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It's not all about the crime but it's also about food: translating references to French regional food in Fred Vargas' Adamsberg novels

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how references to French regional food in two of Fred Vargas' bestselling Commissaire Adamsberg novels are translated by Vargas' English-language translator, Siân Reynolds. Using two Adamsberg novels as a case study, it takes the stance that contemporary crime novels are especially popular due to their emphasis on locality and culture, as they showcase elements of cultural and regional identity, and especially food. It argues that contemporary crime novels function as key cultural narratives and, in turn, translated crime novels function as intercultural narratives. It also argues that Vargas' Adamsberg novels are(inter)national regional novels, as Adamsberg's investigations take him outside of Paris to lesser-known parts of France, enabling Vargas to showcase those regions and elements of their cultural identity, including their food. As Vargas' translator, Reynolds plays a key role in depicting, representing and conveying those cultural aspects to her readers. Through a textual analysis and comparison of a selection of examples from the source and target texts, this article evaluates Reynolds' translation decisions and their implications. It reveals that, despite isolated incongruences, Reynolds successfully follows Vargas' agenda to showcase French regional identity and food, making the novels functions as key (inter)cultural narratives of French regional identity.

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1. Introduction

Since its inception in the form of serialised short stories in the later nineteenth century, crime fiction has been one the most popular forms of genre literature (Pittard, 2015). Despite having also long been considered as a form of sub-literature, its popularity has shown no signs of relenting. As Charlotte Beyer argues, '[t]he demand for crime fiction is higher than ever' and 'crime fiction is as popular now as it has even been among global-wide readerships' (2021, p. 1, 3). In addition, Claire Gorrara describes crime fiction as 'one of the most culturally significant genres of our times' (2009, p. 1).

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This unquenched appetite for crime fiction is especially visible in both France and the UK, where sales of crime novels keep soaring year on year, making it each country's top literary genre. For instance, over 23 million crime novels were sold in France in 2020 (Combet, 2022, p. 3) while 18.7 million were sold in Britain in 2017 (Hannah, 2018).

Reasons for the popularity of crime fiction abound. Crime novels trigger their readers' active cognitive and emotional involvement, as they work alongside the detectives to solve the crimes, to detect clues and red herrings, to identify suspects and culprits, as well as their motive, meaning that they experience various emotions, including suspense, thrill, anticipation, excitement and fear as the reading process unfolds (Seago, 2014, p. 6). Accounting for its popularity is alsothe fact that reading crime is fundamentally both a 'visceral experience' and a 'cathartic experience', as readers escape from their everyday anxieties to find comfort in fictional, yet realistic, anxieties (Platten, 2011, p. 15). Crime novels are also popular because of their authenticity and realism, in terms of location, character depictions and language, and because they tend to use real contemporary events as backdrops to their plots. Indeed, contemporary crime novels are generally set in real or realist locations, including towns, villages, and restaurants, transporting their readers to those places, who thereby become 'armchair tourists' (Seago, 2014, p. 6). Finally, crime fiction is the prime genre for authors to explore contemporary social and political issues, including gender, race, education, employment or migration (Chadderton, 2017).

Whilst endorsing all these reasons accounting for the popularity of crime fiction, this article takes the stance that crime novels are especially popular because they are heavily localised and grounded within their cultural context. Indeed, I argue that crime novels are primarily about culture and locality, depicting and showcasing elements of cultural and regional identity, including food. In line with this approach, I contend that crime novels are key contemporary cultural narratives, as they depict cultural identity in literature and that, in turn, translated crime novels function as key intercultural narratives, which not only provide readers access to a foreign culture but enable the circulation of key cultural elements beyond national borders.

Translators therefore play a crucial role in this process, which goes well-beyond what David Katan describes as 'intercultural mediation' (2013, p. 84). As they play a pivotal role in not just the mediation but the depiction, representation and circulation of elements of a nation's culture, translators are, I contend, intercultural ambassadors, who promote, showcase, celebrate, and impart cultural knowledge to their target readerships.

This article focuses on two of Fred Vargas' bestselling Adamsberg novels and looks at how selected references to French regional food within them, and the stereotypes associated with it, fare in translation into English. Using those two novels as a case study, I analyse how Siân Reynolds, Vargas' English-language translator, tackles specific references and stereotypes associated with the cuisine from two regions of France: Normandy and Béarn. As Vargas usually sets her plots in provincial France, French regional dishes tend to be a key feature in her Adamsberg novels. This includes their composition, the emotions they generate, and the reactions they trigger, all of which provide readers key (inter)cultural insights into lesser-known French regional food, thereby demonstrating that food 'is deeply ingrained in our cultural identity' (Chiaro & Rossato, 2015, p. 237).

As such, this article offers new perspectives on the genre of crime fiction and its (inter)cultural significance. It highlights the key (inter)cultural role which both

contemporary crime fiction and its translation play in the construction and circulation of food narratives, including socio-cultural practices and attitudes, across and beyond regional and national borders.

