville*, which was first performed at Montreal's Centaur Theatre in 1979. *Balconville* is set in Pointe Saint-Charles, in Montreal's Sud-Ouest

borough. The characters are working-class and unemployed francophones and anglophones. Some characters switch back and forth between English and French. The profanity runs freely. “Shit la merde” is a common expression among Balconvillers. The French is *joual*. The English is very colloquial. It would be considered Sub-standard English.

The anglophone characters’ dialogue in this script is full of vocabulary, expressions and even grammar that identify the speakers as lower-class English Quebecers. The contractions used by this group include “dunno” (don’t know), “gimme” (give me), “gonna” (going to), “gotta” (got to) and “wanna” (want to). Yes is “yeah,” and no is “naw.” You is “ya.” Vocabulary elements that distinguish this speech from Standard English and help to identify the social class include: ass, bastard, bucks (money), bugger, brew (beer), boozer, faggot, fuckers, fuckface, fuckin’ (adjective), cops, goof, horny, Pepper and Pepsi (French-Canadian), smokes (cigarettes), jerk, old man (father or husband), piss and puke. Expressions include beat it, bum around, screw around, shit like that, move your ass, for fuck’s sake and piece of shit. Grammatical errors reveal a lack of education: “I don’t got,” “Is there any jobs?”, “them promises” and “you got no respect.” Profanity abounds: goddamn, fuck, shit la merde, fuck you, fuck this shit, fuck off. Although some of the vocabulary is dated, these words and expressions will provide avenues to explore in the analysis of the subtitling of the two films.

1.6 Creation of the Supertext

Of course it does happen that the translator does not succeed in rendering the sociolect. My hypothesis posits that the failure to render the Québécois sociolect in the English subtitles of the film *Bon Cop Bad Cop* gives rise to understatement, which creates a supertext for bilingual movie-goers who read the subtitles.

The Oxford Companion to the English Language defines understatement as:

> A semi-technical term for saying less than one might or saying something less forcefully than one might; any occasion of doing this. Understatement is often used as a kind of emphasis in reverse, especially in BrE: *We're (quite) pleased* (said when something has been an outstanding success and jubilation would be appropriate)" (McArthur, 1992, s.v. understatement).

The equivalent of the English understatement in French is the *litote*:

> La figure rhétorique la mieux adaptée à l'ironie est évidemment la litote, qui dit le moins pour le plus. Litote quotidienne, l'*understatement* britannique suspend l'évidence des proportions réelles comme dans la célèbre conversation de Gladstone avec sa femme :
> – De quoi a parlé le Pasteur, dans son sermon?
> – Du péché.
> – Et qu'en a-t-il dit?
> – Il était contre (Escarpit, 98).

Colston and O'Brien use the setting of a long line-up at the theatre to give examples for irony and understatement. They explain that an ironic statement in such a situation might be: "Oh, fantastic, there is no queue at all!" whereas an understated remark might be: "There seems to be a bit of a queue." What makes these comments funny is the difference between what the verbal comments would lead one to believe and what the reality is, but a great deal depends on the delivery (1999, abstract).

In addition to the understatement in the subtitles of *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, there is also an element of dramatic irony that could be applied in the context of these subtitles. *Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia* describes dramatic irony thus:

> A theatrical device, consisting in the conscious production by the author of an ironical situation, i.e., a marked incongruity between a character's words and the action, as for instance in Schiller's Wallenstein when the hero (not aware of the plot on his life, of which the audience has been informed) says before going to bed: "I intend to take a long rest." The understanding of the unintentional play on words imparts to the audience for a moment the role of "an omniscient god of the drama" (*Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia*, s.v. dramatic irony).

A classic example of dramatic irony is seen in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: Romeo discovers the dead Juliet (she has in fact faked her death by taking a sleeping potion, which is something the audience knows), and Romeo kills himself. Escarpit explains that the source of all dramatic irony is a "secret blindness" ("l'aveuglement non partagé") (1972, 105). He goes on to explain that laughter can be seen as a manifestation of feelings of superiority: "L'ironie ne peut déboucher sur le rire que si elle s'accompagne d'un sentiment de supériorité envers la victime de l'ironie (Escarpit, 1972, 112).

By extension, we could say that, in *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, there is dramatic irony in the English subtitles because the audience knows that the film's characters are not aware of this third person, the subtitler, who is interpreting their dialogue so poorly, who is censoring their profanity and toning down their colourful Québécois expressions. This "secret blindness" gives rise to the bilingual audience's feeling of superiority as the audience realizes that the sociolect has not been captured. And it becomes a kind of inside joke that is shared by the bilingual members of the audience who are reading the subtitles. This inside joke is a form of dramatic irony that could be another explanation for the creation of the supertext, or humorous interpretation, I gave to the subtitles when I watched the movie.

1.7 Summing Up

From this chapter, we may conclude that a sociolect is a dialect used by a particular social group. A sociolect in the source language cannot always be rendered by an equivalent sociolect in the target language, as an equivalent sociolect usually does not exist. However, studies of various sociolects in literature have revealed that authors are not actually rendering authentic sociolects: they are actually using certain characteristic aspects that the audience will recognize to represent the sociolect. This revelation can give translators of sociolects more artistic licence, as they are freer to invent their own "equivalent" sociolect in their quest to render all the beauty, colour, grit and earthiness of the source language. To render a sociolect, translators must possess linguistic knowledge of both languages, but also a knowledge of both cultures. Cordonnier (2002) believes that the more cultures intermingle, the more translatable they are.

Québécois is the term used to describe the French spoken in Quebec. Québécois populaire is the sociolect being examined in the subtitling of the movie *Bon Cop Bad Cop.* The lack of a specific English Canadian equivalent sociolect to render Québécois presents a challenge to translators, from the distinctive vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions to the use of anglicisms and the abundant profanity.

The failure to render the Québécois sociolect in the film *Bon Cop Bad Cop* has given rise to understatement, which creates a supertext for bilingual movie-goers who read the English subtitles that actually enhances the humour. For this same audience, there is also an element of dramatic irony in the subtitles of this film, as the bilingual audience members who read the subtitles feel superior to the actors, who are

unaware that their colourful, profanity-laced dialogue is being rendered in a understated form of Standard English.

CHAPTER 2: Subtitling

> Subtitling is not as easy as it looks. It is not just a matter of converting the words into another language and calling it a day – a good subtitle takes the essence of a sentence and distills it into something instantaneously comprehensible, all the while keeping the cultural flavour of the original dialogue (Coates, 2010, A-1).

Subtitling must be one of the most challenging forms of translation there is. Not only do you have the source text – the dialogue – being spoken at the same time as the subtitles are presented, you also have the visual of the film, which the subtitles have to match. It is, in fact, a "naked," or vulnerable, form of translation in which the translator is open to criticism from all quarters – even film-goers who, although they don't speak the language of the subtitles, remark that they seem too short or too long. Not only is it a "naked translation," it involves a crossing over from spoken language to written language. It is a blend of interpretation and translation. As Barbara Schwarz explains, "The translator is faced with a kind of 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (multi-media performance) where the dialogue works together with the visual image, soundtrack and music" (2002, 3).

2.1 What Is Subtitling?

Subtitling involves presenting the written translation of the dialogue, voice-overs and any written material that appear in the film, such as signs and letters. In North America, subtitles are usually presented on the lower part of the screen. "Subtitles must appear in synchrony with the image and dialogue, provide a semantically adequate account of the SL dialogue, and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007,

8-9). “Subtitles, or captions, are usually one or two lines long with a maximum length of 35 characters. They are either centred or left-aligned” (Gottlieb, 1998, 244-245).

The subtitler is subject to time and space constraints, as subtitles must respect a fixed character length and a limited time on screen. Because we can speak much faster than we can read, and because the subtitles are limited by the space on the screen, the subtitle must both condense and translate the dialogue (Schwarz, 2002, 2). Subtitler Henri Béhar calls subtitling “a form of cultural ventriloquism”:

> Our task as subtitlers is to create subliminal subtitles so in sync with the mood and the rhythm of the movie that the audience isn’t even aware it is reading. We want *not* to be noticed. If a subtitle is inadequate, clumsy, or distracting, it makes everyone look bad, but first and foremost the actors and the filmmakers (2004, 85).

This is not the case with the English subtitles in *Bon Bop Bad Cop.* In this film, the bilingual movie-goer is very much aware of the subtitles, and they take on a great deal of importance, adding, as they do, to the humour of the film.

To reduce the dialogue that will appear on the screen, subtitlers depend on the information conveyed by the images and edit out unnecessary repetitions. “This also explains why a print-out of subtitles, just like a dialogue list without scene descriptions, only very rarely makes any sense at all, and why it is essential for subtitlers to have the film at their disposal when they are translating” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 54).

Subtitles involve not only an interlingual transfer, but a change from the spoken word to the written word. “Gottlieb (1994) calls it ‘diagonal subtitling’ since it involves a shift from one language to another along with a change of mode, from oral to written” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 17). Díaz Cintas and Remael remark

that “a translator has to be multi-talented, but a subtitler also has to be a verbal acrobat – a language virtuoso who can work within the confines of a postage stamp” (2007, 29). Ironically, such a difficult job is considered to be done well when it is invisible.

In short, as Schwarz explains, the subtitles must be simple and clear. They must be immediately understood by viewers and not detract from the overall viewing experience (2002, 4).

2.2 The Process

Procedures vary from studio to studio, but let’s look at the traditional procedure for the subtitling of a 35mm film, which involves a great many different players. First, the film company sends the subtitling company a copy of the film and a dialogue list. Then, a spotter (or subtitler) does the spotting (also called timing, cueing or originating), which determines when a subtitle should appear on the screen (in-time) and leave the screen (out-time). Spotters “tend to share the language of the original programme, although not always; might not know any other foreign languages; and are expected to be technologically literate, with an excellent working knowledge of subtitling programs. They should be conversant with film language and narrative techniques” (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 34).

Then, ideally, both the film and dialogue list are sent to the translator. The translator may work in a format specific to subtitling or in a word-processing format. In this case, the translation must be adapted by an adaptor, who adjusts the translation

"to an appropriate subtitling length, according to the time limitations that operate in particular cases, and the reading speed applied to the programme" (32):

> Adaptors are experts in the media limitations that constrain subtitling and are familiar with condensation and reduction strategies in the target language. Their role is to fit the rough translation in to the subtitle lines, searching for shorter synonyms and altering syntactical structures without sacrificing the meaning of the original, although in some cases they might have no knowledge of the source language (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 34).

The subtitles are then revised and proofread in the written version, without watching the video, to catch any mistranslations and spelling errors. Sánchez explains that this is best done by a native speaker who has not seen the video (Sánchez, 2004, 10). Last, a simulation of the final version of the film is created, which gives an opportunity to make any last changes before the subtitles are laser-engraved onto the celluloid. Sánchez explains that there are different opinions regarding who should carry out this final phase of the subtitling. Some believe this verification should be done by someone who doesn't understand the source language, as "the skill of listening and processing one language while reading and processing another takes great concentration. The danger is that understanding of the source text can result in a type of 'suggestion' whereby small mistakes can be missed. This is obviously even more of a problem where the translator performs the simulation." On the other hand, a case may be made for having a bilingual person revise this version of the subtitles, as they may catch mistakes in translation (Sánchez, 2004, 10).

The current trend in DVD and TV subtitling (but less so in the subtitling of feature films) is for one person to do all these tasks, from the timing of the original dialogues to the translation and adaptation of the subtitles.

Although industry norms do vary, attempts have been made to set standards regarding aspects such as the number of characters (36) and lines (two) that can be presented on the screen, the placement of the subtitle (lower part of the screen) and the colour of subtitles (white). Experts also weigh in on questions such as the ideal font (sans serif) to be used and the use of italics (voices offscreen and written material such as signs and letters).

And so it becomes evident that subtitling a film comes with its own set of constraints. Unlike the translation of a play for the theatre, which can be adapted, or the translation of works of literature, the script of a film to be subtitled cannot be adapted in the same fashion or even given another setting. In this case, the entire film remains fixed, and the subtitles are added on top of the existing work. In addition to the visuals of the film, the dialogue remains in place, serving as a measure against which the subtitles can be compared by bilingual – and even not so bilingual – movie-goers.

2.3 Challenges Inherent in Subtitling

The challenges presented by translating subtitles are many. The translator will generally have to condense the dialogue in the subtitles, because people can speak and listen faster than they can read and because the audience must be given time to take in the visuals of the film. So there will be deletions and a condensation of the original dialogue list. It is usually in the neighbourhood of one-third, but of course it all depends on the combination of source language and target language and the film itself.

