

Translating The Fault in Our Stars

Tone and intertextuality in young adult literature

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OKAY?

OKAY.

The Fault In Our Stars

by John Green



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INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been an increased interest in young adult literature (YAL). Although the genre is quite young, it is doing exceptionally well amongst readers as is demonstrated by the popularity of YAL novels such as *The Golden Compass* and the *Harry Potter* novels, which are highly popular with both adolescents and adults, as well as the increasing amount of movie adaptations of YAL books such as *The Hunger Games* series, the *Divergent* series and *The Mortal Instruments* series. High school teachers frequently look towards YAL to keep their young pupils engaged with and interested in literature. However, YAL is often looked upon as a gateway to adult literature and is frequently considered to be a transitional tool that will help prepare readers for adult literature (Coats 316). Consequently, YAL frequently gets dismissed as not being worthy of study in and of itself, and certain theorists feel that the domain has little of substance to offer for literary discussion other than being a reflection of what teenagers enjoy to read (Daniels 78; Hunt 6). In this thesis I will concentrate on the translation of YAL. YAL is a popular genre in the Netherlands and publishers like Lemniscaat are highly interested in marketing translations of successful YAL novels to the Dutch public. I will focus my attention on examining a recently published YAL book: *The Fault in Our Stars*. *The Fault in Our Stars* was published by the young adult literature author John Green and sold more than a million copies worldwide. This novel presents several interesting translation issues, such as its use of intertextuality, which I will examine in this thesis. In doing so I hope to answer the following research question:

What problems present themselves when translating the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* and what are the possible and desirable solutions for these problems?

In chapter one I will focus on giving a general overview of the history and characteristics of YAL as well as give a short contextualization of *The Fault in Our Stars*. In chapter two I will look at the style and tone of the novel by looking at the narrative situation as well as the conversational

tone and idiolect of the characters in regards to how these might affect the translation when it comes to word choice, grammar and address. Chapter three will focus on the intertextuality and other cultural elements that are present in the novel, as translating cultural elements and recreating intertextual relations in a translation can be challenging, especially when it comes to situations where the target audience is hard to define. In chapter four I will present my own translation which will be made following the guidelines of the model contract for translators as issued by the Vereniging van Letterkundigen. Finally, in chapter five I will discuss the existing translation and compare the translation strategies used there with my own.

1. YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE AND JOHN GREEN

In order to place *The Fault in Our Stars* within the context of the YAL domain as well as explain the relation between children's literature and YAL I will first discuss the history of YAL as a domain in the USA. As YAL's connection to children's literature affects the way YAL is viewed and may affect translation norms and strategies I will also describe the problems inherent in defining YAL before discussing general translation problems inherent to the domain of YAL. I will also briefly discuss John Green and his other works in order to adequately contextualize *The Fault in Our Stars*.

1.1. HISTORY OF YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE IN AMERICA

For most of its history YAL has been considered to be part of children's literature. As a result the origins of YAL are entangled with the origins of children's literature. Researchers frequently trace these origins back to the late 18th century or the start of the 19th century. According to Ghesquiere most of the children's literature that was published before the 1800s was mainly used for didactic purposes and religious understanding, and was not aimed at entertaining children (15). Griswald traces the history of children's literature in America back to the 17th century, but he too admits that it was not until 1750 that the first secular children's books were published, starting with *A New Gift for Children* (1270-1271). Though secular books started to make an appearance, didactic, religious and pedagogical themes were still common. The first half of the 19th century saw the rise of the American Sunday School union, a religious movement which offered Sunday school lessons and produced books specifically aimed at educating youths (Nilsen et al. 41; Griswald 1274). As the century progressed children's literature started to become more secular (Griswald 1274). In 1860 Irwin Beadle and Co. were the first publishers who started offering cheap mass market pulp fiction books or "dime novels" (ibid). It was then that gender divisions started to make themselves known in children's literature, as the dime novels eventually became adventure books aimed exclusively at young boys. Girls were expected to enjoy their own genre which revolved around life at home, which in time became known as the domestic novel (Nilsen et al. 46-47; Griswald 1724). Griswald indicates that the late 19th century is considered to be the golden age for children's fiction. Many classics of the genre like *Little Women* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* were published during this period (1275). He signals that the early twentieth century finally saw the beginning of the rise of the YAL genre with the publication of books that featured adolescents and fell into the genre of the bildungsroman, such as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Catcher in the Rye* (Griswald 1276-77). While it is true that these specific books featured adolescents, these books were historically not considered to be YAL as they were marketed towards adults. The early 20th

century also saw a popularization of serial books, such as the *Little House on the Prairie* series (Griswald 1275).

Lierop-Debrauwer makes an important distinction when it comes to the history of children's literature, and by extension YAL or as she calls it "jeugdliteratuur", which directly correlates to the phenomenon of crossover literature. Crossover literature is used to describe novels that have gained an audience beyond their original intended audience and is usually used to describe children's books that have become popular with adult audiences, such as for instance the *Harry Potter* novels (Falconer 556). Due to tendency of many of the novels we now consider YAL to become crossover literature, she makes a distinction between YAL genres that have historically belonged to adult literature and YAL genres that have traditionally belonged to children's literature. When it comes to YA literature which has historically belonged to adult literature, she distinguishes three genres: the picaresque novel, which typically features societal outcasts who try to survive on the fringes of society, the robinsonade, a subgenre of the adventure novel based on the narrative model of *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *bildungsroman* and initiation novels or coming-of age novels, such as *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, *David Copperfield* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (24-30). According to Lierop-Debrauwer YAL literature that has traditionally been seen as children's literature mainly revolved around one specific genre: the domestic novel, such as *Little Women* (38-45). Though she does not dismiss male protagonists in children's literature, she does state that it were mainly female protagonists who were explored on a psychological level when it came to YAL in children's literature and male protagonists when it came to YAL in adult literature (ibed).

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that adolescents were recognized as a separate group of readers who required a genre or domain specifically aimed at them that was separate from children's literature (Eccleshare 543). Researchers typically count the 1950s and 60s as the decades where YAL fully developed into a genre onto itself with the publication of books such as *The Pigman* and *The Outsiders* (Hunt 4; Eccleshare 544). Eccleshare

indicates that the primary thrust behind the first YAL novels was the romance genre (544). The 1960s and 70s, however, saw a maturation of the YAL domain as writers started writing so called problem novels, which tackled difficult subjects that were previously thought of as taboo, such as sexuality, teenage pregnancy, drug use, and racial relations (Lierop-Debrauwer 45-46). A criticism frequently leveled at these problem novels was that they only reflected the world and were only written for the sake of breaking taboos rather than engaging in psychological development or social criticism (Lierop-Debrauwer 46; Smith 7). However, once the previously taboo subjects became somewhat commonplace, writers started to explore the complexities of them (Eccleshare 545). Since then YAL has typically been characterized by realistic novels: novels which deal with adolescent protagonists in a contemporary setting and tackle subjects that adolescents can relate to. Eccleshare indicates that different themes and topics dominated the domain of YAL at different times (551). For instance, the primary theme of the 1970s and 1980s became the issue of family breakdown and abandonment and the 1980s and 1990s saw an increasing interest in nuclear warfare (Eccleshare 549; 552). The late 1990s and early 21st century saw a rise in vampire and other monster novels, and books such as *Twilight* and *Harry Potter* caused massive popularity for the fantasy genre (Coats 326). This period also saw an increasing concern for environmental matters and the pitfalls of fame (Eccleshare 554).

1.2. DEFINING YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Young adult literature is aimed at an age group that is by its very nature transitional, which causes several problems regarding its definition. It was recognized in the 1960s that adolescents needed their own separate domain, but the demarcation between children's literature and YAL, as well as the demarcation between adult literature and YAL, remains unclear to this day. For a considerable time YAL was considered to be part of the domain of children's literature and even after its recognition as a separate domain it was still mainly discussed as a sub-domain of children's literature. Caroline Hunt laments this phenomenon in 1996 when she signals that "not a single theorist in the field deals with young adult literature as something separate from literature for young children" (5). Some theorists, like Michael Cart, even went so far as to say that we did not in fact need an official definition of YAL as it was merely a subsection of children's literature (Smith 1).

Though the YAL domain was still gaining momentum in 1996, the problem with defining the domain of YAL and seeing it as separate from children's literature still has not truly been resolved. The primary or most popular definition of YAL appears to be based on its target audience (Roxburgh 4). Ghesquiere defines it as literature written by young adults, literature written for young adults, or literature read by young adults, thus allowing room for both the intended audience as well as the actual audience of a book in the discussion of YAL (10). It is, however, the discrepancy between the intended audience and the actual audience, and the age of that audience, which appears to be the main problem for theorists. When it comes to the actual age of the YAL target audience there are varying definitions and it appears that every single theorist has a different opinion on the matter. Ghesquiere defines YAL as being aimed at children aged 12 to 16 (10). Eccleshare claims that YAL novels are aimed at adolescents from the age of 13 and older (543). Smith defines it as being aimed at children aged 12 to 18 and the Dutch Dioraphthe literature foundation defines it as books aimed at 15-30 years olds (Smith 2; 'Over DJP'). The broad age range that seems inherent to YAL, as well as the fact that nobody can agree

on what the age range actually is, complicates matters greatly for those studying or marketing novels within the domain. Campbell signals this issue on the marketing side of YAL in the 1990s. Bookstores and libraries steadily lowered the age of target audience for YAL by marketing the novels towards audiences aged 10 to 14 or even 8 to 12, while the actual target audience according to the writers was 14 to 19-year olds (5). Campbell cites this as being a real problem, as the younger audience is unlikely to understand YAL written for an older audience and the genre loses appeal with the older target audience because it gains the stigma of being juvenile (Campbell 6). As Coats points out the "concerns of a sixth grader are quite different from the concerns of a 16-year old" (322). Coats herself proposes a division in the study of YAL, dividing the domain into at least two categories, preadolescent literature and adolescent literature, to make studying the domain of YAL easier (322).

The matter of the target audience versus the actual audience of YAL novels also plays a major role in the problem of defining the domain. Coats indicates that several books like *The Chocolate War* and *The Catcher in the Rye* were not intended as YAL novels and were originally marketed as adult literature. Both are now however mainly read by young adults and are seen as classics of the YAL domain (322). The same applies to books like *The Lovely Bones*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Secret Life of Bees*, which are still considered to be adult novels, but are also read vicariously by adolescents. The reverse also happens quite often, as YAL fantasy novels such as the *Harry Potter* series and the *Dark Materials* series are frequently read by adults (Falconer 562). All of this crossover reading causes severe issues for the demarcation of the field, making it difficult to decide where children's literature ends and YAL begins as well as seeing the difference between adult literature and YAL (Coats 322). Because there is no clear definition as to what should actually determine the boundaries of YAL one of the primary questions theorists ask after at least 50 years of studying YA literature, is whether or not the label of YAL should be determined by the intended audience of a novel or by its actual audience.

1.2.1. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

Coats indicates in her essay 'Young adult literature: Growing up, In Theory', that we should start looking towards the content of books instead of its audience to start determining whether or not books should be labeled as YAL. Yet, looking towards content to define YAL is proving to be equally challenging, as theorists are also unable to reach a consensus on this topic: "While we agree that the age of the protagonist is important to making the distinction, my colleagues Anita Tarr and Roberta Trites both cite sex as a key determining factor between YA literature and preadolescent texts — if a book has sex in it, it's YA: if it does not it's preadolescent. My own distinctions tend to be more ideological in nature —" (322). The notion of sex being a determining factor in indicating a more grown up audience is also signaled by Kaufman who noted in 2012 that publishers were seeing a rise in sales of books that fit into the young-adult genre in their length and emotional intensity, but which feature slightly older characters and significantly more sex, which was typically explicitly detailed (2). Based on the research done by Coats, Nilsen et al., Ruxburgh and Cole I have compiled a list of features that are commonly found in YAL which might work towards determining if a book can be considered YAL.

A. Written about adolescents

The most common characteristic mentioned is the fact that YAL tends to be written from the viewpoint of adolescents. The protagonist tends to be an adolescent and the story is typically told from the viewpoint and in the voice of an adolescent (Nilsen et al. 20-26; Cole 49; Roxburgh 7). A second common feature of the narrative situation in YAL novels is the prevalence of the first person narrative, which serves to allow readers to identify with the protagonist more easily. Though it is a common feature, Nilsen et al. stress that it is not a prerequisite for YAL (23). Koss'

study on the growing complexity of YAL novels affirms this notion and signals that a growing number of novels use a combination of different point of views and perspectives (75).

B. Marginalized parental figures

Both Cole and Nilsen et al. mention the fact that YAL novels typically focus on adolescents and as a result parental figures are either absent, play a less noticeable role or are a source of conflict (Cole 49; Nilsen et al. 28-29). This allows the adolescent to become the hero of the story and take the credit for their actions and accomplishments (Nilsen et al. 28). To further the lack of parental influences, YAL novels are typically set in an environment which is nearly exclusive to teenagers. The most prevalent of these is the high-school setting, which Green himself also uses in all of his books, except for *The Fault in Our Stars*.

C. Coming of age

YAL novels typically revolve around conflicts, emotions and themes that are important to teenagers such as assuming membership in a larger community, becoming independent of one's parents or coming to terms with oneself (Nilsen et al. 35-38). Cole indicates that YAL novels often deal with notions of coming of age or gaining maturity (49). As has been mentioned, Lierop-Debrauwer considers the bildungsroman, the historic coming of age genre, to be one of the predecessors to YAL and it is still a prevalent genre in the domain (24-30). Nilsen et al. mention that YAL novels tend to imbue their protagonists with admirable qualities which allow them to stand up to hardships and give readers someone to admire and model their decisions after (34-35).

D. Fast paced

Both Nilsen et al. and Cole note that YAL novels are typically fast paced and uncomplicated in narrative style. Cole goes even further and states that they typically do not go over 300 pages (49). Though this might be true or even prevalent it is not quite as common in all YAL genres and there are quite a few exceptions to this rule. As Koss demonstrates in her short study

contemporary YAL is turning towards more complex narratives and plots (75-76). *The Book Thief* is a prime example of this as the novel is well over 500 pages long, spans a timeframe of several years and features a complex narrative situation heavy with focalization shifts, flashbacks, and flash forwards. Fantasy and epic fantasy novels, such as the *Eragon* series by Paolini and the *Dark Materials* and the *Harry Potter* series, also often defy this characteristic by not only being long, but also by containing a narrative that spans multiple novels.

E. Variety of genres and backgrounds

Nilsen et al. also mention the fact that YAL as a domain includes many different genres and subjects, and deals with characters from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds (31-34). While this is true, it is not an aspect that is solely true for YAL, as contemporary children's literature and adult literature also contain many different genres, subjects and characters of varying backgrounds. That this is considered typical for YAL has more to do with the fact that YAL came of age in the 1960s, a time when attitudes towards previously taboo subjects such as sexuality and racial relations changed.

1.3. TRANSLATION ISSUES

Though each novel has its own specific set of translation issues, YAL as a domain also presents several general issues when it comes to translation. Ghesquiere indicates that children's literature is historically closely connected to pedagogical and didactic considerations of parents and educators (15-16). During the first half of the twentieth century YAL was mainly considered to be a form of light entertainment (16). However, by the time of the 1960s YAL matured as authors began to discuss subjects in their novels that were previously considered taboo. Smith indicates that as a result the 1960s saw a lot of discussion about censorship and what books should or should not be made available to adolescents, as the novels started to defy pedagogical and didactic norms and expectations (5-6). As mentioned YAL traditionally covers quite a broad age range and having children aged 13 read books like *The Cather in the Rye*, which deals with profanity, sex, alcohol, and death, proved to a concern for publishers and parents alike (Falconer 543). Hunt also partially attributes the lack of theory on YAL to the fact that censorship was a continuous threat to the genre (6). The issue of censorship also carries over into the world of translation as it affects the selection of source material and the way the text is translated regarding the translation of culturally specific elements.

The question is, however, how this impacts translation. These days YAL straddles the boundary between children's literature and adult literature, but historically it has been seen as part of children's literature. This is particularly problematic when it comes to translation because diametrically opposed norms govern the two literary systems. Shavit points out that in general the translators of children's literature are permitted more liberties because children's literature occupies a peripheral position within the literary polysystem (112). Translators are allowed to change the text by adding or deleting information or even omitting entire passages, and frequently even go so far as to change the entire genre of the novel if the novel is adapted from adult literature (112). These adjustments are made, and indeed permitted, if they are made

in adherence to two principles: what is deemed appropriate and useful to the child in the eyes of society in accordance with what is considered to be educationally relevant or good for the child, and the child's reading and comprehension abilities. Åsman and Pedersen in their study into the translation of Swedish children's literature postulate that as a result from the general freedom that is present in the domain of children's literature domesticating strategies, strategies which move the setting of the novel towards the target culture, are most commonly used when it comes to the translation of children's literature to a dominant target culture (3-4). Desmet's study into the translation of the *Jolly Postman* children's picture books series confirms this belief and shows that even in the opposite direction, from a dominant source culture to a smaller target culture, domesticating translation strategies tend to be prevalent (37). Though these two studies are hardly conclusive, the general trend does indicate that domestication is the norm when it comes to the translation of literature aimed at children. This domesticating trend can be considered to be a form of cultural censorship: children are typically regarded as being incapable of understanding other cultures or culturally specific elements from cultures other than their own and as a result these elements are substituted for cultural elements which are better known to them.

