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Woody Allen's French Marketing: Everyone Says *Je l'aime*, Or Do They?

Frédérique Brisset

- 1 Woody Allen does not belong to the Hollywood studio system, and his success relies much more on European than American markets. This involves a great deal of attention focused on strategies that facilitate positive reception of his films by foreign audiences, among them the French, and choosing his titles for export has become a major step in the process. Among his latest films, *Cassandra's Dream* (2007) made less than \$1m in the US, but more than \$21m abroad, including \$3.5m in France.¹ For a mere \$5m in the US, *Whatever Works* (2009) grossed almost \$30m overseas, \$7m of which in France. And the domestic-international ratio for *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger* (2010) stands at one to ten – \$3m in the US, \$31m abroad, with \$7.4 m in France. The export market has indeed become his main source of profit.
- 2 Comparing original and French titles and posters and, on a broader scale, the transfer choices concerning the linguistic, verbal and/or iconic paratext, can help determine how the marketing of the Woody Allen “brand” works at export. It can also explain which assumptions regarding French-speaking audiences may condition these strategies. Translation issues bring to light the diverging reception capacities of American and French audiences. For they imply, both at home and abroad, different Ideal Spectators—a notion patterned on reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss's *Ideal Reader*. The Ideal Spectator, as an expectation, is first built up by the author himself and Allen is known to be rather demanding concerning the distribution of his films.² As early as 1978, there was a clause in his contracts advising foreign distributors not to change the original titles of his films without his approval, for he meticulously chooses them. This means that altering them in translation becomes a risky process.
- 3 Allen's outstanding productivity, as a writer and director with a career spanning over forty years, enables one to assess the diachronic evolution of his translated titles. Indeed, these titles serve a descriptive function and their translation is constrained by linguistic, cultural, and marketing choices. A French adapter may propose a name but the final word rests with the distributor (with Allen's approval), as the title of the

French version will condition the first visual and audible perception of the movie by its receiver. For a title fulfills three main functions: identification,³ content indication and audience appeal,⁴ all of which rely upon a mutual cultural understanding between author and addressee.

Mirror Image

- ⁴ Keeping the original title of a movie abroad is an increasingly common practice, as distributors choose to brand the film's origin, and this especially when dealing with American blockbusters. This exoticizing option, opposite of localization, or here "Frenchification," proves quite valuable in promoting sagas and sequels. *Kill Bill*, *Alien*, or *Twilight* are such examples. It also allows for the standardization of marketing campaigns⁵ and facilitates the exploitation of by-products on international markets, as can be seen with the *Cars* and the *Toy Story* series. But Allen has decided "not to be swayed by current style or the ideas of others [and] to draw farther and farther away from the teenage and young adult market most movies aim for."⁶ So this is not the key factor in borrowing his titles.
- ⁵ Long before it became fashionable in France,⁷ this strategy had been applied to some of his earlier comedies, such as *Bananas* (1971) for example. These choices were made easier because of his predilection for short titles, "a soft sell, non pretentious approach like one-word titles,"⁸ and this even though he now confesses, "I'm not as dedicated to one-word titles as I was before."⁹ But the shorter the original name, the easier it is to borrow without impeding a foreign audience's comprehension. And out of the 44 films Allen has written to-date, only 10 titles can be qualified as long ones:

1. Film Titles: Number of Words

One-word Titles	Two-word Titles	Three-word Titles	Four+-word Titles
9	12	13	10
20.5%	27.3%	29.5%	22.7%

- ⁶ The trend is also emphasized by his frequent use of onomastic lexemes. When they do not consist in one or several proper nouns,¹⁰ his titles very often include some compound ones.¹¹ *Annie Hall* thus stayed *Annie Hall* in French. Keeping the eponymous title was not a problem, as the first name even conformed to the French spelling. It was not, however, maintained worldwide. In Germany the film is known as *Der Stadtneurotiker*, *The Urban Neurotic*, an adaptation which resulted in Allen requiring a personal control over his foreign titles.
- ⁷ If the title stayed true to the original in France, the poster did not.¹² In the US, *Annie* and *Alvy* shared the black and white space, while the French colour-choice completely relied upon Allen's *persona*, an oversized spectacled Woody mask which barely reflected Diane Keaton's portrait. The generic American commentary "A nervous romance" opposed the line "le nouveau film de Woody Allen" with the author's name typed in the same font size as the title, flattened out at the top of the poster. The full title thus proved no more self-sufficient and the commentary nearly read like a subtitle.

