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Heterolingual and heterophonic intertextuality in a few texts written and performed by “rappers”

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Once upon a time …
In these backwards times of our civilization, totally lacking good sounds, France is divided, France is torn … So a band of tchos,[1] *boys from afar, from distant countries, from nations of carbon mines and muddy cobblestones, come with a mysterious sound: a music that they are ready to play in public for a nice, hot meal. Here we are at the table. In the band there are two bad leader fanatics that talk a lot, that talk too much! They talk of popular music and deep France but, just between us, those two don’t seem very French! People are quick to lose their heads. What would he be like that he’s so often wronged and betrayed? Never mind, after a gargantuan burp, one of the travellers say the barbaric incantation* “el-hamdoulillah”*, what could that really mean? The fact is that after this they begin to play …*

(MAP, introduction to the album *Debout là d’dans*)[2]

During the workshop “The languages of the Banlieue” held at the Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers, the subject of translation has been oriented, little by little, around the question of reprise-modification as a constitutive dialogic process of all wording and all discourse, whatever type it may be.[3] In fact, reflections on different corpuses proposed by the participants (films, songs, performances and written texts) highlighted the constitutive heterogeneity of the word in act in our relationship to the world and to others, of the word in its function as semiotization of thought. Talking about “reprise-modification” is remembering that the borders of a language are not so much natural givens as constructions made in and through discourse. Adopting this point of view, we can agree with Rainier Grutman that “there is no single and indivisible Saussurean *Langue*, there are only *diatopic* (dialects), *diastratic* (sociolects), *diaphasic* (registers) and *diachronic* (the states of language) *varieties*”.[4] Even more, it is possible to give up the obsession with authentic expression and perfect adequacy to consider, with François, that “language is a *mask*”.[5] Translation, resolutely considered as reprise-modification, requires a double theoretical and practical approach. As Meschonnic affirmed, “a theory of the translation of texts is necessary, not as a speculative activity, but as a theoretical practice”.[6]

We chose to explore the notion of heterolinguism through texts written and performed by “young” rappers, in particular those from Maghreb immigration.[7] We have voluntarily limited our analysis to a few examples, without claiming to understand the whole of the phenomenon called “rap”. We take into consideration, as much as possible, both the textual and performative dimension of the selected songs, which share the common point of showing the co-presence of two or more languages. The posture manifested by

these rappers invite us, from a sociological and not merely linguistic point of view, to work against a whole series of stereotyped discourses on "the language of the youth" and the sociolinguistic realities of the "*banlieue*".[8]

The visibility of languages as "others"[9]

The choice of our corpus was oriented, initially, toward the texts and performances in which a language is shown as "other" in a spectacular manner. In fact, Rainier Gruntman defines heterolinguism as "the presence *in a text* of foreign idioms in any form, including varieties (social, regional or chronological) of the main language".[10] This means that the songs analyzed do not translate: they rub languages against each other more than they substitute one language for another.

Even if linguistic wholes or snippets allow themselves to be perceived as "others" because they are constructed in opposition to other languages, it is impossible to claim the rigorous circumscription of the respective territories of languages. These languages, in fact, do not allow themselves to be confined to the representation by a discourse about the "other" (for example in the comments reported), nor to the borders of instituted codes (be they national or dialectical). In other words, "foreign" languages are not systematically attributable to "other" speakers, nor are they easily identifiable. The importance given to the *visibility* of a language as other, and therefore to the effect produced on the receiver, invites us to discuss rather a heterolingual *address* than heterolinguism. The advantage of the dimension of *address* is that it doesn't presuppose the identity of codes nor the transparence of language.[11]

In collective performances, the repartition of languages can be made between artists. Thus, in "*Entre deux*", Sniper essentially sings in French and Leila Rami in Arabic – but not exclusively.[12] The title indicates a situation of radical exteriority where discourses of the exclusion of the two sides resonate. The refrain sung by Leila Rami, continually repeating "*qalouli 3erbi*" / "*qalouli roumi*" (*I was "called" Arab / French*), insists on the imposition of identity by the discourse of the other. The co-presence of the two languages, French and Arabic, produces the tear between two identities imposed from outside.

The performance permits passing off a language as foreign when it really isn't. The group HK et Les Saltimbanks' song "*La Maman*"[13] fictionally delegates the words of the mother who expresses herself in French but with a phonetic articulation (*la boulice, li biTises = la police, les bêtises*)[14] and "erroneous" syntactic twists (*faut pas chercher complication / j'occupe de toi tous les jours*), [15] letting one suppose that, for the non-arabophone French listener, it's may be about hearing the language of the other under or through French.