2.3.1 Marked Speech

One of the problems that can be encountered in subtitling is the use of one or more sociolects in the film. According to Díaz Cintas (1982, 2), "The problems of linguistic variation are practically irresolvable in subtitling." Díaz Cintas and Remael classify sociolect as "marked speech":

> Marked speech is broadly defined here as speech that is characterized by non-standard language features or features that are not 'neutral,' even though they do belong to the standard language, and may therefore have more or less specific connotations. Speech can be marked by style or register, and it can also be either idiosyncratic or bound to socially and/or geographically defined population groups. Besides, marked speech includes taboo words, swear words, and emotionally charged utterances such as interjections and exclamations… (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 187).

Two examples of films with sociolects, or marked speech, that have proven challenging to subtitle include *La Haine (Hate),* which used Verlan, the back-slang spoken in poor French neighbourhoods (Riding, 1996, 2), and the Canadian comedy *Wayne's World,* which featured such unique turns of phrase as "And monkeys might fly out of my butt!" and "I think I'm gonna hurl" (*Gazette*, 1992, F-10).

A common procedure used to translate marked speech is local adaptation. This involves adapting "isolated parts of the text in order to deal with specific differences between the language or culture of the source text and that of the target text." Georges Bastin explains that a common factor that causes translators to resort to adaptation is "*cross-code breakdown*: where there are simply no lexical equivalents in the target language" (1998, 7). Another procedure subtitlers use when dealing with marked speech is compensation. This means that although they may not always succeed in rendering a particular turn of phrase or lexical variant exactly when it occurs in the

dialogue, they may be able to make the subtitle more "colourful" elsewhere, to compensate (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 188).

Unfortunately, subtitlers are not always given the artistic licence they need to render the sociolect, as variations from standard language are not always accepted in subtitles. According to Mary Carroll and Jan Ivarsson's "Code of Good Subtitling Practice," which was adopted by the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation, "The language should be (grammatically) 'correct' since subtitles serve as a model for literacy" (1998). It is unfortunate to adopt such a policy across the board without taking into consideration the context of the dialogue in the film, for limiting subtitles to grammatically correct language can have a negative impact on the rendering of the sociolect. Remi Labrecque, who subtitles American reality TV shows for Musiqueplus, says that his supervisors insist on grammatically correct subtitles:

> Although Quebecois street slang may not always be grammatically correct, Labrecque's bosses are adamant that the subtitles be in proper French, even if the onscreen dialogue is spoken in American ghetto slang. "Our subtitles will always be a little bit more proper than the way they talk on screen, because people are reading," he said (Coates, 2010, 2).

Accents and specific pronunciations can be rendered through an improvised transcription of certain words to suggest a foreign accent. Díaz Cintas and Remael give the example of the musical *My Fair Lady,* in which flower-girl Eliza Doolittle is defined in so many ways by her Cockney English. When Professor Henry Higgins takes her off the street and attempts to turn her into a lady to win a bet, he must teach her to speak proper English:

> Some of the original dialectal features of the girl's speech must therefore be rendered. The (rather nonsensical) French subtitles make use of an improvised phonetic transcription. Such solutions must obviously be applied only to very

> short stretches of text. What the girl says is of little importance, only her pronunciation matters" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 195).

However, trying to put too much language variation into the subtitles can create new problems of comprehension for the audience and may not produce the desired effect. Díaz Cintas and Remael remind subtitlers that their work is supposed to remain "invisible" (2007, 192). Paul Memmi also warns that using too much adaptation in the spelling of the subtitles in an attempt to render sociolect can make them difficult to read. He reminds us that, unlike the original dialogue, subtitles are *read* by the audience:

> Les liaisons, les verlans, les mots mâchés par un accent régional ralentissent la lecture. On croit bien faire en imitant typographiquement un accent, un défaut de prononciation, mais au final on devient illisible ("Audiovisuel : Traduire au fil des images," 1999, 121).

However, Jean-Pierre Mailhac (2000) makes the case that although this type of representation of an accent tends to be phonetically inaccurate and highly stereotypical, it can serve to alert the audience to the sociolect that is being alluded to and thus succeed in its intent (134).

2.3.2 Profanity

> Swearing is an outburst, an explosion, which gives relief to surges of emotional energy. It is a substitute for an aggressive bodily response, and can be aimed either at people or at objects... Its forcefulness is reflected in its use of short, sharp sounds and emphatic rhythms. Its function is to express a wide range of emotions, from mild annoyance through strong frustration to seething anger, and not to make sense (Crystal, 1995, 173).

Díaz Cintas and Remael explain that "taboo words, swear words and interjections are often toned down in subtitles or even deleted if space is limited." This can be explained in part by the fact that "saying such words is one thing, writing

them is another matter, especially if they appear in enormous letters on the cinema screen" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 196). This is unfortunate, as profanity enables the characters to express themselves in a way that reveals a great deal about their personalities, their age, social background and upbringing.

> Such words fulfil specific functions in the dialogic interaction and, by extension, in the film story, so deleting them is certainly not the only or the best option available. Emotionally charged language has a phatic or exclamatory rather than denotative function and it can be quite idiosyncratic, but usually it is also linked to situations and/or population groups. Taboo words are tied in with local tradition and are used differently by different linguistic communities, depending on those communities' religious background, for instance (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 196 quoting Díaz Cintas, 2001).

Schwarz explains that, first, the translator must recognize the severity of the swear word. She believes that native speakers have a built-in profanity scale. "For example, 'shit' is generally considered to be more vulgar than 'damn'" (2002, 5).

As D. Bannon explains, it is vital to consider a character's age, background (including education, religion, social class and gender) and dialect when selecting which expletives to use in a subtitle (2011, 31).When translating profanity, just as when translating anything else, one must be wary of literal translations. For example, "Maudite marde!" is an expletive that is used in Quebec to express frustration or exasperation when everything is going wrong. Its literal translation, "Holy shit!", on the other hand, denotes awe and wonder. As Bannon explains, "The translator's challenge is to find the correct balance that communicates the tone, nuance, and meaning of the source accurately" (2011, 30).

Because swearing is an integral part of the dialogues of both films, we will take a moment to look at swearing in English and French. Swearing seems to be

practised in nearly all cultures. It generally involves "one or more of the following: filth, the forbidden (particularly incest), and the sacred, and usually all three. Most cultures have two levels of swearing – relatively mild and highly profane" (Bryson, 1990, 215).

> The Rating Code Office of Hollywood has a list of seventeen seriously objectionable words that will earn a motion picture a mandatory R rating. If you add in all the words that are not explicitly taboo but are still socially doubtful – words like *crap* and *boobs* – the number rises to perhaps fifty or sixty words in common use (Bryson, 1990, 214-215).

Timothy Jay, a professor of psychology and the author of *Cursing in America*, explains, "Just 10 words and phrases, including hell and damn, account for 80 per cent of public swearing, and have consistently done so since 1986." He remarks that those most likely to use profanity are "soldiers, police, students, drug users, athletes, labourers, juvenile delinquents, psychiatric patients and prisoners," while women are more likely than men to say "Oh, my God." He also mentioned that many religious swear words have lost their potency (Harris, 2009, A-11).

In French Quebec, swearing is religious in nature, and swear words are deformations of religious terminology: ciboire (ciborium), tabernack (tabernacle) and hostie (the host), while English swear words are both religious – dammit/goddammit/damn, Christ – and sexual – fuck, bitch, sonofabitch – in nature. When translating French Quebec's religious profanity, subtitlers must aim for profanity that is of the same severity. But once the subtitler has found the "correct" equivalent, it must be determined if it is appropriate to use this word as a subtitle, for "saying such words is one thing, writing them is another matter, especially if they appear in enormous letters on the cinema screen" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007,

196). For this reason, there is generally a tendency to tone down profanity in subtitles, by reducing both the "severity" of the expletive selected and the number of times it is repeated on the screen. The authors do remark, however, that "many curses and swear words, including 'fuck' and its compounds and derivative, are increasingly common in subtitles, at least in Europe" (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 2007, 197).

According to Bill Bryson, the strongest swear words in English today are probably *fuck, shit* and *cunt* (1990, 217). In a study carried out in England in 1998 in which respondents were asked to rank the severity of swear words, the most vulgar were "cunt, motherfucker and fuck" (Milwood-Hargrave, 2000).

> After *O.K., fuck* must be about the most versatile of all English words. It can be used to describe a multitude of conditions and phenomena, from making a mess of something (*fuck up*) to being casual or provocative (*fuck around*), to inviting or announcing a departure (*fuck off*), to being estimable (*fucking-A*), to being baffled (*I'm fucked if I know*), to being disgusted (*fuck this*), and so on and on and on (Bryson, 1990, 216-217).

In English Quebec, "fuck" remains an expletive to be used judiciously, depending on the social class and environment. In contrast, it is used in Québécois with great abandon as an interjection, an adjective and a verb. This is evidence of the "built-in profanity scale" Schwarz explains that native speakers possess. When non-native speakers borrow an expletive from another language, it doesn't have the same taboos. In movies, "fuck" is used freely by rough characters and members of the lower class. As a result, a "fuck" in French may not always be rendered by a "fuck" in English. This is seen in *Father and Guns,* where "Esti, fuck!" is rendered by "Dammit!" (scene 4).

As Fernández Fernández explains in her examination of the dubbing of the film *South Park* into Spanish, it is vital that the swearing be rendered in the dubbing if the film's artistic integrity is to be retained:

> We should try to find a translation that maintains the original meaning, tone, register, and intention but, at the same time, these translations should be respectful of the idiomatic preferences and the socio-cultural context of the target language in order to achieve the success and impact of the original film with the target language (2006, 18).

2.4 The Use of Subtitles as a Source of Humour

There are cases in English films in which subtitles have been used to humorous effect: characters refer to the subtitles, interact with them and correct them. Then again, the subtitles may have nothing to do with the dialogue, but be added for comic effect. The jive scene in the movie *Airplane!* (1980) is a famous example. The speech of two inner-city African Americans, "which is full of colorful expressions and mild profanity," is subtitled "into bland standard English, but the typical viewer can understand enough of what they are saying to recognize the incongruity." In *Scary Movie 4* (2006), "there is a scene where the actors speak in faux Japanese (nonsensical words which mostly consist of Japanese company names), but the content of the subtitles is the 'real' conversation." In *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002), Austin and Nigel Powers use Cockney English as a kind of code. At first, their dialogue is subtitled into Standard English, then the subtitles consist of a string of question marks. Subtitles are also used to reveal characters' real thoughts, as seen in a conversation between Woody Allen and Diane Keaton in *Annie Hall* (1977). In Mel Brooks's *Men in Tights* (1993), the subtitles are used to convey the thoughts of

Broomhilde's horse, Farfelkugel. In the *Green Acres* episode "Lisa's Mudder Comes for a Visit" (season 5), Lisa speaks to her mother in Hungarian, which is subtitled. Lisa corrects the subtitles and says, "We have a lot of trouble here with subtitles," and the subtitles change ("subtitle [captioning]," 15-16).

2.5 Summing Up

We have seen that subtitling involves constraints of time and space. The challenge is to produce subtitles that become part of the film, thus becoming "invisible" to the audience. Sociolects, or marked speech, are very difficult to render in subtitles. Although it is not always possible to render every incidence of sociolect that appeared in the dialogue in the subtitles, subtitlers adapt their translations and compensate for this difficulty by adding elements of sociolect-marked speech in other places in the subtitles. It is also possible to render marked speech through a phonetic transcription in the subtitles, but it is recommended that this be done for a short time only to ensure that the subtitles do not become too difficult to read. There is a tradition of cleaning up language in subtitles, including correcting grammar and deleting profanity. Adhering to these conventions makes rendering the Québécois sociolect in subtitles virtually impossible. As we have seen, there are English films in which subtitles have been used to humorous effect.

CHAPTER 3: An Analysis of the Subtitling in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* and *Father and Guns*

3.1 An Introduction to the Films

Bon Cop Bad Cop – the first bilingual feature-length film in Canadian history – was a first in Canadian film not only for its bilingualism, but also for its "buddy-cop" formula along the lines of *Lethal Weapon,* replete with car chases and special effects. Based on an original idea by Patrick Huard, *Bon Cop Bad Cop* was directed by Érik Canuel and produced by Kevin Tierney.

In addition to being the highest grossing film in Canadian history in 2006, pulling in $12.2 million at the box office, *Bon Cop Bad Cop* won a Genie in the Best Film category, a Golden Reel Award for the top box-office gross of the year and a Jutra for the Best International Motion Picture, that is, the most successful film outside Quebec (IMDb, n.d., 1).

