Translating Voices in Crime Fiction: The Case of the French Translation of Brookmyre's *Quite Ugly One Morning*

Charlotte Bosseaux

Introduction: Scottish Crime Fiction and Bookmyre's Novels

Narrative texts are made up of voices, which come to us via a narrator or through character monologues and dialogues. These voices lead us in our understanding of a novel's themes, characters and contexts. This chapter presents a case study on a crime fiction novel, *Quite Ugly One Morning* (1996; henceforth *QUOM*) by Scottish crime writer Christopher Brookmyre, and its French translation (Mesplède 1998). The novel, set in Edinburgh, depicts various characters from different parts of Britain whose voices are an integral part of their identity. The main aim of the chapter is to identify and present some of these voices in the source text and investigate how the French translator has dealt with aspects of register, particularly the use of the Scottish dialect and swearing. The analysis is framed within the context of crime fiction writing in Scotland and France following a case study methodology with a focus on how the voices in the source text are rendered in French.

Brookmyre has authored 19 novels as well as short stories. His novels belong to the Tartan Noir genre, a type of crime fiction rooted in Scotland, defined further in the section 'Crime Fiction in Originals and in Translation', and Brookmyre describes them as "satirical crime fiction, irreverent and quite sweary" (Johnston 2013: n.p.). Brookmyre has won many awards for his

C. Bosseaux (✉)
University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
e-mail: charlotte.bosseaux@ed.ac.uk

books, with *QUOM* winning the Critics' First Blood Award for Best First Crime Novel of the Year (1996). His stories present strong characters with well-defined voices, for instance his investigative journalist Jack Parlabane, who appears in six of his novels, has been described as a "lovable rogue" (Mackinven 2015: n.p.) whose charms it is hard to resist.

Brookmyre's Tartan Noir novels are inspired by the American hard-boiled subgenre and are consequently politically and sociologically committed. Like hard-boiled novels, Brookmyre's stories are anchored in a particular setting, criminals use slang, and different agents conduct the investigations. As in hard-boiled novels, style is central in Brookmyre's work, which displays oral elements, slang and an "emotive, suspenseful use of language which needs to have an impact on the reader and generate a range of emotional responses from thrill and excitement, to suspense and fear" (Seago 2014: n.p.). However, Brookmyre's noir novels are more offbeat because of the relentless humour used. Another difference from the hard-boiled genre is that, in American hard-boiled novels, stories are usually told from the point of view of a main character or of a neutral or omniscient heterodiegetic narrator who knows everything about the characters but is not part of the story, whereas Brookmyre uses a third person narration in *QUOM* and a narrative technique akin to Free Indirect Discourse, a type of discourse mixing the voices of narrators and characters, defined further in the section 'Methods: Case Study, Systemic Functional Grammar and Register Analysis'.

Research into Scottish-French translation can give insight into issues related to translating Brookmyre's style from a study of French-English translation of the same genre. For instance, Jean Anderson explains that the work of French crime writer Léo Malet provides a "particular French twist … on the American hardboiled school" (Anderson 2014: n.p.), and that his humour is "developed through a combination of strategies" including slang, punning and orality (ibid.). There is therefore a type of French crime fiction to draw upon for the French translators of Brookmyre. I will thus aim at ascertaining how Brookmyre's characters sound by teasing out the salient features of his prose, and comment on how these are dealt with in translation.

Anderson also emphasizes that there is "an element of social criticism" in Malet's crime fiction which has "connections to a very concrete social reality" (Anderson 2014: n.p). This is also true of Brookmyre's novels, and *QUOM* in particular, with its relentless use of humour and constant criticism of British society. Indeed, Literati Girl, a German book reviewer referring to the original novel, remarks that "[e]ven though the book was first published in 1997, it touches on some social issues that are still prevalent in British society today" (Literati Girl 2016: n.p.).

The review also points to the authentic sound of Brookmyre's characters, who are Scottish and use Glasgow colloquialisms, explaining that "[a] working knowl-

edge of Scottish colloquialisms may help understand some of the dialogue. But, even if not, imagine listening to incomprehensible Scottish banter in the pub" (Literati Girl 2016: n.p.). As a matter of fact, Brookmyre has often been praised for creating very believable characters, and capturing Glaswegian banter. For instance, Bram E. Gieben (2014) comments that "Brookmyre's no slouch when it comes to fast-paced plots, pithy Scottish humour and ribald banter" (Gieben 2014: n.p.). This case study therefore singles out some of the very strong Scottish voices in *QUOM* and investigates their rendering in translation.

Jenny Brumme's article on the narrator's voice of Brenner's detective novels is also illuminating when considering Brookmyre's work. Indeed, Brumme explains that the first-person narrator of Wolf Haas's Brenner novels has an "unmistakable voice" (Brumme 2014: 168) and uses a language that is "highly emotional, full of everyday expression, subjective points of view, playful distortions of ordinary phrases, dialects, and down to earth remarks" (ibid.). She claims that it is this "overall feel of the language" (ibid.) which makes his novels appealing and popular. The same can be said of Brookmyre's third-person narrator in *QUOM*, who is, however, not omniscient, and adopts the point of view of the characters. This narrator, in Brookmyre's own words:

> always slips into the voice of the person from whose point of view the action is being described. This means that the language and tone can change according to the character's individual voice, and is intended to give a sense of their perspective and attitude. There is no omniscient narration—the point of view is fixed to one character throughout the chapter. (Brookmyre, private email conversation, 12 July 2016)

Therefore, the voices in *QUOM* are not homogeneous, and vary, depending on who is speaking and to whom they are speaking, in the amount of dialect, slang and swearing used. Like Brumme (2014) and other writers reviewed in this chapter, I would like to emphasize that it is the prominence of idioms, sayings and humour, for example in puns or plays on words, and the use of a colloquial register, which makes the speech of narrators and characters sound natural. Brookmyre's innovative and entertaining narrative style, use of humour and sarcasm, as well as his relentless criticism of society, thus give a particular voice to *QUOM* that is worthy of investigation in translation.