Drawing ontheories and frameworks developed within imagology and translation studies, this article explores Vargas' treatment of French regional food and focuses on the cultural transfers taking place in the translation of references to French regional food into English. It analyses the translation strategies used by Reynolds and their effects on the target texts, whilst assessing how both Vargas and Reynolds actively showcase French regional food, whilst reproducing and perpetuating regional stereotypes within and across their texts, thereby facilitating their circulation at home and abroad. This, I contend, primarily accounts for the popularity of the Adamsberg novels both in France and Britain.

2. Fred Vargas and the Adamsberg novels: subverting generic expectations and popular reception

Fred Vargas is the *nom de plume* used by Frédérique Audoin-Rouzeau, who was born in Paris in 1957, grew up in Normandy and now lives in Paris (Boisvert, 2012, p. 826). Vargas is a historian, archaeozoologist, researcher and crime author. She is one of the most acclaimed and bestselling French crime writers, a status which has earned her the nickname 'la reine du polar' in the French media (e.g., Didier, 2019). Vargas is also one of the most translated contemporary French authors (Migozzi, 2012).

Vargas is mostly famous for her Commissaire Jean-Baptiste Adamsberg novels, a series currently made up of ten instalments. Adamsberg originally appeared in *L'Homme aux cercles bleus*, published in 1991, and more recently in *Sur la dalle*, which was published in May 2023. Although Adamsberg leads Paris' *Brigade criminelle*, a key characteristic of Vargas' *rompols*, her own term to describe her crime novels, is that they are often set outside of Paris, with investigations taking Adamsberg to lesser-known parts of provincial and rural France such as Normandy, Brittany and the Pyrenees, and sometimes even abroad. Having grown up in Normandy herself, the region takes centre stage in several of her novels, enabling Vargas to showcase it, as well as her attachment to it. Adamsberg himself is not a Parisian. He comes from a small fictional Béarn village high-up in the Pyrenees called Caldhez. As such, Vargas' novels break with the long-established literary tradition of Paris being at the centre of French crime novels and with French crime fiction being a primarily urban and Paris-centred genre.

The Adamsberg novels are also devoid of violence. Although crimes and murders are committed, they are never described in detail and vividly, nor do they prominently feature any explicit references to the technicality of a crime, crime scene or the work of the police, unlike in novels by other contemporary French crime authors such as, for instance, Pierre Lemaitre. Indeed, Vargas' novels focus on the depiction of elements of French regional cultural identity and the cultural contexts they are set in rather than the crimes themselves and their investigations.

Another distinctive feature of the Adamsberg novels is their high level of intertextuality, with regional references and stereotypes being perpetuated within the novels themselves and across the novels in the series.

As far as the reception of her novels is concerned, Vargas has won numerous national and international literary prizes and awards for her Adamsberg novels. The publication of *Pars vite et reviens* tard in 2001, for which she won the *Prix des libraires* and the *Grand prix des lectrices de Elle* in 2002 was a turning point, as each novel published after it has been a bestseller in France (Baron, 2016, p. 16). Until now, Siân Reynolds has translated seven of the nine Adamsberg novels published in English, four of which have won the prestigious CWA International Dagger in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2013 (The CWA – Winners Archive, n.d.).

This article focuses on two novels in the series, which I selected due to their high level of localisation, regional grounding and intertextuality, as well as their depiction of French regional food, more specifically from Normandy and Béarn. The novels are *L'Armée furieuse* (2013; originally published in 2011), published as *The Ghost Riders of Ordebec* (2014; originally published in 2013); and *Quand sort la recluse* (2018; originally published in 2017), published as *This Poison Will Remain* (2019). I analyse how Reynolds translated the references to regional food, the strategies she used, as well as the implications of Reynolds' decisions onto the translated texts.

3. Theoretical framework and methods

To conduct my textual analysis, I draw from theories developed in imagology, which is a useful lens to look at the depiction, circulation and reproduction of regional stereotypes in the Adamsberg novels. I also draw on theories developed in translation studies for the translation of cultural references.

3.1. Imagology and translation: two overlapping fields

Imagology is the study of the construction, representation, and dissemination of national images through literary discourse. Although the focus of this article is regional references rather than national ones, imagology is pertinent to my analysis, as it looks at the construction and circulation of regional images and stereotypes within the Adamsberg novels. Conducting my analysis through an imagological lens allows me to look at how cultural images are constructed and represented within Vargas' novels and how they are, in turn, selected, represented and disseminated through translation within the translated texts. As such, imagology is useful to analyse both the source texts themselves and the cross-cultural transfers involved in the translation process. This enables me to further emphasise that contemporary crime fiction is a privileged genre for the construction and representation of cultural images and that its translation plays a significant role in the construction and cross-national dissemination of cultural images.

Imagology became an established discipline of Comparative Literature Studies during the second half of the twentieth century, primarily in France and the Netherlands (Beller, 2007; Leerssen, 2007). Imagology concerns itself with 'the critical analysis of national stereotypes in literature' (Beller & Leerssen, 2007, p. xiii). As Luc van Doorslaer puts it, imagology involves 'the study of national and cultural images as represented in textual discourse' (2019, p. 56). In other words, imagology studies how national characteristics of a country/nation are represented and depicted in literary discourse and how literature contributes to the construction and circulation of those images within and across cultures.