The other language can be presented in an indexed way and sprinkle the discourse of a single speaker who can keep the other at a distance – like in Axiom's and MAP's "*Des youyous dans ma mairie*",**[16]** where the refrain poses a "we" face to face with a series of terms put on the same level of foreignness: "*Dans ma mairie ya des fat'mas et des youyous / Des foulards, des babouches et des boubous / Des Voyous, des Zoubida, des Mamadou / Au s'cours, on n'est plus chez nous!*".[17] There are even alternating codes to give the sense of a dialogue. "*Lille Ma Médina*" also by Axiom successively shows three emigrant generations and varies the sense of belonging between the grandfather Mohamed ("*J'vais choisir la fille la plus*

Mgedda, p't-être pas la plus zwina / Loin de Lille, Lille **la** *médina*"), [18] the father Hicham ("*Je choisirai p't-être pas la fille la plus zwina / Mais elle sera de Lille, Lille* **ma** *médina*")[19] and the unborn boy, Tarek ("*Et j'choisirai la femme la plus zwina / Loin d'cette maudite ville, Lille* **la** *médina!*").**[20]** The adjective "*zwina*" (beautiful, pretty) and the word "*médina*", depending on whether it is preceded by the determiner "*la*" [the] or "*ma*" [my], circulate to better underline the life path of each person and the distance that separates them at the same time. The force of these "attracting" words, taken from Arabic, alone condense the way of inhabiting the world and subtly mark not only the movements of geographic displacement but also changes in thinking.

The distinction of codes and identities is not watertight and songs operate on different levels, for example *Verlan***[21]** or English as in "*Entre Deux*": "*v'la l'étranger dans le saloon*"[22] and later, "*te-trai sont des zin-cous pas de peace*".[23] The album "*Des youyous dans ma mairie*" thus forges hétérolingual wordplays: "*ils mettent la mairie sens dessus-d'souks*".[24]

This (too) brief typology allows us to make at least two conclusions. The first is that these songs resist any presupposed monolinguism, revealing subjects whose norm is the co-presence of different languages-cultures. If the question of identity is posed in binary terms (or / or), the question of "*Langue*", instead, is not one, exclusive. The second conclusion is that the question of choosing "*Langue*" covers, in reality, a problematic of the reprise-reformulation of the already-said. It isn't about folding heterolinguism (difference of languages) over heterophony (diversity of voices),[25] nor of systematically identifying foreign language and others' speaking, and even less of motivating the

change in code by a change in voice, but of showing that the heterolingual address suggests the rustling of interdiscourse.

From the point of view of creativity, these texts show, in a "practical" way, intertextuality made possible by the reprise-modification of languages and discourses that go beyond what we can think of as a theory of translation.

Interdiscourse, heterophony's underlying theme

Whether the "other" language be attributed to others or not, whether it be actualized or evoked by mimic or accent – it's always a *speaking out* that is observed, starting from an already present discourse. This speech is manifested here as a place, an instance of enunciation where it is difficult to separate the source, the intention and the theme of the discourse. The genre of the speaking subject and where his/her address originates exceed the question of the "*Langue*". This polyphonic discourse, in the strong sense of the term, largely consists in a reprise of discourses that circulate particularly across the media, be they oral or written. These discourses, mainly produced by "authorized" voices and belonging to a *discursive formation* of a political order, are reprised by the voice of young rappers and returned in a critical and ironic form to those who first produced them. This *performative* act thus counters the one that imposes discriminatory borders between languages and cultures, creating the conditions for its reception through the production of an audience able to understand. This can be seen in the text of "*La Maman*" where the rapper-narrator puts dialogues and commentaries of numerous protagonists in the same discursive space, like in a novel (mother, president, police ...):

> "La maman elle a parlé, elle a bien parlé, et tout l'monde
> il applaudit. La maman elle a parlé, elle a bien parlé

> Ya mon fils a la télé, le président il a parlé, la dit c'est pas bien le chômage, tous les jeunes i doivent travailler, la dit faut faire du nettoyage, en France ya trop d'étrangers .
> Ya mon fils t'as vu j'avais raison, quand j'te dit faut faire attention,
> Moi j'dis ici on n'est pas chez nous, faut pas chercher complication,
> et si tu fais li 400 coups, ça oui i vont t'renvoyer dans l'avion.
> Ya mon fils ya la boulis elle est venue à la misou, elle a dit Tafidibitiz
> Qu't'es un mouvi garçon Ti vas y aller à la prison
> Ya mon fils j'comprends pas, Moi j'tai donné toujours d'l'amour
> J'occupe de toi tous les jours, Pourquoi la boulis vient chez moi
> J'occupe de toi tous les jours, Pourquoi la boulis elle parle comme ça?
> La police elle a parlé, elle à pas bien parlé, ils ont pas dit pas "sivous pli"."[26]

The heterolinguality here defines the presence of an *enunciation* (in the Foucaultian sense) under the *Langue*. It brings inside itself an auto-translation or a lining that is both present and hidden (like a coat liner), it supports and gives form to the apparent, exterior text. Here, there is a double-faced discursive tissue; a non-identical double reality, cut from the same mold but that cannot be confused with it.