QUOM also lends itself to a voice analysis because Brookmyre has claimed that, for him, voice "is everything" (Brookmyre 2015: n.p.) and has always been his "starting point" (ibid.). Brookmyre writes a type of fiction that he enjoys, that is, American fiction, but written in his accent; in a voice he can relate to. For Brookmyre "voice, language and accents are all bound together" (ibid.) and the Glasgow accent particularly "lends itself to [a] certain urban

and gritty crime genre" (ibid.) as it is a working-class accent linked to what is "street-wise" (ibid.). Brookmyre's novels thus "celebrate[s] a type of slang, inventive slang" (ibid.) used in Scotland and his storytelling being "rooted in the environment and language" (ibid.) of Scotland, he was always aware that translation would be a challenge: although stories might be universal, languages anchor stories in specific environments. Brookmyre strives to convey in one language something that is "subtly going to tell you about a character" (ibid.) because of the slang that they use or "something that gives away the region they are from, class distinctions etc" (ibid.). Scottishisms are therefore very prominent in his books and, as will be demonstrated later on, pose multiple challenges in translation.

A few of Brookmyre's novels have been translated into French.[1] *QUOM* was translated by Nicolas Mesplède under the title *Un matin de chien* (a dog's morning)[2] and published by the prestigious publisher Gallimard in their well-established subseries *Série Noire*. *Série Noire* is a "determining factor in the French thriller market" (Robyns 1990: 24), as it "introduced the model of the roman noir into the French book market" (ibid.). Interestingly, the series includes many translations; "by 1986, over 2000 titles had been published, 85% of them translation" (ibid.) demonstrating that translations are welcomed in the French crime fiction market.

The main challenges when translating Brookmyre's work are therefore linked to register, swearing and slang as these reflect the identity of his protagonists, their situation and location.

The Case

Crime Fiction in Originals and in Translation

Crime fiction as a genre is concerned with crimes and their investigations. It is a popular genre; there are many novels, films as well as television series, from the Hercule Poirot series to Scandinoir (i.e. crime fiction set in Scandinavian countries) which enjoy much success in translation (Cleeves 2014). The genre is extremely diversified, which makes it difficult to judge homogeneously (Desnain 2015: 2). Its subgenres include:

early detective stories of ratiocination (… Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes), … the clue puzzles of the Golden Age (Christie's Poirot …); the private investigators of … Chandler's hard boiled; the professional investigative teams in the police procedural to the thriller (action, forensic, pathology, etc.). (Seago 2014: n.p.)

Karen Seago explains that "[c]rime fiction works within tight generic conventions, deploys formulaic plot components and developments, and needs to negotiate informed reader expectations" (Seago 2014: n.p.). Therefore, even if the genre of crime fiction is as established in Britain as it is in France (see e.g. Desnain 2015), there might be different audience expectations (e.g. regarding its overall style or type of humour used), since the two countries have different social realities. One of the core features of crime fiction is that it acts as a "barometer" of the values of specific societies at a certain point in time (Seago 2014: n.p.). Consequently, the genre has been of interest for sociologists with Luc Boltanski (2012) suggesting that crime fiction in France plays an important role in how French people perceive social reality. When considering the translation of crime fiction, one must particularly consider various issues brought about by the "constraints of genre norms" (Seago 2014: n.p.), different languages, dialects and cultural realities, and "social and cultural norms which define what is deviant or transgressive along different boundaries" (Seago 2014: n.p.). This case study therefore reflects on the use of Scottishisms and coarse register as an integral part of *QUOM*'s voices and on how translation has mediated the reality described in the original text.

In spite of the success known by crime fiction in translation, scholarly articles are few and far between. This is changing, however, with more studies published in recent years, including a special issue of *JosTrans* (2014) in which an article by Ellen Carter investigates metaphor translation in Caryl Férey's *Utu* and claims that the deletion of metaphors in the English version is due to the non-canonical status of crime fiction. Carter emphasizes that crime fiction has a low status and that "[T]ranslators of crime fiction both into French … and into English … bemoan the conditions under which they work, including tight deadlines, word limits and pedestrian prose" (Carter 2014: n.p.). Hence, the status of crime fiction has been considered as more minor or simple than other genres and my case study intends to contribute by showing that narrative structures in crime fiction novels are complex and that it is as important to study them as it is in more serious literature. Indeed, as a *New York Times* journalist puts it, "Scottish detective fiction, or Tartan Noir as it's called, with its brooding sensibility, brutal humor and fixation on the nature of guilt and punishment, has more in common with the Russian novel than it does with traditional detective writing" (Smith 2006: n.p.). Analyzing voices in *QUOM* should help demonstrate that this genre is definitely worthy of investigation.

Since the crime fiction genre has received much attention in French Studies, one avenue of research could have been to study how the Anglo-American genre, particularly the subgenre of Tartan Noir translates into the French context. Véronique Desnain explains that much French crime fiction published

after 1968, the Néo-Polar, a form of crime fiction characterized by its darkness and violent content, "is firmly anchored in a socio-political context" (Desnain 2015: 2), and as such is a reflection of the values of a society in which the crime has taken place. This is also true of Brookmyre's work, which sharply criticizes government policies and particularly conservative ideologies. However my focus is restricted to the text's voices and character perception as I subscribe to the idea that crime fiction "is deeply concerned with characterisation" (Seago 2014: n.p.).