- 8 So, as early as 1977, the French distributor chose to register this seventh film in a series of past and future opuses where the author's guarantee, secured by the sole name of Woody Allen, became a sales pitch strong enough to attract audiences: they would then receive *the* annual Woody Allen as an invitation to enter his microcosm. It could be understood as a new attempt to market the director as a brand, a more subtle one than the tentative *coup* which had taken place in 1973 with *Sleeper*: even though Allen's character was named Miles Monroe, *Sleeper* was translated into French as *Woody et les robots*. This was done using the same pattern as the nine Jerry Lewis comedies that became a whole series of *Jerrys* for French spectators, beginning with *It's only Money*, translated as *L'increvable Jerry* in 1962. But in Allen's case it was a one-shot try, attempting to capitalize on his image as an actor more than as a director.
- 9 *Celebrity*, one of the short titles he favors, was also transferred into French in 1998, even though a literal translation, very close to the original, was at hand. The process played on the Hollywood connotation. The American poster had already over-exploited the *cliché*: its title, resembling one from a gossip magazine, had a loud orange background, its front page offering a collection of the leading actors' autographed portraits. It focused on Leonardo DiCaprio in the very centre,¹³ and the *blurb* commented on the plot: "a new comedy about people who will do anything to get famous... or stay famous." Allen's name was promoted nowhere and was only listed in the other credits at the bottom of the poster.
- 10 It was not a sales pitch, as opposed to the French poster which read, centered under the illustration, "Une comédie de Woody Allen."¹⁴ Unlike the US version, it referred to the famous director without telling the story, and presumed a prospective audience smart enough to understand the textual and paratextual allusions. The black and white image centered on DiCaprio, framed there with a red felt pen, like a *paparazzi* photograph selected from a contact sheet. The iconographic choices rested upon the same connotations, usually found in people-focused magazines. As a result, the localization of the poster was very relative.
- 11 On the contrary, *Scoop* (2006) is a loanword, an anglicism adopted by the French language. However, it proves an exotic choice once more. The plot takes place in England, so the poster deliberately exploits cultural connotations. The non-translation of the title fits into a deliberate strategy.
- 12 The posters use the same portraits of the two main protagonists, but the layouts differ.
¹⁵ The Anglo-saxon version presents a deck of tarot cards, the main clue to the mystery in the film. An eye-shaped typography for the double O in *Scoop* alludes to the *amateur* detective investigation led by Allen and Scarlett Johansson, made explicit with the subtitle: "The perfect man, the perfect story, the perfect murder."
- 13 In the French poster, the tarot deck has turned into traditional cards; the romantic connotations of the ace of hearts associated with the whiteness of the daylight on the feminine side contrast with the scarier ones of the ace of spades and of the black dark night on the masculine side. We can, once again, notice a bias towards explicitation in the American promotional material and towards allusion in the French version.
- 14 The French commentary "après *Match Point*, une nouvelle partie commence" sets *Scoop* in a localized series, emphasized by the background of the poster, showing the Thames, Big Ben and the House of Commons in London. The distributors chose to market a British environment the director had already invested in, in 2005, with his previous

film. The English title was thus integrated in a global marketing strategy for this movie co-produced by the BBC. It also complied with Allen's latest trend, i.e. directing films set in European cities, whether London, Barcelona, Paris or Rome, whose subsidies now fund his production budget. This, in turn, attracts their citizens into theaters to watch Allen's interpretation of their *locale*, while it also contributes to the marketing of their cities as tourist destinations.