Kevin Tierney is a well-known Montreal producer. "Fluently bilingual and irreverently witty, the founder and president of Park Ex Pictures is an admired figure on the Canadian film scene" (Alioff, n.d., 1). In 2007, he was awarded a Golden Reel Award for *Bon Cop Bad Cop* and a Canadian Comedy Award for the film script (IMDb, n.d.). In 2009, he was awarded the Canadian Film and Television Production Association's (CFTPA) Producer's Award. His film credits include: *Love and Savagery, Serveuses Demandées, Bon Cop/Bad Cop, One Dead Indian, CHOICE : The Henry Morgantaler Story, Twist (EP), Varian's War, The Life of P.T. Barnum,*

More Tales of The City, The Song Spinner, and *Memoirs: Pierre Elliott Trudeau* (Trueman, 2009, 1).

Tierney says that Quebec movies in French are traditionally "hard sells" in English Canada. He explains that *Bon Cop Bad Cop* did reach a new audience: more than ten percent of the Quebec box office came from the English version (Bokser, 2007, 10).

The "buddy-cop" is a sub-genre of the "buddy film." It traditionally involves two men, usually cops, with personalities that are diametrically opposed, who are forced to work together to solve a crime. They are often of different ethnic backgrounds and are often removed from their natural element ("Buddy cop film").

Bon Cop Bad Cop's protagonists, Toronto detective Martin Ward and Montreal cop David Bouchard, are metaphors for English and French Canada. "The unshaven and sexy Huard plays the rough-and-tumble Quebecer David Bouchard" (Stevenson, 2006), a bad-boy cop "who is fond of colourful French swear words, is not above using his fists to solve problems, and likes a little womanizing. Ward [Colm Feore], in contrast, is the ultimate uptight Toronto anglo, and he's aghast at much of his partner's behaviour" (Kelly, December 16, 2006, I-1). The movie's story line, which at times seems to take a backseat to the whole language situation, centres around hockey. It involves a biker gang, the Rock Machine, a serial killer intent on killing off those involved in selling off Canadian hockey franchises to the United States, and of course the two cops on the case, a francophone Montrealer and an anglophone from Toronto. It is, in short, a truly Canadian movie!

The movie opens with the conflict that revolves around a body that is found lying half in Quebec and half in Ontario. Producer Kevin Tierney explains, "The whole idea of it was to take these two stereotypes – the French Canadian cowboy, the English Canadian uptight WASP – one's a loose cannon, and the other's uptight as hell, and they find a body lying across the sign that says Welcome to Quebec/Bienvenue en Ontario, and they argue about jurisdiction… the perfect visual, spiritual, cultural metaphor of Canada and the relationship between the French and English" (Whyte, 2006, C-21).

In an interview with Howard Bokser, Tierney explained:

> The project was always going to be überCanadian. People were going to speak both languages and the jokes were going to be about Canada and the Canadian culture, and the lunacy of living side by side. We wanted to see if we could make French people and English people laugh at the same situation. Maybe not exactly the joke, but the same basic situation, to laugh at ourselves and each other (2007, 10).

Montreal columnist Nathalie Petrowski lauds *Bon Cop Bad Cop* for tackling Canada's political reality and reflecting the country's linguistic duality: "For once in the history of Quebec and Canadian filmmaking, the audience is granted a movie dealing with the central theme of Canada's national life dual language, culture and identity and the tensions this duality sparks… Still, the fact that this is a half-French and half-English film where the two main characters keep slipping into their respective tongues is a welcome change. Maybe it's not a big step for mankind, but for sure it's a bon start for Quebec and Canada" (Petrowski, *Toronto Star,* 2006, F-5).

Bon Cop Bad Cop is the brainchild of Quebec actor Patrick Huard, who plays the rebel Montreal cop David Bouchard. As Brendan Kelly of the *Gazette* explains, "Huard's really revolutionary twist is that the movie is as bilingual as a real-life

conversation on the streets of downtown Montreal. It's half-French, half-English, with both the anglos and the francos frequently switching back and forth between the country's two official languages" (Kelly, 2005, D-1). Kelly feels that the movie is a realistic reflection of the way anglos and francos co-exist in Montreal: "The whole bilingual thing works surprisingly well, just as it does in real life. English and French people speak in their respective languages, and most everyone does their best to make of [*sic*] a go of it in their second language." He goes on to say that the scriptwriters are "equal-opportunity insulters" who mock English- and French-Canadians equally (Kelly, August 3, 2006, D-1).

In fact, according to results from the 2001 Census, in Quebec, "two out of every five individuals (40.8%) reported that they were bilingual, compared with 37.8% in 1996 and 35.4% in 1991" (Canada, Statistics Canada, 1). The 2001 Census also revealed that bilingualism among both anglophones and francophones is on the rise in Quebec: "Between 1996 and 2001, the bilingualism rate for the anglophone group as a whole rose from 61.7% in 1996 to 66.1% in 2001. The bilingualism rate among francophones climbed from 33.7% in 1996 to 36.6% in 2001 (Canada, Statistics Canada, 2).

But because language is culture, and culture is language, especially in Quebec, *Bon Cop Bad Cop* had critics examining the movie for deeper revelations on our two solitudes.

As the *Toronto Star*'s movie critic Peter Howell points out, "*Bon Cop, Bad Cop* looks like a particularly demented royal commission probe into the state of Canada's schizophrenic national identity" (Howell, 2006). The *Toronto Star*'s

Murray Whyte describes the film as "*Two Solitudes,* with shootouts, explosions and off-colour language" (Whyte, 2006, C-21).

"Anglophones and francophones rubbing each other the wrong way is a staple of life as it is lived in Canada. Relations between French and English Canada are our elephant in the room, like class in 20th-century Britain or race in the United States" (*Vancouver Sun*, 2006, A-10).

Huard, who also co-wrote the screenplay, acknowledges that *Bon Cop Bad Cop* is formulaic, but argues that the formula has never been done in Canada: "'How can it be that we've never done this? We are this! We are a country that has two cultures, two nations, two mentalities: when we see this story set in L.A., Chicago, NYC or Boston, we find it funny and it interests us. So why not when it happens in Montreal and Toronto?'" (*Vancouver Sun,* 2006, A-10.)

Director Érik Canuel, a Montreal native, said that he did not find it particularly challenging to direct actors in two languages. "'I approached it the same way I approach Monkland Ave.,' he said. 'Some people speak English, some speak French'" (Kelly, August 2, 2006, D-5).

It is ironic that one of the aspects that makes this film unique, its bilingualism, caused funding problems: "At first, Telefilm Canada was nervous about backing a film with subtitles, Huard says. And the film's finances continued to be a sticky issue, as French and English funding bodies quibbled over who had jurisdiction" (Shimo, 2006, R-1).

Father and Guns is another buddy-cop film. Set in Montreal, it features Jacques Laroche (Michel Côté) and his son, Marc (Louis-José Houde). This father-

son team must put aside their personal and professional differences to save a fellow cop who has been kidnapped by the biker gang Blood Machine. Their mission involves attending an outdoor adventure camp for fathers and sons seeking to reconnect so that they can convince Charles Bérubé (Rémy Girard), the Blood Machine's lawyer, to turn Crown's evidence. Kelly calls it "a genuinely entertaining offering that is often downright hilarious":

> What helps immensely here is that all these folks are fine actors, starting with Côté, who is perfectly cast as this old-school macho cop who just can't stand the thought that his son isn't made from the same tough-guy cloth as him. Girard is also in fine form (when isn't he?) as the lawyer who bonds with Côté's Jacques over their mutual disdain for their progeny (Kelly, 2009, D-5).

Released in 2009, this Cinémaginaire production was written by Émile Gaudreault and Ian Lauzon and directed by Émile Gaudreault. "*De père en flic* became the highest-grossing French-language film ever released in Canada as its box office ascended to $11 million in Quebec alone." More recently, Sony Pictures has acquired the rights to adapt the film into English. Matt Tolmach, president of Sony Pictures, explained the studio's interest in *Father and Guns*: "'We feel that the story and characters that made Fathers [*sic*] and Guns a local phenomenon will make our film connect with audiences everywhere… The film combines the strengths of a great, classic comedy cop thriller with a hilarious look at a dysfunctional father-son relationship'" (Playback, 2009, 42).

3.2 Examining the Supertext

As I have said, I believe that because the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* failed to capture the Québécois sociolect, the understated subtitles create a supertext that

actually makes the movie funnier. A few viewers who posted their comments on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) page devoted to *Bon Cop Bad Cop* shared this point of view:

> Bon Cop Bad Cop had me in tears… Being bilingual, I can say I may have laughed twice as hard as anyone else in the theater. However, this half-English, half-French movie is sure to please anyone regardless of maternal language thanks to perfect subtitles which only add to the amazingness of the film (quixoticlie, 2006).
>
> The English version of this film saw fit to introduce subtitles to the French portions, which were distracting at first until I realized that they were actually part of the joke. Fast readers will have a good laugh simultaneously listening to the French and reading the translation and comparing the two (segacs, 2006).

To begin this analysis, I will provide some examples of the supertext from *Bon Cop Bad Cop* with backtranslations of the subtitles to illustrate the disparity between the dialogue and the subtitle and some proposed translations that attempt to capture the sociolect.

Dialogue: Ben si y est tombé de deux cents pieds, ça a *breaké* sec en hostie, han?

Subtitle: How would you feel after a 200 foot fall? (02.02.01)

Backtranslation: Comment te sentirais-tu après une chute de 200 pieds?

This passage illustrates the failure to render the sociolect, with its Québécois syntax, anglicism and profanity, thus giving rise to understatement and creating a supertext for bilingual audiences.

Another example is Capitaine Le Boeuf, who explains David's job:

Dialogue: Y va pogner son trou pis y va me régler c'te maudit dossier-là au plus sacrant. Okay?

Subtitle: So if I were you I'd just shut my hole and solve this case as fast as possible (01.17.22).

Backtranslation: Alors si j'étais toi, je me fermerais la gueule et je réglerais ce dossier le plus rapidement possible.

The English viewer certainly gets the message, but all the poetry of the French is lost. The backtranslation of the English subtitle illustrates how far the subtitle is from the original dialogue: there is a loss of the vulgar expression "pogner son trou" and two *sacres,* "maudit" and "au plus sacrant."

Another colourful example is the coroner (fast-talking Louis-José Houde) discussing probable causes of death:

Dialogue: Pis y a personne qui se pitche en bas d'un delta plane. C'est ben trop compliqué avec les straps pis toutte. Faut comme vraiment être determiné.

Subtitle: Hanglider straps are too complicated. You really have to want to kill yourself (02.01.11).

Backtranslation: Les courroies d'un delta plane sont trop compliquées. Il faut vraiment vouloir se tuer.

Proposed subtitle: "Hang-glider straps are too complicated. Gotta have a fuckin' death wish" or "Gotta be seriously fucked-up to jump out of a hang-glider. Straps are too damn complicated."

Once again, the English renders the message, but loses out on the delivery, resulting in understatement. There is no profanity in the French dialogue. In my proposed subtitle, the addition of contractions ("gotta") and profanity is an attempt to render the Québécois sociolect, which in this case uses English words ("pitche" and

"straps"), the colloquial "ben" for "bien," "toutte" for "tout" and "pis" for "puis," and "y a personne" for "il n'y a personne."

The subtitle in the following line spoken by David Bouchard does render some profanity, but not as much as there is in the original, which also displays a wonderful rhythm. This loss results in an understated subtitle that may reflect a more "anglo" point of view to bilingual audiences.

Dialogue: Quelle hostie de semaine de *marde*!

Subtitle: Talk about a shitty week! (04.16.19)

Proposed subtitle: "Damn! What a shitty week!" or "Talk about a goddamn shitty week!"

To compare and contrast the English subtitles in both films, I selected three aspects of the dialogue that typically prove to be challenging in translating Québécois. First, I will look at examples of the Québécois sociolect, including Québécois vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions. Then, I will examine the translation of anglicisms in the French dialogue to see how the translators dealt with this aspect of Québécois in the English subtitles. Finally, I will examine the rendering of profanity, which is always a sensitive issue when subtitling a film. In this case, the *sacres* Québécois are very much part of the sociolect, and their successful rendering in the subtitles is an integral part of translating the sociolect. That said, there is a great deal of overlap within these three categories. Some lines from the dialogue fit into all three categories. In such cases, I will try to pick the most relevant examples.

