

Wha's Hud Ma Fuckin Jellies?

The Translation of Non Standard Language in Irvine Welsh's Novel Porno



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Introduction

Translating a literary text poses a number of interesting challenges to the translator. In fact, the challenges are so numerous and complex that many scholars have even come to the rather bleak conclusion that “translation is impossible”. It is, of course, true that no translation of a literary text can be completely accurate, as the culture of the source language will by definition differ from the culture of the target language. To dismiss the notion of the possibility of translation altogether, however, is needlessly defeatist, and would ultimately negate the necessity for translation studies as a whole, and more importantly, or less, depending on your point of view, this thesis. If, however, the focus of the translation is not on rendering the exact *meaning* of the source text, but rather on its *purpose*, then it should be clear that translation is always possible. The very existence of endless translated literary works should be proof enough of that.

The object of this thesis is to analyse the specific translation problem of non standard language, or dialect, and find a solution which is both true to the purpose of the original text, and acceptable in the source language. The terms ‘true’ and ‘acceptable’, in this case, are understood to be incorporated in the brief as given to translators by Dutch publishers, which, according to the model contract for the translation of literary works, is to “produce an impeccable translation, directly from the original text, which is both true in style and content of the original”. (Article 1.1, Nederlandse Vereniging van Letterkundigen; translation JM)

An author whose work is well-known for its use of non-standard language is Scottish novelist Irvine Welsh. His “Edinburgh Trilogy”, comprising of *Trainspotting*, *Glue* and *Porno* – a fourth instalment, the prequel *Skagboys*, was

released in April 2012 – is largely written in dialect. Of the three, *Porno* is especially interesting for the purpose of this thesis as it is less fragmentary, and has fewer narrators than *Trainspotting*, and takes place over a fairly limited amount of time, unlike *Glue*, which spans several decades. The non standard language of *Porno* is, therefore, Irvine Welsh’s snap shot of the lower class Edinburgh dialect of the time – or it was at the time it was published – and does not change owing to the progress of time, as language invariably does. This ‘time-capsule’ quality of the language makes the novel extremely interesting subject, and this thesis, bearing in mind the publisher’s brief to translators, will aim to answer the following question:

“Given the possible translation solutions, and bearing in mind the translator’s brief, how can the dialect of Irvine Welsh’s novel *Porno* best be translated?”

To answer this question comprehensively, a number of things need to be researched. The first two chapters of this thesis are dedicated to Irvine Welsh, his work, and, in particular, *Porno*. These two chapters will serve to establish an understanding of the context in which the author and the novel should be seen. The next chapter is reserved for the ways in which dialect can be, and is, represented in speech and literature, the latter acting as a precursor to chapter six. The fourth chapter deals with the dialect in *Porno*, the way it is being represented on paper, and its function and effect. The fifth chapter is about the translation problems that occur in *Porno*, after which chapter six harks back at chapter three, and concerns itself with the actual translation of the dialect in *Porno*, and which type of translation is best suited to this literary text.

Chapter One: Irvine Welsh and His Work

This chapter is meant to give readers an idea of who Irvine Welsh is, what made him into the writer he is today, and how the critical establishment reacts to his work.

Biography

Irvine Welsh was born in Leith, Edinburgh, in 1961. When he was four, he moved with his family to Muirhouse, another district of the Scottish capital. Welsh left Secondary School when he was sixteen and went on to complete a City Guild course in electrical engineering. He worked as an apprentice TV repairman for a while, until an incident in which he was nearly electrocuted made him pursue a variety of other careers. In the late nineteen seventies, he left for London and joined the punk scene, playing in a number of bands. He started working for Hackney Council, and studied computing with the help of a grant. After working in the London property boom of the 1980's, Welsh returned to Edinburgh where he worked for the city council, in the housing department. He went on to study for an MBA at Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University. (bbc.co.uk)

In the early nineteen nineties, Welsh published parts of what would later become his debut novel, *Trainspotting*, in several Scottish literary magazines. Robin Robertson, then editorial director of publishing house Secker & Warburg, decided to publish *Trainspotting*, despite believing that it was unlikely to sell. It became an international bestseller.

Courting acclaim and controversy in equal measure ever since his first novel was published, Welsh currently resides primarily in Dublin with his second wife.

Reception

Trainspotting and Welsh's subsequent works gained notoriety for their frank depiction of the Edinburgh heroin culture. To date, Welsh's work has often been influenced by the poverty, mass redundancies – instigated, in part, by the Thatcher government – and substance abuse that were rife in Scotland throughout most of his life; the latter saw Edinburgh being dubbed the 'HIV capital of the world', as many contracted the virus through the shared use of needles. The outrage in some quarters, caused by the depiction of the less salubrious aspects of society, does not detract from the fact that the issues he continues to address often stem from the class society Britain still is.

The novel *Trainspotting* was apparently rejected for the Booker Prize shortlist after offending the 'feminist sensibilities' of two of the judges. (bbc.co.uk) The critics were divided, to say the least, but generally Welsh's novel received good reviews, and continues to enjoy commercial success.

The theatrical release of *Trainspotting* in 1996, made Irvine Welsh an international star, as well as a controversial figure. The critical reviews of his later novels have not always been positive, as critics remain divided on whether to hail him as a genius, or a pervert. Perhaps, with the benefit of hindsight, Welsh's biggest mistake was to produce his best novel to date at the very start of his career.

Selected Bibliography and Other Work

To date, Irvine Welsh has published seven novels, and several collections of short stories:

Trainspotting (1991)

The Acid House (1994)

Marabou Stork Nightmares (1995)

Ecstasy: Three Tales of Chemical Romance (1996)

Filth (1998)

Glue (2001)*

Porno (2002)*

Crime (2008)

Skagboys (2012)*

*: All these works feature recurring characters from *Trainspotting* as protagonists. Until the publication of *Skagboys* in April 2012, *Trainspotting*, *Glue*, and *Porno* were known as “The Edinburgh Trilogy”.

Apart from writing novels, he has also contributed magazine and newspaper articles, as well as writing plays (*You’ll Have Had Your Hole*; the title a pun on the perceived Scottish frugality) and music videos, most notably – and, perhaps unlikely– for Sussex band Keane.

Chapter Two: *Porno*, the Novel

This chapter is about the novel *Porno* itself. A brief introduction of the characters and summary of the plot will be followed by a short analysis of the novel's themes and style, after which the context of the text within contemporary British culture will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with how the novel was received upon publication and how it is regarded now.

Main Characters

Irvine Welsh's novel *Porno*, first published in 2002, is set some ten years after the conclusion of its prequel, *Trainspotting*, and revisits many of the characters and places of that novel. Danny Murphy (Spud) is still a junkie in spite of, or because of, the money he got from Mark Renton at the end of *Trainspotting* (as is implied in *Porno*, and the screen adaptation of *Trainspotting*). His relationship with Ally and his son is deteriorating because of his drug habit, and he spends most of his days shooting up, as well as doing research for a book on the history of Leith which he intends to write. Realising the hopelessness of his situation, he tries to provoke Frank Begbie into killing him, so the insurance money can go to Ally and his son.

Frank Begbie has spent most of the nineteen nineties in prison, after being convicted of manslaughter. Someone has been sending him gay porn magazines, and when he is released he is intent on getting revenge on those responsible, as well as seeking out Mark Renton, who has stolen 'his' money. Once outside, however, Begbie is confronted with a world which has changed beyond recognition.

Simon David Williamson (Sick Boy) is leading a less than glamorous life as manager of a bar in London when he is offered the opportunity to take over a pub in Leith. It is not long before he is back to his old ways, scheming and plotting and generally feeling superior to all around him. To the outside world, however, he appears to be a reformed character, and is even being commended by the police. For his latest scheme, producing a porn movie, he needs more money than he can raise on his own. Suddenly, Mark Renton reappears in his life, and it seems as though fate is finally smiling down on Sick Boy.

Mark Renton, who duped his associates at the end of *Trainspotting* now lives in Amsterdam, where he owns a nightclub. With his relationship with a German woman reaching its conclusion, and the club doing neither good nor bad, he is looking for new thrills. When Sick Boy discovers where Renton has been hiding and confronts him, he decides to return to Edinburgh and Leith, but not after being reassured by Sick Boy that Begbie is safely locked away in prison.

Nikki Fuller Smith, a student from England, is the only female (and new) main character in the novel. To put herself through University she works in a massage parlour and as an occasional escort. She shares a flat with Renton's former girlfriend Diane, by whom she is introduced to Renton and Sick Boy. She becomes romantically involved with Sick Boy, and goes on to star in the pornographic film that he is directing.

Plot Summary

The main plot of the novel revolves around the production of the pornographic film, the eponymous 'porno'. Renton en Sick Boy, despite their mutual distrust, set aside their differences so that the film can be made. The main cast are procured

from the clientele of a pub, who have been watching and making pornographic films in the upstairs rooms of their local. Nikki and Dianne, on a fact finding mission for a University assignment, attend one of these evenings. Sick Boy realises the commercial potential of the films. The money Sick Boy and Renton have at their disposal is not enough to produce the film, however, so they devise a scheme to rob fans of Glasgow Rangers of their savings. The film is a resounding success and Sick Boy and Nikki find themselves being celebrated at the Cannes Pornographic Film Festival. Sick Boy's grandiose personality takes over, however, and he once again alienates those around him. Renton cons Sick Boy out of his share of the profits and leaves for San Francisco with Diane and Nikki. With his carefully created upstanding citizen persona coming apart at the seams back in Leith, Sick Boy is no better off than he was at the start of the novel.

One of the two sub-plots of the novel revolves around Frank Begbie. He has been incarcerated for the best part of the nineteen nineties and, once outside, he cannot really cope with the huge social and technological changes there have been, especially as he himself has not changed one bit. His bewilderment, combined with his paranoia and violent tendencies, makes him as dangerous as ever, and he spends much of the novel threatening, punching, and stabbing other characters, trying to avenge the wrongs (both real and imaginary) visited upon him. Begbie hospitalises Spud, after the latter tries to get himself killed by him. Then, Begbie gets a call from Sick Boy alerting him to Renton's presence. He attempts to confront Renton, but is hit by a car while crossing the street. A now comatose Begbie is visited in hospital by Sick Boy, who confesses, amongst other things, that it was he who sent Begbie the gay porn. Suddenly, Begbie wakes up and grabs Sick Boy by the wrist.

The other sub-plot centres around Spud Murphy. He has not spent the money he got from Renton at the end of *Trainspotting* wisely, and he is still using copious amounts of drugs. His relationship with Ally is all but finished and he spends most of his days in the company of other less than salubrious characters, or on his own, researching his intended magnum opus: a book on the history of Leith. Ally ends up working at Sick Boy's pub, which arouses Spud's jealousy. Spud decides that Ally would be better off with him dead, and her collecting the insurance money, so he tries to get Begbie to kill him. He ends up in hospital, but when he is discharged he can once again see a better future for himself, Ally, and his son.

Although all five are major characters in the novel, both Begbie and, especially, Spud do not feature heavily in the main plot, which adds to the sense of them not really belonging to the time and place in which the novel is set.

Set Up

Like its predecessors, *Porno* is divided into several parts, in this case three. Roughly speaking, it can be said that the first part, "Stag" (which appears to refer to the stag party that sees Sick Boy coming to Amsterdam), (re)introduces the characters, describes the situation they presently find themselves in, and sets up the main plot of the novel. It concludes with the release of Begbie from prison. The second part, "Porno", is by far the largest. The title refers to the films the characters are watching and making ('a porno' being the colloquial term for a pornographic film). The third part of the novel, "Exhibition", is set after the film is finished and released onto the market. Its title refers to the film and its content. Each part is

divided into a number of chapters, which are all narrated by one of the five main characters.

General Style and Themes

Porno is essentially a comedy, albeit with tragic elements. Each chapter is narrated from the point of view of one of the five narrators. The narration is delivered to the readers as an interior monologue; the reader gets to experience proceedings as they happen, when they happen. Sometimes, the same scene is described by more than one of the narrators, giving the reader a chance to review their own perspective on that scene. Apart from the stream of consciousness narrative, many of Welsh's other trademark stylistic elements are featured here as well, such as the idiosyncratic reproduction of the –Edinburgh– dialect (which is discussed in depth in the following chapters), the profuse swearing, the references to drugs, and the often cartoonish, grotesque even, comedy and violence. As before, the novel is also imbued with socio–political comment.

The main themes of *Porno*, as with the other novels in the “Edinburgh Trilogy”, are friendship, social (im)mobility, and the influence of class and politics on ordinary lives.

Context

The novel is set, roughly, at the start of the twenty first century. Where the Thatcher years, especially with its closure of mines and shipping yards in the north of Britain, were disastrous for Scotland and Edinburgh, as described in *Trainspotting*, the turn of the century was an optimistic time for Edinburgh. After the devolution referendum of 1997, the first Scottish parliament for nearly three

centuries was installed in 1998, meaning that Scotland enjoyed more political freedom from England. The revitalisation of Edinburgh and Leith was underway, and the nineteen eighties, with its heroin use and resulting AIDS explosion were well and truly a thing of the past. This sense of optimism can be felt throughout the novel, as all characters, with the exception of Begbie, try to seize the opportunities presented to them, albeit with varying success. At the same time, the nineteen eighties still cast their shadow, as the situation Spud finds himself in, for instance, is a direct result of the events during the Thatcher era, and it is unlikely that he will be able to shake that legacy off. Begbie, of course, is a character that thrived rather well – to his standards, although that might not be saying much – before, and has difficulty coping with the new, ‘softer’ Scotland he finds himself in after his imprisonment. The novel is also set at the height of ‘rave-culture’, with ‘love drug’ ecstasy and the ubiquitous cocaine being the drugs of choice, rather than the far more destructive heroin, which left its indelible mark on Scotland, Edinburgh, and the characters of *Trainspotting*. This, again, is a reflection on the optimism of the era.

Reception

Released to generally positive reviews, critics have picked up on the fact that *Porno*, and the other sequels to *Trainspotting* are not as good as the original. In part, this has to do with the fact that the original was, by definition, ‘new’, whereas critics and readers alike now know what to expect from an Irvine Welsh novel. This means that the critical outrage, as well as the praise for new novels involving the same themes and characters, are becoming familiar to the point of partly desensitizing part of the readership. It should be noted, however, that *Porno* was

still an international bestseller; perhaps not the greatest claim to critical acceptance, but a strong indicator that Welsh has a large and loyal readership, nonetheless.

Chapter Three: Dialect in Speech, Literature & Translation

Before attempting to come up with the best solutions for the translation of non-standard language, one has to determine what non standard language – and, for that matter, standard language – actually is. That is not as easy as it may seem at first glance, and opinions on this differ greatly among scholars (and laymen). The standard form of a language, as the name suggests, is the language that is usually seen as the form that has to be used in any kind of (semi-)formal communication within one language community. This means that this form of language is taught in schools, and used in national newspapers, television and radio news broadcasts, and official documents. Because of this, standard language is often confused with being the ‘right’ form of language and that all other forms are subsequently ‘wrong’. It would be worthwhile to note that standard language, too, is just one of many possible varieties of a language, one with greater importance attached to it for the benefit of official communication, but a variety nonetheless. This chapter will explore what constitutes (non) standard language as well as looking at some of the varieties that can be distinguished, and how these are represented in literature. After this is done, the translation of dialect in literary texts will be held under closer scrutiny by analysing which strategies are possible, advisable, and/or best avoided in particular cases.

Dialect in Speech

received pronunciation, *n.*

The most commonly accepted or standard form of pronunciation; *spec.* the standard, most regionally neutral form of spoken British English, traditionally based on educated speech in southern England; abbreviated *RP*. Also: the form of pronunciation of a particular regional variety of English most similar to this. (oed.co.uk)

A number of interesting observations can be made from this *OED* entry about received pronunciation, the standard form of English. First of all, the words ‘most commonly accepted’ indicate that English speakers acknowledge that this variety is the current standard form of British English. Secondly, RP is based on a southern variety of English, or, indeed, *is* a southern variety of English, in spite of being deemed ‘regionally neutral’. Thirdly, RP is based on ‘educated speech’. In short, it can be said that today’s standard English is the variety which is spoken as *their own variety* by well educated people from the south of England, and that all other speakers apparently accept this variety’s supremacy. It should be noted, however, that dialect is of course not just discernible by its non standard phonology, as that in itself would only create a variety of accent, and not a dialect per se. Non standard variations in grammar (such as inversion), vocabulary, and register can make up the language variety that we call dialect. In fact, when non dialect speakers try to impart their attempts at mimicking a dialect with a (mock) sense of realism, they will often resort to the stereotypical phraseology of that dialect, to balance the lack of approximation of the actual phonology. Famous examples of this are “now, then, now, then,” when people mimic the northern

dialect of the late Sir Jimmy Saville, or “top o’ the mornin’ to ye, where’s me pot o’ gold?” when non-Irish try to capture the dialect of the Emerald Isle – although, clearly, there is more than one Irish dialect and accent. It seems that, in order to create an at least passing semblance of a dialect, some, but by no means all, of its perceived characteristics are often all that is required.