Point of View in Narrative Fiction and Translation

The question "who speaks and to whom" is at the core of an investigation of narratives. *Point of view* refers to the way a character or a narrator gives us access to the world of a fiction and it can be subdivided into two further aspects: *focalization*, concerned with "whose eyes and mind witness and report the world of the fiction" (Bosseaux 2007: 15), and *mind-style*; "the way characters' perceptions, thoughts and speech are presented through language" (Bosseaux 2007: 67). There are four important categories of point of view in narrative fiction: the spatial, temporal, psychological and ideological. These cannot all be developed in a short chapter; the psychological point of view has been chosen as it refers to the ways in which "narrative events are mediated through the consciousness of the 'teller' of the story" (Simpson 1993: 11).[3]

Following earlier work (Bosseaux 2007), I argue here that altering the way characters or narrators express themselves can bring out a change in the feel of the text, that is, the fictional universe represented in that text. Focalization and mind-style are considered in order to see how linguistic choices can affect original voices. The linguistic choices of Mesplède, the French translator of *QUOM*, are analyzed to uncover what world he has (re)created in his translation. This case study thus focuses on who are the focalizers, what is their individuality and how their viewpoints are presented in linguistic terms.

In written texts, a relationship is created between writers and their audience as well as between characters. This relationship can be analyzed through an analysis of an author's choices using what M. A. K. Halliday (1970) calls the *interpersonal function* of language, defined as the function to establish, maintain and specify relations between the members of societies. This approach to point of view is concerned with who observes and takes part in the events of a narrative (e.g. narrator or participating characters), the types of discourse used and relationships displayed. An interpersonal approach to the analysis of point of view and voices in *QUOM* is therefore followed by focusing on the linguistic devices Brookmyre uses to construct meaning for his readers.

Methods: Case Study, Systemic Functional Grammar and Register Analysis

This chapter follows a case study methodology. There are three types of case studies: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Susam-Sarajeva 2009). This case study is exploratory and descriptive in nature in that it aims to understand patterns in the data and establishing what happens to the voices in the text (i.e. exploratory), and showing the impact of changes in the way the voices are mediated by translation (i.e. descriptive). As part of a case study analysis, the context of the chosen works has been presented since a case is "a unit of translation or interpreting related–activity, product, person, etc. in real life, which can only be studied or understood in the context in which it is embedded" (Susam-Sarajeva 2009: 40).

The single holistic case study presented here is embedded within the context of crime fiction in translation. The main unit of analysis is Brookmyre's *QUOM* into French. All characters in the novel are British but they have different ways of expressing themselves depending on their geographical backgrounds. Their manner of speaking (i.e. idiolect) varies revealing different social classes, as well as time spent in and away from Scotland. The focus is on the voices of Jack Parlabane, Brookmyre's irreverent investigative journalist, Hector McGregor, a detective close to retirement, and Sarah Slaughter, the victim's wife. Findings will lead to generalizations and allow others to carry out similar analyses in different contexts to contribute further to the larger body of work on voices and crime fiction in translation.

In order to discuss shifts in voices, the framework used is Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), as developed by Halliday (1970). Essentially, SFG places emphasis on language as a meaningful form of communication. It maintains that word choice depends on the context of situations and that there is a network of interlocking options to choose from at speakers' disposal. There is therefore an emphasis on meaning potential and intentions although gauging intentionality is not an easy task, and much consideration should be given before attributing intentions to participants in a conversational exchange.

Halliday is best known for having developed register analysis, in which register is defined as a "configuration of meanings" (Halliday 2002: 38). He identifies three register variables in a text: the *field*, *mode* and *tenor*. In its broadest sense, the *field* of a text is its subject matter (what is being spoken or written about). The *mode* refers to the type of discourses present in a text (the form and structure of language in the text). The final component, the *tenor,* looks into the writer-reader relationship as well as that of the participants

within in the communicative act. These three variables are fulfilled by specific elements performing a related functional role linked to three metafunctions or interconnected elements of meaning in texts or oral discourse: the textual, ideational and interpersonal. Here, the *interpersonal* metafunction is in focus as I am concerned with the voices of the characters, in other words, how they express themselves and how relationships are conveyed.[4] This metafunction focuses on the communication role that speakers adopt (e.g. informing, questioning, etc.). In terms of register variable, this is the *tenor*. In English, the main lexicogrammatical realization of this metafunction is *modality*, which deals with "the 'attitudinal' features of language" (Simpson 1993: 47), through the use of modals (e.g. "must" or "should") but also with words conveying emotions, such as swearwords. Soledad Díaz Alarcón (2014: 66–70) also identifies features of orality belonging to this metafunction such as lexical features (e.g. registers), phonic features (e.g. pronunciation denoting Scottishness), prosodic features (e.g. intonation); morphosyntactic features (e.g. word order of spoken register), and pragmatic features. Pronouns are also interesting lexicogrammatical elements of this metafunction, for instance "you" can be translated in many languages by different pronouns indicative of intimacy or formality.

Usually, written translations address audiences removed in terms of time, space and language from that addressed by the source text. Thus, their discourse operates in a new pragmatic context. When discussing register, one must differentiate between standard and non-standard uses, the latter including regional registers, swearing and obscenities, slang and jargon. These can be used to denote a country, region or nation, as well as the social class of the speakers, and level of formality and intimacy between speakers. Dialects diverge from standard language use and by providing "different ways of saying the same thing" (Halliday 2002: 168) give information about geographical, social, educational, or ethnic background of the speaker (i.e., their sociolect). Additionally, Federico Federici highlights that defining a dialect is "a political and sociological issue as much as a linguistic activity" (Federici 2011: 9), which should be borne in mind when analyzing register.

There are different reasons why characters use non-standard language registers. In *QUOM,* the vernacular is socially and culturally embedded and intrinsically linked with characters' identity. It is used to anchor the story in its surroundings and to assert specific identities—Glaswegian in the case of Parlabane—and to show the differences between the characters in terms of sociocultural background. Brookmyre uses non-standard language registers to characterize his protagonists and to lend authenticity to his writing: we are in Scotland; characters have Scottish accents and use Scottish words. Brookmyre

also uses swearwords to increase the emotional intensity of certain passages, to shock for instance, for humorous or comedic effect, or to emphasize a particular identity (i.e. for characterization).