The intertext might be identifiable, like it is in the case of Axiom's "*Ma Lettre Au Président*"[27] where he uses the refrain of a Boris Vian song: "*Monsieur le Président, je vous écris une lettre, une lettre que vous lirez peut-être / Monsieur le Président, je vous écris une lettre,*

Dans les rues, la sixième république vient de naître".[28] The source can remain anonymous without the intertextual function being affected since the listener is invited to assume the presence of a hypertext – the latter to being unknown.[29]

Each of the songs is likely to produce a *returning reprise modification* through which it is said: "You, the other – I send your discourse, your perception, your prejudices back to you, I paly with them and I enjoy them". So, "*Des youyous dans ma mairie*" opens to the refrain cited above before suggesting an immediately discredited parental voice:

„Fichtre ma fille va épouser un moricaud le coq crie "youyou" au lieu de "cocorico"
elle s'est mise en tête de se convertir aux joies de l'autre camp
j'aurais encore préféré que ce soit un mariage blanc et je les vois on dirait des gitans."**[30]**

The irony of modifying the rooster's crow, symbol of a certain Frenchness, of the wordplay between "*mariage 'blanc'*"[31] (and, a little later: "*Dans ma mairie y a des mariages entre blancs et même entre gris*")[32] as well as the amalgam of all the "foreigners" (*youyous / gitans*) is a way of trapping discourse to return the violence. Beyond ordinary racism, echoes of outrageous political figures are also heard – Jacques Chirac, in this case, in his "Orléans speech"[33] – relayed by the media: "*On est envahi par des indigènes de la brousse*".[34] Irony, in the protest, reclaims the disdainful words of others and reuses them in a discourse that is re-contextualized in a different way through affirmation and voice.

At the same time that this violence is returned, it is also about showing what we can see through another's eyes, through the gaze of the other. Even more, it is about making a voice heard.

Bakhtine well demonstrates that "prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language [...] but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own".[35] While all words blaze a trail for a voice to stand out on the backdrop of interdiscourse, the task is more arduous for those who don't benefit from a situation of enunciation perceived as legitimate. In "*Entre Deux*", Sniper doesn't seem to find any space of legitimacy to speak (of himself), no more in France that is his "country of origin", the "village" [*bled*], where he is asked who he is without giving him the possibility of speaking ("chaque été dès que tu m'vois, tu dis '*chkoune*'? [*who is it?*]").[36]

The imaginary of languages

If it is correct to bring the heterolinguism of interdiscourse, polyphony and intertextuality closer together, it might be wise to not completely retract the imaginary of "*Langue*". In a country that, through a constitutional revision in 1992 of article 2 of its *Constitution,* specified that "The language of the Republic is French", it might be useful to remember Henri Meschonnic's words:

"From one language, any language, there are only discourses. It is this truism that must be enunciated, even braving the ridiculous – but the genious and the clarity of French are there to remind us that it is not useless: that the mode of existence of a language and the mode of existence of discourse are radically different."[37]

The title of the work *Les céfrans parlent aux français*[38] says enough that it is never sure of knowing *which French* is spoken when we speak *French*. In an article published in 2005 on the

website of *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, Aziz Daki analyzes the production of received ideas on "*langue*":

Each time they report on attacks, hostage situations or executions by beheading, western television networks show Arabic characters. [...] Repetition makes reputation. And by dint of the association between Arabic and death, attacks and dismembered bodies, not only do the television networks forge the reputation of a violent language but also makes it nearly anaphoric of the cursed, archaic and barbaric part of this century.[39]

Whether he is right or not, it cannot be denied that a certain media discourse – and even a certain social discourse – willingly labels this or that language as having this or that intrinsic characteristic. What is it in our corpus?

The text of the rappers studied insist more than once on the traumatic moment that constitutes the rupture between the first order of recognition, the one of the gift of love, in particular a mother's love, and the meeting with the exterior, above all with scholastic institutions.[40] Thus, elementary school, for Said (MAP) and Magyd Cherfi,[41] was experienced as a place of the *internalization of humiliation* and the collapse of positive representations elaborated by the parents and transmitted to their children. This traumatic rupture generally conducts them toward scholastic failure and exclusion, provoking an even more traumatizing rupture: that of losing love. The child is thus "nowhere", dispossessed. He or she is seen as *incapable* by both parties. The gift of recognizing love and the gift of recognizing the subject as *capable* are, in fact, cancelled.[42] This is what HK et Les Saltimbanks, among others, put into words:

> "Ya mon fils j'comprends pas / Moi j'tai donné toujours d'l'amour / J'occupe de toi tous les jours / Pourquoi la boulis vient chez moi / J'occupe de toi tous les jours / Pourquoi la boulis elle parle comme ça?"[43]

and Axiom:

> "à la maison on parle l'arabe et en dehors le français / Je suis l'fils de Mohamed, à l'école, faut toujours qu'j'sois le premier/ Ma mère aurait voulu qu'j'sois docteur / Je suis l'aîné donc tu vois, j'ai pas l'droit à l'erreur / Mais savait-elle comment on nous parlait dehors?!"[44]

In effect, the songs willingly give to understand the relationship to school as a trauma, suggesting a difficult relationship to others and, consequently, to the "*Langue*". "*Lille Ma Médina*" evokes school to the second generation ("*Je suis l'fils de Mohamed, à l'école, faut toujours qu'j'sois le premier*")[45] and to the third ("*J'suis en privé, j'travaille bien à l'école*").[46] Tounsy's "*Déraciné*"[47] is even more explicit on the feeling of a grammatized and institutionalized language: "*c'est triste j'ai dû apprendre sa grammaire*".[48] Multiple examples could be given.