3.3 Québécois Vocabulary, Syntax and Colloquial Expressions

As we have seen in the review of the literature, translating the Québécois sociolect is extremely challenging. In this analysis of the subtitling of the Québécois sociolect, I have selected lines of dialogue from both films that present examples of Québécois vocabulary, syntax or colloquial expressions.

One way the translators have attempted to render the Québécois sociolect is through the use of colloquial expressions. The *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* defines colloquial as "belonging to or proper to ordinary or familiar conversation, not formal or literary. Colloquial is often understood to mean 'incorrect' or 'vulgar' but in fact it designates words or usages appropriate to a familiar or informal, rather than a formal style of speech or writing" (Barber, 2004, s.v. colloquial).

The subtitles in *Father and Guns* use a wide variety of colloquial terms and expressions that make the subtitles seem very natural, very true to life, and help to render the Québécois sociolect, for example, jail is referred to as "the pen," an informant is a "snitch," and the perpetrator of a crime is a "perp." Killing is referred to as "wasting" someone. A threat used is "Fix this, or your head is gonna roll." Jacques's son calls his father his "old man." Words of encouragement include "So far, so good," "Give it all you've got," "Do what you gotta do" or "Hang in there," "Let's hustle" and "Stick to 'em like glue!" Bérubé gets "stoned" to keep from "blabbing" even though he claims to have "nerves of steel." He drives a "Beemer" and tells Jacques, "You're a riot! You crack me up!"

The colloquial expressions used in the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* on the other hand, although perfectly idiomatic, are not as colourful as the ones used in

Father and Guns. They include "You stole the show!" "Gotcha," "Me neither!" "What's going on here?" "What's up?" "The game's on," "She didn't even try with me," "I'm on my way" and "Honestly!" (For a list of the colloquial terms and expressions used in the subtitles of both films, please see Appendix 1).

I will begin this analysis of how Québécois vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions were rendered in both films by looking at *Father and Guns.*

Father and Guns

Dialogue: Y'est en train de jaser, c'est ça?

Subtitle: Chitchatting, huh? (scene 1)

This is a good example of the use of a colloquial expression in the English subtitle.

Dialogue: Oyé, déguidine!

Subtitle: Now scram! (scene 1)

This is another example of the use of a colloquial expression in the English subtitle to render the Québécois sociolect.

Dialogue: Saute-moi dans face, crisse-moi une volée, mais pas une grief! Habite tes testicules un petit peu.

Subtitle: Come on. You had it. Tear into me. Hit me! But not with a grievance. Wear your balls! Fuck! A grievance! (scene 1)

"Tear into me" is a good example of the use of a colloquial expression in the English subtitle. However, the literal translation of "habite tes testicules" by "wear your balls" does not ring true. I would suggest "Be a man!" or "Show some balls!"

Dialogue: Y'est équipé pour veiller tard, mais y se couche à 8 heures.

Subtitle: He's well-equipped to stay up late, but goes to bed at 8:00! (scene 1)

This translation of the expression "équipé pour veiller tard" is too literal. I would suggest adapting: "He's got what it takes to be the best, but he hasn't got the balls."

Dialogue: Y sont en train de virer sur le top, les estis.

Subtitle: Those bastards have flipped their lids. (scene 2)

"Flipped their lids" is another effective use of a colloquial expression.

Dialogue: On peux-tu s'entrendre qu'on s'en sacre de l'image de Montréal?

Subtitle: Screw Montreal's image. (scene 2)

Here, an element of vulgar language, "screw," has been used effectively to render the Québécois. This subtitle has reduced the dialogue to the essential elements, and it is effective.

Dialogue: Sors de ta yeule, pis rentre dans ton corps.

Subtitle: Get out of your yap, get into your body. (scene 3)

"Yap" seems like a strange way to render "yeule." The father is talking to his son regarding his reactions on the field with his weapon. I would suggest, "Shut your flappin' mouth and get into your body."

Dialogue: T'es reposant.

Subtitle: You're a breath of fresh air. (scene 9)

Dialogue: Faut que tu prennes ta place.

Subtitle: You gotta stake your ground. (scene 9)

The use of these two colloquial expressions render the Québécois expressions very well.

Bon Cop Bad Cop

In most of these examples from *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* there has been a loss in the rendering of the Québécois vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions in the subtitles. In some cases, I have proposed another subtitle. For more examples of the subtitling of the Québécois vocabulary, syntax and colloquial expressions from both films, please see Appendix 2.

Dialogue: T'a rien *faite.*

Subtitle: You didn't do anything. (01.02.17)

Proposed subtitle: You did <u>bugger all</u>.

I would suggest upping the ante with some vulgar language here: "bugger all."

Dialogue: Heille, franchement.

Subtitle: Honestly! (01.09.43)

This line is given by David, the rebellious Montreal cop. "Honestly" sounds too upper crust, too far from "franchement." Perhaps "C'mon" or "Give me some credit" would capture the dialogue better.

Dialogue: Qu'essé qu'y câlice ici, la tête carrée?

Subtitle: What the fuck is squarehead doing here? (01.14.25)

I am not familiar with the English translation "squarehead" for "tête carrée." In Montreal, "une tête carrée" is "a tête carrée," even in English, so this overtranslation added to the humour of the subtitles for me.

Dialogue: C'est pour ça qu'y est chiant de même.

Subtitle: That's why you're such a snobby pain in the ass. (01.16.39)

Proposed subtitle: That's why you're such a <u>goddamn</u> pain in the ass.

This line is given by David. The use of "snobby" doesn't render "chiant" effectively and it doesn't suit David's character. The addition of "goddamn" is an example of compensation to render the sociolect.

Dialogue: Tu viens d'où, toé?

Subtitle: What planet are you from? (02.11.39)

Proposed subtitle: Where the hell are you from? **or** What rock did you climb out from under?

The addition of profanity or the use of a colloquial expression would help to render the sociolect.

Dialogue: C'est peut-être pour ça que je t'aime pas 'a face, han?

Subtitle: Oh yeah? That's why I hate your face. (02.11.39)

Proposed subtitle: That explains why you're so friggin' ugly.

This is a comment made in response to Martin's explanation that he comes from Toronto. This subtitle is too literal a translation and is not idiomatic. In the proposed subtitle, I have both adapted (with the idea of ugly) and compensated with the addition of "friggin'."

Dialogue: Mêle-toi pas de ça, toé!

Subtitle: Mind your own business. (02.12.45)

Proposed subtitle: Mind your own damn business **or** Mind your own business, asshole.

I would suggest adding some profanity or a vulgar expression to this sentence to compensate for the inability to render the colloquial expression and the "toé."

Dialogue: Martin, niaise pas.

Subtitle: Martin, stop screwing around. (02.13.59)

Rendering “niaiser” by “screwing around” was also seen in *Father and Guns.* Niaiser could be rendered by “fooling around” or “kidding around.” Using “screwing around” is an example of upping the ante in order to render the sociolect.

Dialogue: Ça va ben aller.

Subtitle: It’s going to be fine! (02.18.05)

Proposed subtitle: It’s gonna be fine!

The use of the contraction “gonna” would help to render the sociolect here.

Dialogue: Heille mon char!

Subtitle: My car? (03.01.20)

Proposed subtitle: Shit! That’s my car! **or** Dammit! That’s my car!

There is defnitely a loss in the rendering of “char” by “car.” The French exclamatory has also been transformed into an interrogation in the subtitle, which weakens its impact. I would suggest upping the ante by adding “Shit!” or “Dammit!” and maintaining the exclamatory form.

Dialogue: Comment ça s’fait que t’as un accent dans ’es deux langues? C’était qui ton prof? Jean Chrétien?

Subtitle: How come you have such a strong accent in English and French? Who was your teacher? Jean Chrétien? (04.11.49.08)

Proposed subtitle: How come you speak such shitty English *and* French? Who was your teacher? Jean Chrétien?

In the proposed subtitle, I have adapted the concept of accent to poor language skills, with a stress on the "and." The addition of "shitty" helps to render the sociolect here.

Dialogue: Ma fille a rien à voir là-dedans. Prends-moi à' place.

Subtitle: My daughter has nothing to do with this. Take me instead. (05.10.41.06)

Proposed subtitle: My daughter's got nuthin' to do with this. Take me.

The French dialogue has a grammatical error in the negation and an ellipsis in the second sentence. The subtitle has two sentences that are grammatically correct. To help render the sociolect, I would suggest using a grammatical error and a contraction in the subtitle.

3.4 Anglicisms

The use of anglicisms in Québécois is a distinctive feature of this sociolect that bears witness to the contact of the two languages and the power struggle that exists between them. The question of how to render words that were originally in English in a French text remains a challenge to translators. In literature, translators have struggled with how they can let the reader know that the word was in English in the original text. They have used different strategies, from ignoring it completely to using footnotes or italics, or even introducing gallicized words into the English text.

In a film that is subtitled, the problem of alerting the movie-goer to the fact that these words were in English in the original does not exist, as the original dialogue remains. However, the translator still has the challenge of rendering these anglicisms

in the English subtitles. How this aspect of Québécois has been dealt with in the subtitles may provide further clues regarding the various strategies used to render the Québécois sociolect.

For the purpose of this analysis, I will be looking at the lexical anglicisms, that is, the use of English words or expressions, in the French dialogue.

In *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, there were not too many cases of English loan words in the Québécois dialogue. Because this is a bilingual film, in which the characters switch back and forth between languages, cases where more than a word or two was used in English were treated as English dialogue and therefore not subtitled at all in the English version of the film. Straightforward lexical elements like "park," "game," "cool," "job," "dope," "lift," "munchies" and "joke" were subtitled using the same words.

In *Father and Guns*, there are many cases, too, where the same word was used in both languages: "ride," "hot," "download," "tough it out" for "ils toughent la run" and "French you" for "te frencher."

There were cases, however, where lexical anglicisms in Québécois have migrated from their original meaning in English, so that usage dictates the use of another word in the English subtitle. Here are a few examples from both films. More examples may be found in Appendix 3.

Bon Cop Bad Cop

Dialogue: Bonne chance, les boys!

Subtitle: Good luck, guys. (01.1.57)

This is a good example of a case where the loan word, “boys,” is not used to designate the same group of people in both languages. In English, “boys” are children. It is not a term used to designate men.

Dialogue: Okay, les boys.

Subtitle: OK, boys (01.12.22).

Here, “boys” in Québécois has been rendered by “boys” in the English subtitle. This use of “boys” is not idiomatic in English and does not succeed in rendering the sociolect.

Dialogue: Y a été repêché par Québec, goalé la moitié d’une année, y a été suspendu pour une affaire de dope.

Subtitle: He was drafted by the Fleur de Lys. Played half a season for Quebec before getting busted for dope. (03.09.11)

This is an example of an anglicism that has been given a past-participle ending in Québécois. In English, a goaltender, or goalie, typically “plays” rather than “goals,” so this adaptation to “played” is idiomatic in English.

Dialogue: Tu mets un suspect dans ta valise de char, pis tout ce qui reste après, on pourrait le mettre dans un petit Ziplock.

Subtitle: You put a suspect in your trunk. All that’s left of him fits in a sandwich bag. (03.16.32)

This reflects the practice of adopting brand names for the generic, for example, Scott Towel for paper towel and Frigidaire for refrigerator. In the English, the subtitler has opted to render "Ziplock" by the generic "sandwich bag."

Dialogue: C'est ça ta fucking day d'ouvrage aujourd'hui.

Subtitle: That's your fucking job for today (03.18.53).

This transposition of "day" and "job" in the subtitle produces an idiomatic sentence.

Dialogue: Écoute. J'ai pas mal catché tout ce que t'a faite jusqu'à maintenant, mais Benoît Brisset, je la poigne pas.

Subtitle: I understand everything you've done, except for Benoît Brisset (04.11.39.20).

Here is another case where the anglicism has been given a past-participle ending in Québécois. In English, the use of "understand" is correct. Perhaps the use of "get" would make the subtitle more colloquial and help to render the sociolect.

Dialogue: Après, c'était ben **easy** de l'embarquer pour tuer les autres fuckers qui ont détruit notre **«** Great Game **».**

Subtitle: After that it was easy to get him to kill the others. They destroyed our "Great Game."

Proposed subtitle: After that it was easy to get him to kill the other motherfuckers who destroyed our "Great Game."

There is a loss in profanity and sociolect in the rendering of "fuckers" by "others." I would suggest using "motherfuckers" and keeping the same sentence structure as in the original.

Dialogue: Tu peux faire un reset là-dessus?

Subtitle: You can reset those things? (06.14.04)

"Reset" is a verb in English. In this subtitle, the anglicism in the dialogue has been rendered into idiomatic English.