Imagologists are more specific on what imagology is not and does not do. Indeed, Joep Leerssen (2007) and Luc Van Doorslaer (2019) agree that imagology does not seek to build a theory of cultural or of national identity, nor to establish what nations and nationalities are. Imagology is not, they argue, a form of sociology because it does not seek to understand a given society either. Rather, its primary aim is to study and understand how nations, nationalities and national stereotypes are represented in literature and literary discourse, and therefore to establish a theory of national and cultural stereotypes (Leerssen, 2007; van Doorslear, 2019). It is a 'lens' (Van Doorslaer, 2019, p. 58) through which textual discourse is analysed. Because imagology studies literary texts to establish how images pertaining to a given country or nationality are represented and how they circulate, it lends itself well to my analysis. Indeed, I use the Adamsberg novels in order to establish how images associated with Normandy and Béarn are constructed by Vargas within the source texts but also how these images are mediated through the translator's intervention and how they circulate abroad thanks to the translated texts. Although imagology concerns itself with national images, I argue that it can certainly be used to analyse the construction and circulation of regional images and stereotypes.

Central to imagology are the notions of images, that is 'the mental silhouette of the other' (Beller, 2007, p. 4), and of ethnotype, which Beller & Leerssen define as 'stereotypical characterizations attributed to ethnicities or nationalities', and the study of their dynamics, typology and rhetorical use (2007, p. xiii). Ethnotypes rarely appear on their own in a literary text. As Małgorzata Świderska argues, 'literary images of nations or ethnic groups occur mainly as literary characters' whom she identifies as being either ideological or utopian characters, as well as alter and altus characters, depending on the imagological function they perform in a text (2013, p. 2). In other words, literary characters serve as the main vehicle for the construction, representation and circulation of ethnotypes and images.

In addition, while both fiction and non-fiction are perceived as the most effective vehicles to construct and disseminate ethnotypes, Leerssen argues that they reach their fullest potential and are the most explicit in genres such as sentimental comedy, children's literature, popular fiction and spy-thrillers (2016). This is centralto my argument, as, while Leerssen does not explicitly mention crime fiction, I argue that crime novels, and in this case Vargas', actually explicitly put to the fore, construct, represent and disseminate regional ethnotypes both at home and abroad through translation. Another key point addressed in my analysis is that Vargas not only showcases and celebrates Normandy and Béarn and some of their associated stereotypes, but also perpetuates them within and across her novels. This is especially evidenced by the high level of intertextuality between the novels in the Adamsberg series. These stereotypes are, in turn, perpetuated in translation.

My overview of the principles of imagology shows obvious synergies with translation studies in that both disciplines concern themselves with image-building, representation, circulation, and transfer. In their introduction to their volume dedicated to the synergies between both disciplines, Luc van Doorslaer, Peter Flynn & Joep Leerssen highlight that their overlap remains largely unexplored, as few studies have concerned themselves with looking at how ethnotypes are mediated by translation (2016). This is a gap which this article seeks to address. Given that my main argument is that translators are intercultural ambassadors, I further contend that translators have a significant imagological role to

play, as they select, represent and disseminate ethnotypes to their target readers through their translational intervention. Using van Doorslaer's words, I argue that translators have a key role to play in the 'processes of gatekeeping, representation, and national and cultural image-building', and their circulation (2019, p. 56). My analysis of Vargas' novels is therefore imagological in nature. I follow imagology's threefold approach, that is: (1) a textual analysis of the texts and how the ethnotypes function in them; (2) a contextual analysis of the ethnotypes; and (3) an intertextual analysis of the ethnotypes, as identified within my selected corpus of Vargas' novels, with a specific focus on the textual and intertextual aspects (Leerssen, 2016; Van Doorslaer et al., 2016).

In this article, I use imagology's theoretical principles and methodological approaches to identify the discursive representations which are at play in the Adamsberg novels but also how they fare in translation. My aim is to identify the translation strategies used by Reynolds in her construction and representation of French regional images associated with food and the effects these have on both the translated texts. My starting point is that the novels contain many references to Normandy and Béarn which are, I contend, largely unknown outside of those regions and/or France, and they are very much localised and grounded in their cultural context. I therefore anticipate these references to be either culturally obscure for the target English-speaking readership. I analyse the strategies used by Reynolds to tackle these references, how both source and translated texts provide snapshots of Norman and Béarn regional identities, and what Reynolds' translation decisions can reveal about her attitudes as an imagological observer of French regional culture and as an intercultural ambassador.

3.2. Tackling cultural references in translation

As far as cultural references are concerned, several translation studies scholars have addressed the issue of their translation. On the one hand, earlier contributions can arguably be classed as problem-stating, as they primarily focus on stating the gap between languages and cultures and the complexity of transferring source-text messages into the target language and culture (e.g., Newmark, 1988; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995). On the other hand, later contributions are more problem-solving in nature, as they provide frameworks of translation strategies which may be used for the transfer of cultural references across languages and cultural contexts (e.g., Baker, 2018; Franco Aixelà, 1996; Hervey & Higgins, 2002; Liddicoat, 2016).