Since non-standard language registers have so many connotations, translating them is a real challenge. Leo Tak-hung Chan (2010: 156) explains that:

> problems occur with novels narrated by characters who are given to use of slang and explicit language. They are exacerbated when the narrator's speech idiosyncrasies are functionally significant, cuing the reader to an interpretation, or helping to build an impression of a distinctive subjectivity.

Translating dialects, swearwords and obscenities can be done in various ways, from non-translation to finding a comparable target language dialect, an invented one, a standard term, a colloquial term, or play with syntax. The issue of (non-)equivalence is therefore central as a similar register may not exist in the TL, or if it does, there could be different connotations, which may not match the original's intentions. It is also important to consider whether the status of a source culture dialect is equivalent to that of a chosen target culture dialect.

Registers based on regional differences are difficult to communicate, making translating dialects a notorious challenge for translators. Antoine Berman summarizes this efficiently when he explains that "a vernacular clings tightly to its soil and completely resists any direct translating into another vernacular" (Berman 2000: 286). Slang, a signature of the crime fiction genre, also clings to its context of use. When discussing the translation of slang, Daniel Linder comments that it "should be rendered into the target langue creating an effect on the target reader which is equivalent to that which the original text had on readers in its own culture" (Linder 2000: 280). Linder identifies two translation strategies, either finding equivalents in the target language or neutralizing then "adding slang terms in place where they did not appear in the source text, therefore compensating" (Linder 2000: 280). It must be noted that producing a fully "equivalent" effect is an impossible task because a source culture and target culture are usually different and connotations of a source language term may be extremely hard to convey in the target language. This also holds true when translating accents and dialects. When discussing the difficulty of translating a cockney accent in a French dubbed version, I noted (Bosseaux 2015: 207) that choosing an equivalent regionalized French accent would have anchored the character into the French setting. Connotations of accents or dialects in the source language must therefore be considered carefully in translation.

Finally, one must contextualize voice studies within an analysis of dialogues and types of discourses. In crime fiction, dialogues not only serve to "create suspense, uncertainty, anxiety or excitement," but also to "establish a close relationship with the characters by defining them", "provid[ing] information", "driv[ing] the story" and "provid[ing] the readers with clues" (Díaz Alarcón 2014: 63). The way we are getting access to characters' thoughts and speech depends on the types of discourse used. Broadly speaking, access to characters' thoughts is usually through direct discourse (with reporting and reported clauses) indirect discourse mediated by a narrator and free indirect discourse (FID), a fusion of narratorial and character voices. Dialogues must therefore be investigated as part of the interpersonal point of view since it is through them that voices come to readers.

Hence, linguistic choices in *QUOM* are investigated to analyze the feel of both texts. In order to identify and analyze the different voices the interpersonal metafunction and the tenor are singled out. More could have been studied including Brookmyre's sharp humour and the vivid images he uses throughout but the analysis is restricted to an examination of the tenor and non-standard language register, that is, how Scottishisms and slang (obscenities) have been translated, as they are determinant factors in identifying voice and characterization.

Analyzing Voices in *Quite Ugly One Morning*

Three characters have been selected with examples from all chapters: the Scottish voices are represented by Parlabane and MacGregor; the English voice is that of Slaughter. Like many crime fiction novels, *QUOM* starts *in medias res*. We find McGregor at the scene: a mutilated body has been discovered, the killer has left excrement and there is vomit all over the floor, left by the postman who discovered the scene. The scene is gruesome to say the least.

Scottish Characters

McGregor

The first voice coming to us is that of McGregor, the Scottish police officer, who is soon to retire. His voice comes to us through the narrator in FID:

Islay. Quiet wee island. Quiet wee polis station. No more of the junkie undead, no more teenage jellyhead stabbings, no more pissed-up rugby fans impaling themselves on the Scott Monument, no more tweed riots in Jenners, and, best of all, no more fucking festival (1).

As we can see, McGregor uses the very Scottish "wee" instead of "small" or "little." This is usually translated with "petit" (or "petite" depending on gender) as in "Naw, wait a wee…" (2) or in the example above. Nevertheless when a diminutive word exists in French this can be used instead as in "wee island" (1) translated as "Un îlot tranquille" (quiet islet) (7).

McGregor also uses "aye" on various occasions to say "yes" as on p. 148 "Aye sorry it's not a pretty sight" translated with "Ouais" (yeah) (216). It is also used to ask questions, e.g. p. 192: "Back door locked, aye?" and in this instance translated as "hein?" (huh?) (273).

McGregor also swears profusely, using various derivatives of "fuck." His first words in direct discourse are actually "Jesus Fuck" (1) translated as "dieu de merde" (god of shit) (7). He uses often "for fuck's sake" (148), for example in "would you slow doon for fuck's sake (189)" and the expression is usually translated using "merde" (shit) as in "tu ne peux pas ralentir, merde?" (can't you slow down, shit) (271). When "fucking" is used in an adjectival position it is usually rendered as "putain", for example "fucking festival" (1) translated literally as "putain de festival" (8) although "merde" is often used as well: "I don't want to fucking know, Jennifer" (212) translated as "I absolutely don't want to know anything about all this shit" (303).[5]

There are slips in register in the French version with the use of less coarse expressions. For instance "You're scaring the fucking shite out of me" (189) which becomes "Tu me fiches la pétoche, voilà ce que tu fais" (you are scaring me, that's what you're doing) (272). However, in the same passage, the translator does try and replicate the register of the source text when "Don't fuckin push it" and "Jesus sufferin' fuck" are translated respectively as "Ah, pousse pas, bordel" (don't push for fuck's sake) and "Jésus, souffrez, nom d'une merde" (Jesus, suffer, in the name of shit) (272), but the latter expression is actually nonsensical in French.