Provided, neither the texts nor their performances go back to the idea of a "genius" of the *Langue* nor a preference for any "mother tongue" – an ideologically easy trope in discourse, including the one that Louis-Jean Calvet and Lia Varela qualify as "linguistic-politically correct".[49]

For a heterophonic reception. Another effort.

Probably, an effort is asked of the listener and, even more so, of the critic to not react with hostility to the effect of encryption that is produced by these heterolingual addresses. "*Entre Deux*" is only

partially comprehensible for a non-arabophone French speaker. Listening is nonetheless possible if one doesn't try to understand everything and, above all, by adopting an kind of listening that is similar to what Glissant calls "the imaginary of languages" – that doesn't suppose mastering any great number of languages but rather the will to think of them as a network:

"When I speak of multilinguism, someone immediately asks me: "Ah! Yes, how many languages do you speak"? It is not a question of speaking languages, that's not the problem. We can speak no other languages than our own. Rather, it is the way of speaking our own language, of speaking it in a closed or open way; speaking in the ignorance of the presence of other languages or in the prescience that other languages exist and that they influence us even if we don't realize it. It isn't a question of science, of knowing languages, but a question of the imaginary of languages. And, consequently, it isn't a question of juxtaposing languages, but of networking them."[50]

In this way, the glossary of MAP's two albums that brings us many critical definitions, like a space of "translation", a place of "juncture" articulating "*Ch'ti*",[51] Maghreb Arabic and French. These ironic definitions also translate a point of view, a sociological and political interpretation. Through this glossary, the authors link, indirectly, the hegemony of normed French and the marginalization that it produces, de facto, of these other ignored minority languages. Here are a few examples: "*Hamdoullah*: incantation that means something like 'Thank you God' or 'Praise God'", "*Ch'ti*: native of muddy country and coal mines [i.e. northern France]", "*Jenlain*: a non-halal beverage", "*Socialo*: an endangered species", "*Manich menna*: I am not here"; "*P'tit pouchins*: a baby chicken, a chick, in *Ch'ti*", "*Salam alayk*: expression meaning 'peace be with you'".

Probably, it would be the case to get rid of the belief in the "genius" of language and ask, along with Lüdi, "when will a linguistics for which the case of reference, the prototype, will no longer be the mono-language ideal-locutor, but the real, plurilingual listener"?[52]

Between oral and written

While rap texts seem to belong, at first glance, to a *first genre* of ordinary and daily language, their textual and poetic presentation transforms them into *second genre*.[53] This is due, in the first place, to their performative and chronotopical dimension, of their belonging to their own space of enunciation. This is also equally due to their media communicability and their repeatability. In the latter, the whole of this "rap" production constitutes an *enunciation* having a "modality of existence proper [...] a modality that allows it to be something more than a series of traces, something more than a succession of marks on a substance, something more than a mere object made by a human being; a modality that allows it to be in relation with a domain of objects, to prescribe a definite position to any possible subject, to be situated among other verbal performances, and to be endowed with a repeatable materiality."[54]

While in the ordinary and daily *oral* conversations of plurilingual subjects the mix and presence of different languages are held in the flux of discourse just like the movements of discourse are held in a single language, this is not the case when the word is subjected to an act of writing that supposes reflexivity and distancing. In writing, the change and passage from the other language is a *place-sign*. It's author, beyond the illocutionary force of his argument, is also, in someway, in control of his perlocutionary reach and destiny. In the course of theatrical performance, through mimics,

gestures and interpretation, the author partially delivers the aims and meanings of the "intentioned" sense through the passage to the other language.

The play of interpretation and the interpretation of play are "mentioned" not only through the form and sense of the word but also convene the other *spheres of significations* in social life. These spheres, from bubbles of historical events that cross and are crossed, since they are uttered in another language, necessarily challenge the listener.