Father and Guns

Dialogue: Toutes nos caméras sont bustées.

Subtitle: All our cameras are toast. (scene 3)

This is a good example of a colourful colloquial expression to render the anglicism "bustés."

Dialogue: Let's go, les gars.

Subtitle: Have fun. (scene 7)

Dialogue: Let's go! Let's go!

Subtitle: Go on. (scene 7)

Dialogue: Let's go! Vas-y!

Subtitle: C'mon. (scene 7)

Here, the “Let’s go!” in the dialogue has been rendered by “Have fun,” “Go on,” and “C’mon!”

Dialogue: T’es pu capable de penser straight.

Subtitle: You’re a... brain-addled old lush. (scene 10)

This subtitle displays great adaptation in the use of a colourful colloquial expression.

Dialogue: Ça doit être rock’n’roll, hein.

Subtitle: Must be pretty hairy. (scene 11)

This is a nice adaptation of the Québécois use of “rock’n’roll.”

Dialogue: T’check-moi ben aller!

Subtitle: Just watch me. (scene 13)

This is another fine example of adaptation.

In this section, we can see that, in *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, there was a greater tendency to use the same English word that was in the dialogue in the subtitle. In *Father and Guns*, however, where the meaning was often translated by another English word, there is greater adaptation.

3.5 Profanity

Profanity plays an important role in both *Bon Cop Bad Cop* and *Father and Guns.* However, the approaches taken by the subtitlers of these two films reveal certain differences. What is extremely interesting in both films is to see how freely the French profanity was rendered in the English subtitles.

In *Father and Guns*, "va chier!" is rendered as "fuck you," "go to hell" and "screw you." The exclamatory "Tabarnak!" is rendered as "fuck," "dammit" and "Christ," while "Toé, mon tabarnak!" is given as "You sonofabitch!" In *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, the expletive "Sacrament!" is given as "goddammit," "dammit" and "fuck," while "sacrament d'enfant gâté pourri" is rendered as "a spoiled fuckin' brat!"

In *Father and Guns*, "crisse" and "calvaire" are both subtitled as "dammit!" "Esti" is an expression that was rendered many different ways: "fuck," "for chrissake," "dammit," "damn," "goddamn," "fuckin'" ("Esti que je t'en veux": "I fuckin' resent you"), "Christ" and "Goddammit." The noun "les estis" produced "those bastards," whereas the adjective, "esti d'avocat" was rendered as "damn lawyer" and "esti d'baby-boomers à marde" were "fucking goddamn baby-boomers."

What is interesting to note is the overall preference for "damn/dammit/Godamn/Goddammit" in the *Father and Guns* subtitles over any other English expletive to render a wide variety of swear words in French, including: "Christie," "calvaire," "sacrament," "esti," "fuck," "crisse," "hostie," "en tabarnak," "maudit" (adj.), "tabarnak" and "simonac," whereas the *Bon Cop Bad Cop* subtitlers limited themselves to "shit" and "fuck." In the English subtitles of *Father and Guns,* on the other hand, the use of "fuck" is not at all prevalent.

In *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, there are twenty-eight instances where the profanity in the on-screen dialogue was not rendered at all in the English subtitles: "c'te maudit dossier-là" is rendered as simply "this case" (01.17.22), "au plus sacrant" is given as "as fast as possible" (01.17.22); and "en hostie" (02.01.11) is not translated at all. Although this did happen a few times in *Father and Guns,* what was most remarkable in the subtitles in this film was the number of times the English subtitles added profanity or vulgar language. For a simple "C'est quoi ça?" the English subtitle gives "What the hell is that?" (scene 2). During a discussion with the mayor, the police commander tells the mayor, "On peux-tu s'entendre qu'on s'en sacre de l'image de Montréal?" This could be rendered as "Can't you see that we don't care about Montreal's image?" or "We couldn't care less about Montreal's image." Instead, the subtitler gives: "Screw Montreal's image" (scene 2). The mayor then says to the chief of police in regard to police commander Jacques Laroche, "Baveuse, ta légende" (scene 2). This is rendered as "Smartass, your legend." Not "Pretty sure of himself, eh?" or "No lack of confidence, I see." No, simply "smartass." And it is effective. When the police surveillance team sees that the Blood Machine bikers are spending their days playing mini-putt and walking their dogs, they realize that they have been "made": "Je pense qu'ils nous niaisent" is not "We've been made" or "The gig's up" or "I think they're onto us." It's simply rendered as "They're screwing us" (scene 3). In both cases, the subtitler has used "screw," a word that, if not categorized as profanity per se, would definitely be considered coarse or vulgar language not appropriate for polite conversation. This approach of adding profanity to the text reminded me of the attempt I made at translating Marie-Ange Brouillette's

monologue during my undergraduate degree in translation: I added a lot of profanity. In *Father and Guns*, the addition of profanity and coarse language to the subtitles reveals an attempt to render the grittiness of the Québécois. This is an obvious use of compensation as outlined by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007, 188).

As the table below reveals, there is a high occurrence of "fuck/fuckin'/fucker" and "shit" in the subtitles of *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* whereas *Father and Guns* uses a much wider variety of profanity. This is particularly striking, as *Bon Cop Bad Cop* is a bilingual movie, with the dialogue half in English and half in French and therefore only half the dialogue subtitled in English. Therefore, twelve occurrences of "fuck/fuckin'/fucker" and fifteen occurrences of "shit" in the bilingual movie *Bon Cop Bad Cop* to fourteen and seven respectively for *Father and Guns*, which is completely subtitled in English, indicates a very high degree of strong profanity in *Bon Cop Bad Cop*. What is also interesting to note is the extremely frequent use of "damn," "goddamn" and "goddammit" in the *Father and Guns* subtitles, which are not used at all in *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* and the use of the vulgar "screw" nine times in *Father and Guns* versus only once in *Bon Cop Bad Cop.*

Occurrences of Profanity in the English Subtitles of the Two Films

Profanity	*Bon Cop Bad Cop*	*Father and Guns*
Fuck/fuckin'/fucker	12	14
Motherfuckin'/Motherfucker	3	0
Damn	0	9
Goddamn	0	10
Goddammit	0	3
Shit	15	7
Bullshit	0	2
Sonofabitch	0	1
Bitch	0	1
Bastard	0	2

Christ	4	2
Screw	1	9

To examine the use of slang in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* and *Father and Guns,* I inventoried the occurrence of vocabulary elements and contractions drawn from Fennario's *Balconville* in both films. There is quite an extensive use of "gotta" and "dunno" in *Father and Guns* but none at all in *Bon Cop Bad Cop.* There is also a greater use of "gonna" and "wanna" in *Father and Guns.* Subtitles in both films used "ass" and either "asshole" or "smartass."

Occurrences of Slang in the English Subtitles of the Two Films

Slang	*Bon Cop Bad Cop*	*Father and Guns*
Gotta	0	6
Dunno	0	9
Gimme	0	0
Gonna	3	10
Wanna	1	7
Ass	2	3
Asshole	2	0
Smartass	0	2
Jerk	2	1
Piss	1	1
Buck	0	0
Horny	0	0

We will begin by looking at examples from *Father and Guns* in which, for the most part, the profanity in the dialogue is subtitled with the same number of swear words.

Dialogue: Baby-boomer <u>à marde</u>.

Subtitle: <u>Goddamn</u> baby-boomer (scene 1)

Dialogue: Y sont en train de virer sur le top, les estis.

Subtitle: Those bastards have flipped their lids (scene 2).

Dialogue: Va chier.

Subtitle: Fuck you (scene 4).

Dialogue: Va chier.

Subtitle: Go to hell. (scene 4)

Dialogue: Va chier.

Subtitle: Screw you. (scene 4)

Dialogue: Va chier.

Subtitle: Fuck you! (scene 4)

In these four cases, "Va chier" has been rendered three different ways in the subtitles.

Dialogue: La tabernaque!

Subtitle: THE BITCH (scene 6)!

Dialogue: Je m'en sacre.

Subtitle: Like I care (scene 7).

This is one of the few cases in which the profanity in the French dialogue has not been subtitled. It has, however, been rendered using a colloquial expression. It could have been rendered as "I don't give a shit."

Dialogue: Pendant cinq minutes tantôt, hostie, t'étais hot.

Subtitle: For 5 minutes there, damn, you were hot. (scene 7)

Dialogue: Tire. Je le sais pas quel simonac de bloquage que t'as.

Subtitle: Shoot. What in hell's name is your problem (scene 9)?

Dialogue: Qu'essé ça, esti?

Subtitle: What the hell? (scene 10)

Dialogue: J'ai aucune esti de sensibilité.

Subtitle: I'm goddamn insensitive! (scene 10)

Dialogue: Je t'en veux. Esti que je t'en veux.

Subtitle: I fuckin' resent you. (scene 10)

Dialogue: Qu'est-ce que tu veux que je te dise, esti?... T'as beau venir cracher sur ma tombe autant que tu voudras, tu va miser à côté, câlisse!

Subtitle: What can I say, Christ?... And spit on my grave all you like. You'll miss by a mile, dammit! (scene 10)

Dialogue: Quand ils sont bons, ils sont bons en tabarnac.

Subtitle: When they're good, damn, they're good! (scene 11)

Dialogue: Esti.

Subtitle: Goddammit. (scene 11)

Dialogue: Les estis d'baby-boomers à marde.

Subtitle: Fucking goddamn baby boomers. (scene 11)

Dialogue: C'est de l'esti de niaisage. C'est du maudit niaisage.

Subtitle: This is bullshit! Goddamn bullshit! (scene 11)

Dialogue: Envoye-lé donc chier, lui.

Subtitle: Screw him! (scene 12)

Dialogue: Oh, Seigneur...

Subtitle: Oh, Lord... (scene 13).

Dialogue: Un petit crisse pas aimable.

Subtitle: An unlikable little shit. (scene 14)

Dialogue: Tabarnak, Tim...

Subtitle: Christ, Tim... (scene 14)

Dialogue: Toé, mon tabarnak!

Subtitle: You sonofabitch! (scene 14)

Dialogue: Simonac!

Dialogue: Shit! (scene 15)

Dialogue: Simonac. Maudite patante à gosses.

Subtitle: Goddammit. Freakin' pain in the ass! (scene 15).

The following subtitles from *Father and Guns* illustrate the addition of an element of profanity or vulgarity in an attempt to capture the flavour of the Québécois dialogue in the English subtitles. This procedure is called compensation. I have underlined the added profanity or vulgarity.

Dialogue: C'est du niaisage.

Subtitle: This is bullshit (scene 1).

Dialogue: C'est quoi ça?

Subtitle: What the hell is that? (scene 2)

Dialogue: Je pense qu'ils nous niaisent.

Subtitle: They're screwing with us. (scene 3)

Dialogue: Fait que, sacrifie-toi, fais quelquechose!

Subtitle: So suck it up! (scene 3).

Dialogue: Y doit gobber un méchant cocktail de calmants.

Subtitle: He must pop a buttload of pills (scene 4)

I would suggest "shitload" rather than "buttload."

Dialogue: Juste jaser comme si rien n'était.

Subtitle: Just shooting the shit (scene 4).

Dialogue: Arrête!

Subtitle: Stop, dammit!

Dialogue: Tu me niaises, là?

Subtitle: You're screwing with me? (scene 8)

Dialogue: Marc, niaise pas, c'est dangereux.

Subtitle: Stop screwing around! It's dangerous! (scene 10)

Dialogue: C'est de la maudite grosse condescendance sale.

Subtitle: Fucking goddamn bloody condescending! (scene 10)

There are two swear words in English to one in French or three if you count "bloody," which is a very bad swear word in British English, but doesn't really rate in Canada.

Dialogue: Y'est pas bon au hockey.

Subtitle: 'Cause he sucks at hockey. (scene 10)

Dialogue: Tous des égoïstes.

Subtitle: Selfish jerks! (scene 11)

Dialogue: C'est une hypocrite.

Subtitle: Fucking hypocrite. (scene 12)

Dialogue: Il fait exprès.

Subtitle: Smartass. (scene 15)

Dialogue: Mon père est toujours aussi épais.

Subtitle: My dad's still a douchebag. (scene 15)

The following examples from *Bon Cop Bad Cop* illustrate the tendency seen in the Table "Occurrences of Profanity in the English Subtitles of the Two Films" to use a limited number of swear words, especially "shit" and "fuck."

Dialogue: Qu'essé qu'tu câlices *icitte*?

Subtitle: What the fuck you doing here? (02.11.39)

Dialogue: Je m'en câlice.