Åsman and Pedersen also note that domestication strategies tend to decrease as the intended audience gets older (2). In the case of *TFIOS* the translation direction would be from the dominant Anglo-American culture into the less dominant Dutch culture. Furthermore, Dutch teenagers can be said to be relatively familiar with the Anglo-American culture. Though their high school English education is mainly geared towards Great-Britain, a great deal of the media they are confronted with daily, such as television, games, movies and magazines, is produced by or focused on America. Consequently, when it comes to the translation of *TFIOS* it might be said that strategies which lean more towards foreignizing are preferable over domesticating strategies, as it can be assumed that the intended audience will be familiar with a lot of cultural elements. Postema, however, cautions translators against the use of foreignizing strategies, and in particular not translating certain elements, for while it might be said that Dutch youths are

required to study English at school and watch a lot of American media, their actual knowledge of the language, and also culture, often falls short of the lofty impressions of publishers (49).

Ultimately culturally specific elements and intertextual elements will have to be dealt with on a case by case basis. In section 3.2. I will discuss my own strategies when it comes to culturally specific elements in *TFIOS* and in section 5 I will look at the existing translation of *TFIOS* and attempt to see if there's any credence to my prediction.

A second issue that might become a problem with translating is the evanescence of YAL books. Coats states that "adolescence is a threshold condition, a liminal state that is fraught with angst, drama and change anxiety. The burden of adolescent literature has always been to achieve synchronicity with the concerns of an audience that is defined by its state of flux and impermanence" (325). This state of flux is also signaled by Hunt, who claims it is a prevalent problem for YAL, as taste in clothing, amusement, drugs, relevant interests and the language adolescents use changes quickly (6). Novels from the 1960s and 70s that are considered to be classics of the genre might be seen as outdated by adolescents from the 21st century. This is especially true of novels which heavily feature adolescent speech patterns, which appear to date the most rapidly. Hunt notes that "the more accurate the portrayal of adolescent speech patterns, the shorter the life span of that particular book's 'relevance' to the present experience of teenaged readers" (6). Consequently, while *The Catcher in the Rye* might be considered to be a classic of the genre, modern teenagers might be baffled by Holden's typically 1950s speech patterns and concerns. The dating of adolescent speech patterns could be avoided by eliminating markers of youth language in translation, but this strategy might not be advisable in all cases.

1.4. JOHN GREEN

John Green was born on August 24th 1977. In 2000 he graduated from Kenyon College, Ohio, with a double BA in English and Religious Studies. Afterwards he enrolled in a divinity school with the desire to become a minister and spent five months working as a student chaplain at a local hospital (Sydney Morning Herald 3). He claims that he was "disavowed of that notion pretty quickly while working at the hospital", and his desire to become a minister was replaced by his desire to become a writer (ibid). He spent several years writing reviews for magazines and papers in Chicago and New York, as well as doing work in local radio (Sydney Morning Herald 6). In 2005 he published his first book *Looking for Alaska*, a young adult novel which won the Micheal L. Printz prize in 2006 (Micheal L. Printz). In 2007 his second book, *An Abundance of Catherines*, was published. It was nominated for the Printz prize and garnered an honourable mention on the Young Adult Library services Association's 2007 list of best books for Young Adults (Micheal L. Printz). In 2007 Green and his brother Hank started up a YouTube project called Brotherhood 2.0, wherein they would only communicate with each other through YouTube video messages for one whole year. The project was highly successful and the brothers Green continued their YouTube activities on the vlogbrothers channel. Green's third novel, *Paper Towns*, was published in 2009, and made it to number 5 on the *New York Times* best seller list in October 2008 (Children's Books). He was also awarded the Edgar award for *Paper Towns* in 2009 (2009 Edgar Winners).

John Green is also known for various short stories, such as 'Freak the Geek' and 'The Great American Morp,' online novellas such as *Thisisnottom* and *Zombicorns* as well as several collaborations with other writers, most notable being *Let it Snow: Three Holiday Romance* written in collaboration with Maureen Johnson and Lauren Myracle, and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* written in collaboration with David Levithan. All of John Green's novels are typically categorized as young adult fiction. Most of these novels feature male teens who are trying to deal with relationship dynamics. Though relationships and romantic entanglements feature heavily

in these novels, themes of mystery, adventure, humor and death often play a role as well. *Paper Towns* in particular is known as a mystery novel and as a form of anti-romance novel written in reaction to a trope prevalent in Green's earlier work: the manic pixie dream girl, which is a female character whose characterization is primarily based on her function to teach men how to enjoy life, frequently resulting in a flat character who has no other defining characteristics beyond her excessive quirkiness and attractiveness (Green; Hamer ; Rabin ; 'Manic Pixie Dream Girl').

1.5. *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS*: CONTEXTUALIZATION

The Fault in Our Stars (*TFIOS*) is the fourth of Green's solo novels. The novel was published on the tenth of January 2012 and was long in the making. Green had plans to write about sick kids after his experience as a chaplain in 2000, but long remained unable to do so due to his emotional entanglement and incapability of finding the right "voice" (Chang). In multiple interviews he names Esther Earl, a girl who died of cancer late 2010, as an important influence on the development of the novel. He cites her as the main cause of him finally realizing that, despite the fact that their lives were cut short, these kids still led lives which were meaningful and which were filled with more than just pain (Hamer). This realization is what eventually enabled him to finally write his novel about sick kids.

1.5.1. *MAIN CHARACTERS AND THEMES.*

TFIOS details a few months in the life of a 16 year old girl named Hazel Lancaster who has stage 4 thyroid cancer. The novel is written in the first person and revolves around the romantic entanglement of Hazel and a boy she meets at a cancer support group named Augustus Waters, who has lost his right leg to osteosarcoma. The novel can be classified as a romance, as a good deal of the novel is about the relationship of Hazel and Augustus. However, their relationship does not follow the typical manic pixie dream girl motif found in Green's previous works, but revolves around the motif of the star-crossed lovers which is alluded to multiple times in the text. This is the first novel in which Green departs from the male protagonist and point of view and tells a story from a female point of view. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a major theme of the novel is death and how teenagers as well as their parents deal with loss and life knowing that their days are numbered. Augustus' and Hazel's views on life, death, and heroism are pitted against each other as different sides of the same coin. Augustus strives to be remembered so that his life will not be wasted, whereas Hazel attempt to have as little impact in life as she possibly can so that she will cause no harm to people with her death. Literature features heavily in this novel. Hazel and Augustus bond over a fictional novel called *An Imperial Affliction*, which was written

by Peter Van Houten and is about a young girl named Anna who is living with cancer. The novel ends midsentence and Hazel and Augustus become obsessed with what happens after the end of the book and the people Anna leaves behind. This obsession is symbolic of their own questions and fears about their own deaths. The road trip motif is prevalent in Green's work and *The Fault in Our Stars* is no exception. In order to find out what happens after the end of *An Imperial Affliction* Hazel and Augustus fly out to Amsterdam with Hazel's mother to meet Peter van Houten. He proves uncooperative and they leave without getting the answers they desire. In Amsterdam Augustus informs Hazel that his cancer has come back and that his days are now truly numbered. The novel ends with Augustus' funeral and Hazel finding the eulogy Augustus wrote for her.

Looking at the characteristics typically found in YAL novels *The Fault in Our Stars* can definitely be classified as YAL. The protagonist, Hazel, is an adolescent and the story is written from her viewpoint. The novel can even be considered to be fast-paced as most editions do not exceed 300 pages. Regarding the intended audience John Green himself explicitly stated that he wishes to write for a teenaged audience, indicating that he at least intended for the novel to be classified as a YAL novel (JohnGreenBooks 10). The publisher of the Dutch translation, Lemniscaat, felt differently and claimed that with *TFIOS* Green has transcended the domain of YAL, and that the novel should also be counted amongst literary novels aimed at adults ('John Green wordt volwassen').

The only characteristic that is not as prominent in this novel is that of the parental figures becoming marginalized. *TFIOS* deviates from Green's other novels when it comes to the setting, as Hazel has been withdrawn from high-school and only occasionally talks about going to class at the local community college. The lack of a school setting is partially compensated by the support group Hazel frequents where she is in the sole company of her peers, though only chapter one and nine actively feature this setting. Furthermore, both Augustus' and Hazel's physical conditions deteriorate during the novel and they become more dependent on their

parents for their needs as the story progresses. This dependency is something both Augustus and Hazel fight, turning their relationship with their respective parents into an antagonistic one at times. Hazel's relationship with her parents in particular is overall quite good and they play an important role in her coming to terms with her situation in life and her development as a person. However, Hazel frequently fears hurting them which results in her attempting to distance herself from them, which in turn results in conflict.

1.5.2. RECEPTION OF THE NOVEL IN THE U.S. AND THE NETHERLANDS

The Fault in Our Stars was long anticipated by Green's fan base and when Green announced the publication date the novel quickly rose to the number one position on the bestseller lists of both Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble, due to at least 150.000 initial preorders (Green; Kirch; Trachtenberg). Upon publication on the tenth of January 2012 the book quickly made it to the *New York Times* bestseller list for children's chapter books where it stayed for more than 44 weeks, maintaining the number one position for more than seven weeks. The novel also made it to the top ten of the bestseller list of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Indiebound*, and gained an honourable 9th position in the *Bookseller* bestseller list. To date the book has sold over one million copies (Minzesheimer).

Reception of the book in the U.S. literary circuit was overwhelmingly positive. *The Washington Post* lauded the "authenticity of characters engaged in trying to live forever within the numbered days" and praised Green for deftly mixing "the profound and the quotidian in this tough, touching valentine to the human spirit" (Quattlebaum). *Publishers Weekly* named the book his "best work yet" and *Time Magazine* claimed that the novel was "a good example of why so many adult readers are turning to young adult literature for the pleasures and consolations they used to get from conventional literary fiction" (Grossman; Publishers Weekly). In December of 2012 *Time Magazine* named the book their number one best book in the fiction category for 2012, saying that Green has managed to write "with wit, unpretentious clarity and total emotional honesty" (Grossman). As of February 2013, the movie rights to the novel have been

sold to Fox, who are currently developing a movie adaptation starring Shailene Woodley as Hazel (IMDb).

The book has also gained fame and positive reception on an international level. The book has to date been translated into Dutch, German, Spanish, French, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Chinese and Portuguese (JohnGreenBooks). The Dutch translation of the book was done by Nan Lenders. *Een weeffout in onze sterren*, was published on the tenth of March 2012. The novel was received well in the Dutch press. A few days after the original was published *NRC Handelsblad* signaled that a novel would soon be released in Dutch from the world's most important YAL author John Green (Op Komst). On March 17th 2012 *Trouw* indicated that *TFIOS* was a massive hit amongst American teenagers and claimed that it was no surprise as the main character was a lifelike, funny, intelligent and well written modern youth with a complex depth to her (Ziek zijn stoot af). After the publication of the translation *Algemeen Dagblad* published a short interview with the author indicating that the novel was already a bestseller before it was written (Hamer). Marjon Kok interviewed Green for *De Gelderlander* and claimed that he was one of the greatest best-selling authors in the USA, due to his self-gained internet fame (3.) *De Volkskrant* even published a column explaining the infinity theorem Van Houten refers to in *TFIOS* (Smeets).

Trouw included the novel on its best of 2012 list, recommending the novel to smart well-read teenagers and adults alike (Voor iedereen een boek). Thomas de Veen, critic for *NRC Handelsblad*, named it the best YAL book of the year with a philosophical depth that had a lasting resonance and stated that it deserved more attention and readers (4). At the start of 2013 Lemniscaat reported that *TFIOS* was included amongst the best books lists of the *Sevendays* critics Jacquiline Ancona and Annemarie Terhell, the critic of *Haarlems Dagblad* Hanneke van den Berg, and independent children's literature critic Jaap Friso (Lijstjes).

The publisher of the translation, Lemniscaat, aggressively marketed the novel in the Netherlands by naming March 2012 John Green Month and lowering the price of the novel by 45% for the entire month (Maart 2012). They started a crowd sourced marketing campaign,

which called on fans of the book to spread free postcards and posters announcing the arrival of the translation in local bookshops and libraries during the month of March (Johngreenmaand.tumblr.com). Several events were also hosted in March to promote the novel in the Netherlands, including a meet and greet and a literary night revolving around the new translation along with a live interview with John Green, both of which sold out quickly (Literaire avond rondom John Green; Ontmoet John Green).

In 2013, *The Fault in Our Stars* and *Een weeffout in onze sterren* won the Dioraphte jongerenliteratuurprijs for best translated work. It also won the prize for best foreign work chosen by the public, indicating its popularity in the Netherlands (DJP). The fact that the novel is a hit worldwide is even felt by the tourist industry in Amsterdam, as a section of the novel is situated in Amsterdam. *Trouw* reported in April this year that the Springsnow foundation, which uses a quotation from *TFIOS* on their homepage, was expecting an influx of tourists for their yearly springsnow and elms walk due to the popularity of *TFIOS* (Kar 3).

2. TRANSLATING STYLE

That style is an important part of translation is evident in the fact that the Vereniging van Letterkundigen saw fit to include it as an important factor of the translation process in the model contract for translators: "De vertaler verbindt zich tot het leveren van een naar inhoud en stijl getrouwe en onberispelijke Nederlandse vertaling rechtstreeks uit het oorspronkelijke werk" (VvL). In 'Over Stijl' Anbeek and Verhagen indicate that style is often referred to as the DNA of an author, his personal handwriting or signature on a text (2). It is something recognizable that can be evaluated positively or negatively as is demonstrated by the yearly Bulwer-Lytton fiction contest, which rewards the worst opening sentence of a novel. Koster points out, however, that the term itself does little to indicate what exactly a specific style constitutes beyond a certain stylistic choice ('Alles verandert altijd' 3). Furthermore, both Anbeek and Verhagen, and Koster indicate that examining what constitutes the style of an author or a text means delving into great detail, something which reviewers are often loath to do (8; 'Alles verandert altijd' 3).

Style, as defined by Leech and Short, refers to the way in which language is used. It is defined by the choices that are made from the total repertoire of language in the context of a certain domain, such as an author, a text, or a genre, and it is concerned with the literary or aesthetic function of those choices (31). They further postulate that style is inherently relative and that linguistic choices do not occur in a vacuum (*ibid*). Consequently, stylistic choices are mainly concerned with and limited to the alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter, and what kind of function and effect certain stylistic choices have (31-32). The principle of style as choice is highly relevant to translation as translation deals with nothing but choice ('Alles verandert altijd' 5). If style is looked at as a matter of choice discussions about concrete translation problems such as the lack of a certain literary device or effect in the target language can be shifted from the conversation of untranslatability versus translatability towards the conversation of choice: which available literary devices and effects are needed to mimic a

specific stylistic effect and how do we combine them to create that effect. ('Alles verandert altijd' 6). To say that YAL as a domain has a specific style or contains specific stylistic markers that are present in all YAL novels would be a gross generalization, as writers often have their own specific style. Describing John Green's style in its entirety or even just the style of *TFIOS* is an endeavor beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead I will limit myself to three aspects of style that can be found in *TFIOS*: the discourse situation, conversational tone, and idiolect.

2.1. DISCOURSE SITUATION OF *TFIOS*

Wyile notes that we typically distinguish four types of narration when it comes to texts: first-person or I- narration (FPN), second-person or you-narration, third-person limited, and third-person omniscient or he/her-narration (185). *TFIOS* is no exception to the FPN trope found in YAL novels. Hazel Grace Lancaster, the main character of the novel, is also its narrator and its focalizer.

Consequently, its discourse situation can be

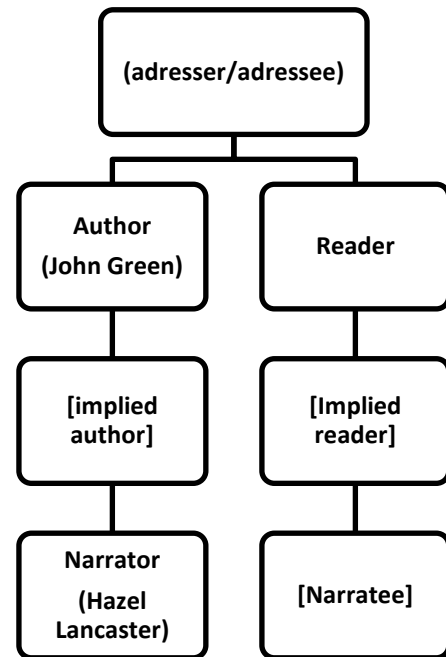


FIGURE 1: DISCOURSE SITUATION *TFIOS* 1

said to have, broadly speaking, three levels (see Fig 1). Leech and Short indicate that when there is no identifiable narratee or interlocutor readers tend to feel as if they are the narratee, because the addressee side of the discourse situation collapses onto itself causing the narratee to effectively become the reader (211-212). In *TFIOS* Hazel is consistently addressing a non-specified narratee as can be seen from the questions she asks herself in anticipation of a narratee: "Why did the cast rotate? A side effect of dying," and the way she describes events: "So here's how it went in God's heart" (4). It never becomes clear, however, just who this narratee is. As a result it can be assumed that in *TFIOS* the addressee side collapses onto itself as well.

Wyile asserts that FPN in YAL typically occurs in the immediate past (186). The fact that little time has passed between the narrated events and the act of narration itself means that the narrated events have had little time to impact the life of the narrator (189-191). As a result they have not yet had any effect on the long term development of the character in question, which in terms of narration means that the narrator tends to be less evaluative of their own actions (187). It becomes clear from the opening sentence that *TFIOS* is situated in the past, or to be more

precise Hazel's 17th year of life, making the Hazel living these events 16 years old. It does not, however, become immediately clear how much time has passed between the occurrence of the events and the narration of these events. Though the text is written in the past tense there are no explicit temporal references to indicate whether *TFIOS* occurs in the immediate or distant past. The only overt hint included in the text about the narrator's age is presented at the very end of the novel: when Hazel reads Augustus' eulogy for her she answers him in the present tense, implying that the Hazel who was reading that letter is the also one who narrated the entire story. Whenever Hazel addresses the implied reader it becomes clear that the events she is describing did occur in her recent past. Take the following passage for example:

The other thing about Kaitlyn, I guess, was that it could never again feel natural to talk to her. Any attempts to feign normal social interactions were just depressing because it was so glaringly obvious that everyone I spoke to for the rest of my life would feel awkward and self-conscious around me, except maybe kids like Jackie who just did not know any better (47).