The rapper who performs the act of writing and singing, motivated by his/her desire to be acknowledged as a citizen by saying, "I am standing and I am speaking (to you)", finds him/herself in the same way an interpreter for those who don't have "voice". Rap is implicitly associated with the question of representation in "*Des youyous dans ma mairie*", through the intermediary of a received discourse about the France soccer team:

> "C'est comme cette équipe de France que des noirs et un bougnoule
> Ca écoute du rap et ça mange de la semoule
> De quel droit du rap massacre la marseillaise oui de quel droit ces voyous représentent la nation française ?"[55]

The performance actualizes the texts and adjusts them to the most recently understood discourse and from one concert to the next there are variations that take into account the circumstances of the specific space and audience.[56] For these rappers, the musical scene
is not only the place of performance, they also institute it as a *forum for debate*. And beginning from this space, they remember and claim, in one way or another, their multiple belongings,

playing with *Langues* and languages through words instituted as *acts*; acts that aspire to be *forms of life*.

Through their speech acts, certain rappers don't claim the status of artist, they want to occupy a place and assume a posture equal to a political activist. "I look for a political identity, not an identity that is French or other", one of the rappers from the MAP group tells us, "I claim a legitimation of my existence as a citizen equal to everyone else". But not only, since their words are also addressed to their communities of origin.

Constitutive heterophony and a heterolingualism

In her work on the concrete forms of the representation of the discourse of others, Jacqueline Authier-Revuz affirms that no discourse can make the constitutive heterogeneity of the enunciating subject visible: "this phantasm of updating, reflexive, for a given discourse, of its own constitutive heterogeneity [...] would come back, after all, to the annulation of heterogeneity in a totally self-contained discourse".[57] Thus it seems possible to consider that the songs analyzed represent, if indeed they don't make it heard, this constitutive heterogeneity of all speaking subjects.

The language procedures used in rap texts are first of all characterized by their intertextuality: proverbial reprises, fixed and idiomatic expressions, a style of writing like "historic documents" (see the introductive text to MAP's album *Debout la-d'dans*, cited above), reprise of words from other songs, reprise of words from common Arabic speech and passages in Spanish or fixed forms from English. All of these elements play on the "as if", a procedure that engages a doubly metaphorical dialogue.

The creators of these texts endlessly play on *changing appearances*, on form and sense. They invite us to understand and see, under the reprise-modification of fixed forms, the rise of a new sense. The discursive tissue of these texts, borrowing forms and senses from other literary and semiotic forms is, in fact, constitutively dialogical and heterophone. The reappropriation of these *pre-existing* discourses and reinvesting them in the framework of verbal rap performance, as a genre and social practice, through a heterolingual intertextuality, makes these "words of others", these "already occupied words" (as Bakhtin says), constantly suspended. Since they bring an opening to the horizon of these words, a space that heterolingual intertextuality both reaffirms and modifies.

Heterolingual address and peer dialogue

The ironic intention, between humor and questioning, common to these different rap singers is that their reflections imply constant reflexivity: from self to self, from self to other, thus manifesting a positioning inside/outside to which the wordplay attests.

What is striking about these texts is the reflexive dimension of their word, which denotes that they are acutely aware that the natural movement of languages and cultures put into contact is their transformation into one and the other; also because they are conscious of the effect that the imposition of the dominant language, tied to other privileges from a socio-political point of view, produces. This is why they don't talk about rejecting that language but, on the contrary, want to seize it and master it to "stay awake" and be able to respond.

Through numerous texts we find that certain rappers listen and know each others' words; they evaluate and judge the "political" engagement of their peers. They speak and respond through their

texts. From this point of view, a kind of "community" can be seen, analogous to the sphere constituted by political parties: they speak in favor or against, they push for or they oppose. Through their critiques, they show that their sympathies or refusals are resolutely of a political order and not ethnic, cultural or linguistic. In a word, they practice verbal democracy.

These are, above all, discourses destined to be heard and communicated. It is an insisting *address*, a call whose incessant repetition is only the counterpart of the continuous and weighty interpellation and the discourse measured against them, dispossessing them of the "possibility of speaking" in order to inhabit the world other than being *invisible*.

Speaking out is thus vital. That this speech isn't received and understood is less important than the dignity that it gives to those who make it, who forge it to become a "*3âqil*", a human subject: "in opening the horizon of the nameable and of the sayable, the speech acknowledged that it has its place in that horizon; because no locutor speaks without making himself in advance allocutary, *be it only for himself;* because with one sole gesture he closes the circuit of his relation to himself and that of his relation to the others and, with the same stroke, also sets himself up as *delocutary,* speech of which one speaks: he offers himself and offers every speech to a universal Speech."[58]

And this work is the one that each and everyone, situated as an individual and thus speaking as a person, invents their own life. Discourse being that in which and through which a person becomes active, with the obligation since he/she thinks and puts those thoughts into words. Heterolingual discursiveness is not, from this point of view, anything but the most visible form of all semiotic processes.