- 15 The exoticizing motivation was already there for *Hollywood Ending* (2002), where Allen played a *has-been* director trying to make his comeback. Only 0.305% of the American public has seen it in theaters, compared to four times as many French people, i.e. 1.216 %.¹⁶ The title, borrowed in French, stresses a desire to maintain the geographical and cultural reference to the famous toponym, home to the major studios. It is all the more justified as the film is a tribute to the genre comedies of the great Hollywood era. But the sarcastic slang interpretation of the word *Hollywood* insinuated in the initial title, “adj. affected, insincere, mannered. Said of people,”¹⁷ gets lost on non-English-speaking spectators.
- 16 *Ending*,¹⁸ the second lexeme in the title, is not lexicalized in French so that the *Hollywood Ending* collocation bears no irony for a French-speaking audience, as noticed by Masson: “*Hollywood Ending*—a title which could have been appropriately translated into the Gallicism *Happy End*.”¹⁹ But it stays close enough to the latter synonym not to affect its comprehension by spectators. And it agrees with a *habitus* of French cinematic circles—a linguistic “Americanization” of cinema in the non-translation of titles.²⁰
- 17 Visually,²¹ the original poster of *Hollywood Ending* relies on the Hollywood myth by listing the cast in concrete, just like the embed foot- and handprints of stars in *Grauman's Chinese Theater* forecourt. Floc'h, a cartoon artist who had created the *Deconstructing Harry* poster in 1998, was hired by the French distributor to illustrate it: he offered a full-length Allen walking blindly on. While the American poster just sells Hollywood, the French poster also markets “une comédie de Woody Allen” with a Festival de Cannes label and a red background reminiscent of the famous carpeted steps, in a delocalizing process.
- 18 Allen's production cannot be compared to blockbusters such as *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997), *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) or *X-Men* (Brian Singer, 2000), films whose titles were not translated, in an attempt to reproduce their American success on the French market: at the end of August 2008, *The Dark Knight*, the second opus of the *Batman* saga, had already grossed on its own \$493,671,047 in the US, while the American total box office of all Allen's films (38 to that date) only amounted to \$456,184,196.

Like and Alike

- 19 In France, when borrowing the title is not possible, loyalty to Woody involves a calque: the original title is then translated literally in French, as was *Interiors* (1979). The verbal calque was also visual, for the posters offered a similar photograph, but in France, the black and white original was colored and sported a yellow banner with *Un nouveau Woody Allen* on the upper-left corner.²²
- 20 There would be no banner later on for *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986), nor for *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), for Allen was part of their cast, his name mentioned high on the list as he imposes alphabetical order; he even appeared in the photograph for the

second film. No ambiguity for the audience there! This was different with *Intérieurs*, an intimist drama in which Allen did not star. So there had to be a reminder represented by the yellow banner.

- 21 Let us now consider *Hannah and Her Sisters*, Allen's greatest success in the US—before he released *Midnight in Paris*—, bringing in revenues of \$40m and ranking fifth at the box office.²³ Translated word for word into *Hannah et ses sœurs*, the title works all the better in French as it refers to the main characters of the script. It fits in the same poster as the original: both use the same illustration, a portrait of the three sisters facing the camera, the same centered title block and left alignment for the cast, as well as the same typography.²⁴ No localization was undertaken, a standardized marketing strategy was simply applied.
- 22 The same applies for *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), one of the titles that Allen worked over for months. He wanted to call it *Brothers*, a name already registered. He then considered numerous possibilities, finally selecting the generic collocation *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. The intertextual relation²⁵ induced by the ironical reference to Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*—for no punishment occurs in Allen's fiction—demanded a calque in French. *Crimes et délits* achieved the same result even if some critics disagreed:
- In *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, we have only one thing to complain about: the French title chosen, a restrictive, opaque, and humorless one. It evokes a prosaic legal code, a refused inference which targets the (problematic) efficiency of coded comedies. The distributors missed the disparity that has nonetheless tickled the *master's* invention, evading the latent Dostoyevskyan couple, which—one will see—was not totally gratuitous.²⁶
- 23 *Misdemeanor* is nonetheless a lexical unit taken from the American legal semantic field,²⁷ and *délit* proves to be the right judicial translation and the most accurate one as well, considering the plot.

Commercial Art-house

- 24 In France, all of Allen's movies are labeled *Art et Essai*, art-house films, which influences their public perception: the Ideal Spectator targeted here is an intellectual one. Their distribution, however, is rather wide. *Small Time Crooks* was launched in 405 theatres in 2000. For *Anything Else* (2003), the distributor planned on 340 copies.²⁸ Among his latest films *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008) was granted 412 copies,²⁹ *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger* (2010) or *Midnight in Paris* (2011) both first launched with 406 copies, and *To Rome with Love* (2012) with 410 copies.³⁰ Allen is now classified as a “cinéaste d'art et d'essai ‘porteur’” with the Coen brothers and Pedro Almodovar.³¹ He has become emblematic of this coveted market:
- The ample prospective choice leads certain exhibitors to target all customers' segments, including film-goers, openly competing with the “art-house” theaters who have settled in this *niche*, if only because the programming of commercial “art-house” films—the French example being the annual Woody Allen film—allows them to diversify their profit sources.³²
- 25 He thus combines a quality brand image, derived from the *Cinéma d'auteur* concept,³³ and a mass market sales potential, as stated by an even more ambivalent designation: “our trade cant has even created this amazing classification, ‘film d'auteur à forte capacité commerciale.’ A way to qualify films by Woody Allen or Pedro Almodovar.”³⁴