In this particular instance we can see from the use of modals that the narrator is predicting an immediate future based on the events she has just described, indicating that the event itself happened quite recently in Hazel's past.

Wyile states that FPN which occurs in the immediate past is rather limited in point of view because it offers very little outside view or evaluation on the events that are described (194-195). This is certainly the case in *TFIOS*, as it is written entirely from Hazel's point of view as she is both focalizer and narrator. However, *TFIOS* does feature a few instances where the audience is offered a glimpse into the mind of other characters. They are not necessarily focalization shifts, as Hazel is still the one who perceives them and presents them to the implied reader, but they do offer a perspective different from Hazel's on the situation. These instances are the letters, texts, and emails other characters such as Peter van Houten and Lidewij Vliegthart write to Hazel or Augustus. Most notable of these instances is the eulogy at the end

of the novel which Augustus writes for Hazel. This letter, which is addressed to Peter Van Houten, gives the implied reader and Hazel an insight into how Augustus actually saw Hazel. In these instances the discourse situation briefly gains another level (see Fig. 2.).

Leech and Short assert that there is an "intimate" relation between fictional point of view and the order in which information is presented. Fictional point of view is defined by Leech and short as "a selective withholding of information, or relinquishing of omniscience" (141-142). It is through the withholding of information that

writers manage to maintain tension or create irony (143). Leech and Short differentiate between three different types of sequencing: chronological sequencing, which concerns the order in which events take place, psychological sequencing, which is the order in which the main character learns or hears important information, and presentational sequencing, which is the order in which the reader learns of important information (142-143). In the case of *TFIOS* the chronological sequencing is linear and the story is told without flashbacks or flash forwards. Due to the fact that *TFIOS* features FPN the psychological sequencing and presentational sequencing overlap fully as the reader finds out about important information the same time Hazel does.

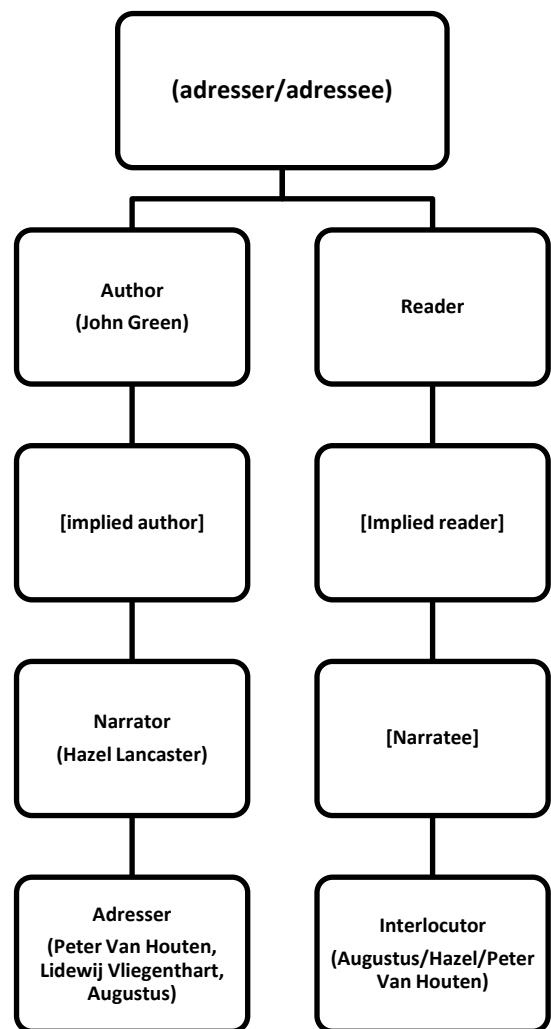


FIGURE 2: DISCOURSE SITUATION *TFIOS* 2

2.2. CONVERSATIONAL TONE

Leech and Short define conversational tone as being the "tone in the speech of characters". Their research mainly focuses on "the usage of tone in indicating the social stance of speaker to hearer" (247). They note that conversational tone is important when it comes to the dramatization of personal relationships and that the dynamics of conversation are reflected in the politeness, familiarity, and rudeness of tone adopted by characters towards other characters (248). It can be indicated by the "varied and subtle use of grammatical, lexical and graphological markers, as well as authorial descriptions of a character's manner of speech" (248). Stylistic values regarding tone are scalar in nature, which means that there are degrees of politeness and familiarity, formality and informality/colloquial language use. Furthermore, tone is mainly found in the way verbal behavior deviates from the contextual norm in a certain situation and the appropriateness of a response or observation in a given situation (248).

Judging the appropriateness of a response is problematic as societal norms are often subjective and tend to change over time. Some solace might be found, however, in Leech and Short. They postulate that conversation is governed by the cooperative principle in which conversational partners attempt to obey certain conversational goals, also known as the maxims of conversation (Leech and Short 236). They distinguish four separate maxims:

1. The maxim of quantity, which dictates that only required information should be given.
2. The maxim of quality, which dictates that one must avoid speculation or lies.
3. the maxim of relation, which dictates that any and all contributions should be relevant to the conversation or purpose at hand
4. the maxim of manner, which dictates that obscurity and ambiguity, as well as being overly wordy should be avoided, and that one should await their turn when it comes to conversing.

These maxims are rhetorical principles rather than absolute norms and as a result they are frequently violated (Leech and Short 237). When it becomes apparent that they are being violated a listener is able to perceive a difference between what is being said by the speaker and what he or she means by it. These so called deviations from the norm, or "implicatures", give rise to conversational tone (237).

Landers further notes that conversational tone can include "virtually any sentiment" and that it has its own unity (68). This unity is however limited to what he calls the tone unit, which is the text between tone shifts as multiple conversational tones may be used for a particular passage or text (68). He also notes that tone violation occurs when a translator ignores the requirements of tone, by, for instance, grossly misrepresenting the social distance, or rather conversational tone, between two characters by inaccurately rendering their style of address (68). Consequently, it may be surmised that translation problems which result from conversational tone are mainly bound up with the way characters express themselves to each other, which can cause issues regarding word choice, grammar, and style of address when it comes to translation.

2.2.1. HAZEL AS NARRATOR

Though conversational tone mainly pertains to the conversations characters have with each other, I would argue that in the case of *TFIOS* it may also be applied to the instances where Hazel is addressing the narratee. Leech and Short divide the matter of tone in their book into conversational and authorial tone. Conversational tone mainly pertains to the relation between characters, whereas authorial tone pertains solely to the relation between the author and the reader. In the case of FPN this delineation becomes problematic as the author is more distant from the act of narration and the authorial role appears to be taken over by the narrator. I have chosen to deal with the relationship between Hazel and her narratee under the umbrella of conversational tone, because the way she addresses the narratee frequently carries markers of a colloquial speech typically found in conversation. Take for instance the usage of stopgaps and contracted verb forms in her narration:

Like, I realize that this is irrational, but when they tell you that you have, say, a 20 percent chance of living five years, the math kicks in and you figure that's one in five . . . so you look around and think, as any healthy person would: I gotta outlast four of these bastards (5).

First person narration frequently has the effect of endearing the narrator to his or her readers. Wylie points out that FPN seeks to draw the reader in, in order to establish a form of confidence between the narrator and narratee in an attempt to fully engage him or her with the text (192). This is caused by the collapse of the discourse levels on the addressee side in FPN, which causes the reader to identify so heavily with the narratee role that her or she essentially becomes the narratee. Leech and Short also mention this aspect of FPN and state that it tends to create a personal relationship between the reader and the narrator, causing the reader to become biased towards the main character (213). In chapter one Hazel introduces the narratee to herself and her life. It immediately becomes clear that she is very honest about her physical and emotional state: "Late in the winter of my seventeenth year, my mother decided I was

depressed, presumably because I rarely left the house, spent quite a lot of time in bed, read the same book over and over, ate infrequently, and devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time to thinking about death" (3). Her honesty about her life and her condition creates a sense and tone of familiarity between the reader and Hazel. The notion of *TFIOS* being a story told to the narratee is furthered by the instances where Hazel is mindful of possible questions of the narratee, take for example: "Why did the cast rotate? A side effect of dying." (4). The tone of familiarity is corroborated by Hazel's informal and colloquial style of speech: "I noticed this because Patrick, the Support Group Leader and only person over eighteen in the room, talked about the heart of Jesus every freaking meeting" (4). The informal nature of her speech places the YA reader on the same social stance as Hazel, which allows the reader to identify with the role of a confidant.

Hazel approaches her disease and the world around her with a healthy dose of humour and sarcastic remarks: "...waiting, as we all do, for the sword of Damocles to give him the relief that he escaped lo those many years ago when cancer took both of his nuts but spared what only the most generous soul would call his life. AND YOU TOO MIGHT BE SO LUCKY!" (5). The witty and black humour Hazel displays as a narrator affirms the confidant role, because Hazel feels comfortable enough with the narratee to joke about her condition. In contrast, she is far more hesitant to joke about her condition or imminent death around her parents. She only does this once, near the end of the novel, when she learns that her mother has been studying to become a social worker to help other people with children who have cancer (298).

The humour Hazel displays can occasionally pose an issue for the translation because it does not always take the form of an obvious joke in the form of a pun or a punchline, but rather that of sarcasm. The translation of sarcasm in particular is difficult because it is found in the tone of what is being said rather than in a basic joke set-up. Take for instance the following passage: "but spared what only the most generous soul would call his life," and the sentence after it " AND YOU TOO MIGHT BE SO LUCKY!" (5). In this instance Hazel is showing her intense dislike of Patrick

and Patrick's life after his remission. The usage of capitals and the exclamation point mimics the format of inspirational rallying cries, which lends the sentence an extra sarcastic dimension as it is intended to be anything but optimistic. Initially I attempted to translate the sentence using various translations of lucky, but while they accurately conveyed Hazel's dislike they seemed to lack the humorous tone of the original: "EN JIJ KAN MISSCHIEN WEL NET ZO GELUKKIG ZIJN!" or "EN JIJ KAN MISSCHIEN WEL NET ZOVEEL GELUK HEBBEN!" As the sentence refers back to a specific person I attempted to try and emphasize lucky in the sense of being a lucky person instead, choosing a rather informal word to further the colloquial nature of the slogan: "EN JIJ KAN MISSCHIEN WEL NET ZO'N BOFKONT ZIJN!"

There is also a secondary issue here and that is the question of who Hazel is addressing, as the pronoun "you" can be used in both singular and plural cases. She could either be addressing the narratee in the singular or talking about or to the other kids at the cancer group in the plural. I decided to translate the sentence in the plural because of the context of the situation. In the previous sentence she indicates that Patrick always talks about his life story, after which she briefly sums it up. In this final sentence Hazel is mimicking what Patrick might say at the end of his own speech, or at least the sentiment that he is usually trying to convey with his speeches. As he typically addresses a group of people with his speeches, the plural would fit better within the context of the sentence: "EN JULLIE KUNNEN MISSCHIEN WEL NET ZULKE BOFKONTEN ZIJN!"

2.2.2. *HAZEL AND AUGUSTUS*

The informal and colloquial conversational tone that is present between Hazel and the narratee is also present in the conversations Hazel has with Augustus, and their shared friend Isaac. The setting and content of the first conversation she has with Augustus and Isaac immediately signals that these three characters are in the same peer group: they are all teenagers suffering from cancer. Comparable to how Hazel feels comfortable enough to joke about her condition

with the narratee, Augustus, Isaac, and Hazel all feel comfortable enough to joke about their condition to each other, which indicates that there is little social distance between them. This becomes even more clear when her friendship with Augustus and Isaac is contrasted with her friendship with Kaitlyn. Though they are close friends Kaitlyn is for all intents and purposes still a normal teenager who goes to high school and does not suffer from cancer. Hazel tries to maintain that closeness with Kaitlyn by treating her as she would Augustus or Isaac, but it becomes clear that Kaitlyn is unable to joke about her condition:

“Is it even possible to walk in these? I mean, I would just die—” and then stopped short, looking at me as if to say I’m sorry, as if it were a crime to mention death to the dying.

“You should try them on,” Kaitlyn continued, trying to paper over the awkwardness.

“I’d sooner die,” I assured her (44).

Hazel later even explicitly states that any and all conversations with Kaitlyn, and everyone who is not like Hazel, would always be unnatural as everyone would be on the lookout not to act callously towards her. Later, when she encounters Van Houten she says that one of the few things she liked about him was the fact that he was callous enough to not treat her and Augustus with pity and deference (186).

The tone of her first conversation with Augustus is quite humorous as they joke about the misuse of the word literally and Isaac's make out session with Monica:

Suddenly standing next to me, Augustus half whispered, “They’re big believers in PDA.”

“What’s with the ‘always’?” The slurping sounds intensified.

“Always is their thing. They’ll always love each other and whatever. I would

conservatively estimate they have texted each other the word always four million times in the last year (18-19).

The joke Augustus makes here not only hinges on the absurdity of the number four million, but on the combination between that number and the word "conservatively", which increases the absurdity of the number. I tried to preserve that link in my translation and added in the "al een keer of" to further the context of him estimating the number:

'Altijd is hun ding. Ze zullen altijd van elkaar houden of zoiets. Mijn voorzichtige schatting is dat ze elkaar het woord altijd het afgelopen jaar al een keer of 4 miljoen hebben ge-sms't.'

Hazel and Augustus, however, do not quite understand each other fully yet, as is demonstrated by Hazel's shift in tone to anger and disbelief, which is also signaled graphologically through the use of italics and capitalization, when she sees him taking out a packet of cigarettes:

"Are you *serious*?" I asked. "You think that's cool? Oh, my God, you just ruined *the whole thing*."

"Which whole thing?" he asked, turning to me. The cigarette dangled unlit from the unsmiling corner of his mouth.

"The whole thing where a boy who is not unattractive or unintelligent or seemingly in any way unacceptable stares at me and points out incorrect uses of literality and compares me to actresses and asks me to watch a movie at his house. But of course there is always a *hamartia* and yours is that oh, my God, even though you HAD FREAKING CANCER you give money to a company in exchange for the chance to acquire YET MORE CANCER. Oh, my God. Let me just assure you that not being able to breathe? SUCKS.

Totally disappointing. *Totally* (19-20).

I have maintained both the italics and capitalization in my translation as they place extra emphasis on certain words, consequently indicating Hazel's inflection and tone of voice. I also attempted to further convey her disbelief and anger by adding in a few pragmatic particles in the

translation, most notable being the triple usage of the word "echt", and the addition of adverb "zwaar" to the translation of sucks:

'Meen je dit nou *serieus*?' vroeg ik. 'Denk je **echt** dat dat cool is? Oh, mijn God, je hebt dit *hele ding* nu **echt** helemaal geruïneerd.'

Hij draaide zich naar mij toe. 'Welk hele ding?' vroeg hij. De sigaret hing onaangestoken uit de mondhoek zonder glimlach.

'Het hele ding waar er een jongen is die niet onaantrekkelijke is of dom, of op een of andere manier onacceptabel en die naar mij staart en het foutieve gebruik van het woord letterlijk weet aan te duiden en me dan vergelijkt met actrices en vraagt of ik een film bij hem thuis wil komen kijken. Maar natuurlijk is er altijd een *hamartia* in het spel en de jouwe is dat je, oh, mijn God, desondanks het feit dat je GODSAMME KANKER HEBT GEHAD, geld geeft aan een bedrijf in ruil voor de kans om NOG MEER KANKER te vergaren. Oh, mijn god. Laat me je even verzekeren dat niet kunnen ademen? **Echt zwaar** KLOTE is. Enorm teleurstellend. *Enorm*.'

The sentence "Let me just assure you that not being able to breathe? SUCKS" caused a few issues. The sentence ends with a question mark, but is not formulated as a question which means that it is technically grammatically incorrect. I deliberated about whether or not I should keep the sentence format including the question mark as is or add the "sucks" to the sentence in the translation in order to make the sentence grammatically correct: "Laat me je even verzekeren dat niet kunnen ademen echt zwaar klote is." However, I ultimately decided against this choice as I believe that, like the other graphological markers, the question mark is placed there to further convey the rising inflection and tone of Hazel's voice in this passage: "Laat me je even verzekeren dat niet kunnen ademen? Echt zwaar KLOTE is."

Comparable to how the narratee is treated as a confidant, Augustus and Hazel become each other's confidants in this story. When Augustus attempts to gain some measure of control over his life by going out to buy cigarettes he calls Hazel and not his parents to come help him

when it all goes wrong. This conversation is particularly interesting, as it is one of the few times Hazel and the reader get to see Augustus brought low in an emotional sense. His anger and desperation at his situation is something which he only appears to show to Hazel. Most notable in this passage is the swear word Augustus uses.

“Where is my chance to be somebody’s Peter Van Houten?” He hit the steering wheel weakly, the car honking as he cried. He leaned his head back, looking up. “I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this I disgust myself I hate it I hate it I hate it just let me **fucking die** (245).

The teenagers in this novel all have a tendency to swear, but typically only use more euphemistic forms of the word "fucking", such as "freaking" and "frigging":

I noticed this because Patrick, the Support Group Leader and only person over eighteen in the room, talked about the heart of Jesus **every freaking meeting**, all about how we, as young cancer survivors, were sitting right in Christ’s very sacred heart and whatever (4).