McGregor also uses Scottishisms such as "doon", "shite", "hame" as well as "glaikit" and "heided", for instance when describing PC Gavin Skinner as a "glaikit, baw-faced, irritating, clumsy, thick, ginger-heided bastard" (2). The Scottish words are typically rendered in standard French (e.g. "emmerdes" for "shite") and often toned down, for instance "mine écervelée" (with a mindless face) (10–11) for "glaikit."

Overall McGregor can be said to be slightly less vulgar in French. There is a register loss mostly in terms of geographical background, as Scottishisms are not translated. When regionalisms are mixed with swearing in the source text the translator plays on a single level of register, that is, swearing.

Jack Parlabane

Parlabane first appears in Chapter 2. We find him in his flat suffering from a ghastly hangover. He is alerted by noise outside, goes out to see what is happening and locks himself out. As he tries to regain access to his flat by entering the flat of the murder victim he is caught by the police.

Like Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, Parlabane is a "tough antihero" (Linder 2000: 276). Parlabane swears profusely, uses slang and Scottish dialect particularly when tough-talking. His first word in FID, the interjection "arse" (7) refers to his headache. It is translated as "putain" (fuck) (16) and his first words in direct speech "Thank fuck" (8) are translated as "Merci ducon" (thank you asshole) (17) which sounds as though he is thanking someone although "thank fuck" was not used in this manner.

On quite a few occasions the choice of French swearwords makes him sound old- fashioned. When Parlabane is taken to the station to meet McGregor, he says "Jesus, don't you heat this place" (12) and later he exclaims "Jesus."(89) Both are translated as "De Dieu" (of God) (23, 132). In the same paragraph his remark "nobody ever notices a bloody thing" (17) is translated as "pourquoi diable" (why the devil) (31). And later on when he uses "bloody" in "bloody book" when talking to Slaughter, this is translated as "satané livre" (devilish book) (114). In the same vein, his interjection, "Jesus Christ alfuckin' mighty. What the fuck is that?" (204) is translated as "Dieu de merde tout puissant! Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?" (God of shit almighty, what is this?) (294). On one occasion, Mesplède tries to inject an oral register in his translation: when Parlabane meets Slaughter, who is snooping around in her ex-husband's flat, he tells her "Find what you were looking for?" In French, the voice reproduces some oral patterns: "Z'avez trouvé ce que vous cherchiez?" (Y'found what you are looking for). All these make him sound older than he is and his inflections are those of someone from the countryside, which he is not. This is not really the "accent" one expects for Parlabane: he is not old fashioned; he is gritty.

Like McGregor, Parlabane uses "wee" frequently, as in "a wee padlock" (76) or "a wee bit broken up" (102). When these are translated "petit" or "un peu" (a little) is used but there are many omissions (e.g. 13, 36, 196, 297 and 209).

When "wee" is combined with "shite" it is usually translated as in "slimey wee shite" (38) translated literally as "une vraie petite merde visqueuse" (60). However "shitey remark" (101) is just translated as "ces blagues" (these jokes) (149).

Parlabane uses "fuck" in its various forms. The translator varies the vocabulary and when these are repeated in the same sentence, he usually omits a few. "Fuck" is usually rendered as "merde" (shit) (18, 78, 213) when it is used in as interjection. Parlabane also uses "fuck" as an adjective, for instance in "weird as fuck" which is rendered as "un truc de dingue" (something crazy) (79), and is not vulgar, or as a noun as in "sad fuck" (191), literally translated as "sale con" (274). "Fucking" is also used as adjective and Mesplède translates most retaining the swearing but varying his translations, as in "Mr Fucking Big Hero" (56) which is rendered as "un héros écolo à la con" (a fucking stupid Green hero) (86), "fucking Nobel Prize," as "saloperie de prix Nobel" (fucking Nobel Prize) and "fucking computer" as "putain d'ordinateur" (fucking computer) (57). The tone is sustained but the French translation avoids repeating the word "fuck" and is therefore more varied in its lexical choices.

When talking to his friend Duncan (Chapter 5), Parlabane is in a very bad mood. Mesplède translates all the swearwords in this passage (e.g. "very fucking amusing", 25; "putain je suis mort de rire", 42), although some are admittedly toned down, but only slightly. For instance, "a fucking polis station, Duncan, for Christ's sake" (25) is translated as "D'accord Duncan, mais merde, un commissariat!" (Ok Duncan, but shit, a police station) (41). It is therefore interesting that on occasions when Parlabane is talking to Slaughter, Mesplède markedly tones down the swearing; for instance when he says "Fuck I forgot the chocolates" (141). "Fuck" is translated as "Zut" (shoot) (206), and it is omitted in it is "fucking cold out there."

One of Parlabane's favourite swearwords is "bastard" which he uses to describe himself as a "nosy bastard" (14), or to talk about people and things, as in "bastard's bank statement" (102). Mesplède translates the vulgarity through a variety of terms such as "merde" (27), "ordure" (trash) (274), "enfoirés" (assholes) (155), and "fils de pute" (son of a bitch) (284).

Parlabane also various Scottish words such as "polis" (police) and "polisman" (policeman), "skelf" (slang for a wood splinter), the verb "blether", and "cludgie" (166). "Polis" is translated by the normal "police", "skelf" and "blether" are translated with their standard French equivalent ("échardes", 18, and "discuter", 193) although "cludgie" is translated with the colloquial and vulgar "chiottes" (240). When "pish" is used to refer to urine as in "He wanted water. Not LA's desalinated pish, and not mineral water, but *water* water, freezing cold out a Glasgow tap. Wattur" (163–4), it is translated with the verb "pisser" or the noun "pisse" (piss) (237–8). However, when it is used in

the expression "Enough of this pish" (208) it is rendered as "Assez joué" (enough played) (298) losing the Scottishness. Interestingly "Wattur" (water) in the previous sentence is translated as "De l'ôôôô", playing on the sound of the word "water" in French, "eau". Finally, Parlabane uses the expression "big yin" (big guy) (32) translated as "mon gros" (my big one) (54) conveying the friendliness but not the Scottishness.