More recently still, the president of the *Studio* movie theatre in Tours, France, also analyzed Allen's films—with Audiard's—as belonging to a *niche*, both arty and mass-oriented (*le créneau de l'art et essai grand public*), stating, “these films account for 5% of our programming, but for 38% of our box-office.”³⁵

- 26 This ratio, nearing an eight-to-one return, implies high financial stakes, with a direct impact on Allen's marketing. The director has to be clearly identified by the prospective audience, drawing on his signature as a true brand, and the branding operates on the very *persona* of the author: for example, his glasses are often used as an identification *artefact* on his DVDs packaging,³⁶ for example, almost as a logo, and are even reproduced on posters for some French adaptations of his plays.³⁷
- 27 Distributors sometimes balance between several strategies for his French titles, like the combination of a *calque* and a borrowing for *Everyone Says I Love You*, which became *Tout le monde dit I Love You*. Keeping the whole original title could have disturbed the French audience. So the distributor chose to translate the first clause, leaving the second one, *I love you*, un-translated as it is clear enough to stress the origin of the film.
- 28 Yet the visual localization works in dissimilar ways: part of the movie is set in Paris, so the *Quais de Seine* where Allen and Goldie Hawn dance are central to the American poster, even if pictures of other stars are inserted at the top, on the right side of the casting.³⁸ The French poster offers a very Americanized shot of this musical, a ballet of Groucho Marx-costumed characters.³⁹ *I Love You*, in huge type, fills up the median section and draws attention to the unavoidable mention “une comédie de Woody Allen,” a promotion pitch inserted on the same level as *You*.
- 29 The American poster advertises Paris and the prestigious cast, while the French poster promotes Allen and America: he is quoted twice, as the author and actor, and his fans cannot ignore that Groucho, impersonated in the ballet, is his favorite comedian. The linguistic combination of the translated title eventually gives America the lion's share.

Small Arrangements

- 30 Adapting the title is another option, although rarer for Allen. Often partial, it may even concern a sole word. In 1993, when *Manhattan Murder Mystery* became *Meurtre mystérieux à Manhattan*, the French audience did not suspect anything: *Murder Mystery* was transposed into *Meurtre mystérieux* and the word order was reshuffled, but the “M” alliteration was maintained. The title expanded from three to four words, but the extra vowel merged into the prosodic whole. The iconography was only slightly modified—while *Murder* was set upside down in English, underlining the zany side of the script, the “Y” in *mystérieux* was the only letter inverted in French, for legibility reasons. Then, for once, the French poster offered a blurb “qui a tué qui ?,” to emphasize the mystery, based on a legal impersonation.⁴⁰ The midnight blue background was maintained, with a few corrections made to adjust the graphics. The marketing strategy was quite similar in both versions and the adaptation proved minimalist.
- 31 If we turn to *Small Time Crooks* (1999), the adaptation was much more consequential. A literal translation, *Escrocs à la petite semaine*, would have disturbed the balance of prosody. The distributor thus preferred a short title with three monosyllabic items, *Escrocs mais pas trop*. The main lexeme was preserved and an internal rhyme added. The “Pas” negation rendered the idea connoted by *Small*—the gang of has-beens led by

Woody did not deserve to be called crooks, for they would eventually get rich legitimately, thanks to his wife's cookies.