The fact that Augustus starts swearing violently here signal his desperation and anger at his situation. I wanted to preserve that difference and attempted to use more euphemistic versions of the word "Godverdomme" in the other instances where characters are using a derivative of "fucking," such as "Godsamme" or "Godganse":

'Waar is mijn kans om iemands Peter van Houten te zijn?' Hij sloeg slapjes op het stuur en de auto toeterde terwijl hij huilde. Hij leunde zijn hoofd achterover en keek omhoog. 'Ik haat mezelf ik haat mezelf ik haat dit ik haat dit ik walg van mezelf ik haat het ik haat het ik haat het laat me godverdomme alsjeblieft gewoon doodgaan.

The way Hazel addresses Augustus in this particular passage, and the way she talks about him, is different from the way she usually does. She uses the word sweetie to address Augustus here, which is particularly interesting because the only other people who use it are

Hazel's parents when they talk to her. Furthermore, Hazel herself only uses the word during one other passage in the novel, which is when she is visiting Isaac in the hospital and they discuss the things they hate about nurses:

"Seriously, that is huge. I mean is this my freaking arm or a dartboard? 3. No condescending voice." "How are you doing, sweetie?" I asked, cloying. "I'm going to stick you with a needle now. There might be a little ouchie" (75).

Hazel initially perceives the word as cloying, and given the fact that the only other people who use it are her parents and her nurses, the word can be said to be indicative of a relationship where one person is dependent on the other. When Hazel is put into the position of caregiver in this passage, she starts using it as well. Because of the link between the various times the word "sweetie" is used, I have decided to translate the word concordantly in all instances:

"Mom," I said. I did not say it loudly, but I didn't have to. She was always waiting. She peeked her head around the door. "You okay, sweetie?" (113).

'Mam,' zei ik. Ik zei het niet hard, maar dat hoefde ook niet. Ze was altijd aan het wachten. Ze stak haar hoofd om de deur. 'Alles goed lieffie?'

He puked, without even the energy to turn his mouth away from his lap. "Oh, sweetie," I said (244).

Hij gaf over en had niet eens meer de energie om zijn mond van zijn schoot weg te draaien. 'Oh, lieffie,' zei ik.

In this passage she is also very truthful about how Augustus comes across in his current state:

He looked up at me. It was horrible. I could hardly look at him. The Augustus Waters of the crooked smiles and unsmoked cigarettes was gone, replaced by this desperate humiliated creature sitting there beneath me (245).

The word boy signals that Augustus is stripped from all pretences in this scene and is reduced to a simple teenage boy who is afraid of his death. The way Hazel talks about him led me to use a diminutive form several times by using the suffix "je/tje" in order to reinforce the difference between the Augustus she sees here and the Augustus she knew at the beginning of the story:

Hij keek me aan. Het was verschrikkelijk. Ik kon hem amper aankijken. De Augustus Waters van de scheve glimlachjes en de ongerookte sigaretten was verdwenen en vervangen door dit wanhopige vernederde wezen dat nu hier onder mij zat.

But this was the truth, a pitiful boy who desperately wanted not to be pitiful, screaming and crying, poisoned by an infected G-tube that kept him alive, but not alive enough (245).

Maar dit was de waarheid, een meelijwekkend jongentje die met alle geweld niet meelijwekkend wilde zijn, , schreeuwend en huilend, vergiftigd door een geïnfecteerde maagsonde die hem in leven hield, maar niet genoeg in leven.

2.2.3. HAZEL AND VAN HOUTEN

Perhaps the most notable shift in conversational tone in the novel is to be found in the conversations between Hazel and Peter Van Houten. Before meeting him Hazel and Augustus create a social distance between themselves and Van Houten. Their idolization of him and his work causes them to perceive him as being more eloquent and intelligent than them: "Wow," I said. "Are you making this up?" "Hazel Grace, could I, with my meager intellectual capacities, make up a letter from Peter Van Houten featuring phrases like 'our triumphantly digitized contemporaneity?'" "You could not" (69). When they finally meet him in Amsterdam, however, it becomes clear that he is not the intellectual or benevolent giant they have been expecting: "Of course, I had hoped that Peter Van Houten would be sane, but the world is not a wish-granting factory" (182). It is during their conversation in Amsterdam that a shift occurs in the way Hazel feels towards van Houten which impacts their relation and the conversational tone.

At the start of the conversation both Augustus and Hazel are polite towards Van Houten and even go so far as to address him with "Sir" (184). Van Houten, however, appears to be unwilling to converse with them. Over the course of the conversation he appears to be doing everything in his power to distance himself from Hazel and Augustus. He breaks the maxim of manner, by continuously interrupting Hazel, Augustus and Lidewij, as well as insulting both Augustus and Hazel. He further break the maxims of both quality and quantity by offering information on topics that have nothing to do with Hazel's questions such as Zeno's paradox and Swedish Hiphop music. This has the effect of establishing him as an intellectual and Hazel and Augustus as intellectually inferior because they have never heard of the people he is referring to. The fact that it has very little to do with the conversation at hand, however, establishes him as rude and his explanations come off as condescending: "surely you know Parmenides," he said, and I nodded that I knew Parmenides, although I did not" (187).

Every time Hazel attempts to turn the conversation towards the questions she has he interrupts her to deviate the conversation to his own preferred topics. When she persists, however, he further breaks the maxim of manner by belittling her opinion and the fact that she even dare ask such questions:

Van Houten was still staring at the ceiling beams. He took a drink. The glass was almost empty again. "Lidewij, I can't do it. I can't. I can't." He leveled his gaze to me.

"Nothing happens to the Dutch Tulip Man. He isn't a con man or not a con man; he's God. He's an obvious and unambiguous metaphorical representation of God, and asking what becomes of him is the intellectual equivalent of asking what becomes of the disembodied eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg in Gatsby. Do he and Anna's mom get married? We are speaking of a novel, dear child, not some historical enterprise (191).

He also starts to refer to her as "dear child", which functions to insult Hazel's opinion by infantilizing her, consequently distancing Van Huoten further from Hazel on an intellectual level by placing her on the level of a naive child.

As the conversation continues Hazel becomes more and more frustrated with Van Houten's condescension and disinclination to answer her questions. When he insults her by describing her as a "failed experiment in mutation" it becomes clear that Hazel is no longer able to show this man any respect and no longer sees him as being above her (193). She replies to his insult by calling him "douchebags" to his face and starts screaming at him to demand the answers she wants (193).

Comparing their first conversation in Amsterdam to their last conversation, which they have in Hazel's minivan after Augustus' death, we can see that Hazel truly no longer considers Van Houten as being above her and that the social distance between the two has been obliterated. The format of this last conversation closely mimics the one they had in Amsterdam as Van Houten once again tries to escape Hazel's line of questioning by talking about philosophers and paradoxes. This time, however, the social distance and relationship between the two characters has changed, it is Hazel who now sees her herself as the better person and consequently manages to stay in control of the conversation. She succeeds in her line of questioning by consistently interrupting his derails and forcing him to answer her:

"You had a kid who died?"

"My daughter," he said. "She was eight. Suffered beautifully. Will never be beatified."

"She had leukemia?" I asked. He nodded. "Like Anna," I said.

"Very much like her, yes."

"You were married?"

"No. Well, not at the time of her death. I was insufferable long before we lost her. Grief does not change you, Hazel. It reveals you."

"Did you live with her?"

“No, not primarily, although at the end, we brought her to New York, where I was living, for a series of experimental tortures that increased the misery of her days without increasing the number of them” (285-286).

The fact that she loses nearly all respect she ever had for him on a personal level provides an interesting option in Dutch when it comes to translating the conversations between Hazel and Peter. English has only one option for the second person singular: "You." Dutch, however, has the option of Tu-Vous distinction. In Dutch second-person pronouns are specialized for two degrees of politeness, which allows for various levels of politeness in a conversation. In this case I would argue, that when it comes to the translation of the interactions between Hazel and Van Houten, both Hazel and Augustus initially address Van Houten in both their letters as well as in person with the more formal "u" and shift to the more informal "je" from the moment Hazel starts using derogatory terms to refer to Van Houten. In order to reinforce Van Houten's condescending tone during the conversation they have in Amsterdam I have also purposefully introduced a T-V distinction in the way he addresses Augustus and Hazel. In the letters he writes them he addresses them with the more formal "u", consequently upholding the image of the polite well-spoken authorial genius. When he meets them face to face I chose to let him address Augustus and Hazel with the informal "je" to increase the distance between the Van Houten from the letters whom they admire and the Van Houten they meet in Amsterdam.

2.3. DIALECT AND IDIOLECT

Dialect is typically defined as "a particular set of linguistic features which define a defined subset of the speech community shares" (Leech and Short 134). Idiolect is a more specific form of dialect and is defined as the "linguistic thumbprint" of a character, the linguistic features which distinguish one character from another" (ibid). These linguistic features range from the kind of grammatical structures characters use to their vocabulary and the register they employ.

Teenagers in literature are typically characterized through the usage of youth language, which is a language comprised out of stopgaps and slang, and is perhaps one of the most obvious examples of youth-based identity formation (Bucholtz 282). The translation of dialects is notoriously difficult as dialect is so deeply embedded within a source culture it rarely, if ever, travels well in translation (Landers 117). Idiolect is perhaps less problematic in translation, though here too the translator is limited by the grammatical and cultural differences between the source and target language.

2.3.1. *HAZEL AND AUGUSTUS*

When we look at Hazel's usage of grammar we can distinguish a variety of sentence types. She has a tendency to use two types of long sentences: complex and run-on sentences. She uses complex sentences mainly when she is narrating and they tend to have a more formal character and lack markers of youth language:

A bit farther down the canal, I could see houseboats floating on pontoons, and in the middle of the canal, an open-air, flat-bottomed boat decked out with lawn chairs and a portable stereo idled toward us (162).

These sentences contrast with her more colloquial sentences and slightly undermine the conversational quality of the narration. This is compensated by Hazel's frequent usage of run-on sentences in her narration, which are highly colloquial in nature. These sentences feature

coordinating and subordinating clauses as well as comma splices, or multiple enumerations strung together, and include the usage of stopgaps. The translation of these run-on sentences is difficult, though not necessarily problematic, because they frequently lack co-ordinating conjunctions.

So here's how it went in God's heart: The six or seven or ten of us walked/wheeled in, grazed at a **decrepit** selection of cookies and lemonade, sat down in the Circle of Trust, and listened to Patrick recount for the thousandth time his depressingly miserable life story—how he had cancer in his balls and they thought he was going to die but he didn't die and now here he is, a full-grown adult in a church basement in the 137th nicest city in America, divorced, addicted to video games, mostly friendless, **eking** out a meager living by exploiting his concertastic past, slowly working his way toward a master's degree that will not improve his career prospects, waiting, as we all do, for the sword of Damocles to give him the relief that he escaped lo those many years ago when cancer took both of his nuts but spared what only the most generous soul would call his life (4-5).

Dit is hoe het er aan toe ging in het hart van God: Zes á zeven van ons liepen of rolden naar binnen, snackten van een armzalig assortiment koekjes en limonade, gingen zitten in de Cirkel des Vertrouwen en luisterden naar hoe Patrick voor de duizendste keer zijn verschrikkelijk deprimerende, zielige levensverhaal uit de doeken deed— dat hij kanker had gehad in zijn ballen en ze dachten dat hij ging sterven, maar hij ging niet dood en nu zit hij dus hier, een volwassen man in een kerkkelder in de op 136 na leukste stad van Amerika, gescheiden, verslaafd aan videospelletjes, nagenoeg vriendloos, om een karig loon bij elkaar te sprokkelen door zijn kankertastische verleden uit te buiten en om langzaam maar zeker naar een diploma toe te werken dat zijn carrière-opties niet zal verbeteren, te wachten, net als ons allen, op het zwaard van Damocles dat hem de verlossing zal geven die hij al die jaren geleden ontkomen is toen kanker hem zijn beide

ballen ontnam, maar wat alleen de meest barmhartige ziel zijn leven zou kunnen noemen spaarde.

An option for the run-on sentences would be splitting them up into more manageable chunks of text. For this particular sentence I could have split the sentence in two parts by turning the em dash into a period. However, I decided against splitting up these run-on sentences because they contribute to the informality and colloquial style of Hazel's speech, which I did not want to lose. When she uses these sentences the reader is nearly blown away by the sheer amount she has to say due to the length of the sentence, an effect I wanted to preserve as much as possible. These run-on sentences also contrast with her more formal complex sentences lending Hazel's language usage an important and distinct variety which works towards establishing her as a character with intelligence and a good command of language.

It is perhaps also interesting to mention that when Hazel is describing a sequence of physical actions she tends to use very short, occasionally to the point of being ungrammatical, sentences:

I turned to the car. Tapped the window. It rolled down(21).

Ik draaide me om naar de auto. Tikte op het raam. Het werd naar beneden gedraaid.

There were only two cars in the lot. I pulled up next to his. I opened the door. The interior lights came on (244).

Er stonden maar twee auto's op de parkeerplaats. Ik stopte naast zijn auto. Ik opende de deur. De interieurverlichting sprong aan.

"Tapped the window" is an example of these ungrammatical sentences. There are three options in translating this particular sentence: Make it grammatical in the target language either by including it with the previous sentence or by inserting a personal pronoun, or make it equally ungrammatical in the target language. I chose the third option because I wanted to maintain the

brevity of speech Hazel displays in these instances in order to maintain her grammatical variety. These sentences contrasts greatly with her more complex formal sentences in their ungrammaticality and her run-on sentences in length, consequently maintaining her variety of grammatical language use in the translation.

Hazel is a very intelligent young girl and her intelligence is reflected in the vocabulary she employs. She frequently uses words from a more formal register, such as "preternaturally" and "microscopically", which she combines with more colloquial terms like "circle jerk" or "cancertastic past". I wanted to maintain this variety in Dutch, because through this language variety Green is attempting to establish the idea that, though they are teenagers who use youth language, Hazel and Augustus, and by extension all teenagers, are quite capable of using complex language. By doing this he further establishes the notion that teenagers are also capable of intelligent discussions or thinking about philosophical questions.

I, however, quickly found that when Hazel uses a more formal word from a higher register Dutch does not always offer the same option of formality. This problem can, for instance, be found in the translation of "decrepit", "preternaturally" and "indomitable".

Source Text	Translation
grazed at a decrepit selection of cookies	een armzalig assortiment aan koekjes en limonade
preternaturally huge	buitengewoon groot deed lijken
like an indomitable eagle	als een ontembare arend

Decrepit is usually used to describe things which are decayed or worn out and is most frequently used in describing old buildings. In this particular instance the translation of the word is difficult because decrepit is not used denotatively to refer to the concrete items on display, but instead refers to the more abstract concept of the selection of items. This means that the textbook

definition and dictionary translation decrepit as decaying or worn out is no longer applicable as Hazel is using a more connotative meaning of the word. The question is, however, which connotation is she using here. Is the selection bad or uninspired and should it be translated to "slecht" or "karig". Does the buffet look unappetizing or have the items gone stale and flat and should it be translated to "vies" or "oud". The sentence in which it occurs is attempting to convey how miserable and depressing the entire situation of the support group is to Hazel, which is why I went with a word which conveys that context by reflecting both the decrepitness of the selection and the depressing nature of the situation: "armzalig." "Armzalig" cannot, however, be said to come from a more formal register. The same shift occurred in the translation of "preternaturally" and "indomitable". "Preternaturally" is the formal word used to describe things which lie outside nature, but are not supernatural and "indomitable" is the more formal word used for describing things which are considered untamable or unyielding. The translation of both, however, resulted in a more common and informal word, as Dutch does not offer more formal options for "buitengewoon" and "ontembare" without having to stray far from the denotative meaning of both words. The same holds true for the translation of "decrepit". Though there are more formal alternatives to "armzalig", such as "deerniswekkend", they are both far more rare and unusual in Dutch than "decrepit" is in English and they are also more removed from the intended meaning of "decrepit" which means that they would not fit the tone of the narration.

Augustus' language use is not overtly different from Hazel, but there are some stylistic markers that set him apart from Hazel. Firstly, he has a tendency to deliver monologues. As is established in chapter one, Augustus chooses his behavior based on their metaphoric resonance. He is very self-conscious about what he says and how he says it. When he speaks he tends to act as if he is delivering a performance. As a result his style of speech is frequently slightly more formal than that of Hazel, resulting in formal sentences filled with metaphoric language:

"Hazel Grace, like so many children before you—and I say this with great affection—you spent your Wish hastily, with little care for the consequences. The Grim Reaper was staring you in the face and the fear of dying with your Wish still in your proverbial pocket, ungranted, led you to rush toward the first Wish you could think of, and you, like so many others, chose the cold and artificial pleasures of the theme park."

"I actually had a great time on that trip. I met Goofy and Minn—"

"I am in the midst of a soliloquy! I wrote this out and memorized it and if you interrupt me I will completely screw it up,

Augustus interrupted. "Please to be eating your sandwich and listening." (The sandwich was inedibly dry, but I smiled and took a bite anyway.) "Okay, where was I?"

"The artificial pleasures" (88).

He tends to use less youth language when he is delivering these monologues, giving him the appearance of being more adult than he actually is. In this passage we can see that when Hazel interrupts the speech, which he in this particular case actually prepared in advance, he falls back into a more colloquial style of speech by swearing and stringing his sentences together through coordinating conjunctions. His performances are, however, not always perfect. As can be seen in the quote above, he also has a slight tendency to misuse difficult words. What he identifies as a "soliloquy" is actually a monologue, as he is addressing an audience instead of just himself.