From acknowledgement to representation, as a conclusion

The granted visibility of the "other" language through heterolingual address invites us to interrogate the political device of representativeness. Nothing would be more incorrect than to believe that the solution would consist in a simple application of the principle of "visibility". Are the self-elected "representatives of visible minorities" really representative of those who are deprived of voice? Or are we really dealing with a notion of representation gone awry, one that becomes a way to take samples and no longer a delegation? It seems to us that the visibility demanded by the corpus, far from posing a necessary resemblance between the represented and the representative, makes the possibility of speaking *like* another in the strongest sense of the term, i.e. *as* another. And this is whether it be in the name of another or in one's own, since the suspicion that weighs on representation only makes sense in an ontological conception of the subject: it is invoking the authenticity of the real presence that we reject the substitute incarnated in the spokesperson.[59] On the contrary, postulating a constitutive heterogeneity allows us to imagine different legitimate forms of representation.[60]

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[1] A speaker of *Ch'ti*, a French dialect spoken in the north of France, particularly in Lille.

[2] "*Start Inside There*".

[3] The interest of this notion found in the work of F. François lies in the fact that it accents the circulation of the word and what it supposes as community difference between the body and texts or discourse. It accents the dialogue of semiotics considered as a space

of play. From this point of view, the movements of displacement, sliding and world and genre change imply that variation is what characterizes the dialogic dimension of language. "Talking about reprise-modification", the author tells us, "calls back to the fact that there is never imitation of the identical: when a gesture changes hand, when a word changes mouth, they become others" [our translation]. But this becoming is in some way multiplied in the case of the language of rappers through the presence of different languages and necessarily renewed performances.

[4] Rainier Grutman, "Le bilinguisme comme relation intersémiotique", in *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature,* XVII (3-4), 1990, p. 199 [our translation].

[5] "L'enfant monolingue existe-t-il ? Le point de vue d'un linguiste", in *Nouvelle Revue d'Ethnopsychiatrie*, n. 25 /26 pp. 155–164, 1994 [our translation].

[6] Henri Meschonnic, "Texts on Translation" in *Target,* 15(2), 2003, pp. 337-353.

[7] While the French phrase "issus de l'immigration" [in the original text] was refused at a certain moment, up to erasing their visible identity ("in order to remain unnoticed" as Said, the lyricist of the group MAP, put it), today it seems that, on the contrary, there is a claim being made to this visibility in a desire to renew the path of their parents and/or grandparents that immigrated. They want not only to reappropriate the term "immigration" but also the term "native", not wishing to leave it to the lips of those who would like to designate them as such, but rehabilitating the term in a new sense.

[8] This term is being used here in the generic sense used in the mainstream media. But neither Axiom nor the group MAP, for example, are from the *banlieue* but instead from Lille and Roubaix, respectively.

Translator's note: *Banlieues* are translated as "suburbs", as these are also residential areas on the outer edge of a city, but the connotations of the term "*banlieue*" in France can be different from those in English-speaking countries. The "suburbs" in the United States, for instance, are generally associated with low population density, detached or semi-detached housing and middle and upper class inhabitants. On the other hand, in France *banlieues* are more frequently areas of low-income apartments and social housing. Thus, the equivalent of *banlieues* in the United States would be "the projects". In the UK, the equivalent would be a "council estate". The term *banlieue* itself comes from the two French words *ban* and *lieue* ("league", or roughly four kilometers).

[9] Amina Bensalah listened to numerous albums and watched many videos of several rappers (both solo and group acts). She also transcribed many of their texts. Certain texts are included in the pamphlets that accompany the albums or are on the websites of certain rappers. Our analysis in this article takes into account this large corpus and not only the extracts that are presented here.

[10] Rainier Grutman, *Des langues qui résonnent. L'hétérolinguisme au XIX^{ème} siècle québécois*, Fides, Québec, 1997, p. 37 [our translation].

[11] Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity,* University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1997, p. 8.

[12] The song "*Entre deux*" ["Between Two"] is on the album entitled *Gravé dans la roche*, [*Written in Stone*], 2003.

[13] "*The Mother*" [translator's note].

[14] The police, nonsense [traslator's note].

[15] Literally "shouldn't look for complication / I take care of you every day" [translator's note].

[16] "*Ululations in my City Hall*". An ululation is a long, wavering, high-pitched vocal sound resembling a howl with a trilling quality. The term ululation is an onomatopoeic word derived from Latin. In Arab countries ululation is commonly used by women to express celebration, especially at weddings but is also commonly used in funerals of martyrs in the Muslim world. Here, it becomes a word to generically refer to women of Arabic origin.

[17] "In my city hall there's *fatmas* and ululations / foulards, *babouches* and *boubous* / Thugs, Zoubidas, Mamadous / Help, we're not home anymore!". *Fatma* is a term that refers to women of Arabic origins; the French *babouche* (derived from the Arabic for "slipper") is a Turkish or Moroccan slipper having no بابوش heel while *boubous* are flowing wide-sleeved robes worn by men in much of West Africa, and to a lesser extent in North Africa. The French *voyou* is a term derived from *voie*, or "road, way", literally meaning "person of/from the street" and, by extension, a man who imposes his will through violence or who makes money in dishonest ways (rogue??). Finally, Zoubida and Mamadou are common names given in West Africa, Mamadou being derived from the Arabic Muhammad. The overall sense here is clearly the presence of numerous signs of foreign origin [translator's note].