Subtitle: I don't give a shit. (02.15.55)

Dialogue: Ciboire de tabarnak!

Subtitle: Holy fuckin' shit! (02.16.21)

Dialogue: Je te tue, mon tabarnak.

Subtitle: I'll kill you, motherfucker! (05.09.57)

The following list inventories instances in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* where the profanity was rendered insufficiently or not rendered at all. Often, there are two swear words in the dialogue, and only one has been rendered in the subtitles.

Dialogue: Hostie d'câlice de tabarnak! C'est qui qui s'est occupé du barrage? Ça m'a pris deux heures pour me rendre sur ma propre scène de crime!

Subtitle: Jesus Christ, who's the idiot that had the road blocked it took me two hours to get to my own crime scene? (01.11.11)

Proposed subtitle: Jesus fuckin' Christ! Who's the idiot that had the road blocked? It took me two hours to get to my own crime scene!

Here, a string of three expletives – Hostie d'câlice de tabarnak! – was rendered in English by a single swear word, albeit one composed of two words: Jesus Christ. I would suggest adding "fuckin'" in between Jesus and Christ, which adds two

syllables and gives a nice rhythm to the exclamation, or perhaps "Jesus H. Christ," which also has a nice rhythm. I would also suggest revising the punctuation so that it more closely mirrors the French.

Dialogue: Okay, les boys. On n'a pus rien à faire *icitte*. On décrisse.

Subtitle: OK, boys. We're out of here (01.12.22).

Proposed subtitle: Let's get the fuck outta here.

In this example, the colourful "décrisse" has been rendered as simply, "We're out of here." Not even the more colloquial "We're outta here." I would suggest adding some profanity – fuck – and a less formal level of language – outta – to render the Québécois. This is an example of compensation. I would also suggest getting rid of "boys" in English, which is not a term men use to refer to each other.

Dialogue: Comment veux-tu que je le bouge? Y est encastré dans la pancarte, hostie.

Subtitle: How could I when he's indented into the sign? (01.13.46)

Proposed subtitle: How could I? He's embedded in the fuckin' sign.

Here, we have lost the "hostie" in the subtitles. I would suggest adding the adjective "fuckin'" to "sign." I would also suggest changing "indented" to "embedded" to render "encastré" and opting for two short sentences that more closely reflect the French.

Dialogue: Y va *pogner* son trou pis y va me régler c'te maudit dossier-là au plus sacrant. Okay?

Subtitle: So if I were you I'd just shut my hole and solve this case as fast as possible. (01.17.22)

Proposed subtitle: Just shut the fuck up and solve this damn case as soon as fuckin' possible.

"Y va pogner son trou" is a variation on "prendre son trou," which means to remember one's station, to keep one's head down and avoid drawing attention to oneself. However, the English subtitle "I'd shut my hole" does not strike me as idiomatic. Perhaps "hole" is a reference to "pie hole" (meaning "mouth"), but this is not a very common turn of phrase. Perhaps "shut my trap" would be more appropriate. I would suggest upping the ante with "shut the fuck up," which is an extremely idiomatic expression. The addition of "fuck" is an example of compensation. There is also a loss of swearing in the English, as "maudit" and "au plus sacrant" have been deleted. I would suggest adding "damn" for "maudit" and "as soon as fuckin' possible" for "au plus sacrant."

Dialogue: Ben si y est tombé de deux cents pieds, ça a *breaké* sec en hostie, han?

Subtitle: How would you feel after a 200 feet [*sic*] fall? (02.02.01)

Proposed subtitle: How'd *you* feel after a friggin' 200-foot fall?

Here, the expletive "en hostie" was dropped in the subtitles. I would suggest adding the adjective "friggin'," which is a more polite form of "fuckin'," and changing the "How would" to "How'd" and italicizing the "you" for emphasis.

Dialogue: C'est plus fucké que ça. C'est l'inverse.

Subtitle: It's the opposite. (02.02.26**)**

Proposed subtitle: It's the fuckin' opposite!

This subtitle reveals a reduction in words of over fifty percent and the condensation of two sentences into one. The attribute "plus fucké" has been dropped completely. I think the compression works, but I would suggest adding "fuckin'" to define opposite. I would also suggest adding an exclamation mark.

Dialogue: Tabarnak.

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (02.10.34**)**

Proposed subtitle: Goddammit!

This is an example of a case where an expletive that stands alone was not subtitled at all. It would be important to provide a translation for English viewers. I would suggest using "Goddammit!"

Dialogue: Qu'on est des pourris sales.

Subtitle: He called us rotten. (02.14.56)

Proposed subtitle: He called us pieces of shit.

"Rotten" is a bizarre choice for "pourris sales" here, as just a few lines earlier, "Mon hostie de câlice de pourris sales!" was rendered as "You motherfuckin' pieces of shit!"

Dialogue: M'as t'en câlisser une là.

Subtitle: I'll fuckin' give you one! (02.15.25)

Proposed subtitle: I'll fuckin' show you who's boss! **or** I'll fuckin' knock you from here to tomorrow. **or** I'll knock the fuckin' daylights outta ya.

The *Dictionnaire de la langue québécoise* explains that "câlisser" is a verb: "*Câlisser un coup de poing* – Donner un coup de poing. *Câlisser son camp* – Foutre son camp. *Câlisser quelqu'un dehors* – Le mettre à la porte" (Bergeron, 1990, s.v. câlisser). The "give you one" is not a strong enough rendering of punch.

Dialogue: Toé, mon tabarnak là…

Subtitle: You utter fuck. (02.15.31)

Proposed subtitle: You motherfucker…

The use of "fuck" as a noun strikes me as strange here, and pairing it with "utter," which has a much more formal register, doesn't ring true. The rhythm of the sentence falls flat, too. I would suggest "You motherfucker," an expletive that ranks high on the scale of unacceptable language.

Dialogue: Comme euh…je vais t'en donner un tabarnak.

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (02.15.36)

Proposed subtitle: I'm gonna knock the fuckin' daylights outta ya or I'm gonna knock your lights out, asshole.

This is similar to the case seen above, "M'as t'en câlisser une là."

Dialogue: Eh, si tu tenais tant que ça à tes fuckin' procédures de câlice…

Subtitle: If your procedures were so fucking important… (03.02.12**)**

Proposed subtitle: If your damn procedures were so fucking important…

There is a loss here in the number of expletives. I would suggest adding the adjective "damn" to procedures to render the French "fuckin'," as we already have used "fuckin'" for "câlice."

Dialogue: Pis si tu veux pas perdre ta job pis qu'y ait encore de la bouffe sur la table de nos enfants, faut fermer notre gueule pis trouver le malade qui a *faite* ça.

Subtitle: So if you want to save our jobs so we can feed our kids, we have to shut up and find the sicko who did this. (03.02.37)

Proposed subtitle: You wanna save our jobs and feed our kids? We gotta shut the fuck up and find the sicko who did this.

There is no swearing in the French dialogue here, although there is the rather vulgar "fermer notre gueule." I would suggest adding some profanity – "the fuck up" – in English to compensate for the loss of the sociolect in English. I would also add the contractions "wanna" and "gotta."

Dialogue: Shit de merde de shit de fuck de tabarnak!

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (03.02.05**).**

Proposed subtitle: Merde! Fuckin' shitty merde! Goddammit! **or** Goddamn sons of bitches! Jesus fuckin' Christ!

This line demonstrates the progress Detective Martin of Toronto has made in his mastery of Québécois profanity. It follows a swearing lesson in Québécois given by David and the ex-con Luc Therrien. Ward utters this line when the car belonging

to his Montreal counterpart explodes. Unfortunately, it was not subtitled at all, perhaps because it was spoken in a mixture of French and English. It is interesting to note the construction he uses at the beginning of his tirade, "shit de merde de shit," bears some resemblance to one of the favourite terms of profanity used by the residents of *Balconville*: "Shit la merde." Perhaps the subtitle could mix French and English swearing, too.

Dialogue: Je m'en câlice! Je m'en câlice!

Subtitle: I don't give a shit (03.06.32**)**.

Proposed subtitle: I don't fuckin' give a shit.

Here, the repetition in French is not marked in the English at all. I would suggest intensifying the "I don't give a shit" with the addition of "fuckin'" rather than repeating the sentence.

Dialogue: Hostie de malade…

Subtitle: What a sick fuck! (03.08.48**).**

Proposed subtitle: What a sick motherfucker!

Dialogue: Hostie d'câlice de tabarnak de crisse d'hostie! Câlice! Ciboire. Hostie crisse de viarge d'hostie d'tabarnak de câlice...

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (03.13.40-45**)**

Proposed subtitle: Jesus Christ! Goddamn it all to hell! Fuckin' hell! Sonofabitch! Goddamn sonofabitch! Fuckin' bastard!

This stream of profanity in Québécois displays great variety. It is uttered by David from within an overturned bathtub. He is trying to shoot his way out of a locked room in a grow-op that has gone up in flames. His frustration and anger stem not only from his situation, but also the deafening reverberation of his gun within the bathtub.

Dialogue: Câlice d'hostie de sacrament de ciboire de criss d'hostie de viarge de tabarnak!

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (03.16.22**).**

Proposed subtitle: You goddamn fuckin' incompetent bastards. What the fuck were you assholes doing?

This tirade of profanity is delivered by the police captain after David and Martin have a series of procedural slip-ups, including the loss of a suspect in a car bombing and the setting off of a fire-bomb in a suspect's home (and grow-op) that destroys important evidence. This dialogue of expletives is exceptional in that it repeats only one swear word – hostie. The captain is expressing his anger at his subordinates and the situation in general. In English, I have proposed a subtitle in which the captain directs his anger at the detectives more directly and uses a few non-swear words. The hilarity of this moment, in which the two cops are stoned because they were inside the grow-op when it blew up, is enhanced by Martin's comment to David at the end of the tirade, "That's not good, right?"

Dialogue: Vous autres, vous avez juste votre reine avec ses enfants fuckés qui d'ailleurs t'ont pris ta femme.

Subtitle: … not like you and your freakin' queen and her fucked up children, one of whom stole your wife by the way (04.00.56**)**.

Proposed subtitle: … not like you anglos and your friggin' queen and her fucked up children, one of whom stole your wife by the way.

The subtitles have lost "vous autres," which is of course a reference to "vous autres, les anglais." In the English subtitles, this is rendered simply by "you." I would suggest making this reference more explicit: "not like you anglos." The adjective "freakin'" is one case where the subtitles did add some profanity or perhaps euphemistic profanity. I would suggest replacing "freakin'" with 'friggin.'" "Fucked up" rendered "fuckés" very nicely.

Dialogue: C'est ça. Continue avec tes hosties de commentaires, tu vas regretter tes cravates laides.

Subtitle: Keep it up and you'll regret wearing those ugly ties (04.08.59**)**.

Proposed subtitle: Keep up the damn comments and you'll regret wearing those ugly ties.

In this case, "hosties" has not been rendered at all. I would suggest replacing "Keep it up" by "Keep up the damn comments" to render "Continue avec tes hosties de commentaires."

Dialogue: Quelle hostie de semaine de *marde*!

Subtitle: Talk about a shitty week (04.16.19**)**.

Proposed subtitle: Dammit. What a shitty week.

We have lost "hostie" in the subtitles, although "marde" has been rendered. I would suggest adding the expletive "dammit" and shortening the following sentence to "What a shitty week."

Dialogue: Tabarnak!

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (05.04.28**).**

Proposed subtitle: Goddammit!

This profanity was not subtitled at all. I suggest "Goddammit!"

Dialogue: Eh, regarde. J'étais justement là-dessus là. Hé, toi, tu me fais faire de l'overtime en **hostie**.

Subtitle: I was just working on it. Do you know how much overtime I'm doing because of you? (05.06.36**).**

Proposed subtitle: I was just working on it. D'you know how much goddamn overtime I'm doing because of you?

Here, "hostie" has not been rendered at all. I would suggest adding "goddamn" as an adjective to overtime and removing the "do" at the beginning of the second sentence. In this case, the two-syllable "goddamn" works better than a simple "damn."

Dialogue: Si jamais y y touche là… Si jamais y y touche, je veux pus jamais te voir, mon hostie!

Subtitle: If he touches her... If he does anything to her, I never want to see you again (05.12.19.12**)**.

Proposed subtitle: If he touches her... or does anything to her, I never want to see you again. Bastard! or You sonofabitch!

Here, "mon hostie!" has been dropped completely. I would suggest adding "Bastard!" or even "You sonofabitch!" at the end of the second sentence.

Dialogue: Hostie de câlice.