Although all of these contributions and frameworks, whether they are problem-stating or problem-solving, provide sound bases for the identification and textual analysis of cultural references in literary texts, they nevertheless present a number of limitations, namely the variation in their number (from 5 to 12), the vagueness of some of the labels used and of the definition of the strategies, some redundant distinctions, and the cross-overs between typologies. In order to mitigate this, I propose here my own typology of translation strategies, which is more suited to my present analysis, using updated labels.

Drawing from Franco Aixelà's typology, my typology also includes two macro-strategies, which I propose to call preservation (i.e., the cultural reference is retained in the translated text) and adaptation (i.e., the cultural reference is modified in the translated

text). Under the strategy of preservation, identify four micro-strategies: restatement (i.e., the reference is repeated as it features in the source text); typographic adjustment (i.e., the reference is repeated but its spelling is adapted to the target language); paratextual explanation (i.e., the cultural reference is made explicit by the translator via a footnote, preface, glossary or notes); and intratextual explanation (i.e., the cultural reference is made explicit and explained by the translator within the translated text). Under the strategy of adaptation, Identify three micro-strategies: semantic adaptation (i.e., the translator uses a hypernym, synonym or hyponym to translate the cultural reference); cultural adaptation (i.e., the cultural reference is translated using a familiar and recognisable reference in the target culture and language); and creative adaptation (i.e., the translator uses self-creation to translate the cultural reference). Finally, I also add the independent strategy of omission to my typology (i.e., the translator decides not to translate the cultural reference at all).

This revised framework provides, I argue, a comprehensive set of translation strategies which I use to systematically identify, evaluate and analyse the translator's intercultural intervention as far as cultural references are concerned. In other words, it enables me to successfully compare and contrast the source and the translated texts and to characterise and define the translation strategies used by Reynolds when it comes to references to French regional food.

To conduct my textual analysis, I am using a selected corpus of examples from each of the novels under study and comparing both the source and target texts. Space limitations preclude me from analysing a wide range of examples. Nevertheless, the sample of examples I have selected from each of the novels provides a comprehensive representation of both the types of cultural references relating to French regional food used by Vargas, as well as the range of translation strategies used by Reynolds to convey them to her target readership, making her translations function as intercultural narratives.

4. The centrality of food as a marker of locality in Vargas' novels

Although cooking is clearly not Adamsberg's forte, food, and more specifically French regional cuisine, is a key feature of Vargas' novels. Whether the meals Adamsberg eats are mentioned or described in detail, Vargas arguably uses her novels to showcase French regional dishes, alongside some of the stereotypes associated with them.

Vargas' deliberate use and depiction of references to regional food in her Adamsberg novels links, I argue, with Michael Cronin's argument that literature is a key medium allowing authors to showcase and celebrate 'the local dimension' through 'the elaboration and presentation of food rituals' (2015, p. 250). According to Cronin, not only are the literary depictions of food central to the texts and plots they feature in, but they are also testament to 'aspects of social practicefrom outside the textual world' (2015, p. 250). In other words, they contribute to the representation and circulation of socio-cultural practices.

Food, place and culture are fundamentally interconnected. Indeed, Linda Rossato argues that 'food is so culture-bound and so closely intertwined with identity, religious, social and cultural meanings' (2015, p.273). Similarly, Delia Chiaro and Linda Rossato highlight that food 'is deeply ingrained in our cultural identity' and its 'cultural and social significance' (2015, p. 237). As such, food and drink practices are significant and tangible elements for the representation and depiction of regional and cultural practices.

Food is, therefore, undeniably culturally, nationally and, perhaps more importantly, regionally bounded. Indeed, while I fully agree with Priscilla Parkhurst Fergusson's argument that 'food […] speaks of place and particularly of country', this paper contends that food, including attitudes and stereotypes associated with it, is primarily associated with specific regions, especially within the French cultural context (2014, p. 3).

Furthermore, Jean Anderson argues that food depictions in crime fiction play a central role in the representations of nations, both in the original source texts and in their translated versions, and that food plays a fundamental role 'in creating a sense of cultural strangeness' when a translated text reaches their readerships (2016, p. 223).

Endorsing Anderson's arguments, I argue that Vargas' depictions of regional food in the Adamsberg series play a key role in the depiction, representation and circulation of elements of French regional culture and identity, which tend to be lesser known. I also argue that Vargas draws deeply on references to regional dishes to 'establish locality' and that the references to local dishes '[offer] a mechanismfor marking territory and culture' in her novels and that this has key implications on the translated texts and their readerships (Anderson, 2016, p. 224). My exploration of the strategies used by Reynolds to create this sense of locality and strangeness through her translations of references to French regional food seeks to demonstrate that these 'go well beyond a simple listing of dishes or ingredients' and, in fact, fulfil a much more complex and significant (inter)cultural function (Anderson, 2016, p. 228).