[18] *I'm going to chose the best girl, maybe not the prettiest / Far from Lille, Lille* **the** *medina* [our translation]. A medina (or "medina quarter", from the Arabic: المدينة القديمة *al-madīnah al-qadīmah,* "the old city") is a distinct city section found in many North African cities. The medina is typically walled, contains many narrow and maze-like streets. The word "medina" (Arabic: مدينة *madīnah*) itself simply means "city" or "town" in modern day Arabic.

[19] *I'll choose the maybe not the prettiest girl /but she will be from Lille, Lille* **my** *media* [our translation].

[20] *And I will choose the prettiest woman / Far from this cursed city, Lille* **the** *medina* [our translation].

[21] *Verlan* is an argot in the French language, featuring inversion of syllables in a word, and is common in slang and youth language. It rests on a long French tradition of transposing syllables of individual words to create slang words. The name *verlan* is an example: it is derived from inverting the syllables in *l'envers* ("the inverse," pronounced *lan-ver*) [translator's note].

[22] *Here it is, the foreign in the saloon* [our translation] where the first word "*v'la*" would be the transcription of an orally pronounced "*voilà*" and the last, "saloon" is in English [translator's note].

[23] *Traitors are cousins, no peace* [our translation], where the last word, "peace", is in English.

[24] Here there is a multilayered wordplay between the French "*dessus d'sous*", which means "upside down" coupled with the Arabic "*souks*" (also spelled "*souq*") and the French indefinite article "*des*", i.e. "some" or "the". A *souk* is a street market, particularly in Arabic and Somali speaking countries; a place where people buy and sell

goods, i.e. a bazaar. The effect is thus hearing both "upside down" and "Arab street market" at the same time, resulting in a double translation as either "*They turned the City Hall upside down*" and/or "*They turned the City Hall into an Arab street market*". Furthermore, in French slang "*souks*" is also used as a synonym for "a mess", derived from the lively chaos of a souk, thus resulting in a third possible translation, "*They make a mess of the City Hall*" [translator's note].

[25] Bakhtin forged three correlated neologisms: "*raznojazychie*", translated into English as *heteroglossia*, meaning the diversity of languages; "*raznorechie*", translated as *heterology*, or the diversity of styles (i.e. sociolects); and "raznoglosie", translated as *heterophony*, or the diversity of (individual) voices. Todorov chose the prefix "hetero-" and not "poly-", so that "the stress is not on the plurality but on the difference". See, Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p. 56.

[26] *Mamma, she spoke, she spoke well, and everyone applauded. Mamma, she spoke, she spoke well / There's my son on the T.V., the president spoke, he said unemployment isn't good, all the youth must work, he said cleaning needs to be done, in France there are too many foreigners. / There's my son, you see, I was right, when I told you that you need to be careful / I said here we're not at home, don't look for complication, / and if you make the 400 blows, then, yeah, they'll send you back on the plane. / There's my son, there're the police coming to the house, they said Umadebiz / Since you are a bad kid, You're going to prison / There's my son I don't understand, I always gave you love / I take care of you everyday, Why do the police come to my house / I take care of you everyday, Why do the police talk like that? / The police spoke, they didn't speak well, they didn't say "please"* [our translation].

[27] "*My Letter to the President*".

[28] *Mr. President, I'll write you a letter, a letter that perhaps you can read / Mr. President, I'll write you a letter, in the streets the Sixth Republic is being born* [our translation]. The main theme is taken from the song *Le déserteur* [The Deserter], a famous anti-war song written by Boris Vian and released on May 7, 1954 during the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Subsequently, it was forbidden by the French censorship to be sold or broadcasted until 1962. It was later translated into English, and was a major Anti-war song by Joan Baez during the Vietnam War. The song is in the form of a letter written to the French President by a man who states that he's going to refuse his call to arms, turning deserter, and explains his reasons to do so [translator's note].

[29] Michael Riffaterre, "L'Intertexte inconnu", in *Littérature* 41, 1981, p. 4-7.

[30] *Damn, my daughter will marry a swarthy, the rooster shouts 'ululations' instead of 'cock-a-doodle-doo' / she got it into her head to convert to the joys of the other side / I would have rather preferred a marriage of convenience and I see them, they look like gypsies* [our translation].

[31] "Mariage blanc", literally "white marriage", is a marriage without consummation. The persons may have married for a variety of reasons. For example, a marriage of convenience is usually entered into in order to aid or rescue one of the people from persecution or harm; or for economic, social or visa advantage [translator's note].

[32] *In my City Hall there are marriages between whites and even between greys* [our translation]. Here there is a clear wordplay

between the literal meaning of the French “*blanc*”, the color “white”, denoting race and the expression “*mariage blanc*” (see translator’s note 33) [translator’s note].