- 32 The famous cookie appears conspicuously in the poster, whose original and French versions are very close, using the same black silhouette: it serves as the background for the casting and the title in the American poster.⁴¹ The red type font reads on three lines in English, and on two lines in white in French, where *Pas* is highlighted in yellow, the same color used for the line "Woody Allen" following "une comédie de."⁴² The original title is copied under the French one. The cast is listed on the left side in France, emphasizing Allen again at the top, while this space is reserved for a blurb in the original poster, "they took a bite out of crime," a pun alluding to the crunchy quality of the cookies and the taste of crime. The paratext is again dedicated to the commentary of the script in English and to the film author in French.
- 33 Linguistic adaptation also concerns another opus, *Deconstructing Harry* (1997), which evokes the deconstruction concept dear to Derrida and works as a "citation-title" whose cultural effect is emphasized by Genette: it "brings to the text the indirect guarantee of another text, and the prestige of a cultural affiliation."⁴³ This applies to Harry, a writer played by Allen who sees his autobiography-based characters come to life and invade his existence. They are declensions of himself, his deconstructions.
- 34 The French title *Harry dans tous ses états*, saves the eponymous relation but loses the intertextual effect, focusing on the result and not on the deconstructing process; such a modulation makes Harry a subject and not an object any more. The content identification function is borne differently by the American and French titles.
- 35 The posters also obey divergent strategies.⁴⁴ On the American one, a staggering pile of bricks embodies the deconstruction, with, at the top of the bill, Allen nearly tumbling over his partners. Their names topple in all directions, echoing the tumultuous relations they keep up on screen. And the type is split in the surname, *Harry*.
- 36 In the French poster by Floch', Allen stands on the right side, but has female partners only. This reductionist choice does not account for the complexity of the script and the existential doubts of the character. The casting is gently arranged on the bottom line. The title is somewhat undulating, but its soft waves are harmonious, quasi antithetical to the original version. The same is true for the background colors, black for the original and white for the French one. The American poster is more faithful to the script, and the distributor has added the adjective *Hilarious* to insist on the comedy genre. In France everything relies on Allen's *persona*, represented in the form of a cartoon character immediately recognizable for a French cinema-goer. And it works: three times as many French people (2.168 %) have seen the film, compared to only 0.832% Americans.⁴⁵
- 37 The marketing of Allen's films usually heads in opposite directions. In the US, the distributor advertises the plot, comments upon the genre and content, and if need be, the famous cast, for Allen is considered there as a filmmaker. In France, he is regarded as an *auteur*⁴⁶: the phrase *Un film de Woody Allen*, his name in the cast or a shot of him acting is enough to draw crowds. In a self-derisive line, the director he plays in *Hollywood Ending* tells it clearly, "Because here I'm a bum... but there... a genius! Oh, thank God, the French exist." It looks as if French audiences have forever adopted Woody, creating a true brand phenomenon, while in his own country he has to take a test with every new film.

- 38 These features have been taken into account by his French distributors. The promotion of *Whatever Works* was based upon:

his previous films, labeled "unforgettable!" in the display advertisement published (...) on June 29, 2009. Two pages on, the reader would find another advert drawing attention to the film launched on the following Wednesday, (...) the process playing upon the annual ritual of the Parisian film-goers who loyally head to the theatre to watch the latest Woody Allen.⁴⁷

39

- 40 And the ad,⁴⁸ updated with the latest titles, was used again, for the promotion of *To Rome with Love* in 2012.

- 41 Throughout his career Allen has applied a serial principle that plays on the expectations of spectators familiar with his work. So the translational strategies for his titles often stress the origin of his films, the American world he himself belongs to. As early as the 1970s, lexical borrowings were favored and still are. Otherwise, calques have been the most frequent strategy, adaptations, very often partial, being the last option resorted to.

2. Translation Strategies for Allen's French Titles

Borrowed Title	Calque Title	Adapted Title
17	17	9
39.5%	39.5%	21%

- 42 How can we assess the modulations of the iconographic and paratextual choices? They reflect divergent visions of the potential audience. Often explicit and catchy in the original version, the posters comment upon the plot, while the French distributors play upon the *auteur* concept. This approach targets a film-going audience devoted to Allen and an Ideal Spectator conceived as more intellectual and upscale.
- 43 His *auteur* mark creates a true brand phenomenon. Identification, the primary function assigned to titles, is "in fact, the most important function of the title, which could, ultimately, dispense with all the others."⁴⁹ But in France, it is the author's identification more often than the identification of the movies themselves that is at stake. This can be partly ascribed to the cultural differences surrounding the reception of movies in both the United States and France: they are seen and marketed as entertainment products there, while they still stand as "oeuvres de l'esprit" (*intellectual productions*), recognized as such by law in France.⁵⁰
- 44 But Allen's brand image mostly explains such an exclusive positioning in the cinematic world. The building of spectator loyalty, the main promotional objective for this local but major market, is sustained by the annual recurrence of his productions. "The rediscovery of what is familiar is pleasurable" Freud wrote.⁵¹ Here is a motto dear to Woody, the psychoanalysis-addict, and a basic marketing concept, so that Everyone Says *Je l'aime!* Or do they?