Of course, there are other reasons why one variety of English was chosen as the standard. As England, and Britain, became more unified from the middle-ages onwards, and people from all over the British Isles traded with each other – with London in the south at the heart of this trade – it became important to have some sort of *Lingua Franca* in the first place. As more people were able to read and write – please note that the great institutes of education, such as Oxford and Cambridge are also located in the southern half of England –, laws were being put to paper, and the printing press was introduced, it made (economic) sense to limit the amount of language varieties available. Before, variation in spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, was taken for granted, but not anymore. Peter Tan, senior lecturer of English at the university of Singapore, has stated in “The Standardisation of English”, that it would have made sense to choose a variety which was already familiar and/or understood by the majority of the population.

Having opted for a limited amount of accepted varieties in this way, and the continued development of Britain and its empire, it was only natural that the need for one common standard arose at some stage. As written English became increasingly important, the call came for the normalisation and codification of written language. As Suzanne Kemner, advising coordinator of linguistics at Houston’s Rice University, has observed, people pick up reading skills far more quickly when the form that words take are more familiar. This argument is

probably one that won over any sceptics to the desirability of a codified language in a society largely dependent, through its sheer size, on written communication. Slowly but surely the English language became codified and standardised, and the written British English we see and use today, although still prone to change, is the result of this codification.

Because of the reasons stated above, today's RP was for a large part chosen for geographic, economic and political purposes. Because of the prestige that was associated with it and the aura of education that surrounded it, RP became a sign of cultivation. As a result, non standard varieties, were deemed 'lesser', uneducated forms, and were often ridiculed as a result. This notion, however, has been revised (for spoken varieties, that is: the written standard has remained largely unchallenged) since the latter half of the twentieth century, in which "received pronunciation has been gradually lessening in social prestige, and is no longer used by many members of the social and professional groups with which it was traditionally associated". (oed.co.uk) This is in no small part due to the advent of television and its frequent use of non standard varieties in drama, variety and current affairs programmes alike. In the early years of television many of those who appeared on screen not only spoke RP, but in a very high register as well, which made it seem as though just about everyone in the country spoke RP, and had gone to RADA, and that other varieties were sub-normal. In fact, about three percent of the British population use RP as their first variety. (MacMahon, p395) From the nineteen sixties onwards, with Ken Loach's drama *Cathy Come Home* and Ian Le Frenais and Dick Clement's 'Geordie' – i.e. featuring characters with a dialect associated with the North East of England – comedy *The Likely Lads*, and soap operas *Eastenders* and *Coronation Street* as famous examples, regional varieties

became generally more accepted, and television gradually reflected the varieties of English spoken throughout the British Isles.

Non Standard Varieties of English

This paragraph will not deal with establishing how many varieties of English there are, but rather with how they can be described and classified. If there is a standard variety of a language, logic dictates that there must be at least one non standard variety as well. In the case of English there are many, but this veritable cornucopia of language varieties can be identified and classified in a number of ways. One can distinguish between local varieties and varieties of class, but also between accent and dialect, or idiosyncratic varieties and varieties pertaining to the use of a certain register, and so on.

According to Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, in *Style in Fiction*, linguists have defined DIALECT (their capitalisation, JM) as:

“...(V)arieties of language which are linguistically marked off from other varieties and which correspond to geographical, class or other divisions of society. A dialect is thus the particular set of linguistic feature which a defined subset of the community shares...”(p134)

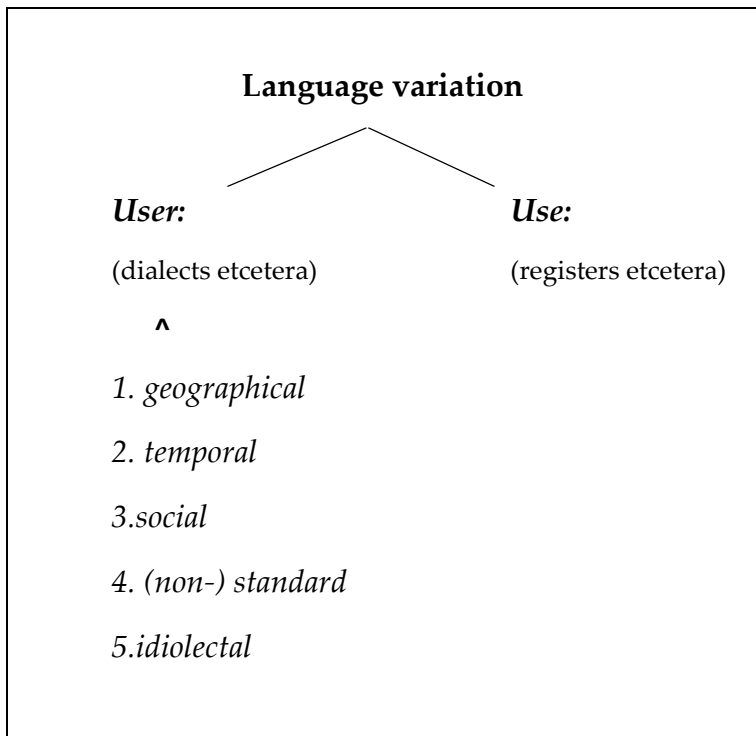
This definition seems to both cover all the major distinguishing features that any variety of a language can have as opposed to every other, as well as being rather too general. In a nutshell, their definition of dialect reads: a manner of speaking, which is peculiar to a particular group of people. This may be very true, but it does

not really offer any solid footholds for anyone trying to establish what (non) standard language is, and how this might be classified.

It is interesting to note that Leech and Short's definition of dialect also encompasses 'accent'. The terms accent and dialect, in its more common use, are often seen as two distinctly separate features, whereby 'accent' refers to the *how* words are uttered (their sound) and 'dialect' by *which* words are uttered (i.e. local or regional words, for example, that have a more common synonym in the standard language) and the grammatical *order* in which they are uttered. It should be noted that it is entirely possible for a speaker to have an accent other than the standard variety without speaking an accompanying non standard dialect, but for a speaker to speak in a non standard dialect without having an accent is extremely uncommon. Adding 'accent' to the spectrum of 'dialect' is, from the point of view of a linguist, not only acceptable, but also necessary.

Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, in *Discourse and the Translator*, make the distinction between users of a language variety and the way the language is being used: "User-related varieties are called *dialects*, which, while capable of displaying differences at all levels, differ from person to person mainly in the phonic medium," (p39) meaning that the differences between these varieties are primarily to be found in the way they sound, rather than by what is actually being said. The way users make use of the language, which message he tries to convey in which situation, refers to *register*. "The differences in register can mainly be found in grammar and lexis." (Hatim and Mason, p39)

Utilising the distinctions made between dialect and register, Hatim and Mason have devised a model which shows not only the possible differences in language varieties by *who* is using them, but also by *how* they are being used:



(figure 3.1: The use-user distinction, Hatim & Mason, p39)

It has to be noted, however that the subdivisions in Hatim and Mason's model are not mutually exclusive; it is perfectly possible, for example, to have a user with both a geographical and social dialect, who is able to switch between registers if the situation calls for it. All users will normally, unwittingly, make use of a temporal dialect, although it is extremely likely that this temporal dialect changes over time: the advent of new socio-cultural phenomena and their introduction and evolution in various language varieties, takes place in both space

and time. A prime example of this is how the English pronunciation of English by Queen Elizabeth II has changed over time. In an article in the *Daily Mail*, dated 9 October 2011, it is stated that “The Queen no longer speaks the Queen's English, and is instead starting to sound like a cockney.” This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but the study, by researchers at Sidney's Macquarie University does show that the Queen's accent “has drifted to one more like those of her subjects who are younger and lower in the social hierarchy.”

Idiolect is the only variety of speech which, by definition, is reserved for just one person. It is perhaps the most flexible of all varieties, precisely because it is reserved for one person. This does not mean, however, that a person's dialectal idiosyncrasies – such as the Queen's – do not change over time as well, or that the register they use is always the same, it simply means that their manner of speech is always their own, regardless of its changes.

It is interesting to see that, just as with Leech and Short, Hatim and Mason's model does not use a standard language, to which all varieties are subordinate, but that it accepts standard language as a variety in its own right. Because of this, all varieties, including the current ‘standard language’, can be valued as equal. This way, existing preconceptions about the *users* of a certain variety, both positive and negative, that other users – including authors and translators- might have, are challenged.

Many literary works – past and present – make use, to lesser or greater extent, of non standard dialect. The dialect in a text can have a variety of functions, as well as a variety of representations. This chapter will take a closer look at the main reasons

an author may have for using a form of dialect, and the ways in which a dialect can be conveyed in a literary text.

Dialect in Literature

Irvine Welsh was by no means the first to use dialect in his novels. In fact, one of the most famous proponents of dialect literature was his fellow Scotsman Robert – Rabbie(!) – Burns, who wrote Scottish dialect (not to be confused with Gaelic, which is another language altogether) poetry as early as the eighteenth century. Other famous Scottish authors to have included Scottish dialect in their works are Sir Walter Scott, Hugh MacDiarmid, John Buchan, J.M. Barrie and Robert Louis Stevenson. Bearing this in mind, it can be said that Welsh's use of dialect is by no means an affectation, but rather simply following a well-established tradition within Scottish literature. The Dutch language, however, appears to lack such a tradition of dialect literature up to the present day. There are some authors, such as Leo Pleysier and Koos van Zomeren, who do make use of dialect in their works. These two authors, however, seem to be torn between using standard Dutch and dialect. Pleysier's dialect language appears on paper as a compromise between standard Dutch, for readability, and dialect language for the sake of authenticity, according to Ad Foolen, of Nijmegen's Radboud University. Koos van Zomeren uses dialect as a means to convey the melancholy that besets him as he sees the surroundings of his youth being changed irrevocably. (Foolen)

Functions of Dialect in Literature

Dialect can have many functions in literary works, and the enumeration below is by no means complete, but in general it can be said that dialect in literature serves three main purposes. The first, but not necessarily the most important, of these functions of dialect is that it can provide comic relief. This comedic function of dialect is particularly prevalent in older literary texts, where non standard dialect added to the stereotypes of characters, or parodied them. (Fields, p63) By juxtaposing, for instance, the language of the cultured people, those who were able to read, or to attend plays as they were wealthy and living in larger cities, to that of those less fortunate, poor city dwellers or provincial speakers, the latter were being ridiculed. (Redling, p246) In contemporary literature, the notion of dialect as a means to provide comic relief, is not as widespread as it was in the past. (Blake, p198-199) One of the possible problems with the use of dialect for comic relief, certainly nowadays, is not so much the fact that it is aimed at a certain group of people within the confines of the text itself, but the fact that certain groups of readers, who are implicitly the butt of the joke, may take umbrage at being ridiculed, even in such a roundabout way. Then again, some authors will purposely aim to offend by using dialects for comic effect.

Another function of non standard language, closely related to the first, but not necessarily the same, is to create distance, or reversely, intimate closeness. Distance or closeness, that is, between the speakers of a certain dialect, and those who do not. An author can use this function of dialect to say a number of things about the users of dialect. The dialect can indicate a difference in social, regional or political strata. By using dialect for this purpose, and assigning it to certain characters in a text an author can convey his ideas about class, race, regionalism/

nationalism, and politics. If a working-class character speaks with a Yorkshire accent, for instance, is also portrayed as being sympathetic, whereas an upper-class character with a public school accent is portrayed as being quite the reverse, this may lead the reader to think that the former is preferable to the latter. Conversely, a speaker of a certain dialect may side with speakers of the same dialect in a literary text, regardless of their actions, or at least identify with them more. A good example of social critique through, amongst others, the use of dialect is Alan Bleasdale's seminal drama *Boys From the Blackstuff* (BBC, 1982), which shows the effects of economics and, by association, Conservative politics, London and 'the South', have on ordinary people, or more particularly, dialect speaking working class northerners. It should be noted however, that an author does not necessarily have social or political motives when writing in dialect.

A third function of dialect, and one which will virtually always be present in a text written in dialect, is that it adds colour to the text. Dialect, then, heightens the sense of realism, as it helps transport the reader to whichever place the story unfolds. The backdrop of a certain place and time, and the mention of certain well-known landmarks, is then augmented by the addition of certain elements which are specific to the language of said place and time. The dialect imbues the text world created by the author with life and realism, and strengthens the unspoken contract between reader and author, in which the former willingly suspends his disbelief, whilst the latter upholds his part of the bargain: the telling of a good story.

Representations of Dialect in Literature

Non standard dialect can appear in literary texts in a variety of ways, some more subtle, others overt, and does not need to feature in a literary text at all. When the author wishes to make use of dialect in his text, however, he has a number of strategies at his disposal, and often he will use a mix of these to create the effect he desires.

One way a representing dialect, albeit a rather lazy one on the author's part, is by simple inferring a character speaks in a non standard dialect. Lines written in standard English will carry an explanatory clause along the lines of: "..., he said in a Texan drawl/ Welsh lilt/ Irish brogue/ posh voice" As stated before, this may be a lazy way of signalling the use of dialect, but that does not mean it is without merit. Many readers will be able to conjure up how a certain line should be spoken in a particular dialect – or at the very least, imagine they are able to do so –, and should they not, the text would not necessarily be the worse for it.

Another way to point out that a text is in dialect is by using standard language interspersed with dialect markers. A Scottish author who uses this method of conveying the dialect quite a lot is crime-novelist Ian Rankin. In his latest novel, *The Impossible Dead*, and in an otherwise standard English dialogue about Scottish politicians in the nineteen eighties, he has one of the characters say: "The MP, (..) I'm not completely glaikit." (p134) The use of 'glaikit' ('stupid') is a clear indicator of the dialect in which the main protagonists apparently speak, but simultaneously understandable to the reading public because of what has gone before. By using these Scottish terms sparingly, and in such a way as to make their meaning instantly apparent, Rankin reminds the readers that the characters speak

in a non standard regional variety of English, without having them reach for a dictionary every few lines, making the novel unreadable.

A third way in which to represent dialect in literary texts is by adjusting the lexis of the language used. Many dialects, as this chapter has shown, are recognisable by their use, or avoidance, of certain words and phrases. A randomly chosen standard English sentence such as “I would like to punch him in the face!” could come out in any number of ways, according to the socio-geographical background of whomever has the inclination to do just that, as the examples below will show:

“I would like to give him a jolly good thrashing, what!” (upper class dialect, as transposed by JM)

“I’d like to punch his light out!” (lower class dialect, transposed by JM)

“Lord above! I’d like to punch him in the face, innit!” (Cockney dialect generator, www.whoohoo.co.uk)

“I’d like to give him a burst mouth!” (Edinburgh dialect, taken from *Porno*, and transposed to standard English spelling)

These four sentences all express the same sentiment; it’s the choice of words, the vocabulary, that sets them apart. These lexical markers are indicators of the social or geographical provenance of the speakers.

A dialect can also be represented by copying certain grammatical features of a dialect, such as inversion. William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, is riddled with this figure of speech. In the Netherlands, the dialect of the eastern region of Twente, particularly, is associated, with this type of dialect variety. The generally accepted order of words is changed, thus creating a word order which will seem unusual to most readers.

The fifth, and the most intrusive, way of representing a dialect in literature is by changing the orthography of the standard language to one that resembles the phonetic realisation of the spoken dialect. The reader might be alienated by the unusual spelling at first, but reading out loud usually helps understanding what is being said. If the author combines the non standard orthography with mostly standard grammar and lexis, the reader should be able to understand the text, even if this does require some extra effort on their part. The Scottish sentence used in the third example of written dialect realisation would then be something like: "I'd like tae gie him a burst mooth!". Aided by conventional grammar and lexis, this dialect sentence does not present the reader with too many difficulties when it comes to understanding its meaning.

Dialect in Translation

Most written languages, like their spoken counterparts, will have one form that is considered to be the standard, and therefore the form which most authors will use when writing, and most readers will expect to see when reading. It is generally accepted among translators and scholars of translation that literary source texts written in the standard form of their respective language should be translated in

the standard form of the target language, provided that the translated target text serves the same function as the source text.

When it comes to literary texts written in a non standard variety of the source language, however, opinions on how to translate this differ. In fact, Bindervoet and Henkes have called dialect “a dead horse, which the translator cannot wait to jump over,” (*‘Extra Edietsiiiie!’*, NRC), to stress the fact that dialect indeed poses a huge problem to translators. This chapter explores the opinions of various scholars on the subject of dialect translation, the solutions they offer, and the problems that may occur.

One problem that springs to mind immediately is not so much the impossibility of translating dialect as such, but rather the apparent lack of original or translated contemporary dialect literature in Dutch. Dutch readers are simply not accustomed to reading target text literary works in dialect. Dialect literature, like olives or oysters, is an acquired taste. Sudden over-exposure to dialect may leave the reader bewildered and bemused in equal measure, and could very well result in abandoning the text altogether, so caution is needed.

In Ian Catford’s *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, published in 1965, the author proposes a solution for the translation of dialect varieties from the source language into the target language. He argues that most languages have elevated one variety, both in written and in spoken form, to the status of the standard form of language. This standard is seen as the unmarked variety of the language, which implies that any deviation from this standard results in a form of dialect, be it social, temporal, or geographical. Catford goes on to argue that “(t)exts in the unmarked dialect of the source language can usually be translated in an equivalent unmarked target language dialect,” (p87) which seems reasonable, but he also

argues that when an unmarked variety is not to be found in the target language, or when the source text is written in a variety other than the standard, the translator may choose an equivalent dialect in the target language. This view is supported by Michael Gregory, who adds that “in translating Cockney dialogue into French, most translators would quite rightly select *Parigot* (the dialect of Paris, JM)”. This means that the choice for a particular equivalent can be based not only on the geographical ‘sameness’ of the source and target dialect, but also on the “‘human’, or social ‘equivalent’”, something which Catford has also pointed out. It appears, however, that Catford does not have a particular source text in mind, as his idea of a dialect-for-dialect translation may work on a theoretical level, but when it comes to the actual translation of a marked dialect from one language to another his theory founders. Even with languages and cultures that are relatively similar, such as English and Dutch, there appear to be a number of problems.