To illustrate how this functions in Vargas' novels, I now turn to the textual analysis of references to regional food in *L'Armée furieuse/The Ghost Riders of Orderbec* and *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain*.

5. Norman food (and drink): the centrality of cream and Calvados

Setting *L'Arméefurieuse/The Ghost Riders of Ordebec* in Normandy allows Vargas to depict Norman food and to construct animage of it as rich and hearty food, in which butter and cream are central. As part of an early encounter with Léone, a local from Ordebec and key witness in the investigation, their discussion turns to the meal she serves him:

> - […] Vous prenez de la soupe, je suppose.
>
> - Merci, dit Adamsberg en tendant son assiette.
>
> - C'est à la carotte. Après, il y a du sauté à la crème.
>
> […] Adamsberg nettoya son assiette à soupe avec du pain, comme le faisait Léo, et apporta le plat de sauté. Du veau avec des haricots. (Vargas, 2013, p.79)

The meal depicted here is rural and hearty: it is made up of soup, meat, green beans and cream. The centrality of bread in French cuisine is also highlighted, as it is used here to mop up the soup. Reynolds' translation reads as follows:

> […] You'll have some soup, I suppose.
>
> 'Thank you,' said Adamsberg, passing his plate.
>
> Carrot. After this, there's some veal in bean sauce.

> […] Adamsberg mopped up his soup with bread, as Léo did, and fetched the dish of veal and beans […]' (Vargas, 2014, pp. 69–70)

Here, Reynolds omits the reference to the creamy sauce, one of the (stereo)typical features of Norman food, and replaces it, instead, by 'bean sauce', which is an instance of creative adaptation. Arguably, this incongruous translation decision not only fails to convey the cultural specificity of the reference but also fails to convey key contextual cultural elements to the target readership. However, the use of bread to mop up soup, which is socially acceptable in this informal setting, is retained and successfully conveyed in the translated text.

Léone goes on to discuss Norman food:

> Avec Ernest, on a ouvert des restaurants un peu partout, on a vu du pays. Cuisine à la crème. Vous seriez aimable de nous sortir le calva, dans le bas du placard, et de nous en servir deux petits verres. (Vargas, 2013, p.81)

Léone's association of 'cuisine à la crème' with Normandy is implicit in the French text. Arguably, Vargas assumes her readership to be familiar with this (stereo)typical feature of the cuisine from Normandy. As this cannot be as clearly ascertained for her target readership, Reynolds makes the reference more explicit in her translated text, as follows:

> […] Ernest and me, we opened restaurants pretty well everywhere, so we saw the world. We offered Normandy cuisine à la crème. Would you be good enough to get out the Calvados from the bottom of that cupboard and pour us a little glass each? (Vargas, 2014, p. 71)

Here, Reynolds uses an intratextual explanation, the addition of 'Normandy', to explicitly establish the connection between Norman cuisine and cream within the text and therefore successfully highlight the text's cultural context. This is further emphasised by the reinstatement of 'à la crème', which features as it does in the source text and does not feature in italics, as is usually the convention for the use of foreign terms within a text.

As for the reference to 'calva', the apocope of 'Calvados', the apple brandy made in Normandy, Reynolds uses its full name 'Calvados'. This is an instance of intratextual explanation in which she provides a more accessible and explicit reference for her target readers. Interestingly, subsequent references to Calvados alternate between the use of the full name 'Calvados' and 'calva' throughout the novel, with the latter being generally used more towards the end of the novel. Arguably, Reynolds uses the full name 'Calvados' to firmly establish the cultural reference within her text. Once her readership familiar with it, she then uses 'calva' as a way to further ground her translated text within the Norman cultural context, thereby bringing it close to the source text and source culture.

The reference to cream as a staple of Norman cuisine occurs a further time in the novel, when Adamsberg eats out at the local restaurant, *Le Sanglier courant/The Running Boar*, with Lina Vendermot, a key witness in his investigation. There is a noticeable contrast in the way food is depicted in this scene. While the food Adamsberg and Vendermot eat is described in generic terms such as 'leurcommande' (their order), 'leurs plats' (their dishes), 'la nourriture' (the food), 'son assiette' (his plate), 'du fromage et des desserts' (cheese and desserts), two dishes are described in more detail (Vargas, 2013, pp. 198–201). Indeed, source-text readers are told that Vendermot dips 'des morceaux de pommes de terre dans une sauce à la crème' and has 'île flottante'

for dessert (Vargas, 2013, p. 199). As the latter is not specific to Normandy, I am focusing on the former only. Interestingly, Vargas includes the detailed reference to cream in her otherwise generic description of the meal. This is, I contend, a deliberate strategy to firmly establish locality within her text, by grounding it within the Norman cultural context through an emphasis on its cuisine. In line with Vargas' strategy, Reynolds retains the reference to cream in the translated text, as Vendermot plunges 'slices of potato into a creamy sauce', thereby also marking locality, although the source text's 'morceaux' (bits) of potatoes have become more elaborate slices, thereby losing the stereotypical image of Norman cuisine being essentially rustic (Vargas, 2014, p. 188).