When it comes to youth language, Hazel and the other teenagers in the novel use it relatively sparingly. This does not mean however, that it does not occur. Hazel and Augustus usage of youth language is connected to how they are portrayed as characters and contrasts with their more formal uses of language. Hazel and Augustus both have a tendency to use stopgaps such as "like", "Oh, my God," and tag the word "whatever" onto many of their sentences, though Hazel does this more often than Augustus. The more famous American slang terms "cool" and "dude" also make relatively frequent appearances. Regarding the translation of whatever, I

briefly debated translating it concordantly using the word "en zo" or "of zo/of zoiets", but ultimately decided against it as whatever is not used completely concordantly by the speakers themselves. The word is frequently tagged onto a sentence with the use of the coordinating conjunctions "and" and "or": "Whenever you read a cancer booklet or website **or whatever**" or "They'll always love each other **and whatever**." In order to reflect this subtle difference I used "en zo" for all the occurrences of "and whatever" and "of zo/of zoiets" for all occurrences of "or whatever".

Hazel and indeed all of the teenage characters, have the propensity to swear when agitated or annoyed, though swear words are used in both narration as well as conversations to punctuate more than just frustration. The most common swearwords used are "Goddamn" and "Shit", and all derivations thereof, as well as "bastard" and the more euphemistic "freaking" and "frigging". For the translation of the swearwords "freaking", "frigging" and "fucking" I considered using the Dutch word "fokking" or "fok", which is derived from the English form, but ultimately decided against it. Though the words are commonly used amongst Dutch youths, I found them to be too much of an Anglicism. Furthermore, the usage of "fok" and "fokking" is considered to be relatively crass in Dutch whereas "freaking" and "frigging" are perfectly acceptable euphemisms in English. I consequently chose to use the word "Godverdomme" and its derivatives such as "verdomme" and "godsamme" for the instances in which "fucking" or a derivation thereof is used.

The only swear word that appears to be used by Hazel alone is the word "douche", which she reserves for referring to Peter Van Houten. In contrast to the teenagers, none of the adults in the story, save Van Houten, use swear words in their conversations or letters. A further characteristic of the speech the teenagers use in this novel is the tendency to contract the verb phrases "going to" and "got to" to "gonna" and "gotta". Dutch grammar does not support a similar contraction as the verbs typically used to translated "going to" and "got to" frequently already exist out of one word. A graphological change to say "mot" or "moe" would immediately

result in a perceived Dutch eye-dialect, which would be incongruous in this situation as the characters who are speaking are for all intents and purposes American. As a result I decided to treat all instances of these contractions as non-contracted verbs.

2.3.2. *PETER VAN HOUTEN*

The contrast between van Houten and Hazel in terms of their idiolect is quite large. Van Houten, though a drunk, is an intelligent and erudite writer. His language use is frequently more formal rather than informal. Compare for instance the opening sentence of his last letter to Augustus: "I am in receipt", versus the perhaps more standard informal, colloquial and expected formulation: "I have received" (111). Dutch does not have the same kind of overly formal way of opening a letter as the standard formulation in Dutch is: "Ik heb uw/je brief/email ontvangen". This loss is partially compensated by the decision I made to have Van Houten address Augustus in his letters with the more formal pronoun "u" : "Ik heb uw elektronische mail ontvangen".

Van Houten's vocabulary is as expansive as Hazel's, but unlike her his language use is completely devoid of any markers of youth language. His language use is noted by both Hazel and Augustus to be typical of great intelligence and something to be revered: "Hazel Grace, could I, with my meager intellectual capacities, make up a letter from Peter Van Houten featuring phrases like 'our triumphantly digitized contemporaneity?'" "You could not," I allowed" (69). His vocabulary prowess is also showcased during his conversation with Hazel and Augustus in Amsterdam, in particular during this passage:

"Oh, shut up, Lidewij. Rudolf Otto said that if you had not encountered the numinous, if you have not experienced a nonrational encounter with the *mysterium tremendum*, then his work was not for you. And I say to you, young friends, that if you cannot hear Afasi och Filthy's bravadic response to fear, then my work is not for you"(189).

The translation of terms such as "numinous" and "nonrational" were non-problematic, but the word "bravadic" did turn out to be problematic as it is not listed in either the *OED*, the *Merriam*

Webster or the *Cambridge Dictionary*. Given Van Houten's admiration of the band Afasi och Filthy and the way they deal with love and fear I am inclined to think "bravadic" is a derivation of *bravado*, which according to the *OED* describes: "Boastful or threatening behaviour; ostentatious display of courage or boldness; bold or daring action intended to intimidate or to express defiance; often, an assumption of courage or hardihood to conceal felt timidity, or to carry one out of a doubtful or difficult position" ('Bravado'). Bravadic in this particular context seems to indicate something along the lines of brave, bold, and courageous, which led me to translate the word to "moedig":

'Oh, hou je mond, Lidewij. Rudolf Otto zei dat als je het sacrale nog niet tegen was gekomen, als je geen absurde ontmoeting had gehad met mysterium tremendum, dat zijn werk dan niet voor jou was. En ik zeg tegen jullie, jonge vrienden, dat als jullie **het moedige antwoord** van Afasi och Filthy's op angst niet kunnen horen dat mijn werk dan ook niets voor jullie is.'

Van Houten's language use is further characterized by the sheer magnitude of allusions he makes. Nearly every sentence he speaks or writes to Hazel or Augustus is imbued with a reference to classical philosophers or literature. This not only sets him apart as being knowledgeable and intelligent, but also enforces the social distance between him and Hazel and Augustus. Neither is likely to recognize let alone understand half of the things he is referring too. The problems with translating allusions, CSEs and intertextuality will be discussed in chapter three.

2.2.3. *LIDEWIJ VLIAGENTHART AND OTHER DUTCH CHARACTERS*

Lidewij Vlienghart and the other Dutch people Hazel and Augustus encounter in Amsterdam present a rather interesting problem when it comes to the translation of their dialogue and emails, as Green has tried to give the Dutch characters a hint of an accent. Lidewij and the other

Dutch are quite good at speaking English, but occasionally their sentences and grammar use show a slight hint of non-idiomatic constructions or grammatical errors. Take for instance Lidewij's: "So if convenient, we will meet you at Peter's home on the morning of 5th May at perhaps ten o'clock for a cup of coffee and for him to answer questions you have about his book" (125). There are two things wrong in this sentence. Lidewij uses the Dutch word order when it comes to dates, turning May 5th into 5th May. The word order is not impossible in English, but typically takes a different form : "The fifth of May". Secondly, the second part of the sentence starting with "for him" is not grammatically correct as it now reads "We will meet for him to answer questions". The pronoun used here is wrong as the sentence should be in the second person, and the and-for construction is highly unidiomatic. Something along the lines of "and so that he can answers any/the questions you have about his book " would sound much more idiomatic in English.

Similar small grammatical errors are noticeable in the rest of her emails. Take for instance: "He was such a very charismatic young man," where the addition of "such" should eliminate the usage of very, but she retains both (303). "I have attached them here and then will mail them to you at your home; your address is the same?" in which the lack of a pronoun in the second part of the sentence causes a faulty grammatical construction regarding the word order (309-310). The pronoun now occupies the same initial position in the second sentence as it did in the first sentence causing it to read as "I then will mail them to your home".

The other Dutch characters, such as the Dutch taxi driver, display the same kind of quirky grammatical errors: "Our city has a rich history, even though many tourists are only wanting to see the Red Light District," where the verb phrase "are only wanting" is in the incorrect tense and should be "only want" (157). The most notable and most explicit usage of a Dutch accent is the old man Hazel and Augustus encounter on the tram. When trying to explain what the storm of seeds outside the window is, he mixes his English with Dutch "The *iepen* throw confetti to greet the spring" (161).

The translation norm in the Netherlands for the translation of dialect is not to translate a source-language dialect to a target-culture dialect as it might clash with the setting of the story ('Treinen Spotten' 1). In this case I would argue that this norm should also be adopted for the translation of the Dutch dialect in *TFIOS*. Simulating a lack of grammatical proficiency for Dutch characters could be done in translations into French or German, but as the text is being translated into Dutch it would make very little sense to have natively Dutch characters speak their native language in grammatically incorrect sentences on purpose. An argument could be made for substituting the Dutch accent with the region specific accent of Amsterdam, thus changing the dialect from appearing grammatically to representing it graphologically. I would argue however, that this would be an inadvisable strategy at best as not everybody one meets in Amsterdam has that dialect. Furthermore, the dialect is characterized as featuring quite a lot of coarse colloquialisms and is typically associated with the more working-class areas of Amsterdam. Lidewij, a masters student, is highly unlikely to have let alone use such an accent when talking to Hazel or Van Houten. In two cases I have, however, attempted to maintain some of the accented speech. In the case of the man who uses the Dutch word for elms I have reversed which words are in English and which are in Dutch. In the source texts he accidentally teaches Hazel the Dutch word for elms and the word "iepen" is marked graphologically in order to show the contrast between the Dutch and the English word for the tree:

"The *iepen* throw confetti to greet the spring" (161).

Because it was such a marked instance I wanted to preserve it in some way in the target text. I reversed the language in order to maintain the contrast between the Dutch and the English and to maintain that slight educational tone. Instead of Hazel and Augustus learning the Dutch word for elms, Dutch readers now learn the English word for iepen.

A second issue I ran across is what happens during Hazel's and Augustus' dinner in Amsterdam. A couple of Dutch people on a boat shout something at them and then the following interaction takes place:

"We don't speak Dutch," Gus shouted back.

One of the others shouted a translation: "The beautiful couple is beautiful" (165).

The issue here lies mainly in the incongruity between Augustus saying that he does not speak Dutch. Firstly the statement in and of itself actively signals to the reader that he or she is reading a translation, as all the characters have been speaking Dutch up to this point, which might not be desirable. If maintained, however, it causes another incongruity if the shouted translation is in Dutch after Gus has just said that he does not speak Dutch. There are three options here: either translate the entire interaction to Dutch, maintain part of the original English interaction to negate the incongruity, or omit the entire interaction. I chose the second option and maintained the sentence "The beautiful couple is beautiful" in my translation, because I felt that the incongruity in this particular case was too great to simply allow a full translation into Dutch. I was also hesitant to omit this interaction as it reaffirms the romantic setting of their dinner in Amsterdam as everybody they meet is portrayed as being incredibly accommodating, complementary and nice.

3. TRANSLATING INTERTEXTUAL ELEMENTS AND CSES

The term intertextuality was originally coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s and is typically used to describe the relation of a text to other texts (Claes 43). Venuti indicates that every text derives meaning and value from previous texts and can be placed within a linguistic, literary and cultural tradition (157). Intertextuality can take very specific forms such as quotation, allusion, parody, pastiche and adaptation, but also broader views such as the usage of specific stylistic devices in a literary tradition or the mimicking of structural forms (Venuti 157). Intertextuality is mainly reception based, as the construction of the intertextual relationship lies in the ability the reader to recognize and comprehend it (Venuti 158). Venuti's approach to intertextuality places heavy emphasis on how the intertextual relation between texts is nigh impossible to recreate in translation. The set of relationships that are present between the source text and other texts can rarely be recreated fully as the context of the source text and the culture it is derived from is dismantled and decontextualized into the different culture of the target text (158-159). This decontextualization can cause significant comprehension issues for readers. Leppihalme describes these instances as "culture bumps", situations where readers have issues with comprehending the "source-cultural" intertextual relation (4). In these instances the intertextual relation fails to function in the target text for the reader as it is not part of the reader's cultural background (4). In this following section I will mainly focus on two specific types of intertextuality: quotation and allusion, as they occur most frequently in *TFIOS*.

3.1. ALLUSIONS AND QUOTATIONS

Leppihalme mentions that allusions are used to bring extra effect or meaning to a text by making use of the associations and connotations that are associated with the allusions in their source culture (34). In her study on the usage of allusions in fiction and journalistic texts she distinguishes three categories of allusion (10):

- 1) Allusions proper: which feature proper name (PN) allusions, which are allusions that are comprised of a proper name, and key phrase (KP) allusions, allusions which do not contain a proper name and typically take the form of a sentence or phrase.
- 2) Stereotyped allusions: allusions that have been used so often that they have become clichés that no longer necessarily evoke their source material.
- 3) Marginal allusions: which feature Semi-allusive comparison, comparisons that only very loosely refer to the evoked text, and eponymous adjectives which do not form fixed collocations.

Leppihalme further indicates that category 1 can be divided into two classes: regular allusions, which are unmodified or "prototypical", and modified allusions (10-11). Though she makes no use of the term quotation in her book, regular or unmodified KP allusions can be considered to be synonymous with quotations. She points out that allusions can function on both the micro or lexio-semantic and syntactic level, of a text and on a macro level, where they affect the internal structure of the text, or both (31). She goes on to present four main functions of allusions, though she notes that there probably are many more functions to be found (41). It should be noted that these functions can overlap partially, especially in the case of the latter two functions.

- A. **Thematic allusions:** These are allusions which function to reinforce themes by implying that something about a situation or character when put in the alluding context is important (37-39). By linking the text with the evoked text a metaphoric resonance is created between the two. In the case of *TFIOS* a prime example would be the title itself:

The Fault in Our Stars, which links the novel with the Shakespearean play *Julius Caesar*, as will be discussed in section 3.3.2.

- B. **Humorous allusions:** Allusions can also be used as a form of parody or irony. Parody can occur on macro level when the entire text is a parody of another text. An example of this is the novel *Shamela* which was published in 1941 by Henry Fielding and is a satirical parody of the novel *Pamela*, which was published in 1740 and written by Samuel Richardson. Transformation of allusions is a typical way of making them humorous. The reader of an allusion expects an that allusion to have a certain form and context (41). Consequently, substituting a word in the allusion for another, or using it in an incongruous context often leads to a humorous effect (42-43).
- C. **Characterizing allusions:** These typically take the form of PN allusions and are used to characterize characters quickly. They can be used in two ways. Firstly, a character can be described as being like somebody, thus implying that the two share certain characteristics (44). Referring to a character as "mother Theresa" might imply that they are saintly and helpful towards others. Secondly, characters might be characterized by the fact that they use allusions and how they use them (44). Typically characters who allude frequently and correctly are depicted as being well-educated and well-informed. This is for instance the case with Peter Van Houten who in all of his conversations and letters with Hazel and Augustus alludes frequently to other writers and philosophers and is thus consistently depicted as being a knowledgeable and intelligent character. Naive or ignorant characters on the other hand can be characterized through the misunderstanding or misuse of allusions (44). This second type of characterizing allusion typically occurs along with interpersonal allusions, as the characterization of one character through allusions frequently establishes their relation to other characters.
- D. **Interpersonal allusions:** In fiction, and in particular dialogue, allusions can be used to illuminate relationships between characters (46). As with characterizing allusions characters who allude (alluders) and allude correctly are depicted as having superior

intelligence or being more educated in contrast with the other character(s) (alludee). When the alludee recognizes and/or names the allusions he or she levels the playing field and establishes a connection (47). Shared knowledge of allusions can create an in-group environment between various characters, thus establishing a social connection the same way a shared sense of humour might (49). When an alludee does not catch the allusion or gives the wrong reply this is typically a sign of socio-cultural inferiority and/or ignorance as the alludee is not able to respond in an appropriate manner (48). Unrequested explanation of allusions usually comes across as condescending (Lippehalme 48). The usage of interpersonal allusions is most evident in the conversations between Hazel and Peter Van Houten. In those conversations Peter Van Houten keeps referencing and explaining philosophers and paradoxes in order to establish his position of authority, amongst other things, over Hazel and Augustus. While he consequently comes across as being highly intelligent or at least educated, this also makes him extremely impolite and condescending towards Hazel and Augustus.

3.2. TRANSLATING INTERTEXTUALITY AND CSEs: STRATEGIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Though this section will focus mainly on the translation of quotations and allusions, I will also include general remarks on the translation of culturally specific elements (CSE) in this section, since quotations and allusions are in essence examples of CSEs. As defined by Aixela CSEs are elements in the source text which pose a problem in translation when they are transferred to a target text, because the element to which they refer either does not exist in the in the target culture or has a different intertextual status. Not unlike Lippehalme, Aixela distinguishes between two general categories when it comes to CSEs: proper names and idiomatic expressions, the latter of which is defined as everything that is not a proper name. He further subdivides the category of proper names into conventional proper names, which like stereotypical allusions no longer carry their specific intertextual relationship and have become meaningless, and non-conventional proper nouns/names, which do carry historical or cultural associations (199).

Regarding the translation of conventional names Aixelá states that the general trend is to transcribe or repeat the name in the target text when it comes to primary genres, except in cases where a traditional canonized translation already exists (199). When it comes to translating intertextuality the strategies offered by Aixela are all included in Lippihalme's list of strategies for intertextual elements, save for one: autonomous creation. This is a rarely used strategy which describes the addition of extra CSEs which might be interesting to the reader and resonate well with the rest of the text. For the translation of the allusions and CSEs I will refer to Lippehalme's list of strategies. She notes that there is a difference between strategies for PN and KP allusions as PN allusions offer a possibility of being retained in their source-text form, while

the same is not necessarily true for KP allusions. This is the reason she has split her list in two (78).

Her list of strategies for PN allusions falls apart into three basic strategies:

- 1) Retention of the name in its original form or widely accepted TL form. For instance, Homer in English can be maintained in Dutch as *Homerus/-os*. This is particularly advisable when the character and connotations attached to the character are known and shared by both cultures involved (79-80). She also suggested the option of:
 - A) Retention with added minimal guidance in the text.
 - B) Retention with a detailed explanation either in or outside the text.
- 2) Replacement with another name by either using:
 - A) Another source language name.
 - B) A target language name that embodies the same concept.