On the whole, then, like McGregor, French Parlabane loses his Scottishness, uses a more varied vocabulary and on occasions is less vulgar than its Scottish counterpart.

English Voice: Sarah Slaughter

Slaughter, the victim's ex-wife, appears in Chapter 6. We find her in her ex-husband's flat searching for clues as to what happened to him and Parlabane surprises her. Slaughter has an "English accent with Scottish inflections" (47), she does not use Scottishisms and swears less than McGregor and Parlabane but she does swear nonetheless. When she first meets Parlabane we are told that "[h]er first instinct was to kick the shit out of him" (35) which Mesplède renders more mildly as "lui botter le cul" (kick his ass, 57).

Slaughter also uses "fuck" on various occasions. When Parlabane walks in on her, she asks: "Who the fuck are you?" (36) and again "who the fuck are you?" three times (46). She is playing tough. The first "fuck" is translated as "bordel" (bloody hell) (57), then the repetition of the word "fuck" is not translated, only the questions "who are you" (71–72). However, when she exclaims "fuck your coffee", it is translated as "Allez vous faire foutre, toi et ton café" (go fuck yourself you and your coffee) (72) and when she wants "a fucking straight answer" (54), "fucking" is translated again as "bordel" (83).

Slaughter uses other expletives, as when she calls McGregor a "sod" (con) (74) and then says that her ex-husband's new girlfriend "sucks his cock metaphorically as well as literally" translated as "le pomper, dans tous les sens du terme" (pump him, in every sense of the word) (75), which is less vulgar as the word "cock" is not translated.

When Slaughter tells Parlabane what went wrong with her husband she is emotional and uses quite a few swearwords. Most are not translated, for example, "bugger all they could do" (87) or when they are, they are toned down "fucking feelings" and "the poor bastards" translated as "sacrées émotions" (bloody emotions) (130) and "pauvre bougre" (poor chap) (130). She seems however to be allowed to swear when talking about objects (e.g. the "fucking roast lamb" (88) translated literally as "putain de rôti d'agneau" (131)).

This is not to say that Slaughter never swears in French, she does with "fuck" (105) translated as "merde" (shit) (155) and "he gives a fuck" (110), mistranslated "qu'il en à rien à foutre" (he doesn't give a shit) (163), but she comes across as less vulgar on many occasions. For instance when "fucking bastards" is translated as "ordures" (trash) (208) and "bastard" as "fumier" (trash) (14), a milder version of "salaud" (bastard) used also on the same page.

Very problematically, there is an example of an extremely sexist choice of word for Slaughter when she says that Jeremy "wasn't a total bastard, you must understand, just a rather fucked-up individual." Mesplède translates this as "Tu vois, il n'était pas une ordure finie, juste une salope d'égoïste" (you see he wasn't a total jerk just a bitch of selfish) (132), which is inappropriate for Slaughter's voice.

Concluding Remarks

Brookmyre's work has a strong Scottish voice. This case study has shown that translating regionalisms into French has posed great challenges to Mesplède, who, when faced with challenging examples of dialects and non-standard language, has chosen various options including non-translation (footnotes, in-text explanation, synonyms), partial translation to retain some flavour, and reproducing overtones in the target language (to parallel a degree of emotionality and offensiveness). For instance, Brookmyre's characters use the word "fuck" and derivatives plentifully. In different contexts the word can be seen as obscene, vulgar, and particularly inappropriate. In most cases, Mesplède uses French equivalents denoting and connoting vulgarity and emphasis. However, there seem to be examples of self-censorship for Sarah Slaughter. This could have been motivated by a concern for de-sensitization from over-use, for non-publication or using vocabulary that is too clichéd or mechanical. José Santaemilia explains that "[M]ore often than not, it is the translators themselves who consider their options and, accordingly, exercise an indeterminate series of 'self- censorships'" (Santaemilia 2008: 223) because of external constraints, sexual morality, politics, orthodoxy, racism et cetera. Whether Mesplède's choices are examples of (un-)conscious self-censorship would need to be established by speaking to the translator and publisher. This has not been possible but it is certainly another way to understand further the choices made by translators. In any case, it seems that Mesplède was not willing to transgress what perhaps are his ideas of female representation. Brookmyre has explained that: "I always try to write women characters as honestly as I can. I think that a lot of male crime writers create women as they would like them

to be—fantasy women. It's because they haven't paid attention" (Anonymous 2015: n.p.). Toning down Slaughter could have been Mesplède's attempt at making her sound more like a more polite and less transgressive "fantasy" woman.

Register use in *QUOM* was shown to have at least two functions: swearing and anchoring characters geographically, although it only has one in the target text: swearing. Consequently characters seem to speak and swear homogeneously, with Slaughter being less vulgar in the target text. Clem Robyns (1990) identifies homogenization in English into French translation of crime novels (1950–70s), in terms of intrigue, characters, setting, ideology and narration (time, mode, and voice). Anna Espunya (2014) also finds examples of homogenization realized through shorter descriptions of people, fewer repetitions, and elimination of FID. She claims that these lead to a "loss of immediacy" with the "translation exhibit[ing] a tendency to disambiguation and factuality, even at the cost of rendering [the character] David as more evil-minded than he is in the source text" (Espunya 2014: 204). Events are also not as suspenseful as they were in the original. There are various mistranslations in the French translation of *QUOM*, as well as unidiomatic choices, but discussing these was beyond the scope of this chapter. It would be interesting to study these further to see the impact of mistranslation on characterization. Moreover, there are examples of different types of discourses being used in the TT, such as indirect becoming direct discourse. Also, the text at times is presented differently with paragraphs merged in the French versions; thus not indicating clearly scene changes and flashbacks, or which character is talking. These changes make discourse more homogeneous and compact. It would therefore be interesting to study this homogenization further.