Subtitle: [no subtitle] (05.16.01.02**).**

Proposed subtitle: Goddammit!

This dialogue was not subtitled at all. I would suggest "Goddammit!" to render the double swear words of "Hostie de câlice."

Dialogue: Après, c'était ben easy de l'embarquer pour tuer les autres fuckers qui ont détruit notre « Great Game ».

Subtitle: Then it was easy to get him to kill the others. They destroyed our "Great Game" (06.05.00**)**.

Proposed subtitle: After that it was easy to get him to kill the other assholes who destroyed our "Great Game."

In this case, "fuckers" has not been rendered at all. I would suggest "other assholes" to render "les autres fuckers" and then running the two sentences together.

3.6 Summing Up

We have seen that the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* sometimes did not render the profanity in the dialogue at all and at other times did not render as much profanity in the subtitle as there was in the dialogue. For example, if two expletives were used in the line of dialogue, the subtitle only gave one. In *Father and Guns*, on the other hand, the profanity was almost always rendered with an equal number of expletives, and there were times that profanity was used in the subtitle to accompany a line of dialogue that did not have any at all. We also saw that there was a great variety of profanity used in *Father and Guns* and a use of less-severe profanity, like damn and Goddammit, and vulgar language, whereas there was less profanity in the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* but the profanity that was used was more severe. The subtitlers of *Bon Cop Bad Cop* could have unintentionally been self-censoring, that is, using fewer swear words, because their choice of profanity – "shit" and "fuck" – was higher on their internal profanity scale. The subtitler of *Father and Guns* used a greater variety of profanity that ranged from severe swear words like "fuck" to vulgar expressions like "screw." I believe it is because of this great variety of swear words from across the profanity spectrum that the subtitler of *Father and Guns* was able to render all the profanity that was in the dialogue in the subtitles and even add more.

CONCLUSION

Subtitling a film is a type of constrained translation, as subtitles are subject to time and space considerations. It also involves changing from the spoken word to the written word. This type of translation presents a particular challenge to translators, as the viewer always has access to the original text, in the form of the dialogue, and the film's visuals remain unchanged. As a result, the types of adaptations that can be made are limited.

In the film *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, just as in many Quebec plays, "there is an omnipresent, invisible character and that is the Québécois language" (Gaboriau, 1995, 87). The translator's challenge is to render this character in the translation.

As seen in the translation of literature and drama, translating any sociolect, including Québécois, is extremely difficult. As a sociolect is a dialect that reflects regional, social and sometimes even political influences, it must be concluded that, save for the exception that confirms the rule, one sociolect cannot be substituted for another. As a result, in order to render some of the colour of the sociolect in subtitles, one must adapt and compensate. Failure to adapt, as seen in examples drawn from *Bon Cop Bad Cop*, can result in understated subtitles that create a "supertext" for the movie, in effect adding a new layer of humour for the bilingual movie-goer who watches the movie and reads the English subtitles.

To examine this phenomenon, the subtitles in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* were compared with those in the movie *Father and Guns*, a movie whose subtitles, in my opinion, succeeded in rendering the Québécois sociolect and therefore did not create a supertext. Although the usual tendency when subtitling is to make the subtitles more

polite, more grammatically correct and less profane than the dialogue, the subtitles in *Father and Guns* reveal a strategy that includes not only rendering all the profanity that is in the dialogue, but spicing up the English subtitles with additional profanity and vulgar expressions. There was also evidence of a tendency to use slang, contractions (gotta, gonna, dunno, etc.) and a wide variety of colourful colloquial expressions to produce English subtitles that reflect the grittiness of the original Québécois sociolect.

The analysis also revealed a great divergence in the types of profanity used in the subtitles of both films. While *Bon Cop Bad Cop* revealed a preference for a limited number of swear words like "shit" and "fuck," there is a much wider variety of swear words used in *Father and Guns* and a greater use of milder swear words. This use of a variety of swear words from across the profanity spectrum in *Father and Guns* enabled the subtitler to sprinkle the subtitles with swear words more liberally and thus capture some of the earthiness of the original sociolect. While the subtitles in *Father and Guns* actually added profanity and vulgar language in the subtitles, the subtitles of *Bon Cop Bad Cop* did not render all the swearing that was taking place in the dialogue.

We can therefore conclude that the subtitlers of *Father and Guns* exercised a greater creative licence to render the sociolect. The successful rendering of a sociolect such as Québécois in subtitles is made possible by the various procedures outlined above. As we have seen, the translator must have not only a firm grasp of both languages, but also extensive cultural knowledge and be comfortable enough with the material to adapt and compensate.

The failure to render the sociolect in the English version of *Bon Cop Bad Cop* has created a supertext that actually enhances the film for bilingual movie-goers who read the subtitles. The supertext was particularly effective in the case of this movie, as it serves to emphasize the stereotypical portrayal of Canada's two solitudes, which are very much at the heart of this film. The fact that the subtitler failed to render the Québécois sociolect, with all of its *sacres* and colloquial expressions, adds another layer to the film for bilingual anglophone movie-goers who read the subtitles, one in which this viewer may appreciate the dramatic irony that is generated by the actors' lack of awareness as to how their dialogue is being rendered. It must be noted that supertext can only be appreciated by a small, select audience. I would suggest that, in the vast majority of cases, for the film to reach a wide English-speaking audience, translators who are subtitling Québécois films would be advised to render the Québécois and avoid creating a supertext if they wish to make the film available to a wide English audience, for, as we have seen, the supertext itself can only exist for bilingual audiences who read the subtitles, such as those found in Montreal, where there is a high rate of bilingualism.

Now let us return to Cordonnier's hypothesis that the degree of translatability of a text is directly proportional to the degree of intermingling of the cultures (Cordonnier, 2002, 46). When I first came across his hypothesis, I have to admit I was skeptical. Now that I have compared and contrasted the subtitles in the two films and compared the translators' approaches, I am more inclined to agree. Because Canada's two official languages are in constant contact, we do know what is being said. And as we have seen in *Father and Guns*, it is entirely possible to render the

Québécois sociolect in English subtitles. Of course, the difficulty remains in how we can render the Québécois sociolect. As seen in *Fathers and Guns,* the trick is to adapt and compensate, compensate, compensate! Failure to do so will result in a loss of the flavour of the original and risk creating a supertext for a select group of bilingual movie-goers who read the subtitles.

The last item to be examined is the authorship of the subtitles in both films. In *Bon Cop Bad Cop,* the subtitles were created by the film's producer, Kevin Tierney. In *Father and Guns,* seasoned translator Danielle Gauthier, who has a long list of film and TV subtitle credits on her resumé, created the subtitles for the Centre national de sous-titrage (CNST). This just goes to show, there's more to being a translator or a subtitler than being able to speak both languages! A subtitler must recognize the cultural differences in the two languages and adapt so that the target audience has a comparable viewing experience.

This type of analysis could be carried out in other films with sociolects to ascertain whether a supertext is created in other films in which the subtitles do not succeed in rendering the sociolect. Such an analysis would help determine whether or not the creation of the supertext in *Bon Cop Bad Cop* is a unique phenomenon.

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Appendix 1: Colloquial Terms and Expressions

The following colloquial terms and expressions from the two films are presented in the order in which they appear in the films.

Bon Cop Bad Cop

pumpkin

You stole the show!

Gotcha.

Me neither!

What's going on here?

What's up?

The game's on.

She didn't even try with me.

I'm on my way.

Honestly!

Well, it's been fun.

You're kidding.

That had to hurt.

What the hell?

It's on me.

You an alkie or something?

Show the lady a little respect.

What planet are you from?

Stop screwing around.

I don't give a shit.

Come on.

My sympathies.

You stole the show.

nut case

sicko

sucking up

I've got the munchies.

Are you hitting on me?

I don't give a shit.

Shut the fuck up!

You go, Daddy.

Kick the shit out of him.

You're not serious.

Father and Guns

Chitchatting, huh?

Now scram.

C'mere.

This wasn't the plan.

We said we'd do business.

I'm freaking out too!

snitch

Those bastards have flipped their lids.

That's all peachy!

Do what you gotta do.

Fix this or your head is gonna roll.

Alive and kicking.

All our cameras are toast.

Whatcha doing?

Nice going, Jacques.

Shame on you.

Now you're gonna tail every last Blood Machine 24/7. From the honchos to the hangers. Stick to 'em like glue! I wanta know where they've stashed Jeff, now!

They're screwing with us.

You're the best.

split up

Flip off

So suck it up!

psycho

perp

Jeez

It bums me out.

What's your problem?

Go to hell.

He’s dying to talk. He just doesn’t know it.

blabbing

He gets stoned to cope.

Let’s hustle.

Just shooting the shit.

I could work him, get inside his head, flip him like a pancake.

the old man.

Shut up.

Screw you.

Fuck you!

momma’s boys

hunky-dory

Hardly the Ritz, is it?

We’re doing good.

Like I care.

Give it to him!

C’mon

Make it look real, give it all you’ve got.

Psycho!

Awesome.

Not to be a suck-up

You’re a real cracker-jack!

You’re a riot!

You crack me up!

You're screwing with me?

That was really lame. Sorry.

Take care, ok?

Gee thanks.

You should be proud, 'cause you're a breath of fresh air.

Don't you ever wanna start fresh?

I'm parched.

Back off

It's not out of spite.

You gotta stake your ground.

It just came out.

Easy now!

C'mon!

Yessir!

Check this out.

Easy, Jacques!

Hang in there!

Get a grip!

Thanks for the news flash.

He'll freak.

Why always spill our guts?

they brought me to tears.

Must be pretty hairy.

So he ditched Mom and me.

Took him 20 years to get his fill.

Our pleasure!

Wait up.

You bug me.

I just got dumped.

the namby-pambies

So far, so good.

You haven't screwed up too badly.

Just let me work.

You're digging your own grave if you waste Jeff Tremblay!

Ordinarily, you'd get the boot.

No kudos for me, huh?

Like your ass being kicked?

Your gang's toast!

Appendix 2: Québécois Vocabulary, Syntax and Colloquial Expressions

Father and Guns

Dialogue: Y'en peu pu!

Subtitle: He can't wait! (scene 1)

Dialogue: Qu'essé que t'attends?

Subtitle: What are you waiting for? (scene 1)

Dialogue: Pa, si t'arrêtes pas de m'écoeurer, je te sacre une grief en pleine face.

Subtitle: Dad, lay off or I'll file a grievance! (scene 1)

Dialogue: Y pense que ça fait pas capoter?... Y on pogné Jeff!

Subtitle: He thinks I don't care!... They got Jeff! (scene 1)

Dialogue: Plus vivant que ça, tu meurs.

Subtitle: Any more alive, you kick the bucket. (scene 2)

Bon Cop Bad Cop

Dialogue: Qu'essé qui se passe?

Subtitle: What's going on here? (01.01.50)

Dialogue: Qu'essé j'fais icitte, moi là?

Subtitle: What am I doing here? (01.02.07)

Dialogue: Qu'essé qu'j'ai *faite*, moi?

Subtitle: What did I do? (01.02.10)

In these three lines of dialogue, neither the "qu'essé" nor the "icitte" have been rendered.

Dialogue: J'ai essayé de t'aider, tsé.

Subtitle: You know I tried to help. (01.02.36)

Dialogue: Tu l'sais ça, hein? Hein?

Subtitle: You know that, right? (01.02.40)

Dialogue: Détache-moé.

Subtitle: Untie me! (01.02.58)

Dialogue: Qu'essé qu'y a, ma puce?

Subtitle: What's up? (01.07.18)

Dialogue: Non, ça marche pas ton affaire de cool. Okay. Envoye. Merci. Bye-bye. Va chercher du lait.

Subtitle: Your cool thing is not going to work. Go get the milk, please. Thank you. (01.08.01)

Dialogue: Ben voyons donc. Dis pas ça là. Tu vas t'en trouver un.

Subtitle: Don't say that. You'll find somebody. (01.10.19)

I would suggest adding "C'mon" at the beginning of the subtitle.

Dialogue: Ben voyons donc...

Subtitle: What the hell? (01.10.19)

Here, an element of profanity has been added in the English subtitle to help render the sociolect.

Dialogue: Heille, commence pas, toi. Envoye là. Va jouer à la police là. Va rejoindre tes petits amis.

Subtitle: Run along now, go play cops and robbers, your little pals are waiting. (01.10.19)

Dialogue: J'peux-tu savoir qu'essé qu'je fais encore icitte à cette heure-là, à matin?