Though replacement is a viable option Lippihalme warns against using this strategy overly much as target culture names might become implausible if the context of the story remains orientated towards the source culture(111).

- 3) Omission by either:
 - A) omitting the name, but keeping the meaning through using a common noun or description.
 - B) Omitting the allusion in its entirety.

Her list of translation strategies for KP allusions is slightly more extensive:

- 1) Usage of an existing standardized translation.
- 2) Minimum change: a "literal" loan translation that does not specifically regard the original connotative or contextual meaning in the source language (84).

- 3) Extra guidance in the text by adding in information regarding sources. This includes the use of typographical means to signal that the material is an allusion, such as italicization and the use of quotation marks.
- 4) Extra guidance outside of the text through the usage of footnotes, endnotes, a preface or other explicit additional information.
- 5) Simulated familiarity or internal marking by which the translator uses marked wording or syntax in the translated segment to show that the allusion departs from the style of the context. This frequently occurs along with the use of dated standardized translations (118).
- 6) Replacement or substitution with an existing target language reference.
- 7) Reducing the KP to its meaning by rephrasing it, consequently making the KP overt rather than allusive.
- 8) Recreation of the meaning/tone of the KP in the target language by using a combination of strategies.
- 9) Omission.
- 10) Maintain the KP without translating it.

As Aixela indicates there are several factors which affect the choice of a certain translation strategy (203). One of the most important of these is perhaps the question of audience. If a specific audience can be indicated the source text might be handled differently than if that were not the case. In the case of *TFIOS* the novel clearly belongs to the domain of YAL, but this designation does little to indicate its intended audience. As has been indicated, scholars and publishers all disagree as to what the actual age of the intended audience of YAL is or should be. According to Coats the intended age of the main characters of the novel, 16/17 in this case, is an important indicator of the intended audience (322). I would personally argue that in the case of the translation of *TFIOS* for the Dutch market the novel should be primarily aimed towards teenagers of that age, in concordance with Green's own wishes regarding the novel: " I

am not interested in publishing books for adults. I like my job. I like my editor. I like my publisher. I am very grateful that so many adults are reading *The Fault in Our Stars*, but I really like writing and publishing books for teenagers, and it's difficult for me to imagine wanting to do anything else as a writer" (JohnGreenbooks). This does not eliminate older or younger readers, but allows me to focus on adapting translation strategies and considerations for a smaller defined audience than the rather broad age categories that are usually given by theorists.

For the translation of *TFIOS* I maintained the American setting as much as possible as Dutch adolescents can be said to be relatively familiar with most general aspects of American culture due to their large consumption of American media. In the passage from chapter 18 (section 4.8/7.8) the American setting is most prominent when Hazel has to dial 911 and give a description of her location to the emergency services

He was staring straight ahead. Quietly, I pulled out my phone and glanced down to dial 911.

"I'm sorry," I told him. Nine-one-one, what is your emergency? "Hi, I'm at the Speedway at Eighty-sixth and Ditch, and I need an ambulance. The great love of my life has a malfunctioning G-tube" (244-245).

I maintained the American emergency service number in my translation because 911 can be considered to be known internationally as the emergency services number of the USA and it is unlikely that adolescents would not recognize it in this particular context. Substituting it with 112, which is known nationally as the Dutch emergency services number, would probably cause a break with the setting for readers. When one dials the emergency services in the Netherlands the operator is mandated to ask the following: "1-1-2 Alarmcentrale, wilt u politie, ambulance of brandweer," whereas in the USA they typically ask "what is your emergency." In line with my choice to maintain the 911 number I forwent translating what the operator says with the standard Dutch line and instead attempted to keep the translation as close to the original American as possible : "*wat is uw noodgeval?*"

When Hazel describes her location the streets she mentions are typically American, but the same kind of format is usually unheard of in Dutch. Though "Ditch" can perhaps easily be changed into "Greppelstraat", changing "86th" into "86ste straat" would result in a highly unusual and forced translation. As I already made the choice to maintain the setting, I decided to leave the street names untranslated. This did mean that I had to add a clarification into the translation regarding the location to make the translation sound a bit more like natural Dutch as double addresses are usually only given if it is clear that the location they point to is on a corner: "Hoi, ik sta bij het tankstation op de hoek van Eighty-Sixth en Ditch en ik heb een ambulance nodig." The Speedway she mentions is a gas station which actually exists in reality and can be found on the corner of Eighty-sixth and Ditch in Indianapolis.

In chapter 11 the setting of the story shifts from Indianapolis to Amsterdam. This results in an interesting situation when Hazel and Augustus wait for and get on a tram in order to go eat at a the Oranje restaurant:

Waiting for the number one tram on a wide street busy with traffic, I said to Augustus, "The suit you wear to funerals, I assume?"

"Actually, no," he said. "That suit isn't nearly this nice."

The blue-and-white tram arrived, and Augustus handed our cards to the driver, who explained that we needed to wave them at this circular sensor (160-161).

In translating this segment I wanted to slightly emphasize Hazel's foreignness in this particular setting. I attempted to achieve this by translating the "waiting for the number one tram" as "terwijl we wachtten voor tram 1" rather than the more typically Dutch expression "terwijl we stonden te wachtten op lijn 1" as Hazel is unlikely to know that busses and trams are typically referred to by their line. Furthermore, I also translated the "cards" she mentions to the more generic "kaarten" rather than the specifically Dutch version: "OV-chipkaarten".

One instance in which I deviated from my strategy to maintain the foreign setting is the part where Hazel's shoes are described: "I was standing with my Chuck Taylors on the very edge of the curb, the oxygen tank ball-and-chaining in the cart by my side, and right as my mom pulled up, I felt a hand grab mine" (20). While Converse sneakers are known by their maker, Chuck Taylor, in the USA, they are generally not advertised under that name in the Netherlands. Consequently, I substituted the brand name for the name of the maker and added the word "schoenen" to make the reference more explicit: "Ik stond vastgeketend aan mijn zuurstoftank met mijn Converse schoenen op de rand van de stoep en precies toen Mam aan kwam rijden voelde ik een hand de mijne grijpen."

3.3. INTERTEXTUALITY IN *TFIOS*

Intertextuality in *TFIOS* takes on a multitude of forms ranging from PN allusions to KP allusions and transformed allusions. In this section I will discuss the untransformed KP allusions. The PN allusions which occur in my translation are connected to these KP allusions and mainly occur in section 4.7/7.7 when Van Houten alludes to multiple philosophers, a rapper and Churchill. I purposefully did not attempt to move these PN allusions towards a Dutch setting, by for instance using a Dutch prime minister instead of Churchill, because firstly most of these references are specifically explained, and secondly, because the people Van Houten refers to are unfamiliar to Augustus and Hazel and I wanted to preserve that sense of unfamiliarity for the reader.

3.3.1. *WATER ALLUSIONS*

The Fault in Our Stars is as much a book about the love for books as it is about disease. Both Hazel and Augustus are big fans of a fictional book or series. Hazel, is a devout fan of *An Imperial Affliction*, written by Peter van Houten, and Augustus is a fan of *The Price of Dawn* series, a fictional novelization of a video game. Both get mentioned often, though only *An Imperial Affliction* is quoted directly by both Hazel and Augustus. *TFIOS* even starts off with an epigraph by Peter Van Houten:

As the tide washed in, the Dutch Tulip Man faced the ocean: “Conjoiner rejoinder poisoner concealer revelator. Look at it, rising up and rising down, taking everything with it.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“Water,” the Dutchman said. “Well, and time.”

—PETER VAN HOUTEN, *An Imperial Affliction*

The *OED* defines epigraphs as “A short quotation or pithy sentence placed at the commencement of a work, a chapter, etc. to indicate the leading idea or sentiment; a motto” ('epigraph'). This

particular epigraph alludes to the epigraph of *The Great Gatsby* which, just like this epigraph, was written by a fictional character:

Then wear the gold hat, if that will move her;

If you can bounce high, bounce for her too,

Till she cry, "Lover, gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover,

I must have you!"

— Thomas Parke D'Invilliers (Fitzgerald).

Much like the epigraph of *The Great Gatsby* the epigraph of *TFIOS* fulfills a thematic function by pointing out one of the novel's main themes. Throughout the novel it becomes clear that water plays an important role as both a nourishing and destroying force. Some of the more obvious references to water are found in its destructive capabilities. Drowning is referenced at multiple times, a prime example being Hazel's cancer which causes her lungs to fill with fluid and her to effectively drown halfway through the novel. Her visit to Amsterdam is filled with references to water and she herself even goes so far as to compare herself to Amsterdam, the drowning city: "I was thinking a lot about how they'd made this place exist even though it should've been underwater, and how I was for Dr. Maria a kind of Amsterdam, a half-drowned anomaly, and that made me think about dying" (172). Whenever Hazel feels pain or grief she also equates this to drowning: "And here it was, the great and terrible ten, slamming me again and again as I lay still and alone in my bed staring at the ceiling, the waves tossing me against the rocks then pulling me back out to sea so they could launch me again into the jagged face of the cliff, leaving me floating faceup on the water, undrowned." (236). A few pages later she even echoes the epigraph when she compares her grief to the tide: "But she kept asking, as if there were something she could do, until finally I just kind of crawled across the couch into her lap and my dad came over and held my legs really tight and I wrapped my arms all the way around my mom's middle and they held on to me for hours while the tide rolled in" (267).

The translation of the *An Imperial Affliction* quotes is less tricky than the other forms of intertextuality as its intertextual relationship and possible associations are contained within the context of the novel itself, rather than an outside source. As a result the translator does not have to worry about any possible cultural problems or inconsistencies when translating these quotes thus allowing for more freedom. On the other hand, there is also no option of using a preformed target language item, substitution or an existing translation, as none exist in Dutch or any other language.

A second thematical allusion that is connected to the water theme of the novel is the quote from the poem 'The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock' by T.S. Eliot. In *TFIOS* Hazel is enrolled in community college where she mainly takes poetry and literature courses. Hazel quotes poetry quite often and this is one of the poems she demonstrates knowing by heart. She first recites the opening lines on the plane to Amsterdam and gives the closing lines at the dinner she and Augustus have the following day. The closing lines, ones again feature water, and most notably the notion of drowning:

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea/ By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red
and brown / Till human voices wake us, and we drown (164).

'The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock' is one of the more famous poems in the history of American literature and as John Green himself states "a lot of teenagers have memorized it" (Johngreenbooks). The same cannot be said for Dutch teenagers. The poem is likely to be virtually unknown to them as it is not taught in the Netherlands, except for in university courses on American poetry. For the translation of this quotation, and all the other quotations, I have looked towards existing translations as there is always a possibility that a standardized or canonized translation of a work or allusion already exists. Given the obscurity of T.S. Eliot in the Netherlands and the fact that the poem can hardly be considered to be standardized in the Netherlands there is, however, little chance of this being the case. The poem is never referenced by its full title, as only its nickname "Prufrock" makes an appearance. This might suffice for an

American audience, but the poem is relatively unknown in the Netherlands and it is unlikely to be immediately recognizable by its nickname alone. In order to make the connection more explicit I have inserted the author's name into the text, so that when Hazel names the poem it becomes clear to whom she is referring.

In concordance with the obscurity of the poem in the Netherlands the amount of translations of 'The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock' is rather low and no recent ones have surfaced. The two I managed to unearth are 'De hartekreet van J. Alfred Prufrock,' by Martinus Nijhoff, which was published in *De Gids* in 1950:

Onze verblijfplaats is het paleis van de zee.

Nimfen omkransen ons met zeewier en met kinken

tot mensen ons wekken, en wij verzinken.

and 'J. Alfred Prufrock's liefdeslied' by Pé Hawinkels which was published in 1967 in *Raam*:

Wij hebben verwijld in de appartementen van de zee

Roestbruine slingers van wier hebben zee-meisjes ons omgedaan

Tot ons mensenstemmen wekken, wij vergaan.

Globally comparing the two translations with Eliot's last lines we can see that in general Hawinkels is more faithful to the meaning of the poem on a word level. My most important consideration was, however, the last word of the poem: "drown." Nijhoff's "verzinken" is indeed still used as a way of describing drowning, but it is more of an oblique than overt reference to drowning. Hawinkels' "vergaan" on the other hand is completely decoupled from the notion of drowning and is more in line with ships sinking after a terrible accident rather than people drowning, even though one usually follows the other. I wanted to maintain that link to drowning as best I could, to reinforce the water and drowning theme, which is why I ended up choosing Nijhoff's translation rather than Hawinkels'.

An option which I have not explored at all in the translation of these KP allusions is maintaining them in their original state. The argument as to why I have not is relatively simple. Though it is true that English is taught in high schools, I would argue that English proficiency amongst adolescents can hardly be said to be high enough to comprehend relatively difficult poetry.

3.3.2 SHAKESPEAREAN ALLUSIONS

A second set of thematical allusions that play out across the book are the Shakespearean allusions. Most notable is perhaps the title of the novel: *The Fault in Our Stars*. The source of the allusions becomes clear in the letter Augustus receives from Van Houten, in which Van Houten quotes a line from the Shakespearean play *Julius Caesar*: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves" (111). The line in its original context implies that it is not the stars, nor fate or destiny or a higher power, which cause our problems, but rather ourselves: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves that we are underlings" (*Julius Caesar* 1.2). The notion of stars being indicative of one's fate also feeds into Van Houten's second allusion to Shakespeare, that of the star-crossed lovers, which is the description of the two lovers from *Romeo and Juliet*. By referencing the star-crossed motif *TFIOS* employs the same dramatic irony as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: the reader knows right from the start that the love story can end in nothing but tragedy.

Van Houten also quotes Shakespeare's Sonnet 55, as well as the Macleish poem inspired by it. Both poems deal with the topic of remembering the dead. This is an important theme in *TFIOS* as both Hazel and Augustus have very different ideas about how they should live their lives in light of their impending death and how they want to be remembered. Augustus, for instance, is convinced that he needs to live his life according to the heroic ideal, that his life is only worth something if he is remembered by many for doing something heroic. The last Shakespeare allusion Van Houten makes is a brief reference to a line from Hamlet's famous to be or not to be speech: "But here's the rub" (113).

For the translation of the Shakespeare quotations I looked towards already existing translations, which turned out to be slightly problematic. The sheer amount of translators who have translated Shakespeare into Dutch is astounding and the list of translations into Dutch goes as far back as the 17th century (Delebatista 93). Initially I wanted to attempt to conserve the homogeneity of the source material by only using material from one Dutch Shakespeare translation or translator. This decision led me to the translator whose 19th century translation of the entirety of Shakespeare's work can be considered to be the most canonized in the Netherlands: Burgersdijk. (Leek 94). This decision, however, resulted in a variety of other problems as his translations did not quite fit the target text in their entirety. Similar problems occurred with other translators, like Jonk, Komrij and de Roy van Zuydewijn, who had also translated all of the Shakespearean works cited in *TFIOS*. Consequently, I abandoned homogeneity as a strategy and looked towards a variety of other Dutch Shakespeare translators. I compiled a list of the available different translations and translators, which is included as an attachment in section 8 (See tables 1 to 4).

The problems in translating sonnet 55 are caused by two of its lines: its first line, which refers to the Macleish poem title and its last line about which Van Houten makes a rather coarse pun based on Shakespeare's description of time being sluttish: "(Off topic, but: What a slut time is. She screws everybody.)" (112). As there is no existing MacLeish translation as of yet, the connection between the first line of Sonnet 55 and the title of the MacLeish poem can be disregarded as a problem, as the translator is free to use the first line of whichever translation of Sonnet 55 he or she chooses.

Looking at the available translations of Sonnet 55 (See table 1), there are two types of translation that can be distilled: Those translations who do have an adjective modifying time, and those who have not. There are in total only four translators who have maintained the adjective in front of time: Decroos, who translated it to "slordgen tijd", Versteegen who translated

it as "veile tijd", De Roy van Zuydewijn who translated it as "slons tijd", and Honders who translated it to "sloerie tijd".

There are a variety of strategies available regarding the translation of this particular passage. The pun could be omitted in its entirety in which case the translator would have to examine which translation conveys the meaning of the sonnet the best. As this particular reference enforces the motif of time begin against Hazel and Augustus and is rather humorous I was loath to use omission as a strategy. This meant that my decision became constrained by finding a translation in which the pun could work. Another option would be rewording the pun either by making a pun based on another adjective or on the general meaning of the poem. Most of the translations refer to time being a dirtying force of decay:

Dan steen door **Tijd besmeurd met slordig slijm** (Verwey).

Dan steen, **verwaarloosd en besmeurd** met tijd (Jonk).

which would mean that a reworded pun would have to be based on the power of time being something which causes decay. A translation along the lines of "Wat is tijd toch vies, ze besmeurt alles" or "Wat is tijd toch slijmerig, ze plakt aan iedereen." would work within the framework of the meaning of the translations, but rather misses the humorous quality of the original and would cause a shift in meaning from the notion of time being a destructive force to time being dirtying or indeed something which affects everybody negatively. Another option that is available here is maintaining the sentiment of the pun without specifically using a pun based on a translation, which could result in something along the lines of: "wat is tijd toch kut, ze verwoest alles." This particular strategy would mean omitting one of the jokes in the text, which would make the letter slightly more serious than it is in the original. Lastly, because the Honders translation did use a variation of the word sluttish, maintaining the joke in its entirety is also an option: "Wat is tijd toch een sloerie, ze naait iedereen." I would argue that in this particular case, because the possibility is there, the joke should be maintained rather than reworded or omitted.

This would mean that the Honder's translation would have to be chosen by default as none of the other translation offer the same opportunity:

Geen marmer, geen goudglanzend monument
 Voor heersers overleeft dit machtig rijm;
 Jij glanst hier feller dan in vuil cement
 Dat sloerie tijd bezoedelt met haar slijm (Honders).