These selected examples illustrate the way that Norman food and drink play a central role in *L'Armée furieuse/The Ghost Riders of Ordebec*. Vargas uses references to regional food, which she scatters throughout the narration, as a way to showcase the region to her readers and to ground her novel within the Norman cultural context. In translation, despite an isolated incongruous decision, Reynolds successfully conveys Vargas' cultural agenda through an overall strategy of preservation of the cultural references in the target text.

I now turn to *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain*, which highlights how references to Béarn food, especially garbure, take centre stage and feed into Vargas' cultural agenda.

6. Garbure and Pyrenean cuisine: emotional responses to regional food

Just as *Le Sanglier courant/The Running Boar* is central to *L'Armée furieuse/The Ghost Riders of Ordebec*, the restaurant *La Garbure* is very much a key location in *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain*. Located in central Paris, *La Garbure* is a (fictional) Pyrenean restaurant serving traditional dishes from the region. It is also a place which Adamsberg visits frequently, when he feels the need to connect with his origins. As such, the restaurant functions as a sanctuary for him, as it enables him to not only eat food from his region and childhood, but also to socialise with other natives from Béarn. Furthermore, the restaurant enables Vargas to not only showcase Pyrenean cuisine but also to build and dwell on a series of regional stereotypes associated with it, which are, in turn, replicated by Reynolds in translation.

Throughout *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain*, Adamsberg and the members of his team, especially Louis Veyrenc who also comes from Béarn, dine at *La Garbure* eight times over the two-week period of their investigation. Not only does the restaurant offer the team a friendly space where they can reflect on their investigation, but it holds an emotional significance for both Adamsberg and Veyrenc. The restaurant's regional specificity is reflected in its name, which is the name of its specialty dish: garbure, which is initially depicted as follows:

> La garbure était un plat traditionnel des Pyrénées, et sans doute fallait-il avoir grandi avec pour apprécier cette soupe au chou mêlée des restes divers du potager et, si possible, de jarret de porc. (Vargas, 2018, p. 75)

This depiction of garbure clearly echoes the earlier depiction of the Norman dish Léone serves Adamsberg: it is a rustic, hearty and meat-based dish. Yet, in contrast with the

depiction of Léone's dish, the narrator's description of garbure is ironic and derogatory, as the dish is described as made with any leftover vegetables. The narrator also highlights that amateurs of garbure cannot possibly be non-locals from Béarn. In other words, garbure is presented as an unrefined and unappealing dish. In translation this passage reads as follows:

> Garbure is a traditional dish of the Pyrenees region, and you probably have to have grown up there to like this cabbage soup mixed with other home-grown root vegetables, and if possible some pork shank. (Vargas, 2019, p. 59).

Reynolds successfully conveys the narrator's derogatory depiction, although she alters the meaning associated with its origin. This strategy is an instance of creative adaptation. While the source text focuses on the emotional attachment locals have with the dish (i.e., they have grown up eating garbure), Reynolds focuses on the emotional attachment locals have with their region (i.e., they have grown up in the Pyrenees). As such, the emotional response food can trigger and its role as a marker of locality is attenuated and shifted towards the region, rather than the dish itself. As Anderson argues, 'foods may be used in the source text to evoke affective responses not possible in a target text readership, in which case there is a strong element of untranslatability present' (2016, p. 228). It is arguably to overcome this challenge that Reynolds associates the emotional response with the region rather than the dish. Indeed, while her readers are unlikely to feel an emotional attachment with an unfamiliar dish, they are more likely to have experienced an emotional attachment with a place.

This initial depiction of the dish serves as the starting point for the creation and replication of a series of stereotypes and attitudes about garbure and Béarn throughout the novel. Indeed, the dichotomy between Béarnlocals and non-locals, and their attitudes towards garbure, are exemplified by the reactions of Adrien Danglard, Adamsberg's chief lieutenant, as he joins them for dinner:

> Danglard avait refusé avec véhémence d'avaler une seule assiette de cette garbure, l'équivalent pour lui d'une soupe aux déchets bonne pour des montagnards endurcis. Il mangeait délicatement un cochon de lait farci. Dès son entrée de foie de canard, accompagné de vin de Jurançon, sa tension s'était amollie. (Vargas, 2018, p. 77)

A self-declared refined Parisian, Danglard refuses to taste garbure and opts for a more sophisticated starter made with duck liver and a main meal of stuffed suckling pig, served with Jurançon wine. The dishes served at *La Garbure* are described in detail, which I contend is a deliberate strategy from Vargas to showcase other dishes from Béarn, and to mark Pyrenean locality in Paris. The narrator's use of 'cette' and 'soupe aux déchets' conveys the negative image non-locals have of the dish. Reynolds's translation of this passage reads as follows:

> Danglard had vehemently refused to swallow a single helping of garbure, which to him meant a soup concocted from leftover vegetables, fit only for hardened mountain-dwellers. He was delicately making his way through some stuffed suckling pig. Since the first course (duck liver pâté) accompanied by a glass of Jurançon, his mood had lifted. (Vargas, 2019, p. 61)

Reynolds successfully conveys Danglard's attitude towards garbure. Although her use of 'leftover vegetables' is less derogatory than the source text's 'soupe aux déchets',

this is compensated by her decision to use 'concocted'. These two strategies are therefore instances of semantic adaptations. Reynolds' strategy for the translation of Danglard's starter is interesting, as it produces two simultaneous effects. On the one hand, her decision to put the name of the starter in brackets is, I argue, a resolute narrative choice to put the focus on the regional wine which Danglard drinks, Danglard being an amateur of fine wine. At the same time, putting the name of the starter in between brackets actually makes it more prominent within the text, partly because it is at odds with the translation strategies used for other references to food considered thus far. In addition, Reynolds' decision to translate Danglard's starter as 'duck liver pâte' is an instance of creative adaptation, as the food reference is more specific than the one depicted in the source text, which is not as explicitly described. This highlights Reynolds' authority, as the translator, to provide her own take on the source text, whilst successfully sticking to her own agenda to showcase and celebrate regionality.

Danglard is not the only member of Adamberg's team to have a defiant attitude towards garbure. For instance, Lieutenant Voisenet has his own reservations, as his conversation with Adamsberg shows:

> - Vous n'êtes pas obligé de prendre de la garbure, Voisenet, dit Adamsberg.
>
> - […] C'est cette espèce de soupe à tout de chez vous?
>
> - Pas à tout, corrigea Veyrenc. Au chou, aux pommes de terre et au jarret de porc, si on en a. (Vargas, 2018, pp. 159–160)

Voisenet's remark indicates that the dish itself is not necessarily known to non-locals and his use of 'cette espèce de' implies that it is barely worthy of being called soup. Yet, it also gives Veyrenc an opportunity to showcase garbure again and to describe it in more detail. Reynolds's translation reads as follows:

> 'You don't *have* to eat garbure, Voisenet,' said Adamsberg.
>
> […] It's that soup you have in your region, isn't it - chuck everything in?
>
> 'Not everything,' Veyrenc corrected him. 'Cabbage, potatoes, shin of pork if there is any.' (Vargas, 2019, p. 132).

Reynolds' translation of Voisenet's remark successfully marks the two opposing attitudes towards garbure. Her use of 'that soup', combined with 'chuck', conveys Voisenet's perception of it as being unrefined. In addition, his use of 'you have' and 'in your region' establishes a greater divide between the locals from Béarn (i.e., Adamsberg and Veyrenc) and the non-locals (i.e., the rest of the team) and singles out Béarn as a separate and distinct location more than in the source text. As such, Reynolds' translation is successful in maintaining the stereotypes associated with the dish and in conveying Veyrenc's more detailed depiction of it.

Later in the novel, another member of the team, Lieutenant Mercadet, visits *La Garbure* with Adamsberg. This isa further opportunity for the regional stereotypes associated with Béarn cuisine to come up and be celebrated:

> - Vous n'avez que ça, là-bas? demanda Mercadet. Du porc et du chou, du chou et du porc?

> - On a de tout, dit Adamsberg en souriant. Des poules, des moutons, des chevreaux et des truites. Du miel et des châtaignes, que voulez-vous de plus? […] Adamsberg écrasa ses pommes de terre qu'il mélangea au chou, à la rurale, et attendit. (Vargas, 2018, pp. 360–361)

Mercadet's ironic comment about Béarn cuisine lacking in variety is a reaction to the fact that Adamsberg eats garbure once again. Adamsberg's enumeration of the Béarn cuisine staples enables him to respond to Mercadet's irony through irony and to celebrate the local food from his region. The narrator's additional comment about Adamsberg's way to eat garbure also highlights local customs, whilst also revealing that Adamsberg is keen to distinguish himself as a local amongst the urban non-locals in the restaurant and, therefore, to explicitly mark his regional identity. Reynolds's translation reads as follows:

> 'Is this all you have down there?' asked Mercadet. 'Pork and cabbage, cabbage and pork?'
>
> 'Oh, we have everything,' Adamsberg said, smiling. 'Chickens, sheep, goats, trout, honey, chestnuts. What more do you want?' […] Adamsberg mashed up his potatoes to mix them with cabbage in the regional fashion, and waited. (Vargas, 2019, pp. 306–307)

Reynolds conveys the irony between Mercadet and Adamsberg and Adamsberg's list of local staples successfully. Interestingly, Reynolds opts again for creative adaptation, as she translates 'à la rurale' (in the rural fashion)with 'in the regional fashion' in order to convey Adamsberg's way to eat garbure. Indeed, while the French text generates an opposition between the urban and the rural, thereby reinforcing the status of garbure as a hearty and rustic stew from the mountains and stressing its socio-economic origin, the translated text establishes a distinction between the local (i.e., regional) and the non-local (i.e., outsiders) way to eat the dish, thereby stressing its geographical origin and locality. This shift in emphasis is significant, as the translated text arguably marks locality more explicitly than the source text does.