First of all there is the problem of matching the equivalent dialect. If, for example a translator chooses to translate a written Cockney dialect into an equivalent Dutch dialect, there are myriad options to choose from. A general Amsterdam dialect can be chosen to reflect the fact that it is, as with the source variety, the accent of the capital and largest city; Catford’s “dialect of the metropolis” (p87-118) . This implies that, apart from the general dialect of Amsterdam, the particular working-class dialect of Amsterdam’s ‘Jordaan’-area could be used in the translation just the same, as the original variety is also associated with the working classes. The working class dialect of the Hague could be used, as both London and the Hague are the political centre of their respective countries. The Rotterdam dialect could also be used as the East End of London borders the Thames, and Rotterdam is a well known port, associated with the river

Maas. The dialect of cities such as Eindhoven and Maastricht be used just as well, as these are relatively large cities in south(east) of the Netherlands; a choice based on geographical equivalence. It is clear choice for any particular existing dialect can be motivated by a variety of reasons. None of these dialects, however, can or will be a perfect match to the dialect of the source text, as there can never be an exact social and geographical match.

Another flaw in Catford's theory, and a strong indicator that he did not have any actual literary text in mind, is the fact that a dialect-for-dialect translation will in many cases have a jarring, and sometimes even bizarre effect upon readers. There is a 'contract' between author/translator and the reader, whereby the latter willingly suspends his disbelief, provided the author/translator does not break this spell by compromising this suspension of disbelief. As dialects are generally rooted to a certain geographical location, uprooting a target language dialect to an location that remains unchanged from the original in the target text, will change a novel in such a way that the brief generally given by publishers to translators is at risk. Put simply, if a translator opts for an equivalent target language dialect – using any one of Catford's criteria–, but retains the setting and culture specific items of the original, the effect of the original is not only lost, but also changed beyond recognition. As Diller and Kornelius have pointed out in "Die Lehre von den Sprachvarianten." ("The Study of Speech Varieties", *JM*), it is nigh impossible to find a matching equivalent of a dialect as dialect, regional and social ones especially, as there will always be enough differences between (users of) the source dialect and the translated equivalent to merit the distinction of being the ultimate equivalent. (Diller, p84) Hatim and Mason, too, feel that the choice for

a real target text dialect compromises the text world created in the source text, especially when it comes to the setting.

One way to remedy the problem of changing the original effect when opting for an equivalent dialect is to also transpose all cultural elements of the original to the target culture. This, however, means that the identity of the original text is displaced by the process of translation (Mével), and is little more than repairing something which should not have been done in the first place, with something even less desirable. Displacement is an often adopted strategy for the translation of dialect in the United States, according to Lawrence Venuti, where the idea of domesticating translations is favoured and where local expectations are taken into account to a greater extent, rendering the foreign elements of a text 'invisible' (p19-20) so this approach could work very well over there. In the Netherlands, however, translated literary texts – especially for adults – are hardly ever fully domesticated.

The downsides to Catford's theory does not mean that his ideas cannot be used at all. They serve their purpose when one looks at the way a source text written in the standard variety of a language has to be translated. When it comes to source texts in dialect, however, another approach is probably needed.

Perhaps the easiest way of translating dialect, if a suitable equivalent is indeed impossible to find, is by simply ignoring it, and opting for the standard variety in the translation of the target text instead. B.J. Epstein points out that this is "an easy, if not faithful, solution, and in general should probably be avoided". As Luigi Bonafini states in *Translating Dialect Literature*, he rues the loss of regional dialects in translated versions of Mark Twain's stories and argues that this diminishes the value of the target text. This, of course, is true: the dialect in literary works often serves a specific purpose, and losing the effect of the dialect in the

translation means losing part of what the author of the source text intended to achieve by using the dialect. This does not mean that dialect is untranslatable by definition, but it is true that every source text will lose something in translation.

There are ways of circumventing the problem of finding a suitable existing equivalent of the dialect used in the source text. Jiřy Lévy has suggested that, because the dialect cannot truly be captured by an equivalent target language variety, the dialect should only be alluded to. (p144) Rather than writing in dialect, the translator should add a clause such as 'he said in a Texan drawl'. This device is often used in literary source texts as well, inviting the reader to conjure up in their own minds what a character's dialect would sound like. A translator should be wary of using this device too much, however, as it can become superfluous or intrusive if applied too liberally to the target text.

Another way of translating dialect, suggested by Hatim and Mason is by 'inventing' an equivalent dialect. (p43) Bindervoet en Henkes, in their *NRC* article 'Extra Edietsiiiiie!', advise something similar: they feel the translator should translate the dialect as if it were an (invented) *accent*, because this enables the translator to recreate the atmosphere, if not the instant readability of the original work. By this they mean that the translator can opt to modify the standard target language in such a way that it is perceived by readers as being a dialect, without causing too many additional problems associated with using an existing dialect in the target text. This approach seems to be a good one, provided the invented dialect does not become too difficult to understand. Slight but consistent modifications should be able to carry the suggestion of a dialect, without compromising the target text, nor the intention of the source material in a serious way. Inventing a dialect can be the only real choice a translator has for certain

texts, such as Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, that are written in an invented form of the source language themselves. In fact, it is important to remember that many source text dialects are an invention, too, as they do not have an officially recognised written form, or, when they do, this is not the form the author has adhered to. A more recent example of an invented dialect is to be found in the Dutch translation of David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, which is partly set in a dystopian future, much like Burgess's *Clockwork Orange*. The translator must have had a field day in coming up with a new Dutch dialect (or perhaps, the standard Dutch of the future). The result is quite radical, but cannot shake off its obvious artificiality. Where the – just as artificial, of course – source text narrator says: “(n)ow I'd got diresome hole-spew that day 'cos I'd ate a gammy dog leg in Honokaa...” (p239), the translator, Aad van der Mij, opts for “(n)ou ha'k vreesluk spuitrij die dag omda'k in Honomaa'n bedorve honde poot gegete had...” (p263). In this particular case, the translator might get away with this precisely because it is not supposed to resemble any form of contemporary language, and because the words, or rather their meaning, can be recognised with relative ease.

The translator could also opt for leaving out the dialect altogether. If the dialect does not play a pivotal role in a literary work, this should not pose too many problems. As Cees Koster points out in his *Filter* article “‘Kut. Fuck. Klote. Shit.’: het Engels in het Nederlands”, the expressive nature would be lost by a naturalising strategy, but this would not constitute too much of a disaster.

Chapter Four: The Dialect of *Porno*

To ascertain which strategies can be adopted to produce an adequate translation of a non standard language variety literary text such as *Porno*, the translator first has to find out what kind of dialect is being used. When analysing the dialect in the novel, I came to the conclusion that Welsh makes use of a so-called eye-dialect. This term, first coined in the nineteen twenties by George Krapp, professor of English at Columbia University, is “used to describe the phenomenon of an unconventional spelling to reproduce colloquial usage.” (Brett, 49) This is almost exactly what happens in *Porno*; the Edinburgh dialect may seem authentic, but in reality, this effect is achieved by spelling rather than content. This is aptly illustrated by the following sentences, uttered by Francis Begbie:

One fuckin thing ah'm* gaunnae* dae* is tae* find the fuckin sick cunt that kept sendin ays*/** that fuckin filthy poofs' porn whin* ah* wis* inside. Added six months oantae* muh* fuckin sentence whin* ah* battered this wide wee cunt that laughed whin ah* sais: 'Lexo n* me's** partners'.

Ah wis* takin'* aboot* the fuckin shoap we hud*. (p101)

Although clearly written in a non-standard variety of English- some twenty out of a total of fifty nine words are spelled in non-standard English (*), as well as occasionally referring to oneself in the majestic plural(**)- the sentence is perfectly intelligible nonetheless, both in meaning and their grammatical order. The same

can be said for almost every other instance in the novel where the Edinburgh dialect is used. The few instances where Welsh does use authentic Scots words, such as 'dippit' (stupid) in "The place is fuckin empty; an auld wifie n two dippit cunts eatin a breakfast." (p101) and 'blether' (a talk) "– Well, I'll nip roond the night. We'll get a proper blether. Right?" (p103), their meaning can be easily be inferred by the context in which they are being said.

The Author's Reasons for Writing in Dialect

In a 1996 interview with Scottish newspaper *The Herald*, when interviewed about the dialect used in *Trainspotting*, Welsh stated that "(t)he classic assumption of such fiction holds true: working-class people speak funny so are in fiction only for the purposes of humour." This appears to be true, especially for older literary works, such as those of Charles Dickens, where dialect often appears to be used "...not to indicate a genuine difference in pronunciation, but the (...) [as] a friendly nudge to the reader, a knowing look which establishes a sympathetic sense of superiority between the author and reader as contrasted with the humble speaker of dialect". (Brett, p49) In contrast, Welsh promotes these 'humble speakers' to narrators of his novels, proving that they, too are more than just perennial also-rans, only there to provide some comic relief. From a post-colonial point of view, Welsh gives the sub-alterns (in this case speakers of dialect, people living on council estates, junkies) a voice to raise against the colonial elite (the standard English speaking middle- and upper classes, the English 'colonisers' of Scotland). Welsh is proud of being from Scotland and does not shy away from vociferating this pride in his novels.

Apart from making those who are “invisible visible” (Smith), Welsh has other reasons for having his narrators speak in the Edinburgh dialect in *Porno*. Some of these, of course, are quite *banal*. As *Porno* is a sequel to *Trainspotting*, he was more or less forced to do so, and the fact that he uses eye-dialect rather than ‘proper’ dialect is prompted by financial reasons- a novel, above all, has to be readable. Other reasons, though, are more important.

Speakers of Dialect in Porno

As all chapters in *Porno* are being narrated from the point of view of five of its main characters, it needs to be established which characters speak in dialect, and which do not. This seemed fairly straightforward when I started out. The characters of Begbie and Spud exclusively use the Edinburgh dialect, Sick Boy and Renton avail themselves the Edinburgh dialect, Standard English, as well as an amalgam of both, whilst the only female English character, Nikki Fuller-Smith makes sole use of standard English. In the context of the novel, however, it could be said that Nikki’s standard English is actually the dialect. She is the outsider, the foreigner, the “subset” of which Leech and Short speak. (p134) However, I have taken the “speech community” (Leech and Short, p134) to not only mean the mainly Scottish community in the novel, but also the reading community as a whole. Because of this I have chosen Nikki’s narration as the standard source text language, and all other forms of speech as (part)dialect. This chapter sets out to analyse the dialect of the novel’s characters. Spud and Begbie’s language is treated more or less as one, just as Renton and Sick Boy’s, as their language appears to be closely related, owing to the social circumstances the characters find themselves in; Begbie and Spud’s lives spiralling out of control, while Renton and Sick Boy

appear to be more upwardly mobile.. This pairing also enables the translator to compare and contrast the language of characters who find themselves in largely the same circumstances. It should be noted, however, that this analysis pertains to their language as a whole, as the language variety the characters employ not always even, for a host of reasons, which will be discussed below.

The Language of Spud and Begbie

It is quite telling that this time around it is only Spud, the junkie, and Begbie, the jailbird, whose narratives are solely in the Edinburgh dialect. They have both been unable to move on with their lives in a positive way. In spite, or because, of the money he received at the end of *Trainspotting* (it is not actually in the novel, but is shown in Danny Boyle's film, and implied in *Porno*), Spud's social circumstances are even worse than before. A full time junkie, most of his former associates will not have anything to do with him, and to make matters worse, he fears that his partner, Alison, might leave him for Sick Boy. His only solace seems to be his big project, writing a history of Leith. Spud's use of dialect reflects his low social status, his drug abuse, his inability to interact with most other characters and the fact that he seems out of place, especially outside Leith. This is illustrated by his visit to the Edinburgh Rooms in the library, where he gets admitted to, much to his own surprise: "It felt tae ays like ah wis breakin in, man...". (p145) The tragedy is that he is, sometimes, fully aware of his status, too, but this is part of the point Welsh tries to get across: someone's background and dialect are not indicators of intelligence. It is often precisely because of that background and in spite of intelligence that one is unable to break away. Welsh uses this contrast between background and intelligence, too, when he lets Spud ponder the reasons behind

the name-calling he suffered as a child: “Jist cause ay the auld Erin name and the poor threads due tae the adverse economic circumstances and the poverty that was endemic in Murphy households at Tennent Strasser and Prince Regent Strasser.” (p145)

Francis ‘Franco’ Begbie, on the other hand, has no shortage of self-confidence. His expletive strewn narrative shows him to be as bold, brash, and violent as ever, not to mention completely paranoid. He has been cut off from the best part of the nineteen nineties by his jail sentence and he faces a world full of “newfangled phones” (p103), where Thai restaurants are all the rage and Leith has undergone a remarkable demographic and economic revitalisation. He has become an anachronism in his own world and time. He is just as much an outsider as Spud, and his use of dialect reflects that. Unlike Spud, however, he seems to be utterly unaware of this. This adds to his bewilderment, and is used to comic effect when he learns that his second hand furniture shop has been transformed into a Thai café: “Fuckin tie café? What the fuck is this cunt oan aboot?” (p101) Begbie’s singular and casual use of expletives should be seen as a part of his particular idiolectal version of the Edinburgh dialect, rather than independent of it.

The Language of Renton and Sick Boy

Renton and Sick Boy’s use of standard English and Edinburgh dialect is very much the same. They are both capable of code-switching, unlike Spud and Begbie, when the situation necessitates this. The first chapter of the novel is narrated by Sick Boy. He lives in a dinghy flat in Hackney and works in a bar; things could be better. In this chapter both his interior monologue and proper dialogue are in standard English. In other chapters, while his interior monologue remains largely in

standard English, the dialogue changes. The dialogue will also vary between standard English and the Edinburgh dialogue depending on who he is talking to. In his own pub, The Port Sunshine Tavern, he has no need for standard English, in fact it can be counterproductive. This appears to indicate that Sick Boy is acutely aware of his surroundings and the role he plays in them, and changes his speech accordingly.

The only time Sick Boy reverts to the Edinburgh dialect in his narrative is when he gets angry, for instance when he spots Renton in Amsterdam: “It wis ma old mate Mark. It wis Rents.”(p134) This seems to indicate that under the veneer of ‘proper’ Britishness, there lurks still very much a Leith ‘schemie’.

The same can be said for Renton. Unaware of Sick Boy’s impending visit, he almost exclusively uses standard English in both speech and narrative. When he and Sick Boy are together, however, their dialogue alternates between standard English, the Edinburgh dialect and a combination of the two. Renton’s reasons for switching to the non standard varieties is easy to explain. First of all, and this goes for Sick Boy, too, if two speakers of the same dialect are talking to each other, it would make sense for them to speak in the language that they are used to. Secondly, and this accounts for their use of standard English as well as its combination with the Edinburgh dialect, both men wish to prove to each other that they have moved on since *Trainspotting*, that they are no longer two drugged-up ‘schemies’. Another reason why they revert to the Edinburgh dialect, and this is Renton’s reason, is that he tries to bridge the ‘emotional distance’ he has created between him and Sick Boy by double-crossing him. By tapping into their shared he tries to control the damage that Sick Boy (and Begbie) will do to him. The first time Renton encounters a furious Sick Boy in Amsterdam, he can only blurt out

“(s)ick...-eh, Simon, ah’ll gie ye it,” (p141) but in the same conversation he composes himself: “Mine is muscle, I never took you for a fat cunt.” ((p143)

The Language of Nikki Fuller-Smith

As her double-barrelled might suggest Nikki comes from a rather posh, English family. Her narrative is exclusively written in standard English, but reported speech is often in the Edinburgh dialect. Being both English and a University student, she stands out quite a lot from the other characters, despite some of her actions. Upon closer inspection I realised that some of language she uses was rather posh as well, for instance when she says: “I don’t respond to him, but I do approach Simon, ” (p293) or, “I was far too much of a lady to mention it.” The fact that she does transcribe reported speech in dialect suggests that she looks down on some of the other characters because of their actions and social class. The inclusion of her character might, in that case, be Irvine Welsh’s way of saying: “You (the upper classes, the English) might think you are better than we are, but you are just the same,” although he also makes a point of stating the fact that Scottish students do not pay any tuition fees, whereas an English student in Scotland does, forcing them to sometimes take on jobs they would not consider if they did not have to. It is more likely, however, that Nikki’s style of narration reflects the way she perceives herself, a coping mechanism to shield herself from her own feelings of self-loathing and the situation she is in (the choices she makes stem partly from a traumatic childhood), but also that of a young university educated woman who still has all options open to her, in stark contrast to Spud and Begbie.

Chapter Five: The Translation Problems in *Porno*

When it comes to translating dialect, as shown in chapter five, it turns out that it poses problems much like most other aspects of translating. In each case, the translator has to recreate the original feel of the text into the target text. Whether the original text makes use of dialect, or any other stylistic traits, does not really alter anything. A certain aspect of the original causes certain problems for the translator, who then has a number of possible strategies at his disposal, of which he has to choose the strategy that is best suited to that particular problem and to the translation as a whole. This chapter is dedicated to the possible translation strategies that can be employed for the translation of the dialect in *Porno*, and to establishing which of these is the most desirable. To this end, a number of example fragments from the source text will be used as an example of the kinds of problems the language of *Porno* poses to the translator, as outlined by Christiane Nord in “Text Analysis and the Degree of Difficulty of a Translation”.