Brookmyre has said that he feels "hostage to the translator" (Brookmyre 2015: n.p.), as translators bring his work to a new culture, and cultural references are very difficult to convey. This echoes what Brigid Maher notes, when discussing English translations of Italian crime fiction, namely a "realisation on Lucarelli's part of the enormous responsibility translators have for an author's fate in a foreign country" (Maher 2014: n.p.). *QUOM* is linguistically and culturally rich and its French translation does simplify the individuality of Brookmyre's voices. The translator Ian Monk explains that "the translator is responsible for creating the feel of the book and the image of the author. It is important to make the work as fluid as possible in order to attract a readership" (Monk n.d.: n.p.). However, instead of fluidity it may perhaps be better to talk about "making the voices plausible" for the target audience, as pointed out by Hannes Meyer (2015: n.p.), Brookmyre's German translator. *QUOM* is strongly anchored in Scotland, Edinburgh in particular, with

many references including places and landmarks. It is clear that the French translation is still set in Scotland as cultural references are always kept through direct translation (e.g. "the C of S" (Church of Scotland) and "Eglise d'Ecosse" (Church of Scotland), 4 and 11), additional explanations or footnotes (e.g. "Tardis", which is kept with a translator's note explaining what a Tardis is, 2 and 9). Additionally, Slaughter's name is actually translated as Dr. Bouchery (Dr Butchery), to keep the play on words.

David Bellos (2012: 41) comments that:

> [I]f a detective novel set in Paris makes its characters speak and think in entirely fluent English—even while they plod along the Boulevard Saint-Germain, drink Pernot and scoff a *jarret de porc aux lentilles*—then something must be wrong. Where's the bonus in having a French detective novel for bedtime reading unless there's something French about it? Don't we want our French detectives to sound French?

Translating locations is one thing but translating regionalisms and dialectal varieties is not as straightforward as Bellos intimates. In her discussion of how Italian crime fiction novels can be translated into English for an Australian audience, Maher (2014) points out that when trying to respect the essence of the original tone in translation it is not only the language which needs to be adapted to the new audience. Indeed, a translated novel set in a specific location ought ideally to retain the connotations of the places used in the original story while at the same time still making sense for a target audience. This is something that is noticeable in the French translation of *QUOM*: we do get a sense of Scotland but the language and Scottishisms are distilled so that they make sense to the target audience. As Halliday puts it, dialects cannot be translated; "we can only mimic dialect variation" (Halliday 2002: 169). Do we really want French Parlabane to sound Scottish? And if so how can this be done in the French context. Federici tells us that "[t]here may be a literary and translation future in which experimentation with dialects and regional languages is perceived more in terms of a creative opportunity than in terms of a mere linguistic challenge" (Federici 2011: 20). Mesplède has tried on a couple of occasions to keep the oral dimension of the Scottish register but overall Scottishness is lost in translation.

This single holistic case study set out to show how voices are mediated in translation since they address a different audience in a different context. Ultimately, I hope that it can inspire readers to reflect further on the voices present in a source text and target text. Case studies of this kind should help carry on disrupting commonly held views that translation is a transparent

mechanical act, that translations replace originals and that translators are or should be invisible. Anderson (2014) concludes that the strategies used by the English translator of Malet have restricted the reception of the French author in Britain because stylistic expectations of the genre in English seem to have shaped the translation. She adds that "translators still need to hear the unique voice of each writer and to transmit that voice as best they can" (Anderson 2014: n.p.). I would also conclude that Brookmyre's carefully crafted voices in *QUOM* still need to be fully unveiled in translation and that, when possible, this revelation requires more collaborative work between author and translator, which is also highlighted by Maher (2014).

Notes

1. *A Big Boy did it and Ran Away* (2001), *The Sacred Art of Stealing* (2002), *All Fun and Games until Someone Loses an Eye* (2005) and *The Attack of the Unsinkable Rubber Ducks* (2007).
2. Mesplède also translated *Country of the Blind* (1997), which was later revised by Catherine Boudigues (Boudigues and Mesplède 2001).
3. For further information about the three metafunctions please consult Simpson (1993) and Bosseaux (2007).
4. For further information see for instance Baker (2011), Hatim and Mason (1997) and Bosseaux (2007, 2015).
5. 'Je ne veux absolument rien savoir de toute cette merde.'

References

Anderson, J. (2014) 'Hardboiled or Overcooked? Translating the Crime Fiction of Léo Malet', in J. Evans, K. Seago and B. Rodriguez de Céspedes (eds) *JosTrans* (Special issue on Crime in Translation) 22: 28–43.

Anonymous (2015) Christopher Brookmyre in a World According to Women (*The Herald*, http://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/13196531.Christopher_Brookmyre_in_a_world_according_to_women/) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Baker, M. (2011) *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* London: Routledge**.**

Bellos**,** D. (2012) *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation*, London: Penguin.

Berman, A. (2000) 'Translation and the Trials of the Foreign', in L. Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 284–297.

Boltanski, L. (2012) *Enigmes et complots: une enquête à propos d'enquêtes* (Enigmas and Conspiracies : an Investigation Regarding Investigations), Paris: Gallimard.

Bosseaux, C. (2015) *Dubbing, Film and Performance: Uncanny Encounters*, Oxford: Peter Lang.

Bosseaux, C. (2007) *How Does It Feel: Point of View in Translation*, Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Brookmyre, C. (1996) *Quite Ugly One Morning*, London: Abacus.