References to *La Garbure* and garbure are central to *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain*. In terms of the plot, the restaurant is the place where the team is the most productive and where the investigation really progresses. The restaurant functions as a sanctuary for both Adamsberg and Veyrenc because it provides them with a direct link with their beloved region and roots. Both have an emotional attachment with the place, its atmosphere, and the food served. Their interactions with the other members of their team enable regional stereotypes associated with Pyrenean cuisine to be explored, as a key feature in the narrative, although they are arguably also exaggerated. Whilst they are a source of good-natured banter amongst the characters, it is a way for Vargas to provide her readers, both at home and abroad, access to lesser-known elements of French regional identity but also to construct and replicate stereotypes associated with the Béarn within the novel. This, I have shown, is successfully done in translation, thanks to Reynolds' intercultural intervention.

7. Assessing Vargas' and Reynolds' (inter)cultural interventions: celebrating and showcasing French regions at home and abroad

My analysis has shown that French regional food is central to Vargas' Adamsberg novels. In both *L'Armée furieuse/The Ghost Riders of Ordebec* and *Quand sort la recluse/This*

Poison Will Remain, Norman and Béarn food, and to an extent drink, are put to the fore. Dishes and specialties from these two French regions are celebrated, through detailed depictions of them as being hearty, comforting and triggering strong emotional responses and attachment, as well as a strong sense of regional identity. This is especially evidenced by Adamsberg's and Veyrenc's attitude towards garbure in *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain*.

As an international and bestselling author of contemporary crime novels, part of Fred Vargas' agenda as a crime writer is, I argue, to depict, celebrate and showcase the cultural identity of lesser-known parts of France, especially through references to their cuisine. The references to regional food in the Adamsberg novels enable Vargas to convey, represent and establish locality. Yet, they go beyond the acts of representing and depicting, and enable Vargas to showcase, promote and celebrate regional food and drink throughout her novels. Setting *L'Armée furieuse/The Ghost Riders of Ordebec* in rural Normandy and giving such prominence to *La Garbure* and garbure in *Quand sort la recluse/This Poison Will Remain* enables Vargas to showcase regional, rural and provincial France. As such, her novels arguably steer away from the tradition of French crime fiction being as being fundamentally urban and Paris-centric and subverting generic expectations. Through her depictions of regional food, Vargas celebrates key aspects of France's cultural and regional identities. Combined, these elements form a key feature of the novels, as they punctuate the narrative. As part of this, Vargas also creates and perpetuates series of stereotypes relating to those regions and their food within her novels. As such, Vargas can very much be considered as a national and international author of regional crime fiction, a uniqueness which led to the term 'Vargassian' being coined to describe her work.

In translation, my analysis reveals that Reynolds successfully follows and replicates Vargas' agenda to celebrate and showcase regional France beyond and across national borders. As Vargas' English-language translator, Reynolds successfully overcomes the challenge to, as Cronin puts it, 'decode the language of food in terms of what it tells […] about the social setting, cultural background, [and] situation in time' (2015, p. 251). Yet, I contend that she goes beyond this act of decoding, as she overwhelmingly, albeit not always, successfully captures, represents, showcases, and celebrates the cultural significance of French regional food and drink in her translated texts. I have shown that she uses various translation strategies to convey, replicate and perpetuate these cultural references and their associated stereotypes within her translations, thereby successfully maintaining their high levels of locality, regional grounding and intertextuality in translation. Reynolds' strategies include a combination of restatements, intratextual explanations, semantic adaptations and creative adaptations. Although these strategies are overwhelmingly successful in preserving the locality and making the regional references accessible to Reynolds' target readership, I have shown that some translation decisions are incongruous or fail to fully capture and convey the locality and cultural significance of certain references. I also noted instances of inconsistency and omission. Despite these limited instances where the locality is not captured, my analysis reveals that translation does fulfil a key imagological role, as it certainly contributes to the representation, depiction and circulation of elements of regional identity, cultural images of the other and regional stereotypes.

Rossato argues that 'translating food and food culture also means translating an entire world of meanings, which includes traditions, social practices, food knowledge […]' (2015, p. 275). This is clearly something which Reynolds successfully conveys in her

translations of Vargas' novels, as my analysis shows. While the references to regional food are not key to Adamsberg's actual investigations, their centrality, presence and recurrence within the novels reveal that they are a feature which is typically 'Vargassian'. Given their prominence in the novels, I can conclude that they contribute to confirming the cultural significance of contemporary crime fiction in the representation, construction, and transmission of elements of cultural identity, in this case French regional food, as well as stereotypes associated with it. Contemporary crime fiction therefore significantly contributes to the depiction, construction, celebration and circulation of elements of cultural identity, both at home through the source texts and beyond national borders thanks to the translation process. In that sense, contemporary crime novels can therefore be considered to function as key cultural narratives while translated crime novels function as key intercultural narratives.

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