Translation Problems

Christiane Nord identifies four separate categories of problems which can occur when translating texts: pragmatic, culture specific, language pair specific, and text specific problems. (p147) The latter of these problems, ‘text specific’, appears to be a category, if indeed it can be called that, from which the other three originate, and will therefore not be discussed separately. It can be argued that every – literary – text will give rise to translation problems which can be deemed ‘specific’ for that particular text, and can be identified in accordance with the other categories that

Nord has devised. In some cases the problems that occur in *Porno* can be categorised in more than one of the problems that Nord has identified.

Pragmatic Translation Problems

Pragmatic translation problems arise as a result of differences in the “communicative situations in which the source text and target text are embedded”. (Nord, p147) In the case of *Porno* this has a number of implications. The novel is set the turn of this century and the last, whereas the translation of *Porno*, if it were commissioned today, would be published some ten years later. This, of course, is not a huge problem. Frank Begbie’s wariness of – at the time– new fangled technologies such as mobile phones, or his dismay and wonder at existence of a brand of painkillers called ‘Nurofen’ may seem quaint now, but this does not really impede the readability as such. If an English reader would be reading this novel in 2012 the ‘problem’ of the novel being set in a different time would be much the same.

A more pressing issue in this category of translation problems is the “culturally determined prior knowledge” (Nord, p147) that is – largely – absent from text recipients in the target language. *Porno* is heavily influenced by the socio-political situation in Scotland (1980’s- 2000). British people will generally be aware of the social problems Scotland and Edinburgh faced in the nineteen eighties (mass redundancies, heroin addiction, and the AIDS explosion), as well as more recent – political – developments (devolution, revitalisation of formerly deprived inner city areas), so this will be deemed common knowledge among British readers of *Porno*. Dutch readers, however, may not be aware of Scotland and Edinburgh’s socio-political background. How this can be remedied by a translator of *Porno*, however,

is another matter, and will be discussed further on, when possible translation strategies will be analysed.

A final pragmatic translation problem, closely linked to the previous and at the very heart of this thesis, is the dialect. The dialect forms an integral part of Welsh's source material, but is very difficult to translate into Dutch, without losing the implicit role and function the dialect has in the source text, especially if readers are not in the possession of sufficient prior knowledge.

Culture Specific Translation Problems

Culture specific problems occur in *Porno* as a result of the difference between certain conventions and norms in Scotland and the Netherlands. A good example of this are the references to units of measurement such as 'pints', and food such as 'mushy peas', that may have precise Dutch equivalents – in this case '0,568 liter' and 'suddererwten' – but are difficult to translate in a way that is both accurate in terms of their meaning, and does not hamper readability and understanding.

Apart from problems that arise from the difference between Dutch conventions and those of Britain as a whole, the dialect of *Porno* poses its own problems, as well. Two aspects of the dialect, especially, create what Nord deems 'culture specific translation problems', namely the swearing and the rhyming slang. The profuse swearing in the novel is mainly achieved by two words, or variations thereof, and in many cases accompanied by an explanatory, or amplificatory noun. The word 'fuck', in various forms, appears no less than eighty five times in the selected fragments narrated by Frank Begbie, with 'cunt' a respectable second at thirty five times. The swearing poses a number of problems. Firstly, the swearing serves a distinct function in the dialect and vocabulary of a

number of the novel's characters, as shown in chapter six of this thesis, and therefore needs to be retained in the translation somehow. Secondly – even in the source material –, the swearing is ubiquitous, yet limited in its variation, which can cause a problem vis-à-vis the readability of the text. The jarring effect of the repetition of 'fuck' and 'cunt' is diluted somewhat by the nouns that accompany them, but that in turn poses a problem which will be discussed in the 'language pair specific problems' section.

The rhyming slang of the novel is particularly problematic for the translator because of three reasons. First of all, Dutch dialects, unlike their English counterparts, are not known for their rhyming slang, which means that the only option really open to the translator is to make use of the actual term the rhyming slang is trying to convey. Another problem with the rhyming slang in the dialect in *Porno* is that it presupposes that the reader 'gets' the implication of the slang. That this may be a problem for the translator is illustrated by the fact that in the existing Dutch translation of the novel, the term 'Lou Reed' is understood to mean 'weed', rather than its actual meaning, 'speed'. Both 'weed' and 'speed' are types of drugs, so that reference was not lost on the translator, its effects, however, are quite different. The translator, Ton Heuvelmans, could have inferred its meaning by references made in the accompanying text, but it is clear that rhyming slang in the dialect of *Porno* can be hard to translate.

Language Pair Specific Translation Problems

Structural differences between the English and Dutch language account for a number of translation problems. In *Porno*, some of the peculiarities of the Edinburgh dialect as employed by Welsh's characters, cause problems for the translator. The coupling of swear words with nouns (whether or not accompanied by an adjective) is something that is rarely possible in Dutch, at least not in that way. This can be best demonstrated by looking at the chapters narrated by Frank Begbie. His idiosyncratic rendition of the Edinburgh dialect, stands out for its profuse swearing; it is very much a part of his idiolect, and it is doubtful that he is even aware of it. When Begbie discloses that his misbehaviour in prison "(a)dded six months oantae muh fuckin sentence," (p101) the 'fuckin' refers to the 'sentence'. In Dutch however, it is more common in sentences of this type, to let a swear word refer to the numeral, in this case 'six (months)' rather than the noun 'sentence'. In another example,. In the same chapter, Begbie also refers to "I wis takin about the fuckin shoap we hud," (p101) meaning "I was talking about the fucking shop we had", where 'fuckin' refers to '(the) shoap'. In Dutch, however, one would use the swear word to refer to the fact that something was being *talked* about, rather than the actual thing. This language pair specific problem somewhat forces the translator into translating the dialect of *Porno*, of which the swearing is an integral part, to adhere as much as possible to the rules of the Dutch language, whilst at the same time trying to retain the atmosphere that the swearing adds to the dialect. This is an inevitability that the structural differences between languages poses. It can be said, however, that this problem could be the least difficult, as the difference in structure between the source- and the target language, leaves the translator – again, with the brief in mind – with no other option but to adhere to the structural

vagaries of the target language, whereas the other problems leave myriad translation options open.

Chapter Six: Translating Dialect in *Porno*

When it comes to translating dialect literature there is a veritable treasure trove of strategies available to the translator. However, it will soon become apparent that many of these strategies, though possible from a theoretical point of view, are not advisable, indeed wholly undesirable. This chapter returns to the most commonly accepted strategies, as discussed in chapter three, and compares and contrasts them with each other, so as to ascertain which of the strategies that are realistically available to the translator suit the brief as outlined in the introduction to this thesis.

Both Diederik Grit, in “De vertaling van Realia” (“The Translation of Realia”, *JM*) and Andrew Chesterman, in “Vertaalstrategieën: een classificatie” (“Translation Strategies: a Classification”, *JM*) have outlined ideas on how to actually implement various translation strategies. James S. Holmes, in “De brug bij Bommel herbouwen” (“Rebuilding the Bridge at Bommel”, original title) has devised a diagram with which the strategies that have been adopted can be analysed in retrospect (p186), but which can also be used beforehand, to provide the translator a better insight at the availability and desirability of the choices he makes. I will use these ideas, as well as those mentioned in chapter three, to translate a fragment of the source material. The fragment will be translated in accordance with the following strategies: 1.) existing dialect equivalency (cf Catford et al), 2.) invented dialect equivalency (cf Hatim & Mason), 3.) register equivalency (cf Levý), and 4.) the omission of dialect altogether (cf Bindervoet & Henkes). This way, the translator can assess their suitability. The strategies are accompanied by a translation of the following fragment, taken from the start of chapter 58, “LUCKY BONUS”, as narrated by Francis Begbie:

Ah've dragged that **cunt** **Second Prize** oot, n uv phoned
 up **Spud** Murphy cause ah want tae git tae the boatum ay
this shite wi June. Some **cunt's** goat the wrong end ay the
fuckin stick here, or some **cunt's** tryin tae fuckin well
wind me up. Mates. Nae **cunt's** yir **fuckin** mate, ye see
 that the aulder ye git. **Second Prize**, oan the pool table,
aw **fuckin** edgy, tryin tae drink a **fuckin** tomatay juice
 like a **fuckin** poof. Ah'll gie the **cunt** tomatay juice.
Fuckin anti-social **cunt**.

(p355)

This eighty nine word fragment contains twenty nine words, highlighted in yellow, that can be considered dialect on account of their alternative spelling, fifteen swear words (red) that are part of Begbie's idiolect, two nicknames (green), as well as a number of expressions – cliché's, almost – that, although common enough in other varieties of English, might be part of the Edinburgh dialect as a whole, of the novel's character's sociolect, or of Begbie's idiolect (underlined). If 'cause', 'mate', and 'edgy', and 'anti-social' are seen as markers of non standard language, this would leave fewer than twenty standard English words, making this fragment ideal to test the various translation strategies on.

Existing Dialect Equivalency

There are three ways in which the translator can adopt the strategy I have called 'dialect equivalency'. He can choose a suitable Dutch dialect, without changing the orthography, or he can change the orthography, but not the grammar and vocabulary of standard Dutch. He can also combine the first two options and for a suitable dialect, together with the accompanying orthography. This strategy is favoured by Ian Catford, amongst others, who encouraged translators to look at the dialect used in the original, and then see which target text dialect would be a suitable equivalent.

The first option, finding a suitable equivalent dialect, is more problematic than it might look. Erik Bindervoet and Robert Jan Henkes discussed this strategy in the aforementioned article for *NRC* called 'Extra-Edietsiiiie!' in 2007, but warn that its effect can be counterproductive if the target text dialect is not completely equivalent, and therein lies the problem: finding an exact (or near-enough) match. Establishing which Dutch dialect is (un)suitable can be done in a number of ways. If Edinburgh is primarily seen as a capital city, then the 'Jordanese' dialect of Amsterdam might fit the bill. If, however, Edinburgh is seen as a large city in the north of Britain, then the dialect of the city of Groningen might step to the fore. If on the other hand, Edinburgh is seen as the second largest city in Scotland, then the dialect of Rotterdam might be most suitable. The list of possible equivalents is nearly endless. This strategy poses another problem, too. A literary text set in Edinburgh, featuring Scottish people and places, with Scottish names, with protagonists speaking in the dialect of the Hague, would stretch the believability of the text, and the readers willing suspension of disbelief, beyond breaking point. This can be remedied if the culture specific items, that give away the 'foreignness'

of a text are all domesticated (cf Holmes). In a translation of *Porno* Edinburgh could then become Den Haag (administrative capital), George IV bridge 'Lange Poten' (a well-known landmark or street) and Danny 'Spud' Murphy Danny 'Patat' Peeters (being of Dutch speaking, but not Dutch, descent, and transposing the 'Irishness' to 'Flemmishness'). Perhaps surprisingly, these changes would be feasible. The bigger problems occur when significant events in – recent- history are being mentioned, in *Porno*'s case devolution and Irish immigration, to name but a few.

Among the many possible dangers of adopting a dialect for equivalent dialect is that it might cause offence to those whose dialect is, or is not, chosen to represent the dialect of *Porno*. Many readers will not see this as a problem, but as P.H. Burton points out in 'Working with Dialect Translations', "others may need reassurance that the linguistic variety in question is not being parodied or otherwise downplayed." (p83)

The other two possible ways of adopting this strategy, altering the orthography, and altering both the orthography and adopting dialect vocabulary aggravate rather than alleviate the problems outlined in the previous paragraph, as they are largely the same, or extended, versions of the first.

Ultimately, for this strategy to work, the original work would have to be altered beyond recognition, and would not be suitable to the current ideas of translating literary text. This strategy of dialect equivalency does occur in children's literature and translated adult literature of the past, but is not suited to the modern way of thinking about translation, and certainly not to the translation of *Porno*. Catford was, and is, of course a well respected scholar on the subject, but it should not be forgotten that the poetics of most translators at the time he

developed his views, were markedly different from today, and that such intrusions on the source text were the standard then, but not nowadays – at least not in non-Anglophonic target texts. Using an existing Dutch dialect, in this case the dialect of the Hague (as this is one of the best documented Dutch city dialects and because the Hague dialect generators abound on the internet), the translation of Begbie’s fragment would read like this:

Ik hep die kankâhlèeâhr van un Tweiduh Près nâh
 buïtuh gesleipt en ik hep Patatje Peiteâhrs gebeld
 omdat ik nâh wel eins wil wetuh wâh dat gezèk
 met Sjaan vandaan komt. Un of andeâhre
 kankâhlèeâhr heift ut helemaal veâhrkeiâhrd
 begrepen, of iemand probeiâhrt me op tuh naaien.
 Vrienden. Hoe oudeâh je wôhdt, hoe meiâh je
 doâhhebt dat gein enkele kankâhlèeâhr je vriend is.
 Tweiduh Près, bè duh poâltafel, helemaal gestresst,
 probeiâhrt tomatuh sap tuh drinken als duh un of
 andeâhre kankâh flikkeâhr. Ik zal die kankâhlèeâhr
 eins tomatensap geven. Saaie kankâh -aso.
 (Plathaags.nl)

For this specific fragment, the translation seems to work quite well: proper names have to be changed into suitable Dutch equivalents – why would Dutch people have English (nick)names –, but on the whole this translation is readable, whilst at the same time conveying the atmosphere of the original. The real problems, of

course, are only brought to light when the narrative starts to include existing places and people. *Porno* often alludes to Edinburgh landmarks and streets, as well as, for instance, people connected to Edinburgh's Hibernian football club, and although these can be transposed to fit The Hague in theory, in practice the novel would be altered to such an extent as to be a completely unrecognisable, new work. As Cees Koster points out when analysing the translated dialect of *Trainspotting*, having Scottish junkies "speak the language of *Bartje* or *Merijntje Gijzen* may be an acceptable form of comedy, but is by no means a legitimate translation strategy". ('Kut. Fuck. Klote. Shit.': het Engels in het Nederlands, *Filter*) Complete naturalisation, as Holmes terms it (p186), of the narrative is therefore not a strategy that would suit the brief of a Dutch translator.

Invented Dialect Equivalency

If the translator wishes to emulate the dialect of the source text, he might do wise in inventing a suitable Dutch dialect. The suitability of the invented dialect can be determined by how similar it is – in the target culture – in style to the source material. The translator has the freedom to borrow from all varieties of Dutch, and can create an eclectic mix. Therein does lie a problem, however, as the translator must make sure the new dialect of *Porno* is still as familiar – that is to say, in the *meaning* of the dialect words – to Dutch readers as the original work was to a British audience. Welsh ostensive use of a single dialect poses another problem for the invented dialect as well. The single dialect, by its very nature, created a homogeneity an invented dialect can only hope to achieve. An invented dialect is in danger of being nothing more than a ragbag of dialect phrasing, without making

sense to, let alone engaging, the reader. Bindervoet and Henkes recommend an invented dialect, as it allows the translator to convey the idea that a dialect is being spoken, whilst the geographical location does not have to be abandoned, as opposed to the solution Catford offers.

Another possibility is not to create a new dialect from existing ones, but actually creating a whole new target language dialect. Anthony Burgess, for example, invented ‘Natsat’, a mix of foreign languages interspersed with English, for “A Clockwork Orange”. In spite of this, that novel is exceedingly comprehensible in grammar and vocabulary. The same goes for David Mitchell’s “Cloud Atlas”, as we have seen in chapter three. That novel, however, was an original work, and its language did not have an existing counterpart in the real world. The translator of *Porno* must bear in mind that the language of the source material, though odd in appearance, was not invented, but existed already. To create neologisms for the sake of achieving the dialect effect of the source material in a translation seems rather crass. It may have worked for the invented dialect of Cloud Atlas and its universally acclaimed Dutch translation by Aad van der Mijn, but in the case of *Porno*, such an invented dialect would sit less comfortably:

‘K het die flapkikker van ‘n Second Prize d’r uit
getrokke en ‘k het Spud Murphy geklingeld ommat
‘k nou wellus wil wete hoe dat gesmaggel met June
steekt. Dene flapkikker het ut niet gesnope of dene
flapkikker probeert mijn te verkutten. Kamerade.
Genene is je kameraad, dat oog je pas as je
bejaarder wor. Second Prize, bij de ballenbak, is

stressed as de hel en zuigt een roodappelprut alsof
 'ie een ruggetuffer is. 'K zal die flapkikker us
 roodappelprut geve. Dooie flapkikker.

One needs to bear a few things in mind when assessing the suitability of this translation strategy. Invented words will almost invariably be a source of controversy, because they very much are the translator's preference, rather than a universally accepted successor of a known word, or expression. In this case, 'roodappleprut' and 'ballenbak' may be, to the translator, whole acceptable Dutch invented dialect representations of 'tomatay juice' and 'pool table' respectively, but it is hard to assess how readers will respond to them. Another problem is that an invented dialect, especially one that has to take readability into account, tends to resort to an almost childlike representation of the standard language. In this case, the letter 'n' is dropped from the end of words, and vowels are dropped from words such as 'ik' ('I'), the latter being something which is frowned upon in Dutch contemporary literature, but which used to occur quite frequently in earlier times, both in original and translated works. The combination of creativity – the invention of a dialect – and readability seem to be quite incompatible.