Brookmyre, C. (1997) *Country of the Blind*, London: Abacus.

Brookmyre, C. (2001) *A Big Boy did it and Ran Away*, London: Little Brown

Brookmyre, C. (2002) *The Sacred Art of Stealing*, London: Abacus.

Brookmyre, C. (2005) *All Fun and Games until Someone Loses an Eye*, London: Little Brown

Brookmyre, C. (2007) *The Attack of the Unsinkable Rubber Ducks*, London: Little Brown

Brookmyre, C. (2015) Interview with Charlotte Bosseaux (University of Edinburgh, http://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/translation-studies/events/whose-voice-is-it-anyway/translation-and-interpreting-context/conversation) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Brumme, J. (2014) 'The Narrator's Voice in Translation: What Remains from a Linguistic Experiment', in Wolf Haas's Brenner Detective Novels" in S. M. Cadera and A. Pintaric (eds) *The Voices of Suspense and Their Translation in Thrillers*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 161–176.

Boudigues, C. and Mesplède, N. (2001) *Le Royaume des aveugles* (The Kingdom of the Blinds), Paris: Gallimard.

Carter, E. (2014) 'Why not Translate Metaphor in French Crime Fiction? The Case of Caryl Férey's *Utu*', in J. Evans, K. Seago, B. Rodriguez de Céspedes (eds) *JosTrans* (Special issue on Crime in Translation) 22: 44–56.

Chan, L. T. (2010) *Readers, Reading and Reception of Translated Fiction in Chinese: Novel Encounters*, Manchester: St. Jerome.

Cleeves, A. (2014) The Top 10 Crime Novels in Translation (*The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/22/top-10-crime-novels-translation-ann-cleeves-scandinavia-montalbano) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Díaz Alarcón, S. (2014) 'The voices of suspense and the French detective novel: Alain Demouzon's *Melchior*', in S. M. Cadera and A. Pintaric (eds) *The Voices of Suspense and Their Translation in Thrillers*: Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 61–75.

Desnain, V. (2015) 'Présentation' (Presentation) *Itinéraires* (Special issue on Le polar en Europe: réécritures du genre [Thrillers in Europe: Genre Rewritings]): 2014 (3): 1–3.

Espunya, A. (2014) 'Shifting Points of View: the Translation of Suspense-building Narrative Style', in S. M. Cadera and A. Pintaric (eds) *The Voices of Suspense and Their Translation in Thrillers*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 193–206.

Federici, F. M. (2011) 'Introduction: Dialects, Idiolects, Sociolects: Translation Problems or Creative Stimuli?', in F. M. Federici (ed.) *Translating Dialects and Languages of Minorities: Challenges and Solutions*, Oxford: Peter Lang, pp. 1–10.

Gieben, B. E. (2014) Review of Bedlam by Christopher Brookmyre (*The Skinny*, http://www.theskinny.co.uk/books/book-reviews/bedlam-by-christopher-brookmyre) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Halliday, M.A. K. (1970) 'Language Structure and Language Function', in J. Lyons (ed.) *New Horizons in Linguistics*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 140–165.

Halliday, M.A.K. (2002). 'The Construction of Knowledge and Value in the Grammar of Scientific Discourse: with Reference to Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species', in J. J. Webster (ed.) *Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse*, Volume 2 in the Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday, London and NY: Continuum, pp. 168–192.

Hatim, B and I. Mason (1997) *The Translator as Communicator*, London: Routledge.

Johnston, J. (2013), Christopher Brookmyre (Ayr writer's club, http://ayrwritersclub.co.uk/christopher-brookmyre-25th-september-2013/) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Linder, D. (2000) 'Translating Slang in Detective Fiction', *Perspectives* 8:4: 275–287.

Literati Girl (2016) Review of Brookmyre's *Quite Ugly One Morning* (Online blog, https://literati-girl.com/2016/04/20/quite-ugly-one-morning-by-christopher-brookmyre-atoz/) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Mackinven, H. (2015) Christopher Brookmyre: Exceptions to the Rule (Online blog, https://helenmackinven.wordpress.com/tag/christopher-brookmyre/?iframe=true&preview=true) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Maher, B. (2014) 'The Mysterious Case of Theory and Practice: Crime Fiction in Collaborative Translation", in J. Evans, K. Seago and B. Rodriguez de Céspedes (eds) *JosTrans* (Special issue on Crime in Translation) 22: 132–156.

Mesplède, N. (1998) *Un matin de chien* (A Dog's Morning), Paris: Gallimard.

Meyer, H. (2015) Interview with Charlotte Bosseaux (University of Edinburgh, http://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/translation-studies/events/whose-voice-is-it-anyway/translation-and-interpreting-context/conversation) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Monk, I. (n.d.) Foreign Crime Fiction: The Translators Unedited (Interview with Bob Cornwell, http://www.crimetime.co.uk/mag/index.php/showarticle/3115) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Robyns, C. (1990) 'The Normative Model of Twentieth Century "Belles Infidèles": Detective Novels in French Translation', *Target* 2:1: 23–42.

Santaemilia, J. (2008) 'The Translation of Sex-Related Language: The Danger(s) of Self Censorship(s)', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction* 21 (2): 221–252.

Seago, K. (2014). 'Introduction and Overview: Crime (Fiction) in Translation', *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 22: 2–14.

Simpson, P. (1993) *Language, Ideology and Point of View*, London: Routledge.

Smith, D. (2006) Denise Mina and the Rise of Scottish Detective Fiction, *New York Times*, (http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/22/arts/22mina.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1) [accessed 24/03/2017].

Susam-Sarajeva, Ş. (2009) 'The Case Study Research Method in Translation Studies', in I. Mason (ed.) *Training for Doctoral Research,* special issue of *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer (ITT)*: 37–56.