The problem with the translation of the *Julius Caesar* quotation lies in picking a suitable translation which manages to accurately translate the sentiment of "the fault in our stars" and which maintains the connection to the *Romeo and Juliet* allusion. Firstly, the connection to stars and being star-crossed means that that it would be preferable if the translation used the Dutch word for or a word related to the Dutch word for stars, "sterren", to indicate fate. This would mean that the Marcellus translation would immediately no longer be an option, as it ascribes the blame to divine authority rather than fate: "'t Is niet der Goden schuld."

Secondly, the word "fault" in the source text can be used in two distinct meanings: in the sense of there being something to blame and in the sense of something having a flaw. Which of the two is being used specifically in the Shakespearean quotation is unclear, though I would argue it definitely leans more towards the latter than the former. It is however, definitely the latter which Van Houten references when he writes that there is "no shortage of faults to found amid our stars" (112). The title of the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* also uses the definition of flaw, as can be seen from the usage of the preposition "in", rather than blame, which would require the preposition "of". This is particularly problematic because the Dutch word "fout" does not quite have the same dual meaning. This is demonstrated by the various translations as they tend to make a choice between "fout" and "schuld". Burgersdijk, Courteaux, Hawinkels, Jonk, and de Roy van Zuydewijn have all translated the word "fault" in the sense of blame: "De schuld van ons gesternte," "ons gesternte, Brutus, draagt de schuld," "aan ons zelf is het te wijten, " en "de schuld, Brutus, ligt niet". Opzoomer and Koster are the only two who have chosen to use the word

"fault" in the sense of there being a flaw: "De fout, mijn Brutus, ligt niet in de sterren, maar in ons zelf" en "De fout ligt, Vriend, in ons Gesternte niet, maar in ons zelf." As both the title as well as Van Houten use the word in the sense of "fout" rather than "schuld", I would argue that the translations of Opzoomer and Koster are preferable in this instance in order to allow for that connection. Of the two I chose Opzoomer because, despite it being the older translation, it uses the slightly less archaic "sterren" as opposed to the more archaic sounding "gesternte", its word order sounds more natural, and it names Brutus directly, which reinforces the link with *Julius Caesar*.

When we look at the available translations for star-crossed we can see that they all use different words and phrasing to indicate the doomed nature of Romeo and Juliet's love: "een minnend paar, ten ondergang gewijd," "een liefdespaar, dat 't lot geen kansen gaf," "Een lievend paar, door 't grimmig lot gemerkt." Where the term has become standardized in English for indicating a doomed pair of lovers it would appear that in Dutch there is a distinct lack of homogeneity on this front. Of the available translations only Komrij and Jonk use the word "sterren:

Uit bloeddoordrenkte lendenen creëren

De kampen twee geliefden die, misleid

Door lot en sterren, jammerlijk creperen (Komrij).

Het stel dat uit die beide kampen sproot,
wier liefde onder slecht gesternte staat (Jonk).

In this particular case I would argue that preserving the link between the allusion to *Romeo and Juliet* and the *Julius Caesar* quotation is preferable and that the choice for one should guide the other. As I already chose the quotation that uses "sterren" rather than "gesternte" in translating the *Julius Caesar* quote and used "sterren" throughout the rest of the passage, I feel that Komrij would fit better within my translation.

In the final paragraph Van Houten briefly alludes to a line from the famous to be or not to be speech from *Hamlet*: "Ay, there's the rub" becomes "I digress, but here's the rub." Though this may have originally been a line from *Hamlet*, the phrase "here's the rub" has become a standardized expression in English, so much so that the allusion itself can perhaps be called a stereotypical allusion which does not necessarily evoke its source material when it is mentioned. However, given the fact that the phrase is situated in a letter which is awash in Shakespeare allusions it is quite likely that it is still meant as an allusion to *Hamlet*. I decided to look towards Dutch translations of the line for inspiration for the translation of the phrase, rather than a direct quotation, as Van Houten does not directly quote it either. The term is used by Hamlet to indicate a problem within his reasoning, and it is used by Van Houten to indicate the crux of his argument after his digression.

I would argue that Kok's "zwarigheid", Komrij's "valkuil", Voeten's "Knoop" and "Bindervoet's and Henkes "Ja, dat is het hem" are all too far removed from this particular meaning and usage of the term to fit in well with what Van Houten is trying to indicate. That still leaves five options: "punt", "stremt", "wringt", "kneep" and "probleem". Given the context of the phrase and the way in which Van Houten uses it I opted to use "punt" as proposed by Eijssinga: "Ik dwaal af, maar dit is mijn punt."

For the translation of the MacLeish poem, which is derived from sonnet 55 I could find no existing translation. Consequently, I attempted my own translation and used the first line of the Honders translation of Sonnet 55 to maintain the link between these two allusions:

(om eerlijk te zijn: Ik ben niet de eerste die deze observatie maakt. cf, het gedicht van Macleish 'Geen marmer, geen goudglanzend monument ', die de heroïsche zin bevat: "Ik zal zeggen dat jij zult sterven en niemand zal je gedenken.")

3.3.3. WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS AND OTHER TITLES

The last intertextual elements I want to discuss are 'The Red Wheelbarrow' by William Carlos Williams and the titles of various poems and books that are mentioned in *TFIOS*. The poem can be interpreted as another allusion with a thematic function. The poem 'The Red Wheelbarrow' is above all a poem about the act of observation and the importance of observing your surroundings. On multiple occasions the act of observing the universe and the notion of the universe being inclined towards consciousness so that it can be observed is mentioned by both Hazel and her Father as being indicative of life having a purpose (223). William Carlos Williams, not unlike Eliot, is well known in the USA and the fact that Hazel knows the poem by heart is indicative of its popularity. In the Netherlands Williams cannot be said to enjoy the same amount of popularity and may even be said to be unknown to the greater public. So unknown even that the translation I used for this poem was hailed as the first translation of William Carlos Williams' work by some critics, even though this is not quite true as J. Bernlef tried his hand at at least one of his Williams' poems in his collection of poetry translations: *Alfabet op de rug gezien* (Boer; Deel).

The chance that a Dutch teenaged audience would know the original is low, but this is not necessarily an issue in this particular case as Hazel mentions the poem by its full title and also names the author. For the translation of the quotation there was only one published translation to be found: the 2006 publication of *Even dit*, a selection of William Carlos Williams' poems translated by Huub Beurskens:

Er hangt zoveel af
van
een rode krui-
wagen

glanzend van regen-
water

naast de witte
kippen

The fact that Hazel gives the full title here leads me to my last discussion point: Should the titles of books and poems all be maintained in their original form or should they be translated. Hazel is reading these works in English, which would mean that maintaining the title would perhaps be advisable to preserve the cultural setting of the novel. On the other hand, this argument could also be applied to the KP allusions themselves as they too are recited or written down by Americans. In the end I decided to translate those titles that were available in translation in the Netherlands, such as "The Red Wheelbarrow" , as these poems are given in a translated form and will probably have a bigger chance of being familiar to readers under their Dutch titles. In line with this strategy I also translated the fictional book titles. For the translation of *An Imperial Affliction* I looked towards a translation of the poem it alludes to, 'There's a certain slant of light' by Emily Dickinson, in order to maintain the allusion. I picked the most recent translation by Peter Verstegen as it works well as a book title:

Niets mag haar – Iets leren –

Zegel van Wanhoop hier –

Vorstelijke beproeving ons door

de Atmosfeer gestuurd– (Verstegen).

4. *TFIOS* VERTALINGEN: *DE FOUT IN ONZE STERREN*

4.1. EPIGRAPH

Terwijl de vloed opkwam keek de Nederlandse tulpenman naar de oceaan: 'Verbinder antwoorder vergiftiger verhuller blootlegger. Kijk dan, het komt op en zakt weg, en neemt alles met zich mee.'

'Waar heb je het over?' vroeg ik.

'Water,' zei de Nederlander. 'Dat, en tijd.'

- PETER VAN HOUTEN, *Een vorstelijke beproeving*

4.2. HOOFDSTUK 1: INTRODUCTIE

In de nawinter van mijn zeventiende levensjaar besloot mijn moeder dat ik depressief was, waarschijnlijk omdat ik amper het huis uitkwam, veel tijd in bed spendeerde, hetzelfde boek steeds herlas, onregelmatig at en een groot deel van mijn overweldigende hoeveelheid vrije tijd wijdde aan nadenken over de dood.

Als je een pamflet of -website of zoiets over kanker leest geven ze altijd aan dat depressie één van de bijwerkingen is van kanker. Maar eigenlijk is depressie geen bijwerking van kanker. Depressie is een bijwerking van doodgaan. (Kanker is ook een bijwerking van doodgaan. Eigenlijk is nagenoeg alles dat.) Maar mijn moeder vond dat ik behandeling nodig had, dus nam ze me mee naar mijn Huisarts¹, Jim, die het ermee eens was dat ik praktisch aan het verdrinken²

¹In the source text Hazel has a tendency to capitalize certain words which would otherwise not be capitalized, presumably to differentiate these people or instances from others. She uses it here to differentiate between her two different doctors, her "Regular Doctor" and her "Cancer Doctor". Though the Dutch word for Doctor, huisarts, and the word for cancer doctor,

was in de totaal verlamme en klinische depressie en dat daarom mijn medicijnen aangepast moesten worden en dat ik ook wekelijks een Praatgroep moest gaan bijwonen.

Deze Praatgroep had een wisselende cast van personages die allemaal in verschillende stadia³ van door tumoren veroorzaakte ongesteldheid verkeerde. Waarom de cast wisselde? Een bijwerking van doodgaan.

De Praatgroep was natuurlijk zo deprimerend als maar kon. We⁴ kwamen iedere woensdag bijeen in de kelder van een Episcopale kerk in de vorm van een kruis. We zaten met z'n allen in een cirkel in het midden van het kruis, precies waar de twee balken elkaar gekruist zouden hebben, waar het hart van Jezus zou zijn geweest.

Het viel mij op omdat Patrick, de Praatgroepleider en de enige in de zaal die boven de achttien was, het iedere godganse bijeenkomst had over het hart van Jezus, hij ging maar door over hoe wij, als jonge mensen die kanker hadden overleefd, nu midden in het uitermate heilige hart van Jezus zaten en zo.

Dit is hoe het er aan toe ging in het hart van God: Zes á zeven van ons liepen of rolden naar binnen, snackten van een armzalig assortiment koekjes en limonade, gingen zitten in de Cirkel des Vertrouwen en luisterden naar hoe Patrick voor de duizendste keer zijn verschrikkelijk deprimerende, zielige levensverhaal uit de doeken deed— dat hij kanker had gehad in zijn ballen en ze dachten dat hij ging sterven, maar hij ging niet dood en nu zit hij dus hier, een volwassen man in een kerkkelder in de op 136 na leukste stad van Amerika,

kankerarts, already indicate that there is a difference between these two I still maintained the capitalization as it is a graphological quirk of Hazel's that occurs again and again.

² I have shifted the meaning of this word from "swimming" to "drowning" to make the phrase sound more idiomatic in Dutch, with the added benefit that the phrase now connects more closely with the metaphor of water being a destroying force.

³ I opted for the word "stadia" as opposed to "fase" or "graad" to enforce the cancer terminology.

⁴ I wanted to avoid the personification of the support group here.

gescheiden, verslaafd aan videospelletjes, nagenoeg vriendloos, om een karig loon bij elkaar te sprokkelen door zijn kankertastische verleden uit te buiten en om langzaam maar zeker naar een diploma toe te werken dat zijn carrière-opties niet zal verbeteren, te wachten, net als ons allen, op het zwaard van Damocles dat hem de verlossing zal geven die hij al die jaren geleden ontkomen is⁵ toen kanker hem zijn beide ballen ontnam, maar wat alleen de meest barmhartige ziel zijn leven zou kunnen noemen spaarde.

EN JULLIE KUNNEN MISSCHIEN WEL NET ZULKE BOFKONTEN ZIJN!

Daarna introduceerden we onszelf: Naam. Leeftijd. Diagnose. En hoe het ermee voorstond vandaag. Ik ben Hazel, zei ik als ze bij mij aankwamen. Zestien. Aanvankelijk schildklier, maar met een indrukwekkende en lang bezette kolonie uitzaaiingen in mijn longen. En ik voel me oké.

Als we de cirkel rond waren vroeg Patrick altijd of iemand iets wilde delen. En dan begon het wederzijds schouderkloppen⁶: iedereen praatte over vechten en strijden en winnen en krimpen en scannen. Om eerlijk te zijn tegenover Patrick, hij liet ons ook praten over sterven.

⁵ "Lo those many years" is an allusion to Lucas 15:29, which has become a standardized expression in Anglo-American Culture. The various Dutch translations are not homogenous when it comes to this phrase. Variations range from "Al jarenlang" (Nieuwe bijbelvertaling) to "Zie, ik dien u al zoveel jaren" (Herziene Statenvertaling). The lack of a similarly standardized expression in Dutch led me to forgo the allusion in its entirety.

⁶ Circle jerk is a slang term which typically refers to a group discussion where everybody is either supportive of each other or validates each other without any real progress being made, similar to the concept of an echo chamber. It does not have an equivalent in Dutch, so I attempted to approximate what Hazel meant by the usage of "schouderkloppen". This did lead to the omission of "of support", as this is already implicit in the word "shouderkloppen" itself. To make the futility of the exercise more clear I added the word "wederzijds".

Maar het overgrote deel van hen was niet aan het sterven. Velen van hen zouden net als Patrick de volwassenheid halen.

(Wat betekende dat er nogal wat concurrentie gaande was, aangezien iedereen niet alleen kanker wilde verslaan, maar ook de andere mensen in de kamer. Kijk, ik weet dat het irrationeel is, maar wanneer ze je vertellen dat je nog maar, om en nabij, 20% kans hebt om het vijf jaar uit te houden begin je te rekenen en denk je dat betekent dus één op de vijf...dus kijk je om je heen en denk je, zoals ieder gezond persoon dat zou doen: ik moet vier van deze klojo's overleven.)

Het enige wat de praatgroep nog enigszins de moeite waard maakte was een knul die Isaac heette. Hij was een magere jongen met een lang gezicht en stijl, blond haar dat voor één van zijn ogen hing.

En zijn ogen waren het probleem. Hij had een of andere verschrikkelijk zeldzame vorm van oogkanker. Één oog was al weggesneden toen hij nog een kind was en nu droeg hij dus zo'n glazen jampotbril die allebei zijn ogen (zowel de echte als de glazen) buitengewoon groot deed lijken, alsof zijn hele hoofd alleen maar bestond uit een nep oog en een echt oog die je continu aanstaarden. Van wat ik kon opmaken uit de zeldzame keren dat Isaac iets met de groep deelde was de kanker weer teruggekomen waardoor zijn overgebleven oog nu ook in levensgevaar verkeerde.

Isaac en ik communiceerde nagenoeg exclusief door het medium van zuchten. Iedere keer als iemand anti-kankerdiëten besprak of het had over het snuiven van vermalen haaienvinnen of zo keek hij even naar mij en zuchtte hij zachtjes. Als antwoord schudde ik dan een fractie van een seconde met mijn hoofd en ademde uit.

4.3. HOOFDSTUK 1: EERSTE ONTMOETING MET AUGUSTUS

Mam⁷ was er nog niet, wat raar was omdat Mam bijna altijd al op mij stond te wachten. Ik keek om me heen en zag dat een lange, weelderige brunette Isaac tegen de stenen muur van de kerk aan had gedrukt en hem nogal agressief aan het kussen was. Ze stonden zo dichtbij dat ik de rare geluiden die hun monden samen maakte kon horen en ik hem 'altijd'⁸ kon horen zeggen en haar 'altijd' terug kon horen zeggen.

Augustus stond ineens naast me en zei half fluisterend: 'Ze geloven nogal in openbare uitingen van affectie.'

'Waarom zeggen ze continu 'altijd'?' Het slurpende geluid nam toe.

'Altijd is hun ding. Ze zullen altijd van elkaar houden of zoiets. Mijn voorzichtige schatting is dat ze elkaar het woord altijd het afgelopen jaar al een keer of 4 miljoen hebben gesms't.'

Er kwamen nog een paar auto's aanrijden en ze namen Michael en Alisa met zich mee. Het waren nu alleen nog maar Augustus en ik die keken naar Isaac en Monica, die rustig

⁷ The only names given for Hazel's parents are the nicknames she calls her parents by: Mom and Dad, which is also why these nicknames are treated as proper names and are capitalized.

Because the relationship between Hazel and her Mother is quite affectionate I decided to use the more informal "mam/mamma" rather than the more formal "moeder" when she addresses or talks about her mother. I have long debated whether or not I should translate all instances of Mom/Dad concordantly, that is with one nickname alone. I eventually decided that as Hazel treats it as their names, I would do the same and limit myself to one nickname: "Mam"

⁸ The word "always" comes back a few times in the novel in reference to this specific moment, which is why I decided to translate it concordantly. I also wanted it to be one word to mimic Hazel and Augustus's "always": "Oké."

verdergingen alsof ze niet tegen een huis van gebed aanleunden. Zijn hand reikte over haar kleding naar haar borst en hij betaste het onhandig met zijn vingers terwijl hij zijn hand stilhield.

Ik vroeg me af of dat lekker voelde. Het leek van niet, maar ik besloot Isaac te vergeven aangezien hij blind aan het worden was. De zintuigen moeten zich te goed doen zolang er nog honger is en zo.

'Stel je voor, die laatste rit naar het ziekenhuis,' zei ik zachtjes. 'De laatste keer dat je ooit nog een auto zal besturen.'