Register Equivalency

As Hatim and Mason point out (cf Chapter Three) varieties of languages or not only achieved by users, but also by their use. Two people may speak the same dialect, but the way they use this dialect can be completely different. The Edinburgh dialect of *Porno* is used differently by the various users. The variation of

register is largely responsible for that, as the four male characters have grown up together and speak the same dialect. When Renton and Sick Boy are in Amsterdam, their lower class Scottish dialect and their accent, are largely gone. When they are in Edinburgh, however, and interact with other characters their accent and register changes. The translator can seek to recreate the dialect of the original not through dialect, but through register. The idiolect of each character should ensure that there is no danger of breaching the continuity by altering the register, just as it does in the source text novel. This idea is given added weight by Jiří Levý, and Diller and Kornelius, who advise the translator to look at the purpose of the source text dialect and what it is meant to convey. This way, you might ‘lose’ the original dialect, but you can recreate its purpose and ‘feel’ in the source text. Using this strategy, the source text fragment could translated like this:

Ik heb die klojo van een Second Prize naar buiten gesleept
 en ik heb Spud Murphy gebeld omdat ik nou wel eens
 wil weten waar dat gezeik met June vandaan komt. Een of
 andere klootzak heeft het helemaal verkeerd begrepen, of
 iemand probeert me op te naaien. Vrienden. Hoe ouder je
 wordt, hoe meer je beseft dat geen enkele klootzak je
 vriend is. Second Prize, bij de pooltafel en gestresst als de
 neten, probeert tomaten sap te drinken als de een of
 andere kuthomo. Ik zal die klootzak eens tomatensap geven.
 Saaie kut-aso.

This strategy boasts a number of advantages over the previous ones. First of all, by opting for an equivalent register, rather than an equivalent dialect, the atmosphere of the original can be preserved (cf Holmes). Secondly, the translator does not have to bend over backwards to make the dialect fit the locale, or vice versa. Another important advantage is that the translator does not have to find words that are both recognisable as being dialect, and well established enough within the target culture to be instantly recognisable.

Omission of the Dialect Altogether

This is another of Bindervoet and Henkes's possible solutions, but this is also seen as something that might sit right with children's literature, as it might fit with one of the functions of said literature – improving comprehension and general literacy, without 'getting in too deep' – it would neutralise the purpose of the text and feeling it intends to convey. If the source text fragment was translated using a neutralising strategy, the translation would look something like this:

Ik heb Second Prize naar buiten gesleept en ik heb Spud
Murphy gebeld, want ik wil tot op de bodem uitzoeken
hoe dat gedoe met June nou zit. Of iemand heeft
het bij het verkeerde eind, of iemand houdt me voor de gek.
Vrienden. Niemand is je vriend, en naarmate je ouder wordt,
heb je dat steeds beter door. Second Prize, bij de pooltafel, is
op van de zenuwen en probeert een tomatensapje te drinken,
alsof hij homoseksueel is. Ik zal hem eens tomatensap geven.
Ongezellige vent.

This translation can, of course be seen as a bit of an exaggeration of standard Dutch – in fact, although written in fairly neutral language, it sounds rather camp. What really makes this translation stand out, and makes it risible, however, is the juxtaposition of *what* is being said, and *how* it is being said. In the source text this actually happens quite a lot. Intelligent observations are being made in a tone of voice that makes the reader suspect otherwise. Therein lies the problem of this translation strategy: it cloaks the unusual in rather mundane language, whereas the original conveys mundane occurrences in unusual language. The atmosphere of the source material is inescapably lost in this way, and therefore does not suit the brief. In *Porno*, where the text is virtually anchored by the Edinburgh dialect, the complete loss of the dialect is unacceptable; this particular translation strategy would effectively mean that the novel is untranslatable. (Koster)

Conclusion

When it comes to translating the dialect of *Porno*, the translator has a number of options at his disposal. Bearing in mind the usual brief given to the translator by publishers these options become more limited. Conveying the atmosphere of the original material is paramount. Of course, the example translations for each strategy were extremes. Their purpose was to show the effect that each strategy has on a literary text written in dialect. In reality, the translator will often opt for a blend of several strategies to obtain the perfect atmospheric match. However, the examples have shown that some strategies, if rigidly adhered to, will do a disservice to the source material. Nonetheless, in general it can be said that the best translation strategy will mostly consist of elements of the 'register equivalency' approach, because this enables the translator to circumvent the problems posed by adopting a real or invented equivalent dialect. I have translated selected fragments of the source text according to the register equivalency approach. That is not to say, however, that I have completely disregarded the other available strategies. Wherever the other strategies had their use I have not hesitated to deploy them. I felt that, by using an equivalent register, I would be able to preserve the atmosphere of the source material as well as the readability. The translated fragments should read as though Welsh had originally written *Porno* in Dutch. I have sometimes consulted the original translation of the novel, by Ton Heuvelmans, as he largely followed the same strategy, although the results, of course, are largely not the same, as, inevitably, the translator's individual preferences shine through.

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APPENDIX A: ANNOTATED TRANSLATIONS

Table of Contents

Francis Begbie

Translated Fragment from Chapter 18: NICHTENPORNO

Translated Fragment from Chapter 27: BARSTENDE KOPPIJN

Danny 'Spud' Murphy

Translated Fragment from Chapter 25: De afdeling Edinburgh

Translated Fragment from Chapter 45: Paardenkrachten

Mark 'Rents' Renton

Translated Fragment from Chapter 14: Hoeren van Amsterdam deel 4

Simon 'Sick Boy' Williamson

Translated Fragment from Chapter 24: Project # 18.737

Nikki Fuller-Smith

Translated Fragment from Chapter 37: “. . .een politiek correcte wip. . .”

NICTENPORNO¹

Wat ik hoe dan ook ga doen is dat zieke stuk vreten² opzoeken die me die gore nichtenporno bleef sturen toen ik in de lik zat. Kostte me godverdomme³ mooi zes maanden extra doordat ik dat lefgozertje in mekaar roste omdat hij moest lachen toen ik zei dat Lexo en ik 'partners' waren.

Ik had het dus godverdomme over onze winkel.

Dus daar ga ik godverdomme als eerste langs. Er is iets aan de hand, want die grote klootzak is al maanden niet meer op bezoek geweest in de nor. Zomaar. Geen uitleg, niks. Dus ik pak de bus naar Leith, maar als ik daar aan kom is de hele winkel pleite. Ik bedoel, hij is er wel, maar hij is godverdomme helemaal veranderd. In een of ander achterlijk eettentje. Maar goed, ik zie hem daar achter

¹ The alliteration of the original, "Poofs; Porn", can be maintained by translating this as "Potenporno". In Dutch it is more common – though just as politically incorrect – however to accentuate things that are (perceived as) being for the gay community with the prefix 'nichten-'. In the existing translation, Ton Heuvelmans opts for 'Flikkerporno'. (p109) Both options, I feel, are more acceptable than 'Potenporno'. The capitalisation, of course, need to be maintained in the Dutch translation, as it serves as an indication of Begbie's temperament

² Begbie's predilection for the imprecation 'cunt' appears to be as much a part of his Edinburgh dialect as of his idiolect, as the others use this word more sparsely. 'Cunt', as with his other curse of choice, 'fuck(ing)', does not seem extremely repetitive, though. In a Dutch translation however, opting for variations of 'klootzak' and 'godverdomde' as a suitable approximation of 'cunt' and 'fuck' respectively, would not only seem gratuitous, but would also hinder the readability of the text, as in Dutch the rhythm would falter. In the written Dutch equivalent dialect, or register, therefore, more variation, if not too much, is needed to approximate the Edinburgh dialect rhythm of Frank Begbie.

³ The rhythmic qualities of 'fucking' mean that it not only has to be more varied in the translation – in this instance, I have opted for 'godverdomme' – but also that the position of the curse word(s) needs to be different. To go for 'zes kutmaanden extra' as a translation of 'six fucking months' would imply that the months themselves are 'kut', rather than Begbie's actual meaning: that the extension of his incarceration is rather a shame. To accentuate this in Dutch, I have opted to couple the curse with the personal pronoun.

de bar de krant zitten lezen. Je kan hem ook moeilijk missen, zo groot als die klootzak is. De zaak is zo goed als leeg; een oud vrouwtje en twee debiele⁴ klojo's die aan het ontbijten zijn. Lexo die eten serveert alsof 'ie⁵ een of ander groot stom wijf is. Hij kijkt op, ziet me daar staan en doet bijna alsof hij godverdomme nog een keer moet kijken. "Alles goed, Frank!"

Dus ik zeg "Prima". Ik kijk het hutje eens goed rond, allemaal kleine kuffafeltjes en van die spleetogentaal en kutdraken op de muren en al dat soort gelul. "Wat krijgen we nou?"

"Heb er een eettentje van gemaakt. Geen knaken te verdienen met tweedehands meubels. En 's avonds kun je hier Thais eten. Doet het goed bij het nieuwe trendy volk in Leith en bij de studenten hier", grijnst hij, helemaal vol van zichzelf.

Fukking taai vreten?⁶ Waar heeft die klootzak het over? "Watte?"

"Tina, m'n vriendin, die runt de zaak eigenlijk. Ze heeft haar catering diploma. Volgens haar loopt de zaak beter als eettent."

"Dus de zaken gaan goed", zeg ik verwijtend tegen die lul, terwijl ik rondkijk en hem laat merken dat het me allemaal geen ene kut kan bekoren.

⁴ Welsh's original uses the Scots slang 'dippi'. It can be inferred from the text that this is a negative term, something which the Scots-English dictionary I consulted to find out the exact meaning corroborated. A Dutch regional variety, such as 'uit de poppenkast gevallen klojo's' might be a tad too obscure, and too long to resemble the staccato qualities of Begbie's dialect and idiolect.

⁵ Although I stated in chapter six that the translation of 'I' to 'k' – closely related to 'ie' for 'he', seen here – is generally not done in contemporary Dutch (translated) literature, it is sometimes unavoidable in *Porno*, as these are ubiquitous in the original. In the translation, however, I have endeavoured to keep these to a minimum.

⁶ The entire Thai food exchange is a fairly loose translation of the original, but justifiable because the comedy that is derived from Begbie's misinterpretation can be maintained, and in such a way as to do justice to Begbie's manner of speech.

Het is duidelijk dat die klootzak nu open kaart wil spelen. Hij gaat zachter praten en wenkt me naar achter. “Klopt, ik moest de boel weer op de rit krijgen. Niet meer dealen. Veel te veel gezeik met de juten⁷. De zaak is nu van Tina”, zegt hij weer, en dan: “Maar we zullen het natuurlijk netjes met je afhandelen.”

Ik kijk hem nog steeds aan, terwijl ik tegen de muur leun en de keuken in gluur. Ik voel hem verstijven, alsof hij bang is dat ik de hele tent ga verbouwen. Hij mag dan denken dat hij heel wat waard is, maar met handen als kolenschoppen begin je geen moer als je een mes in je bast hebt. Ja, je ziet zijn ogen naar de keuken gaan, net als die van mij net deden. Dus ik maak het die klootzak gelijk maar even duidelijk. “Je was al een tijdje niet meer langsgekomen in de bajes, he”, zeg ik.

En hij kijkt me godverdomme alleen maar aan met die stomme grijns van hem. Ik kan zien dat hij eigenlijk helemaal niet met me wil praten, dat hij me het liefste helemaal terug tot aan het einde van Leith Walk zou willen rammen.

Dat wil ik nog wel eens zien. “En ik zal je nog eens iets zeggen, de helft van de oude zaak was van mij, dus de helft van deze is ook van mij,” zeg ik tegen die klootzak. Ik kijk de tent rond om mijn nieuwe onderneming eens goed in me op te nemen.

Hij kookt van woede, dat is duidelijk, maar ondertussen ouwehoert hij nog steeds een eind weg. “Ik zie jou nou niet echt thee en broodjes serveren, Frank, maar we komen er vast wel uit. Ik zorg heus wel voor je, ouwe makker, dat weet je.”

⁷ The slang term ‘bizzies’ is apparently derived from the Scouse dialect of Liverpool (Urban Dictionary) and is a pejorative term for police officers (who were too ‘busy’ to actually do any real policing). Research among English friends has made me conclude that this is not a term which meaning can be inferred from reading the text; some thought it might be a diminutive for ‘business’. An equivalent Dutch term would be ‘juut’, with the added benefit of being universally understood.

“nou, ⁸op dit moment moet er vooral voor flappen worden gezorgd,” zeg ik tegen die grote tyfushond.

“Geen probleem, maatje,” zegt hij en hij telt een paar twintigjes neer.

Ik begrijp er geen ene klote meer van. Hij geeft me geld, maar tegelijkertijd hangt hij een lulverhaal op. “Zeg, Franco, ik heb gehoord dat Larry Wylie nog steeds met Donny Laing optrekt,” zegt hij.

Mijn hoofd schiet omhoog en ik kijk hem aan, “Oh, ja?”

“Jazeker, zeg heb jij ze niet aan elkaar gekoppeld?” Lexo probeert weer onschuldig te lachen, maar kijkt me dan strak aan alsof hij wil zeggen dat ze de kluit aan het belazeren zijn.

Ik probeer te bedenken wat hij daar godverdomme mee bedoelt, en wie nou wie probeert te belazeren, en dan zegt hij: “En je raadt nooit van wie de Port Sunshine nu is. Dat ouwe maatje van je. Sick Boy, zo noemden ze die klootzak.”

En nou begin ik dus godverdomme echt koppijn te krijgen, net zoals in de gevangenis, alsof mijn kop uit elkaar knalt. De boel is aardig veranderd hier...Lexo met een eettent...Sick Boy met een kroeg...Larry Wylie die voor Donny werkt...ik moet even naar buiten voor wat frisse lucht en tijd om godverdomme na te denken...

Maar die grote klootzak gaat maar door. “Ik ga vanmiddag naar de bank, Frank, zodat ik je een goeie smak geld kan geven totdat we iets voor de lange termijn kunnen regelen, he? Je logeert zeker bij je moeder?”

“Jaja,” zeg ik, mijn kop staat op klappen en ik had nog helemaal niet bedacht waar ik naartoe zou gaan, “Ik denk het wel...”

⁸ For the sake of clarity I have left out one of the ‘I said’-s. It looked to me that this was not a vital part of the dialect in the original, and could even be a typographical error.

“nou, dan kom ik vanaaf⁹ wel even langs. Kunnen we eens goed babbelen. Oké?” zegt hij, en ik knik als een mongool, met kloppende slapen, terwijl er een bejaarde klojo binnenkomt voor een broodje spek en een kop thee. Een mokkel in een overall komt na hem binnen en Lexo knikt naar haar en zij bedient die ouwe rotzak. Lexo pakt pen en papier en hij schrijft een nummer op. Hij zwaait een van die moderne telefoons, zo eentje zonder draad, recht in mijn smoel. “Dit is mijn mobiele nummer, Frank.”

⁹ Even though ‘vanaaf’ is perhaps too contemporary or ‘youthful’ to be uttered by a man in his late thirties, the original ‘(w)ell, I’ll nip roond the night’ does need something to make it stand out, rather than a bland translation, which it would have been if ‘vanaaf’ was replaced with ‘vanavond’. It also reflects that unlike Begbie, who walks around thinking that it is still the early nineteen nineties, others have got on with their lives, and as a result their language has changed.

BARSTENDE KOPPIJN

Mijn kop staat op klappen. Die kutmigraine. Te veel nadenken, dat is mijn probleem, niet dat die debielen hier dat zouden snappen. Ik denk over veelteveel dingen na. Dat krijg je er godverdomme van als je hersens hebt; daar ga je teveel van denken, zoals over die irritante klootzakken die een paar rammen voor hun kanis moeten hebben. En daar zijn er nogal een boel van. Tyfushonden, ze lachen je achter je rug uit, echt wel: ik weet dat het zo is en ik weet ook wanneer. Ze denken dat je niks in de gaten hebt, maar je ziet het godverdomme mooi wel. Je wéét het verdomme gewoon. Je hebt het godverdomme altijd door...en of je het door hebt.

Ik heb verdomme Ibuprofen nodig. Ik hoop dat Kate gauw terug komt van haar moeder met die kleine janker van d'r, want een wip helpt altijd, zorgt ervoor dat de spanning in je harses wat minder wordt. Je ventieltje leeg laten schieten is net zoiets als een hersenmassage krijgen. Ik begrijp geen ene klote van die klootzakken die zeggen, "Nu even niet, ik heb hoofdpijn, " zoals in de film enzo. Het lijkt me dat je dan *juist* moet neuken. Godsamme, als iedere klootzak elke keer als ie koppijn had ging neuken, dan was er een stuk minder ellende op deze wereld.

Ik hoor geluid bij de voordeur; dus dat zal haar zijn.

Maar, ho es even, dat is d'r dus mooi niet, he?

Een of andere klootzak probeert hier godverdomme in te breken...omdat ik hier zit met het licht uit vanwege die koppijn. Ze denken natuurlijk dat er niemand thuis is! Nou, dat hebben ze dus godverdomme mooi fout!

Kom maar op!