Subtitle: You wanna tell me why the hell I'm here this early? (01.14.36)

This subtitle demonstrates the use of a contraction, "gonna," and the addition of profanity, "hell," to render the Québécois sociolect effectively.

Dialogue: Heille, c'est une joke ça là là.

Subtitle: This is a joke. (01.17.10)

Dialogue: Heille, écoute-moi ben, toé!

Subtitle: Listen to me, you! (01.17.11)

Dialogue: On s'est jamais lâché depuis, han.

Subtitle: And we've been together ever since. (01.18.14)

Dialogue: Ben écoutez, si je peux faire quoi que ce soit là...

Subtitle: If I can do anything... (01.18.14)

Dialogue: Je sais qu'à première vue, comme ça, y a l'air d'un comptable homosexual là, mais fie-toi pas aux apparences.

Subtitle: I know that at first look he looks like a gay accountant. But believe it or not he's not an accountant. (02. 00.50)

Dialogue: Eh... y a pas commencé à se cicatriser *pantoute.*

Subtitle: It had hardly started to heal. (02.02.10)

Dialogue: Le *boutte* qui saigne a été *faite* en premier avant qu'y meure.

Subtitle: The part that bled was done while he was still alive. (02.02.26)

Dialogue: Fait qu'y était mort avant la chute.

Subtitle: He was dead before the fall. (02.02.32)

Dialogue: Heille, c'est ton droit, han?

Subtitle: That's your right. (02.05.07)

Dialogue: Ouais. T'as-tu tout ce qu'y faut ici, mon noir? Excellent.

Subtitle: Anything else? (02.09.04)

Dialogue: C'est pas ça qui manqué *icitte*.

Subtitle: We're not short on those around here. (02.09.53)

Proposed subtitle: No shortage of those around here.

This line is said in reference to helicopter pilots in the local bar. The subtitle is not idiomatic English. The proposed subtitle is idiomatic, but does not succeed in rendering the flavour of the original dialogue.

Dialogue: Toé, Luc, ça doit ben faire sept ans que t'es mort?

Subtitle: Therrien, you've been dead for seven years (02.11.15)

Dialogue: Je joue ça pour la bière, moé.

Subtitle: Winner buys the beer? (02.11.39)

Dialogue: Attends un peu que je sors d'icitte, tu vas trouver ça moins drôle.

Subtitle: Laugh it up, assholes. When I get out of here... (02.15.18).

This is an example where profanity, or a vulgar expression, “assholes,” was added to the English subtitles to render the sociolect. In the second sentence, using “outta here” instead of “out of here” would have also helped to render the flavour of the original dialogue.

Dialogue: Oui, j’peux. J’suis avec toé.

Subtitle: Yes I can, I’m with you. (02.16.37)

Dialogue: J’ai-tu manqué Gabrielle?

Subtitle: I didn’t miss Gabrielle? (02.17.21)

Proposed subtitle: Did I miss Gabrielle? **or** I didn’t miss Gabrielle, did I?

This English subtitle is not idiomatic. This “j’ai-tu” construction in Standard French would be “est-ce que j’ai” or “ai-je.”

Dialogue: C’est beau, ma cocotte.

Subtitle: Way to go, pumpkin! (02.19.33)

It seems strange to me to call a tween “pumpkin.” I would suggest “sweetie.”

Dialogue: Ben astheure, on sait que c’était pas lui.

Subtitle: At least now we know it wasn’t him. (03.03.09)

Dialogue: Tu m’niaises là.

Subtitle: You’re kidding, right? (03.04.38)

Dialogue: Heille, ça va ben... Heille, ça va ben...

Subtitle: This is good. This is really good. (03.13.31)

Dialogue: J'sors d'icitte, j'm'achète une cravate.

Subtitle: If I get out of here alive, I swear I'm gonna ask for a desk job. (03.14.04)

Dialogue: En tout cas, y a un bon coup de patin.

Subtitle: Well, you could say he's a hell of a skater. (04.03.09)

Dialogue: Tu me fais-tu des avances là?

Subtitle: Are you hitting on me? (04.09.05)

Dialogue: Quand ça me tente. Pis là, ça me tente pas.

Subtitle: When I feel like it. And now I don't. (04.11.35)

Dialogue: Là, est débarré.

Subtitle: It's unlocked. (04.12.17)

David says this line after breaking into a car to rescue someone who was locked in the trunk. It is a very understated line, just like the French in this case.

Dialogue: Qu'est-ce qu'y a?

Subtitle: What is it? (05.09.03.08)

This is a line delivered by David's ex-wife, when he calls her in the middle of the night to ask to speak to their daughter. I would suggest, "What's wrong?" in this case.

Dialogue: Heille! Heille! Ça commence-tu votre affaire?

Subtitle: Hey, is this press conference going to happen or what? (05.14.42)

There is a loss here of the common Québécois syntax "Ça commence-tu?" One way of lowering the level of the language would be to substitute the contraction "gonna" for "going to." Ending the sentence with the interrogative "or what?" does add a conversational flavour to the subtitle.

Dialogue: Pis astheure, tu me donnes ma fille.

Subtitle: Okay, now you give me my daughter.

Proposed subtitle: Okay, now gimme my daughter.

Appendix 3: Anglicisms

Bon Cop Bad Cop

Dialogue: La game commence.

Subtitle: The game's on (01.03.35)

Dialogue: T'es pas cool.

Subtitle: You're not cool (01.07.48).

Dialogue: J'avais dit à mes amis que t'étais le père le plus cool.

Subtitle: I told my friends you were the coolest father.

Dialogue: Non, sauf que… entre chaque beau dix minutes, ben, il y a la **job**, les filles, la job, les chums, le hockey, la job… le téléphone…

Subtitle: Yes, but in between those 10 minutes there is always the job, women, the job, your pals, hockey, the job… the phone (01.08.51).

Dialogue: C'est ma journée off là.

Subtitle: No, come on, it's my day off (01.09.15).

Dialogue: Heille, c'est une joke ça là là.

Subtitle: This is a joke (01.17.10).

Dialogue: Je vais parker en arrière.

Subtitle: I'm going to park in the back (02.07.57).

Dialogue: Comment tu penses que ton boss va réagir quan y va se rendre compte de-de-de ta négligence?

Subtitle: What do you think your bosses will say when they hear that this happened as a result of your negligence? (03.02.12).

Dialogue: J'ai les munchies là…

Subtitle: I've got the munchies (4.00.26).

Dialogue: Heille, ton lift est arrivé.

Subtitle: Your lift is here (04.01.08).

Dialogue: Y a une affaire qui *fit* pas dans l'histoire, pis c'est toi. So bah-bye.

Subtitle: The only piece in this story that doesn't fit is you, so bye-bye (04.01.19).

Dialogue: Fait qu'y s'est ramassé aux States.

Subtitle: …but he ended up in the States (04.03.29).

Dialogue: Hé, toi, tu me fais faire de l'overtime en hostie.

Subtitle: Do you know how much overtime I'm doing because of you? (05.06.36).

Dialogue: On dirait que je m'ennuie. J'ai 'es blues.

Subtitle: I don't know. I'm a little lonely (05.08.43).

Dialogue: Y en a qui ont des deadlines là.

Subtitle: Some of us have deadlines (05.14.42).

Dialogue: C'était un fucked-up loser que j'ai trouvé sur Internet.

Subtitle: He was a fucked-up loser I found on the Internet (06.04.44)

Father and Guns

Dialogue: Ca va être toute une ride.

Subtitle: It's gonna be quite a ride. (scene 5)

Dialogue: Vous allez devenir les deux meilleurs chums du monde.

Subtitle: You'll be the world's best friends. (scene 7)

Dialogue: Hostie, t'étais hot.

Subtitle: Damn, you were hot. (scene 7)

Dialogue: Crisse, ils toughent la run pareil.

Subtitle: Dammit, they tough it out! Y'know? (scene 8)

Dialogue: Bérubé et moi, c'est le grand amour. I am hot. I am so hot baby.

Subtitle: Bérubé and I... it's real love! (scene 8)

Dialogue: Marc veut te frencher.

Subtitle: Marc wants to French you! (scene 8)

Dialogue: Y t'choke tout le temps.

Subtitle: He always chokes! (scene 9)

Dialogue: T'es quelqu'un qui est groundé. T'as beaucoup de charisme.

Subtitle: You're grounded. You have lots of charisma. (scene 9)

Dialogue: Y' passent leurs esties de journées à downloader... Sont capable de downloader un film avant que ça sorte, mais demande-y pas de visser une étagère.

Subtitle: Spend their goddamn days downloading!...They can pirate a movie, but can't put up a shelf. (scene 11)

Appendix 4: Profanity

Father and Guns

Dialogue: S'il m'arrive quoi que ce soit, prends soin de ma femme, mais pas trop, esti.

Subtitle: Anything happens to me, take care of my wife, within limits.

In this case, there is a loss in profanity. The "esti" has not been rendered or compensated for.

Dialogue: Calvaire!

Subtitle: Dammit! (scene 2)

Dialogue: Sacrament, Nathalie.

Subtitle: Goddammit Nathalie! (scene 4)

Dialogue: L'esti d'avocat, y'est pas approchable. Si je pouvais passer une journée avec. Juste une petite journée, jaser comme si rien n'était, je pourrais le travailler et rentrer dans sa tête et le revirais de bord comme un vieux gilet. Y'est plus protégé qu'un panda en Chine, esti. Fuck!

Subtitle: We can't get near that damn lawyer. Give me one day with him, just shooting the **shit.** I could work him, get inside his head, flip him like a pancake. He's better protected than a Chinese panda, dammit! (scene 4)

Dialogue: Je ne sais pas si c'est de la marde de chien ou de la marde d'orignal, mais de la marde, c'est de la marde.

Subtitle: Dunno if it's dog or moose shit, but shit is shit (scene 6).

Notice the use of "dunno" here for "je ne sais pas." This is an effective way of colloquializing the English.

Dialogue: T'es un maudit bon Jack. T'es un comique. Tu me fais rire. Y'me fait rire.

Subtitle: You're a real cracker-jack! You're a riot! You crack me up! Bastard cracks me up! (scene 8)

Dialogue: C'est un tueur, esti.

Subtitle: 'Cause he's a killer, dammit! (scene 9)

Dialogue: Tabarnak! C'est pas drôle.

Subtitle: Fuck! That's not funny! (scene 10)

Dialogue: T'es un petit sacrament d'enfant gâté pourri.

Subtitle: You're a spoiled fucking brat. (scene 10)

Dialogue: Crisse d'innocente!

Subtitle: You stupid bimbo! (scene 11)

Here, "crisse" was not rendered, but the subtitle does give "stupid bimbo," two derogatory terms.

Dialogue: Va donc chier, toi!

Subtitle: Go to hell! (scene 11)

Dialogue: Quand ils l'ont brisé l'esti de moule, ils se sont rendus compte qu'ils accomplissaient pas grand'chose.

Subtitle: When they broke the damn mould, there wasn't much to find! (scene 11)

Dialogue: Son enfant intérieur, tabernak!

Subtitle: His inner child, fuck! (scene 11)

Dialogue: Passent leurs esties de journées à downloader!

Subtitle: Spend their goddamn days downloading! (scene 11)

Dialogue: ...une estie d'carte de fête! Esti que je t'haïs.

Subtitle: ...a goddamn birthday card! I fucking hate you! (scene 11)

Dialogue: Si elle était ici, elle t'enverrait chier.

Subtitle: She'd say, go screw yourself. (scene 12)

Dialogue: J'suis en train de faire une crise cardiaque, esti!

Subtitle: I'm having a damn heart attack! (scene 12)

Dialogue: J'ai d'lair en crisse, mais je fais juste semblant.

Subtitle: I look pissed off, but it's just an act! (scene 13)

Dialogue: On n'est pas vraiment en crisse, on fait juste semblant.

Subtitle: We're just pretending! (scene 13)

These two lines of dialogue follow each other. In the first case, "en crisse" is rendered by "pissed off," which is vulgar language. The second time, only the second half of the sentence is subtitled. Given the context, this deletion is very clear to the audience, so I wouldn't really count this as a loss.

Dialogue: Mais moi je veux juste vous dire que vous avez vraiment un esti de gros de problem dans votre relation père-fils.

Subtitle: But I gotta tell you, you two have a damn troubled father-son relationship. (scene 13)

Dialogue: T'es un esti de traitre, toé!

Subtitle: Goddamn traitor! (scene 14)

Dialogue: T'es solide en simonac.

Subtitle: If that doesn't destroy your will to live, nothing will! (scene 15)

There is a loss in profanity here, but the subtitler has compensated with a colourful colloquial expression**.**