[33] This refers to a speech given in 1991 by Jacques Chirac, the mayor of Paris who later became French president, more widely known as "*Le Bruit et l'odeur*" which translates as “noise and smell.” This speech became famous when it was sampled in 1995 by the French band Zebda on their hit "*Le bruit et l'odeur*" from the album by the same name.

[34] *We are invaded by natives from the bush* [our translation].

[35] Mikhail Bakhtin, “On Dialogism and *Heteroglossia* (the other(s)' word)”
in Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1992, p.294.

[36] Each was as you see me, you say chkoune? [our translation], where there is wordplay between the French “*chaque*”, or “each”, and the Arabic question “*chkoune*”, or “who is it?” [translator’s note].

[37] Henri Meschonnic, *De la langue française. Essai sur une clarté obscure*, Hachette, Paris, 1997, p. 31 [our translation].

[38] Boris Seguin and Frédéric Teillard, *Les céfrans parlent aux français. Chronique de la langue des cités*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1996, p. 227. Boris Seguin also participated in the workshops. Translator’s note: “*Céfrans*” is Verlan for “French” (people).

[39] Aziz Daki, “L’air du ton : Blason” in *Aujourd’hui le Maroc*, 2005 [our translation]. Available online at http://www.aujourdhui.ma/magazine-details1104.html.

[40] Here we are using the terms and theoretical proposals from Axel Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, Political Press, 1995.

[41] "Le bleu de travail", in *La trempe*, Actes Sud, 2004. pp. 113-131.

[42] The backdrop for this analysis refers to our readings of Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, Joel Anderson (trans.) MIT Press, 1996 and *La société du mépris,* Editions La Découverte, 2006; and also Paul Ricoeur, *The course of recognition*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2007, his "La lutte pour la reconnaissance et l'économie du don", Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture Secteur des sciences sociales et humaines, 2004, available online at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001375/137527fo.pdf; and "Becoming capable, Recognized", Chris Turner (trans.), text written for the reception of the Kluge Prize, 2005, available online at: http://www.filosofiayliteratura.org/lengua/segundo/06-07/volversecapazingles.pdf.

[43] *There's my son I don't understand, I always gave you love / I take care of you everyday, Why do the police come to my house / I take care of you everyday, Why do the police talk like that?* [our translation].

[44] *At home Arabic is spoken and outside French / I am Mohamed's son, at school I must always be the first / My mother had wanted that I be a doctor / I am the eldest so you see, I don't have the right to be wrong / But did she know how they spoke to us outside?!* [our translation].

[45] *I am Mohamed's son, at school I must always be the first* [our translation].

[46] *I'm in a private* [school], *I study hard at school* [our translation].

[47] "Uprooted".

[48] "It's sad I had to learn his grammar" [our translation].

[49] Louis-Jean Calvet et Lia Varela, "XXIème siècle : le crépuscule des langues ? Critique du discours Politico-Linguistiquement Correct", in *Sociolinguistic Studies* 1(2), 2000, p. 47–64 [our translation].

[50] Edouard Glisant, *L'Imaginaire des langues. Entretiens avec Lise Gauvin (1991-2009)*, Gallimard, Paris, 2010, pp. 27-28 [our translation].

[51] See translator's note 1.

[52] Georges Lüdi, "*Pour* une linguistique de la *compétence* du locuteur plurilingue", in *Revue française de linguistique appliquée* 2, Vol. IX, 2004, p. 133 [our translation].

[53] Mikhaïl Bakhtine, *Esthétique et théorie du roman*, Gallimard, Paris, 1978.

[54] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 120.

[55] *It's like that team of France with blacks and a sand nigger / that listens to rap and eats semolina / What right does rap have to massacre the Marseillaise, yeah what right do these thugs / have to represent the French nation?* [our translation].

[56] HK et Les Saltimbanks integrated in a recent live performance of "*La maman"* in Nice (for the demonstration against the G20), a

new passage that talks about the violence of the police in Syria and about the fall of the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt but also, in a very humorous way, gave their predictions for the 2012 French elections.

[57] Jacqueline Authier-Revuz, "La représentation du discours autre : un champ multiplement hétérogène", in J. M. Lopez Muñoz & Alii (eds.), *Le discours rapporté dans tous ses états*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2004, p. 53 [our translation].

[58] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining – The Chiasm" in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (eds.), Northwestern University Press, 2007, p. 412.

[59] See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak ?", in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, Champaign, 1988, p.275; see also Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others", in *Cultural Critique* 20, 1991, p. 10: "in speaking for myself, I am also representing myself in a certain way, as occupying a specific subject-position, having certain characteristics and not others, and so on. In speaking for myself, I (momentarily) create my self – just as much as when I speak for others I create their selves – in the sense that I create a public, discursive self, which will in most cases have an effect on the self experienced as interiority."

[60] Lasse Thomassen, "A Basic Closure of Perspective? Reply to Robinson and Tormey", in *Parliamentary Affairs* 60 (1), 2007, p. 141.