Ik gooi mezelf van de bank af, alsof ik Bruce Willis of Schwarzenegger of zo'n andere klojo ben, en ik kruip over de vloer en ga tegen de muur naast de woonkamerdeur staan. Als ze weten wat ze aan het doen zijn, dan komen verdomme eerst hier voordat ze de trap opgaan. De deur vliegt open, de klootzakken hebben hem godverdomme opengebroken. Ze zijn nu binnen. Ik weet niet hoeveel het er zijn, zo te horen niet veel. Hoeveel het er zijn maakt trouwens geen reet uit, want naar buiten gaan ze toch niet meer.

Geweldig...dit is godverdomme helemaal geweldig....Ik sta die klootzakken achter de deur op te wachten. Een klein rotzakje komt binnen met een honkbalknuppel, de kleine tyfuslijer. Daar baal ik dan weer van. Ik sluit de deur achter hem. "Zoek je iets, klootzak?"

Het joch draait zich om en zwaait de knuppel voor zich uit, maar hij doet het nu al in zijn broek. "Aan de kant! Laat me eruit!" schreeuwt hij. Ik herken dat rotjoch! Van de kroeg, van Sick Boy's kroeg! Hij herkent mij trouwens ook, en zijn ogen worden groot. "Ik wist niet dat jij hier woonde, man, ik ga er maar weer eens vandoor..."

Lijkt me godverdomme duidelijk dat die klootzak dat niet wist. "Kom dan," lach ik hem toe. Ik wijs naar de deur. "Daar is ie. Waar wacht je godverdomme op!"

"Aan de kant...ik wil verder geen problemen..."

Ik lach niet meer. "Die heb je godverdomme anders wel, of je nou wil of niet," vertel ik hem. "Dus geef mij die knuppel maar. Of anders pak ik hem af. En geloof me, het is echt beter voor je dat ik hem niet van je af moet pakken."

De afdeling Edinburgh¹⁰

De afdeling Edinburgh van de Centrale Bibliotheek, man, die zit dus zeg maar vol met informatie over, nou ja, Edinburgh. Nou is dat natuurlijk vrij logisch, want je zou natuurlijk geen info verwachten over een stad als Hamburg, of eh... Boston op de afdeling Edinburgh. Maar waar het dus om gaat is dat ze daar ook info hebben over Leith, echt alle Jezus¹¹ veel, maar dat zou dus eigenlijk in de bieb van Leith¹² op de Ferry Road horen, man. Maar laten we wel wezen, Leith wordt door die gasten van de gemeente wel gezien als onderdeel van Edinburgh. Aan de andere kant kan ik me ook nog wel herinneren dat je van die folders had die over gedecentraliseerd bestuur gingen en waar de gemeente het zogenaamd helemaal in ziet zitten¹³. Dus waarom moet een gast uit Leith, zoals ik, helemaal naar Edina¹⁴ sjouwen, alleen

¹⁰ The 'Edinburgh Rooms' are those parts of the library solely dedicated to the city of Edinburgh. Finding a Dutch equivalent proved difficult as this is one of those terms or conventions that has no one-on-one Dutch equivalent. The choice I made 'afdeling' may be a bit bland, but possible alternatives, such as 'de Edinburgh-zaal' did not seem right, both in its commonness in Dutch and its effect on the rhythm of Spud's language.

¹¹ The original idiomatic 'loads n loads' can also be translated as 'massa's' or 'kast na kast'. Bearing in mind the way Spud expresses himself however, and to add a curse word to compensate for the ones that are lost elsewhere, I have opted for the more explicit, yet rather mild, expletive 'alle Jezus'.

¹² Originally I chose 'Leithse bibliotheek'. This would work fine if it was about a Dutch, or well-known foreign, city, in this case however it seems jarring. This option 'bieb van Leith' is, again, short enough to keep the rhythm of the language as fluent as possible.

¹³ Sometimes, it seems as though Spud adopts speech patterns or language that is not his own, but instead picked up from television, newspapers or things like that. This allows, or perhaps forces, the translator to do the same and break up the fluency of the language. It could, of course, be part of Spud's idiolect, but either way, the translator needs to show the apparent oddness of Spud's language – odd as in different from what is perceived to be Spud's idiosyncratic language.

¹⁴ The city of Edinburgh is very much a real character in Welsh's novels, and this anthropomorphism is exemplified here by Spud, when he calls the city 'Edina', which may be part of the Edinburgh dialect, or a show of Spud's idiolect. The English language seems to have a tendency to bestow nicknames, sometimes mere abbreviations, sometimes more elaborate, on cities and towns. The

maar om info over Leith te vinden? Waarom dat hele teringeind¹⁵ naar de George IV-brug¹⁶ banjeren, in plaats van een korte tippel¹⁷ naar de Ferry Road hier naast de deur, weet je¹⁸?

Maar goed, het is wel een lekkere wandeling in het laffe maartse zonnetje¹⁹. Hoewel de winkelstraat wel een tikkie²⁰ koud aanvoelt. Ik ben hier al sinds het

Dutch people and language, however, does not do that a lot - the exception being the renaming of cities and towns in honour of 'carnaval'. To leave this nickname out simply because it is not common in Dutch, would be crass. Originally I re-named the city 'Edje', because I felt that this might make readers pick up on its meaning quicker. Over time, however, I have learned not to underestimate the readers intelligence. Another reason for choosing 'Edina' in the translation as well, is that translators- at least those who follow the same strategy as I have- would not domesticate terms unnecessarily.

¹⁵ The original speaks of a 'great long march', and generally Spud does not swear. In spite of this I have opted for 'teringeind' as it is clear that Spud is not best pleased that he has to into town. The entire chapter is imbued with Spud's unease at having to go to Edinburgh and, specifically, the library.

¹⁶ An iconic landmark in Edinburgh, the George IV is not so much a bridge, at least not anymore, but rather one of the principle streets of the city, which is elevated. It may confuse Dutch readers that a bridge houses a library, but as before, readers should not be underestimated, and can always look it up. Partly as a result of the popularity of *Trainspotting*, many Dutch people have now visited the city, which probably means that a fair amount of readers are aware of the unique urban geography of Edinburgh.

¹⁷ The Edinburgh dialect of *Porno* does not prevent its characters to have their own peculiar speech mannerisms. Spud's language is very specific, in that it cannot really be mistaken for the language of any of the other characters. Spud seems to borrow dialects and registers from various times, places, dialects, and registers, often opting to express sentiments and describe things using phrases that are uncommon to say the least. In this case 'a nippy wee hop' seems to belong to a somewhat older Scottish person, In the translation, the oddness of the phrase could be maintained by 'korte tippel'. Spud's language in translation, however, is in danger as coming across as being quite camp, which the character clearly is not.

¹⁸ As stated above, Spud's idiolect is strewn with phrases that seem to belong to different eras, in this case the nineteen seventies. In English, however it is still common nowadays to lace one's speech with 'you know', or in Spud's case, 'ken'. In Dutch, however, this comes across as nigh on hippie-esque. As 'ken' is such an integral part of Spud's speech, I have decided to go for 'weet je', in spite of its Dutch connotation, although 'weet je wel', an earlier possible option would perhaps have been pushing it too far.

¹⁹ Heuvelmans has opted for 'grote gele maartse zon' (p152), which either shows his unfamiliarity with the term, his willingness to stray from the original in favour of his own translation, or his attempt to at least capture the similarities between the shape of a biscuit and the sun. 'Biscuit

festival niet meer geweest en ik mis al die coole wijven die naar je lachen en je flyers van hun voorstellingen geven wel. Hoewel je wel knettergek wordt van hoe ze van een bewering een vraag weten te maken. Dan gaan ze van: “We geven een voorstelling tijdens het festival?” “We spelen in het Pleasance theater?” “De kritieken waren lovend?”. Dan heb je dus echt de neiging om te zeggen: ho eens even, coole poppedop²¹, als je dat dus wilt doen, van een bewering een vraag maken, dan hoef je er alleen maar “weet je?” achteraan te plakken. Weet je?

Maar natuurlijk nam ik die flyers dan toch maar aan, want het is dus zeg maar niet aan mij om wat tegen die kakkersneetjes die hun Masterbeerdiploma²² hebben gehaald te zeggen, weet je?

Maar dat is dus wel altijd mijn makke geweest, man, zelfvertrouwen. Het grote probleem is dat geen drugs meestal ook geen zelfvertrouwen betekent. Op dit moment gaat het wel²³, maar de situatie is wel..., welk woord gebruiken die gasten ook alweer? Precair, man, precair. En het eerste dat ik zag toen ik aan kwam

arsed’, denotes confusion, and refers to the fact that the sun does not seem to be able to make its mind up; either coming out, or not shining at all. I have tried to capture this solar confusion by opting for ‘flauwe maartse zonnetje’, because this refers to the fact that it does shine, but in a half-hearted way.

²⁰ For the second time in quick succession, the word ‘nippy’ is used. This synonym for ‘cold’ is usually associated with being used by older people, which is again a strong indicator of his clearly marked idiolect showing through the Edinburgh dialect. The translation contains the more age-neutral ‘tikkie’, as there are no real equivalents for ‘nippy’ in the Dutch spoken by the elderly.

²¹ I cannot believe that Spud’s general demeanour would allow him to say ‘lekkere poes’ to these girls, but Heuvelmans clearly does. (p152) He does retain the feline reference, but transforms Spud’s character in the process. I have opted for the less sexually aggressive ‘coole poppedop’.

²² Sadly, it proved nigh impossible to find an equally funny translation of ‘hot thespian action’. Heuvelmans’, perhaps sensibly, has opted to neutralise this bit completely: ‘chique meisjes die op de universiteit zitten’. (p152) I have tried, not entirely successfully, to come up with a Dutch semi-innuendo, but in fairness it does not come close to the original.

²³ What Spud is actually saying is ‘op dit moment is het zelfvertrouwen niet laag’, but as so often in this text, the rhythm of this translation would not be equivalent to that of the original. I have therefore opted for the more general, and shorter ‘op dit moment gaat het wel’.

lopen was de pub aan de overkant van de Bibliotheek, Scruffy Murphy's. Een van die zogenaamd authentieke Ierse pubs die voor geen meter lijken op die in Ierland zelf, weet je. Die zijn alleen maar voor zakenlui, yuppen en rijke studenten. Maar toen ik die zag raakte ik dus wel gelijk helemaal gestrest en schaamde ik me. Als het leven eerlijk was, zouden de gasten die dat soort tenten runnen jongens zoals ik een vergoeding moeten betalen. Voor de geleden emotionele schade, man. Ik bedoel, ik hoorde niet anders toen ik op school zat, het was alleen maar 'Scruffy Murphy, Scruffy Murphy'. En dat alleen maar door de Ierse voorouders en armoedige kleren als gevolg van de ongunstige economische omstandigheden die endemisch waren in de Murphy huishoudens in de Tennentstrasse en Prince Regentstrasse²⁴. Dus het is echt a-rielekt²⁵ man, gewoon puur a-rielekt. .

²⁴ In Dutch, there is a tradition of making words sound German for no apparent reason. The fact that Spud does this as well, is serendipitous, and hands the translator the solution to this on a plate.

²⁵ 'The pure oppo ay good' is translated to its more explicit antonym, as 'het puur tegenovergestelde van goed' is too long and breaks up the rhythm. 'A-rielekt' is a term that was used more a decade ago than it is nowadays, but its meaning should be clear. It also fits well with Spud's character and idiolect.

Paardenkrachten²⁶

Ik ben dus zeg maar zwaar naar de klote; doordat ik eerst uit mijn plaat ging door de speed²⁷ en daarna een paar smarties²⁸ nam om weer een beetje bij te komen, dus ik was niet echt scherp toen het Chizziemonster²⁹ me belde. Moet die gozer eigenlijk niet zo, beetje foute knakker om eerlijk te zijn, maar hij bleef maar aan me klitten in de bak. Wist niet eens dat ie weer vrij was. Maar ja ik zat dus wel om wat gezelschap verlegen en Chizzie had als tip de naam van een paard doorgekregen van een maatje van hem, Marcel, en die pikt altijd de winnaar eruit. Dus we zetten ons geld in bij Benny van de bookmaker³⁰ en we gaan terug naar de zuipkeet om

²⁶ Heuvelmans has opted for 'Easy Rider' (p283), as this phrase is universally known in the Netherlands as well (even though I have yet to meet someone who has actually seen the film). In Dutch however, the connotation with the horse race is lost. By using 'paardenkrachten' I retain both the 'motor' reference and the allusion to the horse race central to this chapter.

²⁷ Again, Heuvelmans does not seem to understand what is being said, or he just favours his own interpretation and flies in the face of accepted wisdom. Of course, both 'speed' and 'weed' can be rhyming slang for 'Lou Reed' (p283), but even if one does not know that in Edinburgh Scots 'Lou Reed' refers to 'speed' it should be clear from the text what is going on. First of all, you don't need to 'come down' from weed (in spite of making you 'high'). Secondly, taking jellies (ecstasy) to mellow you out *after* having smoked weed seems exceedingly superfluous. Sadly, I suspect that Heuvelmans made an honest mistake, which underlines the need for additional education of translators on the English language and culture. No translation is perfect, and Heuvelmans' s is generally very good, but it does seem as though Heuvelmans only contact with the English language has come from text books.

²⁸ As Spud uses a candy related euphemism for ecstasy, I have tried to do the same in the translation.

²⁹ In spite of the general strategy I followed, I have opted for a purely Dutch translation of this nickname. I felt that this had to be done because 'Chizzie the Beast' would be a stumbling block where it comes to readability. The main character's names appear far more often than this one, and this is why I felt this was a legitimate change in this case, but not for the names of other characters.

³⁰ As with 'Lou Reed' the slang of the original, 'cream cookies' – 'bookies' cannot be followed, as slang is largely non-existent in Dutch. An additional problem is that bookmakers are not a common feature of Dutch high streets. Most readers, however, will be acquainted with the British penchant

Snow Black, onze knol, als eerste over de finish van de race van kwart voor drie op Haydock te zien stormen.

Ik kon het niet geloven, man. Gelijk vanaf het begin gaat ie er vandoor en halverwege ligt ie in z'n eentje al mijlenver voor. Op het laatste stuk komen een paar van die hobbelpaarden³¹ nog wel dichterbij, maar onze knol vliegt, man, hij vliegt. Sterker nog, ik heb nog nooit zo'n afgetekende race gezien. Niet dat je me hoort klagen ofzo, integendeel. We schreeuwen: "YEEEEEESSSSSSS!!!"³² En we omhelzen elkaar onder de tv in de kroeg en opeens verstijf ik als ik denk aan wie er nog meer door die armen omhelst zijn en hoe zij zich toen voelden. Ik maak me los met de smoes dat ik aan de bar nog wat drankjes ga halen om het te vieren. Terwijl ik in mijn zak op zoek ga naar geld vind ik nog wat van die smarties.

Terug bij de bookmaker is Benny nou niet echt blij³³. "Goeie tip," gromt hij.

"En of, gozert," lach ik.

"Kwestie van je oren en je doppen³⁴ open houden, he," grijnst Chizzie. "Zonder geluk vaart niemand wel³⁵, makker. Soms heb je dat."

Dit is echt het einde, man, want ik heb dus vier rootjes gewonnen en Chizzie achteneneenhalf. Vier rootjes! Ik ga Ali en Andy mee op vakantie nemen, Parijs, de

for gambling on sporting events. I have therefore opted to use the unmarked standard English term 'bookmaker'.

³¹ 'Gee-gee' is a Scottish colloquialism for 'hobbelpaard'. As this fits perfectly with the meaning and atmosphere of the original, and as Dutch has no well-known other term for 'hobbelpaard', I have used the unmarked Dutch standard.

³³ The expression 'his face is tripping him' does not have direct equivalent that is fitting both rhythmically, and atmospherically. The more neutral 'niet echt blij zijn' is not exactly equivalent in meaning, but very much so in rhythm and atmosphere.

³⁴ I have changed the position of 'eyes' and 'ears' as this fits better in Dutch. The dialect and register that was lost with 'niet echt blij' is recaptured here.

³⁵ I have opted for a suitable Dutch cliché. Chizzie is trying to wind the bookmaker up, as well as brushing off any suggestions of foul play.

Lichtstad!³⁶ Lekker, Marcel, en ja, lekker Chizzie, dat je de tip doorgaf, dat moet gezegd worden!

³⁶ Although 'de Lichtstad' does not have the same connotation as 'Gay Paree', it is the most common Dutch nickname for Paris. Inventing another nickname just to preserve the jollity of the original phrase does simply not work.

14

Project # 18.737

Iedereen die geen reet te zoeken heeft in het nieuwe Leith is er, op mijn eerste dag aan het roer. Een stelletje vieze ouwe mormels en die kleine kut techno- en hip-hopgastjes met hun schotse ruitjes en zegelringen aan elke fucking vinger. Een van die brutale klootzakjes durft me zelfs Sick Boy te noemen! Als je maar weet dat de enige drugs die hier gedeald gaan worden het voorkeurszegel van Simon David Williams zullen dragen, stelletje onbeschofte tyfuslijertjes. Vooral omdat ik de mazzel had om gisteren een oude makker, Seeker, tegen het lijf te lopen, en mijn zakken nu uitpuilen van de pillen en de pakketjes coke³⁷.

En die ouwe Morag moet ook er ook uit: een dikke moeke met een ziekenfondsbrilletje riekt een beetje te veel naar het oude Leith voor het soort beleid dat meneer Williamson van plan is in voeren. Te jaren zeventig, Mo. Stijlpolitie³⁸: ta-toe, ta-toe...Nu bedient ze een van die klootzakjes, nou ja, dat probeert ze. "V-v-vier h-h-halveli," zegt het joch, begeleid door het gegrinnik van z'n maten, terwijl hij een gezicht trekt alsof hij een beroerte heeft gehad en Morag met haar mond open beschaamd toekijkt.