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Films

Directed by Woody Allen

Bananas (1971)

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (1972)

Sleeper (1973)
Annie Hall (1977)
Interiors (1978)
Hannah and Her Sisters (1986)
Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989)
Manhattan Murder Mystery (1992)
Everyone Says I Love You (1996)
Deconstructing Harry (1997)
Celebrity (1998)
Small Time Crooks (2000)
Hollywood Ending (2002)
Anything Else (2003)
Match Point (2005)
Scoop (2006)
Cassandra's Dream (2007)
Vicky Cristina Barcelona (2008)
Whatever Works (2009)
You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger (2010)
Midnight in Paris (2011)
To Rome with Love (2012)

Directed by other directors

Titanic (James Cameron, 1997)
Twilight (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008)
Toy Story (John Lasseter, 1995)
Cars (John Lasseter & Joe Ranft, 2006)
The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan, 2008)
Alien (Ridley Scott, 1979)
X-Men (Bryan Singer, 2000)
Jurassic Park (Steven Spielberg, 1993)
Kill Bill (Quentin Tarantino, 2003)
It's Only Money (Frank Tashlin, 1962)

NOTES

1. (unadjusted gross), <http://boxofficemojo.com/movies> <last accessed 1/11/2013>.

2. "Woody also demands to check the pictures used for the film promotion, as well as the poster, except that, for that, he is ready to talk it over and will never challenge the producer." Samuel Blumenfeld, "Letty Aronson : sœur de Woody Allen, un job à plein-temps," *Le Monde*, May 13, 2011. (Quotations from the French, my translation).
3. This is legally registered: "The title of a work of the mind, if it presents an original character, is protected as the work itself," *Code de la propriété intellectuelle*, art. L 112-4, March 2, 2013.
4. Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 80.
5. Nolwenn Mingant, *Hollywood à la conquête du monde* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2010), 226.
6. Eric Lax, *Woody Allen, a biography* (London: Vintage, 1991), 370.
7. "While in the early 1990s, the titles of American films were regularly translated, the process became rarer in the mid 1990s. [...] In 1993-1994, half the movies of Warner Bros. and a third of the UIP movies distributed in France kept their original title." (Mingant, 226).
8. Eric Lax, *Conversations with Woody Allen* (New York: Knopf, 2007), 71.
9. Lax, *Conversations with Woody Allen*, 11.
10. Zelig, Alice, *Melinda and Melinda*, Vicky Cristina Barcelona.
11. *Broadway Danny Rose, Mighty Aphrodite, Cassandra's Dream, Midnight in Paris*.
12. The posters are on the following websites: <http://www.toutlecine.com/images/film/0012/00126295-annie-hall.html> and <http://www.les400coups.org/affiches/affiche.php?id=284> <last accessed March 17, 2013>.
13. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Celebrity_ver2.jpg <last accessed March 17, 2013>.
14. <http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm-16090/photos/detail/?cmediafile=30711> <last accessed March 17, 2013>.
15. <http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm-60736/photos/detail/?cmediafile=18674307> and <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0457513/> <last accessed March 17, 2013>.
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ABSTRACTS

Choosing a movie's title is a major step in the distribution process. As a first contact between films and their prospective audiences, titles induce a certain vision of a movie and its author. Woody Allen, a most demanding director concerning the translation of his films for export, proves especially punctilious on the matter of titles. His success relies much more on foreign markets than on the domestic circuit and French-speaking audiences are more often than not the key to his box office performance. His American and French titles are compared here, as well as the linguistic and iconographic changes operated on his films' posters, to illustrate the way chosen to export the director's persona as an original brand in the French-speaking area. His distributors play on the image built by Allen over the years, for he is seen as a true auteur in France. As a result, his French titles are kept the closest possible to the American ones, and his presence, whether as an actor or a director, is always reminded on the promotional material. These strategies have helped install each of his movies as part of a whole series, so that Allen's work has almost become a genre by itself.

INDEX

Keywords: marketing, titles, translation, Woody Allen, American English, French

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Frédérique Brisset holds a PhD in English studies and translatology, completed at Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3 University. She teaches English at Orléans University, France. Her research deals with audiovisual translation from English to French, especially dubbing, and builds on contrastive translation theories; she studies the impact of dubbed versions regarding the construction of the author's image and its reception by the audience, on the Model Author and Addressee patterns as defined by reception theories. She has published articles in French, Belgian and Greek journals, focusing on the audiovisual translation of proper nouns and of discourse markers, on the dubbing of yiddishisms and on the seriality process in Woody Allen's films, and she has contributed to international conferences on coherence in translation, on translated humour, and on the transfer of etymology in dubbed movies.