Er zal wat moeten veranderen. Alex McLeish?

³⁷ Although cocaine has a number of Dutch euphemisms, none of these are as short as 'ching'. The more neutral 'coke' is just as short. Unfortunately, or to his credit, Heuvelmans does not seem to know that cocaine does not come in 'zakjes' (p87), but in 'pakketjes', which are notoriously hard to open without spilling, to boot.

³⁸ Heuvelmans again misses the point completely, when he claims Morag is dressed in the same style as the band The Police.(p87) Morag is not dresses as Gordon Sumner and his colleagues in 1979. Her style is not the same as The Police. Sick Boy refers to the imaginary governors of style, and the fact that Morag's appearance leaves much to be desired.

Ik denk dat je gelijk hebt, Simon. Toen ik hier kwam was deze club een puinhoop. Ik zag gelijk dat er mogelijkheden waren, maar er moest wel eerst gesnoeid worden voordat de tijd rijp was om te investeren.

Zo gaat dat, Alex.

Morag houdt zich bezig met de etenskant van de zaak. We doen hier aan maaltijden voor gepensioneerden, van die driegangen dingen voor nog geen pond per persoon. Wat me vooral irriteert is wat dit *niet* doet voor de winst: als ik liefdadigheidsvoedsel wilde uitdelen was ik wel een tafeltje-dek-je begonnen. Jaja, die pubmaaltijden zijn godvergeten goedkoop: ik subsidieer die oude bloedzuigers om in leven te blijven. Een zo'n ouwe bok schuifelt mijn kant op, met een ietwat dreigende blik in zijn door gele en felrode huid omgeven blauwe ogen, nog best kwiek voor zo'n ouwe lul. De klootzak stinkt zo erg naar pis dat je zou denken dat hij in zo'n pis-en-poepfilm heeft gespeeld. Misschien doen die ouwe goorlappen wel aan watersport in dat bejaardencentrum waar ze heen gaan. "Vis of pastei, vis of pastei..." raspt hij, "Is de vis gefrituurd vandaag?"

"Nee, ik heb hem een paar tikken gegeven en gezegd dat ie zich moest gedragen," reageer ik gevat, met een glimlach en een knipoog.

Mijn pogingen om de joviale kastelein uit te hangen zijn tot mislukken gedoemd in dit pretpark van gore ouwe losers. Hij kijkt me aan met z'n verkreukelde bejaarde Schotse terriërsmoel, klaar voor ruzie. "Is dat paneermeel of beslag?"

"Beslag," deel ik de geïrriteerde ouwe lul moegestreden mee.

"Ik vind het lekkerder met paneermeel," zegt hij, met een imbeciele grimas op zijn chagrijnige kop, terwijl hij zich omdraait en de hoek inkijkt. "En Tam en

Alec en Mabel en Ginty vinden dat ook, of niet soms?" Roept hij, waardoor er vanuit de hoek geestdriftig wordt geknikt door nog zo'n stel grafkistontduikers.

"Mijn oprechte excuses," zeg ik, me inhoudend in een poging om hartelijk te blijven.

"Dat beslag, dat is toch wel krokant en vers, hè? Ik bedoel, niet zo papperig, of wel dan?"

Ik sta hier mijn uiterste best te doen om kalm te blijven tegenover die bijdehante ouwe pisnacht.

"Zo krokant en vers als een nieuw briefje van twintig," vertel ik hem.

"Nou, dat is me een tijd geleden, dat ik een nieuw briefje van twintig had," zeikt de ouwe kankerzak. "De erwtjes, zijn die gepureerd of zijn het doperwtjes?"

"Geen erwtjes als het geen doperwtjes zijn!" Schreeuwt het Biafra-mokkel³⁹ dat Mabel heet onze kant op.

*The captain's wife was Mabel, by Christ, and she was able...to give the crew, their daily screw...upon the kitchen table.*⁴⁰

Puree of doperwten. Kijk, dat is nou nog eens het overwegen waard voor een zakenman zoals ik. Als Matt Colville mij nu toch kon zien, de vernedering alleen al zou het waard zijn om zijn vrouw vijf keer te mogen neuken. Ja, dat zijn de dingen die er vandaag de dag toe doen. Puree of doperwten. Weet ik veel. Het kan me ook geen reet schelen. Ik wil terugroepen: de enige verschrompelde erwtjes hier zitten verstoppt in die korstige beha van jou, meid!

³⁹ The original 'famine victim' is less marked than 'Biafra-mokkel'. I have chosen this term as the dialect, register, and comedy lost elsewhere needs to be compensated somehow. The inference of the term 'Biafra' will be known to most readers.

⁴⁰ This lyric is taken from the song 'The Good Ship Venus'. As this is an original song, and lyrics are generally not translated, or supplanted by an equivalent target language song, I have opted to maintain the original text in the target material.

Hoeren van Amsterdam deel 4

Ik ga eerst wat andere dingen doen; administratie afhandelen, rekeningen, correspondentie, wat telefoontjes plegen en dat soort geneuzel. En opeens krijg ik godverdomme de schrik van mijn fucking leven. Ik zit daar dus het kasboek te bekijken, wat rekeningafschriften van de ABN-AMRO. Ik heb nog steeds moeite met geschreven Nederlands. Het maakt niet uit hoe goed je de taal spreekt, als je het op papier terugziet snap je er niets van. Kennen, “to ken”. Schots-Hollands. Gewoon ‘loch’ zeggen.

Rekeningnummer.

Reckoning.⁴¹

Er wordt op de deur geklopt en ik check nerveus of Martin nog wat pakketjes coke heeft laten rondslingeren, onder de stapels papier, maar nee, die zullen allemaal wel in de kluis achter me liggen. Ik denk dat het Nils of Martin wel zal zijn en doe de deur open, waarop een of andere klootzak me naar binnen duwt. Terwijl mijn lichaam zich aanspant, flitst het door me heen: IK WORD HIER GODVERDOMME BEROOFD...maar dan zie ik iemand voor me staan, vertrouwd en vreemd tegelijk.

Het duurt even voor ik het allemaal goed beseft. Alsof mijn brein de informatie die mijn ogen sturen niet goed kan verwerken.

Want recht voor mijn neus staat Sick Boy. Simon David Williamson. Sick Boy.

⁴¹ Sometimes, as it does here, the text uses Dutch words and their English translation side by side. The translator can sort this problem fairly easily by reversing the order in which the words appear. In this case, ‘rekeningnummer’ and ‘reckoning’ have switched position.

“Rents,” zegt hij op koele, beschuldigende toon.

“Si...Simon...wat krijgen we nou...Dat meen je n...”

“Renton. We moeten praten. Ik wil mijn geld,” gromt hij, terwijl zijn ogen net zo uitpuilen als de ballen van een Jack Russell die een hitsig teefje ziet, en het kantoor opnemen. “Waar is mijn geld, godverdomme?”

Ik staar hem alleen maar als een zombie aan, omdat ik geen idee heb wat ik tegen hem moet zeggen. Het enige dat in me opkomt is dat hij dikker geworden is, maar dat hij het vreemd genoeg wel kan hebben.

“Godverdomme mijn geld, Renton,” hij loopt op me af en snauwt in mijn gezicht, ik kan de hitte voelen en doe een pas achteruit.

‘Sick...eh, Simon, ik eh...je krijgt het heus terug,’ vertel ik hem. Meer kan ik niet uitbrengen.

“Vijf kolere-rootjes, Renton,” zegt hij en hij pakt mijn t-shirt bij de hals.

“Watte?” Vraag ik, totaal de kluts kwijt. Ik kijk naar zijn hand bij mijn nek alsof het hondenschijt is.

Bij wijze van antwoord is hij zo goed om zijn grip iets te verslappen. “Ik heb het uitgerekend. Rente, plus schadevergoeding voor het geestelijke leed dat je veroorzaakt hebt.”

“...een politiek correcte wip...”

We stappen de auto in en ik merk dat ik huil, maar het misbruikte gevoel ebde al weg en is nu verdwenen. Ik weet dat mijn tranen onoprecht zijn omdat ik wil dat Simon me naar huis brengt en met me naar bed gaat. Ik wil dat hij denkt dat ik zijn prooi ben, terwijl ik degene ben die hem wil, en ik wil hem vannacht⁴². Simon is niet onder de indruk van mijn tranen. “Wat is er?” vraagt hij op vlakke toon terwijl hij de auto de Lothian Road opdraait.

“Ik had mezelf een beetje in de nesten gewerkt,” zeg ik hem.

Simon denk hier over na, om dan vermoeid te zeggen: “Die dingen gebeuren,” maar aan zijn stem te horen gebeuren die hem niet. We stoppen bij mij voor de deur en kijken naar de lucht. Het is helder weer en de hemel glinstert van de sterren. Ik heb er nog nooit zoveel gezien, tenminste niet hier in de stad. Colin heeft me een keer meegenomen naar de oostkust, naar een huisje bij Coldingham en toen was de hemel er mee bezaaid. Simon kijkt omhoog en zegt: “De sterrenhemel boven mij en de zedelijke wet binnenin mij.”

“Kant...⁴³”, zeg ik met een mengeling van bewondering en verwondering, terwijl ik me afvraag waar hij naar toe wil met dit gepraat over zeden. Weet hij wat ik heb uitgespookt? Maar hij draait zich snel naar me om en lijkt beledigd. Hij zegt

⁴² This sentence is a bit clunky, even in the original. It does however reflect the way Nikki speaks and thinks and I have therefore left it in, despite its slightly jarring nature.

⁴³ The comedy is lost in this translation. Sick Boy is actually quoting Nick Cave, not Emmanuel Kant, and therefore thinks that Nikki is calling him a ‘cunt’. I did toy with the idea of replacing Kant with Schopenhauer, and insert a joke based on the mishearing of that name (‘kop houden’), but this would mean a lot of other changes in the text. Ultimately, I chose to leave the phrase in, and lose the joke.

niets maar kijkt me indringend aan. “Je citeerde mijn favoriete quote van mijn favoriete filosoof,” leg ik uit, “Kant.”

“Oh...dat is ook een favoriet van mij,” zegt hij, terwijl een lach op zijn gezicht doorbreekt.

“Heb je filosofie gestudeerd? En Kant?” vraag ik hem.

“Een beetje,” knikt hij. Dan legt hij het uit: “Het maakt deel uit van de Schotse renaissance traditie. Je gaat van Smith via Hume naar de Europese denkers, zoals Kant, je weet wel, dat hoort bij ons Schotten.”

De verwaandheid in zijn stem doet me bijna ineenkrimpen omdat het me doet denken aan McClymont. Ik wil *zó niet* op die manier over hem denken, dus ik stel voor: “Kom mee naar boven voor een kop koffie, of we kunnen een wijntje drinken.”

Simon kijkt op zijn horloge. “Een kop koffie zou het beste zijn,” zegt hij.

We lopen de trap op en ik bedank hem opnieuw voor zijn tussenkomst, in de hoop dat hij me ernaar zal vragen, maar hij doet er nonchalant over. Mijn hart slaat over als we in de hal zijn en ik nog licht van onder de deur van de woonkamer zie schijnen. “Dianne of Lauren is kennelijk nog aan het studeren,” leg ik fluisterend uit en leid hem mijn kamer binnen. Hij gaat op een stoel zitten, maar als hij mijn cd-rek ziet staat hij op om de collectie te bekijken, zijn gezicht nog altijd ondoorgroendelijk.

Ik ga koffie zetten en kom met twee dampende mokken terug naar de slaapkamer. Als ik binnenkom zit hij op het bed en leest een boek met Moderne Schotse Poëzie dat op de literatuurlijst van McClymont’s colleges staat. Ik zet de bekers op het tapijt en ga naast hem zitten. Hij laat het boek zakken en glimlacht naar me.

APPENDIX B: SOURCE TEXT FRAGMENTS

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18

POOFS' PORN

One fuckin thing ah'm gaunnae dae is tae find the fuckin sick cunt that kept sendin ays that fuckin filthy poofs' porn whin ah wis inside. Added six months oantae muh fuckin sentence whin ah battered this wide wee cunt that laughed whin ah sais: 'Lexo n me's partners'.

Ah wis takin' about the fuckin shop we hud.

So that's muh first fuckin port ay call. Somethin's up, cause that big cunt stoaped comin intae the fuckin nick tae see ays ages ago. Jist like that. Nae fuckin explanation. So ah gits a bus tae leith, bit when ah gits doon ah sees thit the fuckin shoap isnae even thaire! Ah mean, it's thaire, but it's aw fucking changed. Intae some fuckin daft café.

Ah sees him but, sittin behind a counter reading the fuckin paper. Cannae miss yon big cunt, the fuckin size ay um. The place is fuckin empty; an auld wifie n two dippit cunts eatin a breakfast. Lexo, servin food in a café like a big fuckin lassie. Eh looks up n clocks ays, nearly daein a fuckin double take. – Awright, Frank!

– Aye, ah goes. Ah look around at this dump, aw wee tables n sortay Chinky writin oan the waws n daft fuckin dragons n that. – What's aw this?

– Made it intae a café. Nae dosh in used furniture. At nights it turns intae a Thai café. Popular with the new Leith trendies n the student population, eh grins, aw fill ay ehseel.

Fuckin tie café? What the fuck is the cunt oan about? – Eh?

–Muh girlfriend, Tina, she runs it really. She’s got an HNC in caterin.
Reckoned the place wid dae better as a café.

– So you’ve done no bad, ah sortay accuses the cunt, lookin around, littin um see tit ah’m no fuckin chuffed.

Ye kin see the cunt’s ready tae pit ehs cairds oan the fuckin table. Ehs voice goes aw even n low, as eh nods fir ays tae come through the back. Now eh’s lookin ays in the eye. – Aye, hud tae sort masel oot. Nae mair dealin. Too much fuckin heat fae the bizzies. This is Tina’s now, he sais again, then goes: – Of course, you’ll be taken care ay mate.

Ah’m still lookin at um, leanin back against the waw, then glancing through tae the kitchen. Ah kin feel um tensin up a bit, as if ehs worried thit ah’ll jist fuckin well kick oaf right now. Thon big cunt fancies ehsel, but hands the size of shovels mean fuck all whin thir’s a chib in yir gut. Aye, ye kin see ehs eyes gaun tae the kitchen, jist whaire mine went n aw. So ah pits the big cunt right in the fuckin picture. – Nivir been tae see ays for a bit in the jail, eh no, ah goes.

Eh jist lookst at ays wi that wee fuckin smile thit eh’s goat. Ye kin feel thit the cunt’s goat nae fuckin time fir ays really, underneath it aw eh’s jist wantin to stomp ays aw the fuckin wey doon Leith Walk.

Lit um fuckin well try it. – N ah’ll fuckin well tell ye somthin else, half ay the auld shop wis fuckin mine so that makes it thit half ay this is fuckin mine, ahm sayin tae the cunt, lookin out at the café, scanning muh new fuckin investment.

N ye kin see thit the cunt’s blood’s fuckin bubblin but eh’s still giein ays aw the shite ay the day. – Ah cannae really see ye servin tea n rolls, Frank, but we’ll come tae some arrangement. Ah’ll see ye awright, ma auld mucker, ye ken that.

– Aye, ah goes, – ah’m fuckin well needin sorted oot fir some cash right now, ah tells the big cunt.

– Nae bother at aw, buddy boy, eh goes, n ehs countin oot some twenties.

Ma heid’s buzzin, ah dinnae ken whether um comin or gaun here. Ehs handin over some dough, bit at the same time comin oot wi shite. – Listen, Franco, ah hear that Larry Wylie’s still knockin about wi Donny Laing, eh sais.

Muh heid shoots up n ah meets ehs eyes. – Aye?

– Aye. Wis it not you thit goat thaim e crewed up thegither? Lexo goes aw that fuckin smiley innocent wey then gies ays this sort ay severe stare n nod, like eh’s tryin tae say thit thir takin the fuckin pish. N ah’m tryin tae work oot in muh fuckin heid what eh fuckin means, n what the fuckin score is, n whae takin fuckin pish oot ay whae n eh goes: – N you’ll never guess whae’s got the Port Sunshine now. That auld pal ay yours. Sick Boy, they used tae call the cunt.

Now ah’ve goat a proper fuckin migraine startin, like one ay the yins ah used tae git inside the fuckin jail...ah feel like muh heid’s gaunnae fuckin explode. It’s aw fuckin changed roond here...Lexo wi a café...Sick Boy wi a pub...Larry Wylie workin fir Donny...ah’ve goat tae git oot ay here intae the aire, git time tae fuckin well think.

N this big cunt’s gaun oan. – Ah’m gaunnae go tae the bank this affie, Frank, git ye a proper wad tae see ye through. Till wi kin sort oot something mair long-term like. Ye steyin at yir ma’s, aye?

– Aye...ah goes, heid thumpin, no really kenning where ah’m fuckin gaun, – ah suppose...

– Well, I’ll nip roond the night. We’ll get a proper blether. Right? Eh goes, n ah’m jist noddin like a daft cunt, ma fuckin temples throbbin as this auld cunt

comes in n wants a bacon roll n a cup ay tea., n now this bird in an overall comes in behind um n Lexo nods tae her n she serves the auld bastard. Lexo's goat a pen n a notepad n eh's writin doon a fuckin number. Eh waves one ay they newfangled phones, nae cables like, in muh face. – That's ma mobile number, Frank.

TENSION IN THE HEID

Muh heid is fuckin nippin. This fuckin migraine. Too much thinkin, that's ma problem, no that some ay the thick cunts roond here wid understand that. Too much gaun oan in ma heid. That's what comes ay huvin fuckin brains; makes ye fuckin well think too much, think aboot the aw the fuckin wide cunts thit need tae git their fuckin faces burst. N thir's loads ay thum n aw. Crappin bastards, thir ey laughin at ye behind yir back, aw aye: ah ken n ah kin tell. They think thit ye dinnae see, bit ye fuckin well see awright. You ken. Ye eywis fuckin well ken, surein ye fuckin dae.

Ah need some fuckin Nurofen. Ah hope Kate gets back fae he ma's wi that greetin-faced bairn ay hers soon, cause a ride eywis help, cuts oot aw the fuckin tension in the heid. Aye, whi ye shoot yir duff it's like gittin yir fuckin brain massaged. Ah cannae understand aw they cunts thit say, "No the now, ah've goat a headache," like in they fuckin films n that. See, tae me, that's whin ye *need* a fuckin ride. If every cunt had a ride whin they hud a headache, thir widnae be as much fuckin trouble in the world.

Thir's noise at the door; that'll be her now.

Bit hud oan a fuckin minute. Naw it's fuckin well no her.

Some cunt's tryin tae fuckin well brek in here. . .cause ay me sittin wi the light oaf cause ay ma heid nippin. That's thaimie thinkin thit nae cunt's in! Well, some cunt's fuckin well in awright!

Game oan!

Ah roll oaf the fuckin couch ontae the deck, like one ay they Bruce Willis or Schwarzenegger type ay cunts, n crawl aling the flair, standin up against the waw behind the livin-room door. If they ken whit thir daein thi'll fuckin well come ben here first, instead ay gaun up the stairs. The door flies open, the cunts huv fuckin well forced it. Thir in now. Ah dinnae ken how many, no a loat by the sound ay it. But it disnae matter how many come in, ause thir willnae be any fuckin well gaun oot.

Barry. . .this is fuckin barry. . .Ah stands behind the door waitin oan the cunts. This wee fucker steps in cairryin this baseball bat, the fuckin wee bastard. A big disappointment tae me. Ah shuts the door behind um. – Lookin for something then, cunt?

The wee cunt turns roond n start waving the bat in front ay ays, but eh's fuckin well shat it right away. – Oot ma road! Lit ays oot! Eh shouts. Ah recognise that wee cunt! Fae the pub, fae Sick Boy's pub! He kens me n aw, n eh's eyes go wider. – Ah didnae ken it wis your place, man, ah'm just gaunnae go. . .

Fuckin right the wee cunt didnae ken. – C'moan then, ah smile at um. Ah points tae the door. – Thaire it is. Whit ye fuckin waitin fir!

– Oot the wey. . .ah'm no wanting any bother. . .

Ah stoap smiling. – Yuv fuckin well goat it whether yir fuckin well want it or no, ah tell um. – So gie's that fuckin bat now. Dinnae make ays take it oaf ye. Fir yer ain sake, dinnae make ays dae that.

The Edinburgh Rooms

The Edinburgh Rooms at the Central Library, man, they're like fill ay stuff about, well, Edinburgh. Ah mean that stand tae reason, as it should be, like. Ah mean, ye widnae expect tae find things about the likes ay Hamburg or eh...Boston in the Edinburgh Rooms. Thing is but, thir's stuff about Leith here n aw, loads n loads ay stuff, stuff which by rights should be in the Leith Public library doon in Ferry Road, man. Fair dos, ah mean, Leith is classed as a part ay Edinburgh by the council gages, if no by a lot ay cats doon in the old Port. But oan the other hand, ah mind ay the time whin thir was leaflets about aw that decentralization the council's meant tae believe in. So why the need for a Leith cat like me tae trek aw the wey up tae Edina, jist tae git stuff on Leith? Why this great long march up tae George IV Bridge instead ay jist a nippy wee hop next door tae Ferry Road, ken?

Mind you, it's a nice wee walk in this biscuit-ersed March sun. The high street's a wee bit nippy, but. No been up here since the festival n ah miss aw they cool chicks smiling at ye en giein ye leaflets fir thir shows. It's pure radge but, they wey they sortay make a statement intae a question. They go: 'We've a show in the festival?' 'It's up the Pleasance?' 'The review was brilliant?' N ye feel like sayin, hud oan a second, cool kitten-cat, cause if ye want tae dae that, n make a statement intae a question, aw ye need tae dae is tae add 'ken' oan the end. Ken?

But of course, ah ey took the leaflets anyway, cause it's not fir the likes ay me tae say anything tae posh lassies thit uv been tae college n that, studying hot thespian action likesay, ken?

That's always been ma problem but, man, confidence. The big dilemma has been that drug-free too often equals confidence-free, man. Right now the confidence isnae low, but it's, what's the word thit cats yaze? Precarious, man, precarious. N the first thing ah noticed whin ah goat up here wis this pub acroas the road fae the Central Library called Scruffy Murphy's. One ay they Irish theme pubs that are nowt like what real pubs in Ireland are like, ken. Thir jist for business cats, yuppies and rich students. Lookin at it made ays go aw tense n ashamed inside but. In a just world these cats that run this bar should pay the likes ay me compensation for emotional damage incurred, man. Ah mean, that wis aw I goat whin ah wis at the school, it wis 'Scruffy Murphy, Scruffy Murphy'. Jist cause ay the auld Erin name and the poor threads due tae the adverse economic circumstances and the poverty that was endemic in the Murphy households at Tennent Strasser and Prince Regent Strasser. So it's like the oppo ay good, man, the pure oppo ay good.

Easy Rider

My heid's, likesay, well fucked; basically cause ah got oot oan the Lou Reed n took a few jellies tae come doon, so ah wisnae thinkin right when Chizzie the Beast phoned ays. Never thought much ay the cat, a bad gadge really, but eh sort ay latched oantae ays in jail. Didnae ken eh wis oot. Thing wis ah wis desperate for company n Chizzie hud the name ay this hoarse which wis a tip thit came fae a mate called Marcel, whae never gies oot a loser. So Benny at Slateford takes the bet and we go back tae the cabin cruiser tae watch our boy, the 8–1 outsider, Snow Black, romp hame at Haydock in the 2.45.

Ah couldnae believe it, man. Right fae the off our boy makes the runnin. By the halfway stage eh's way oot oan eh's ain. A couple ay other gee–gees narrow it a bit ower the last furlong, but our boy's cruising, pure cruising. In fact, it's the maist one–sided race ah've ivir seen. No that we're moanin or nowt like that, man, we are very far fae complainin. Wir gaun: – YEEAAHHSSSS!!! n wir in a big under the telly in the bar n ah suddenly freeze fir a second, thinkin aboot whae else's been in they airms n how they must huv felt. Ah pulls away makin the excuse thit ah'm gaunna hit the bar n git mair drinks tae celebrate. In ma pocket, as ah'm diggin oot the notes, ah find some mair ah they jellies.

When wi git back intae the cream cookies, Benny's face is tripping him. – Hot tip, he grumbles.

– Too true, catboy, ah smile.

– Goat tae keep yir ears eyes n ears open, eh, Chizzie grins. – Luck ay the draw, chavvy. Win some, lose some.

N it's the best feelin ever, na, cause ah'm oan four fuckin grand, man, and Chizzie's on eight n a half. Four grand! Ah'm gaunnae take Ali n Andy oan hoaliday, Gay Paree! Nice one, Marcel, and aye, nice one Chizzie, fir sharing it wi ays, it hus tae be said!

Whores of Amsterdam Pt 4

I start doing some other things; dealing with paperwork, bills, correspondence, making phone calls and all that shite. Then I get a shock, a big, big fucking shock. I'm just sitting there looking at the cashbook, through some bank statements from the ABN-AMRO. I still have trouble with Dutch on the page. No matter how good your verbal gets, the visual recognition in print can floor you. To ken, to know. Dutch-Jock. Just say loch.

Rekeningnummer.

Reckoning.

There's a tap on the door and I anxiously check to make sure that Martin's not left any wraps of coke out, lying under the stacks of paper, but no, they'll all be in the safe that sits behind me. I get up and open the door, thinking that it's probably Nils or martin, when this cunt pushes me inside. The thought hits me in a second, tensing up my body: I'M BEING FUCKIN WELL ROBBED HERE...before it evaporates and I see a figure standing in front of me, familiar and alien all at the same time.

It takes a second for the realization to entirely strike home. It's like my brain can't quite process the sense data my eyes are sending it.

Cause standing right in front of me is Sick Boy. Simon David Williamson.

Sick Boy.

– Rents, he says in cold accusation.

– Si...Simon...what the fuck...I don't bel...

– Renton. We've business. I want my money, he barks, his eyes bulging like a Jack Russell terrier's baws when it sees a bitch on heat, scanning the office. –
Where's my fucking money?

I just stand there looking at him, zombified, not quite knowing what the fuck to say. All I can think is that he's gained weight but it strangely looks okay on him.

– My fuckin money, Renton, he steps towards me and snarls in ma face, and I can feel the heat and slaver from him.

– Sick...eh, Simon, ah'll...I'll gie ye it, I tell him. It seems to be all I can say.

– Five fuckin grand, Renton, he says, and he grabs a hold of my T-shirt at the chest.

–Eh? I ask, a bit scoobied, looking down at his hand on my chest like it's dug shite.

In response he deigns to loosen the grip a little bit. – I've worked it out. Interest, plus compensation for the mental stress caused to me.

I shrug doubtfully at this, in some half-arsed defiance. It was such a big deal at the time, but now it seems a small thing, just a pair of twats mixed up in a bit of daft junkie business. It hits me now, after a few years of looking over my shoulder, I've become complacent, blasé even, about the whole deal. It's only on the odd sneaky family visit to Scotland that the paranoia resurfaces, and it's only really Begbie I worry about. As far as I know he's still doing a sentence for manslaughter. I only briefly considered at the time how the whole business affected Sick Boy. The strange thing was, I intended to compensate him and Second Prize, and, I suppose, even Begbie, like I did Spud, but, somehow, I just

never got round to it. Nope, I never thought about how it impacted on him, but I sense that he's going to tell me.

Sick Boy lets go of me and peels away, spinning round the office, slapping his own forehead, pacing up and down. – I had tae contend wi Begbie effir it! He thought I wis in it wi ye! I lost a fucking tooth, he spits, halting suddenly and pointing in accusation tae a gold-toothed gap in his ivory mouth.

– What happened tae Begbie...Spud...Secon...?

Sick Boy snaps savagely back at me, rocking on his heels: – Never mind those cunts! This is *me* we're talking about! Me! He thrashes his own chest with a clenched fist. Then his eyes widen and his voice drops to a soft whine. – I was supposed tae be yir best mate. Why, Mark? He pleads. – Why?

I have tae smile at his performance. I can't help it, the cunt hasn't changed a bit, but this riles the fuck out of him and he jumps on me and we go crashing to the floor, him on top of me. – DON'T FUCKIN LAUGHT AT ME, RENTON! He screams in my face.

That was fuckin sair. I've hurt my back and I struggle to get my breath with this fat cunt on top of me. He *has* put on weight and I'm pinned under him. Sick Boy's eyes are full of fury and he pulls back his fist. The thought of Sick Boy beating me to a pulp for the money seems faintly ridiculous. Not impossible, but ludicrous. He was never into violence. But people change. Sometimes they get more desperate when they get older, especially if they feel that that ship hasn't come in. And this might not be the Sick Boy I knew. Eight, nine years, is a long time. A taste for violence must be like a taste of anything else: some people can acquire it later on in life. I have myself, in a controlled way, through four years of karate training.

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Scam # 18,737

All those people who have no place in the new Leith are here on my first day at the helm. A load of dirty auld mingers and these wee tartan techno and hip-hop cunts wi the sovies on every fucking finger. One of the cheeky little bastards even calls me Sick Boy! Well, the only drugs that'll be dealt here will carry the Simon Williamson seal of approval, you insolent wee fuckers. Especially as yesterday I had the good fortune to run into an auld associate called Seeker, and now my pockets are fairly bulging with pills and wraps of ching.

And auld Morag will have to go; a fat wifie with retro National Helath frames is too old-skool Leith for the type of regime the Williamson boy plans to institute. Too seventies, Mo. Style police: nee naw nee naw nee naw... She's serving one of the wee cunts now, or trying too. – F-f-foor pints ay l-l-l...the boy says tae the sniggers of his mates, his face twisting in impersonation of a stroke victim as Morag stands in open mouthed embarrassment.

Changes may have to be made. Alex McLeish?

Well, I think that's right, Simon. When I arrived here the club was in a shambles. Straight away I saw the potential, but we had to clear away some of the dead wood before we were ripe for investment.

That's the process, Alex.

Morag specialises in the catering side of the enterprise. We do meals here, three-course fuckers for something like ninety-nine pence a head for the pensioners. It irks me at what this is *not* doing to the profit margins: if I'd wanted

to serve socialised food I'd have gone into meals on wheels. Aye, those bar lunches are fucking scandalously cheap: I'm subbing those auld parasites to stay alive.

One old bear shuffles up tae me, somewhat menacing blue eyes set in yellow and red crystalline skin, so jaunty for such an ancient bastard. The cunt smears so badly of pish you'd think he'd been in a golden showers video. Maybe those old fuckers are into the water sports at that centre they go to. – Fish or shepherd's pie, fish or shepherd's pie...he rasps, – did ye batter the fish the day?

– Naw, I'd just gie'dit a slap and telt it tae behave itself, I quip with a smile and a wink.

My attempts at playing jocular mine host are obviously doomed to failure in this fucking sad arcade of rancid old losers. He looks at me, his auld wee Scots terrier face aw screwed up in belligerence. – Is that breadcrumbs or batter?

– Batter, I inform the vexatious auld fuck in tired resignation.

– Ah like it best doen wi breadcrumbs, he goes, that mumpy face twisted into a circussy girn as he looks over intae the corner. – N Tam n Alec n Mabel n Ginty'll tell ye same, right? Eh shouts across, soliciting some enthusiastic nods from similar human remains.

– I humbly apologise, I say, biting my tongue, trying to retain a mood of superficial bonhomie.

– The batter, is it crispy? Ah mean, it's no that mushy wey, is it?

I am making a supreme fucking effort here, the wide auld cunt. – As crisp as a new twenty pound note, I tell him.

– Huh, it's been a long time since *ah* hud a new twenty-pound not, the old ratbag moans. – The peas, ur they mushy or gairden?

_ Nae peas if thir no gairdin peas! This famine–victim wifie called Mabel shouts over.

The captain's wife was Mabel, by Christ, and she was able...tae gie the crew, their daily screw...upon the kitchen table.

Mushy or gairdin. Now there's a consideration for a man of enterprise. If Matt Colville could see me now, for him to witness the humiliation would be worth about five fucks at his wife. The burning issues of the day, right enough. Mushy or gairdin. I don't know. I don't care. I feel like shouting back: the onle stale pees in here are in your fuckin scabby auld knickers, hen.

' . . . a politically correct fuck. . . '

We get into the car and I realise that I'm crying, but the prostituted feeling was fleeting and it's now gone. I know my tears are insincere because I want Simon to take me home, to take me to bed. I want him to think that he's preying on me, when I want him, and I want him tonight. But Simon's unimpressed with the waterworks. – What is it? He asks evenly as he eases the car up Lothian Road.

– I got myself into a situation that freaked me out a bit, I tell him.

Simon contemplates this, then says wearily: – It happens, though, by the tone of his voice, obviously not to him. We pull up outside my place and look up at the sky. It's clear and there are loads of stars. I've never seen that many, not here in the city. Colin once took me down to the east coast, to a cottage near Coldingham and the whole sky was a rash of them. Simon looks upwards and says: – The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.

– Kant. . . I say in a mixture of admiration and consternation, wondering what he's getting at with the moral-law stuff. Does he know what I've been doing? But he just turns around quickly and he looks vaguely insulted. He says nothing but there's an urging look in his eyes. – You used my favourite quote from my favourite philosopher, I explain, – Kant.

– Oh. . . it's a favourite of mine as well, he says, his face breaking into a smile.

– Did you study philosophy? Did you study Kant? I ask him.

– A little, he nods. Then he explains: – It’s the old Scottish lad o’pairts tradition. One goes from Smith to Hume to Euro thinkers like Kant, you know, that Old Jock Central route.

There’s a smugness in his tone that makes me cringe a little as it reminds me of McClymont. I so *not want* to think of him in that way, so I venture: – Come upstairs for a coffee, or we could drink some wine together.

Simon glances at his watch. – A coffee would suit best, he says.

We get up the stairs and I’m thanking him again for his intervention, hoping that he’ll ask me about it, but he’s making light of it. Inside the hallway my heart stops as there’s a crack of light from under the door of the living room. – Dianne or Lauren must be up burning the midnight oil, I explain in a whisper, ushering him into my room. He sits down in the chair, then, seeing my CD rack stands up and goes through the collection, his face still inscrutable.

I go and make some coffee and bring two steaming mugs back to the bedroom. When I get back, he’s sitting on the bed, reading a book of Modern Scottish Poetry, one of the course texts for McClymont’s class. I set the cups down on the carpet and sit beside him. He lowers the book and smiles at me.