Zonder dat hij naar mij keek zei Augustus: 'Je verpest het nu wel een beetje voor me, Hazel Grace. Ik probeer hier de jonge liefde in al haar prachtige ongemakkelijkheid te observeren.'

'Ik denk dat hij haar borst pijn doet,' zei ik.

'Het is inderdaad nogal moeilijk om te bepalen of hij haar nu tracht op te winden of een borstonderzoek aan het uitvoeren is.' Toen stak Augustus Waters zijn hand in een zak en trok, van alle dingen op de wereld, een pakje sigaretten tevoorschijn. Hij klapte het open en stak een sigaret tussen zijn lippen.

'Meen je dit nou *serieus*?' vroeg ik. 'Denk je echt dat dat cool is? Oh, mijn God, je hebt dit *hele ding* nu echt helemaal geruïneerd.'

Hij draaide zich naar mij toe. 'Welk hele ding?' vroeg hij. De sigaret hing onaangestoken uit de mondhoek zonder glimlach.

'Het hele ding waar er een jongen is die niet onaantrekkelijk is of dom, of op een of andere manier onacceptabel en die naar mij staart en het foutieve gebruik van het woord letterlijk weet aan te duiden en me dan vergelijkt met actrices en vraagt of ik een film bij hem thuis wil komen kijken. Maar natuurlijk is er altijd een *hamartia* in het spel en de jouwe is dat je, oh, mijn God, desondanks het feit dat je GODSAMME KANKER HEBT GEHAD, geld geeft aan een bedrijf in ruil

voor de kans om NOG MEER KANKER te vergaren. Oh, mijn god. Laat me je even verzekeren dat niet kunnen ademen? Echt zwaar KLOTE is. Enorm teleurstellend. *Enorm.*'

'Een hamartia?' vroeg hij met de sigaret nog in zijn mond. Het zorgde ervoor dat hij zijn kaak moest aanspannen. Hij had, jammer genoeg, een prachtige kaaklijn.

'Een fatale karakterfout' legde ik uit terwijl ik me van hem wegdraaide. Ik liep naar de stoeprand toe en liet Augustus Waters achter mij staan. Toen hoorde ik een auto verderop in de straat starten. Het was Mam. Ze had staan wachten zodat ik vriendjes kon maken of zo.

Ik voelde een soort vreemde combinatie van teleurstelling en woede in mij opwellen. Ik weet niet eens wat voor een gevoel het was, alleen dat er nogal veel van was en ik wilde Augustus Waters slaan en ook mijn longen vervangen met longen die niet zo waardeloos waren in het zijn van longen. Ik stond vastgeketend aan mijn zuurstoftank⁹ met mijn Converse schoenen op de rand van de stoep en precies toen Mam aan kwam rijden voelde ik een hand de mijne grijpen.

Ik trok mijn hand los, maar draaide me wel om.

'Ze zijn niet dodelijk als je ze niet aansteekt,' zei hij terwijl Mam stopte naast de stoep. 'En ik heb er nog nooit eentje aangestoken. Het is een metafoor, kijk: Je stopt dat wat je zal vermoorden tussen je tanden, maar je geeft het de macht niet om je te vermoorden.'

'Het is een metafoor,' zei ik argwanend. Mams liet de motor gewoon lopen.

'Het is een metafoor,' zei hij.

'Je baseert je gedrag op de metaforische resonantie ervan...' zei ik

'Oh, ja,' Hij glimlachte. De grote, sullige, echte glimlach. 'Ik geloof nogal sterk in metaforen, Hazel Grace.'

⁹ This is a pun on the stereotypical portrayal of a clingy wife, also known as a ball-and-chain. As Hazel is literally rather than figuratively chained to her oxygen tank, I focused on the more literal meaning of the phrase rather than the figurative.

Ik draaide me om naar de auto. Ik tikte op het raam. Het werd naar beneden gedraaid. 'Ik ga naar de film met Augustus Waters,' zei ik. 'Neem alsjeblieft de volgende paar afleveringen van de *ANTM*¹⁰ voor me op.'

4.4. HOOFDSTUK 7: DE BRIEF VAN VAN HOUTEN

Hij reikte weer naar mijn hand, maar deze keer deed hij het om er een opgevouwen stuk briefpapier in te stoppen met daarop het letterhoofd van Peter Van Houten, emeritus Auteur.¹¹

Ik las het pas toen ik weer thuis was en op mijn grote bed zonder enige kans van medische onderbreking. Ik deed er eeuwigheid over om het slordige schuine handschrift van Van Houten te decoderen.

Beste meneer Waters,

Ik heb uw elektronische mail daterende de 14e April ontvangen en ben zeer onder de indruk van de Shakespeariaanse complexiteit van uw tragedie. Iedereen in dit verhaal heeft een stevige hamartia: Zij dat ze zo ziek is; u dat u zo gezond bent. Als zij gezonder was of u zieker dan zouden jullie niet zo misleid zijn door lot en sterren, maar het lot en

¹⁰ Hazel explains what ANTM is earlier in the novel, which is why I maintained the acronym here.

¹¹ Officially there is actually no such thing as a Novelist emiritus. There is an Author Emirtus award in the united states, which is an honorary title bestowed yearly by the Sience Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America to appreciate the contributions of senior writers who are no longer active in the field. As *An Imperial Affliction* is unlikely to be classified as science fiction or fantasy, this is probably simply a reference to the fact that Van Houten has not written anything since An Imperial Affliction. In the Netherlands and the USA the term is generally only used to refer to pensioned clergymen, magistrates, professors, or other people of merit, who are also the only ones allowed to adopt the title. Van Houten is unlikely to have ever been granted the title for simply being a writer, leading me to believe he simply adopted the designation because he could. Consequently, I have maintained the Latin designation in its entirety despite its improbability.

de sterren zijn nu eenmaal van nature misleidend en nooit heeft Shakespeare het erger bij het verkeerde eind gehad dan toen hij Cassius liet opmerken: "De fout, mijn Brutus, ligt niet in de sterren, / Maar in ons zelf." Makkelijk om te zeggen als je een Romeinse edelman bent (of Shakespeare!), maar er is geen tekort aan fouten te vinden in onze sterren.

Als we dan toch bij de tekortkomingen van de beste Will zijn: uw woorden over de jonge Hazel doen me denken aan het vijfenvijftigste sonnet van deze dichter uit Avon, die natuurlijk begint met : "Geen marmer, geen goudglanzend monument / Voor heersers overleeft dit machtig rijm; / Jij glanst hier feller dan in vuil cement / Dat sloerie tijd bezoedelt met haar slijm." (Even terzijde: wat is tijd toch een sloerie. Ze naait iedereen.) Het is een mooi gedicht, maar ook bedrieglijk: we herinneren inderdaad de krachtige rijm van Shakespeare, maar wat weten we nog van de persoon die hij tracht te herdenken? Niets. We weten nagenoeg zeker dat hij mannelijk was; alles behalve dat is gokwerk. Shakespeare vertelde ons zeer weinig over de man die hij ter aarde bestelde in zijn linguïstische sarcofaag. (Getuige ook dat als we spreken van literatuur we dat doen in de tegenwoordige tijd. Als we over de overledenen spreken zijn we lang niet zo aardig). Men vereeuwigd de verlorenen niet door over hen te schrijven. Taal begraaft, maar laat niet herrijzen. (Om eerlijk te zijn: Ik ben niet de eerste die deze observatie maakt. cf, het gedicht van Macleish 'Geen marmer, geen goudglanzend monument', die de hoogdravende versregel bevat: "Ik zal zeggen dat jij zult sterven en niemand zal je gedenken.")

Ik dwaal af, maar dit is mijn punt: De doden zijn alleen zichtbaar in het verschrikkelijke, lidloze oog van het geheugen. De levenden, Godzijdank, behouden de mogelijkheid om ons te verrassen en teleur te stellen. Uw Hazel leeft, Waters, en u moet uw wil niet opleggen aan de beslissing van iemand anders en al helemaal niet een beslissing waarover zorgvuldig is nagedacht. Ze wenst u pijn te besparen en u zou haar dat moeten toestaan. U vindt de logica van jonge Hazel misschien niet overtuigend, maar

ik heb langer door dit tranendal geploeterd dan u en vanuit mijn ogen is zij niet degene die gestoord is.

Met vriendelijke groeten,

Peter Van Houten.

Het was echt door hem geschreven. Ik likte aan mijn vinger en depte het papier en de inkt vloeide een klein beetje, dus ik wist dat het echt echt was.

'Mam,' zei ik. Ik zei het niet hard, maar dat hoefde ook niet. Ze was altijd aan het wachten. Ze stak haar hoofd om de deur. 'Alles goed lieffie?' 'Kunnen we dr. Maria bellen en vragen of een internationale reis m'n dood zal worden?'

4.5. HOOFDSTUK 8: BRIEF VAN LIDEWIJ

Beste Hazel,

Ik heb bericht ontvangen van de Wensstichting dat je ons vanaf 4 mei zal gaan bezoeken samen met Augustus Waters en je moeder. Dat is al over een week! Peter en ik zijn zeer verheugd en kunnen niet wachten om je te ontmoeten. Je hotel, de Filosoof, ligt om de hoek van het huis van Peter. Misschien moeten we je één dag geven voor de jetlag, oké? Dus, indien het schikt, zullen we je bij Peter thuis ontmoeten op de ochtend van 5 mei rond een uurtje of tien voor een kop koffie, zodat hij je vragen over zijn boek kan beantwoorden. En misschien kunnen we daarna een museum of het Anne Frank huis bezoeken?

Met de allerbeste wensen,

Lidewij Vliegenthart

Hoofdassistente van mr. Peter Van Houten, auteur van *Een vorstelijke beproeving*.

4.6. HOOFDSTUK 11: DINEREN IN AMSTERDAM

Terwijl we wachtten voor tram 1 op een brede straat vol met verkeer, zei ik tegen Augustus, 'Ik neem aan dat dit het pak is dat je naar begrafenis draagt?'

'Om eerlijk te zijn, nee,' zei hij. 'Dat pak is bij lange na niet zo mooi als deze.'

De blauwwitte tram arriveerde en Augustus gaf onze kaarten aan de bestuurder die uitlegde dat we ze voor een soort ronde sensor heen en weer moesten zwaaien. Toen we door de drukke tram liepen stond een oude man op om ons twee stoelen naast elkaar te geven en ik probeerde hem te vertellen dat hij weer moest gaan zitten, maar hij bleef indringend naar de stoel gebaren. We zaten drie haltes in de trein en ik leunde over Gus heen zodat we samen uit het raam konden kijken.

Augustus wees naar de bomen en zei, 'Zie je dat?'

Ik zag het. Langs de grachten stonden overal iepen en uit de bomen dwarrelden een soort van zaadjes. Maar ze zagen er niet uit als zaadjes. Ze zagen er net uit als miniatuur rozenblaadjes die van hun kleur ontdaan waren. Deze bleke blaadjes verzamelde zich in de wind als zwermende vogels—de duizenden blaadjes leken net een lentesneeuwstorm.

De oude man die zijn stoel had opgegeven zag dat het ons opviel en zei: 'De lentesneeuw van Amsterdam. *The elms* gooien met confetti om de lente te begroeten.'

We stapte over op een andere tram en vier haltes verder kwamen we aan bij een straat die in tweeën werd gedeeld door een prachtige gracht. In het water golfde de reflectie van de oude brug en de pittoreske kanaalhuisjes.

Oranje was maar een paar stappen verwijderd van de tram. Het restaurant was aan de ene kant van de straat en het terras stond aan de andere kant op een betonnen balkon precies op het randje van de gracht. De ogen van de gastvrouw lichtten op toen ze Augustus en mij naar haar toe zag lopen. 'Meneer en mevrouw Waters?'

'Ik denk van wel?' zei ik.

'Uw tafel,' zei ze gebarend naar een smalle tafel aan de overkant van de straat die maar een paar kleine centimeters van de gracht verwijderd was. 'De champagne is ons cadeau aan u.'

Gus en ik glimlachten kort naar elkaar. Toen we de straat eenmaal hadden overgestoken trok hij mijn stoel voor me uit en hielp hij met aanschuiven. Er stonden inderdaad twee glazen met champagne op onze tafel met wit tafelkleed. Het koele briesje werd perfect gecompenseerd door de zon; Aan de ene kant van onze tafel fietsten fietsers ons voorbij—goed geklede mannen en vrouwen op weg van hun werk naar huis, ongelofelijk aantrekkelijke blonde meisjes die in paardenzit achterop de fiets van een vriend meeliften, kleine kinderen zonder helm die op en neer wipten in plastic stoeltjes achter hun ouders. En aan de andere kant werd het grachtenwater verstikt door de miljoenen confetti-zaadjes. Kleine bootjes waren gemeerd aan de bakstenen oevers en stonden halfvol met regenwater, sommigen waren bijna aan het zinken. Een eindje verderop in de gracht kon ik huisboten zien die op pontons dreven en in het midden van de gracht kwam een open boot met platte bodem, bedekt met tuinstoelen en een draagbare stereo-installatie, ons langzaam tegemoet. Augustus nam zijn glas champagne en hief het. Ik hief het mijne ook, ook al had ik nog nooit eerder iets gedronken op een paar teugjes van het bier van mijn papa na.

'Oké,' zei hij.

'Oké,' zei ik en we klonken onze glazen. Ik nam een slokje. De kleine bubbels smolten in mijn mond en reisden noordwaarts naar mijn hersenen. Zoet. Knapperig. Heerlijk. 'Dat is echt heel lekker,' zei ik. 'Ik heb nog nooit eerder champagne gedronken.'

Een stevige jonge ober met golvend blond haar verscheen. Hij was misschien zelfs nog wel langer dan Augustus. 'Weet u,' zei hij met een verrukkelijk accent, 'wat Dom Perignon zei nadat hij champagne had uitgevonden?'

'Nee?' ze ik.

'Hij riep naar zijn medemonniken, 'Kom snel: ik ben de sterren aan het proeven' Welkom in Amsterdam, wilt u een menu zien of wilt u liever de keuze van de chef proberen?'

Ik keek naar Augustus en hij naar mij. 'De keuze van de chef klinkt goed, maar Hazel is een vegetariër.' Ik had dit precies één keer tegen Augustus gezegd. Op de dag dat we elkaar hadden ontmoet.

'Dat is geen probleem,' zei de ober.

'Geweldig. En kunnen we hier ook nog wat meer van krijgen?' Vroeg Gus over de champagne.

'Natuurlijk,' zei onze ober. 'We hebben vanavond alle sterren gebotteld mijn jonge vrienden. Bah, de confetti!' zei hij en veegde zachtjes een zaadje van mijn blote schouder. 'Het is al in jaren niet zo erg geweest. Het is werkelijk overal. Erg irritant.'

De ober verdween en wij keken hoe de confetti uit de hemel viel, over de grond rolde in de wind en in de gracht viel. 'Het is nogal moeilijk om te geloven dat iemand dit ooit vervelend zou kunnen vinden,' zei Augustus na een poosje.

'Mensen raken echter altijd gewend aan schoonheid.'

'Ik ben anders nog niet aan jouw schoonheid gewend geraakt,' antwoordde hij met een glimlach. Ik voelde dat ik bloosde. 'Dankjewel dat je mee bent gekomen naar Amsterdam,' zei hij.

'Bedankt dat je mij je wens liet kapen,' zei ik.

'Bedankt voor het dragen van die jurk die er echt WAUW uitziet,' zei hij. Ik schudde mijn hoofd en probeerde niet naar hem te glimlachen. Ik wilde geen granaat zijn. Maar aan de andere kant, hij wist wat hij aan het doen was, of niet soms? Het was ook zijn keuze. 'Trouwens, hoe loopt dat gedicht af?' vroeg hij.

'Huh?'

'Dat je aan me voordroeg in het vliegtuig.'

'Oh, Prufrock van T.S. Eliot? Het loopt zo af: 'Onze verblijfplaats is het paleis van de zee /
Nimfen omkransen ons met zeewier en met kinken / tot mensen ons wekken, en wij verzinken.'

Augustus trok een sigaret uit het pakje en tikte de filter tegen de tafel. 'Stomme
mensenstemmen die altijd alles verpesten.'

De ober kwam aanlopen met nog twee glazen champagne en wat hij 'witte Belgische
asperges bereid in een infusie van lavendel' noemde.

'Ik heb ook nog nooit champagne gehad,' zei Gus nadat hij wegliep. 'Voor het geval je het
je afvroeg of zo. Ik heb overigens ook nog nooit witte asperges gehad.'

Ik was op mijn eerste hap aan het kauwen. 'Het is geweldig,' zei ik.

Hij nam een hap en slikte. 'God. Als asperges altijd zo smaakten zou ik ook een vegetariër
worden.' Een aantal mensen in een gelakte houten boot in de gracht onder ons kwamen naar ons
toe. Een van hen, een vrouw van een jaar of dertig met krullend blond haar, nam een slok van
haar bier en hief toen haar glas naar ons toe en schreeuwde iets.

'Wij spreken geen Nederlands,' schreeuwde Gus terug.

Een van de anderen schreeuwde een vertaling: 'The beautiful couple is beautiful.'

4.7. HOOFDSTUK 12: OP BEZOEK BIJ VAN HOUTEN

Hij nam een flinke slok en trok een grimas. 'Ik heb geen drankprobleem,' kondigde hij met een onnodig luide stem aan. 'Ik heb een Churchilliaanse relatie met alcohol: Ik kan grappen maken en Engeland regeren en alles doen wat ik maar wil. Behalve niet drinken.' Hij keek vluchtig naar Lidewij en knikte naar zijn glas. Ze nam het van hem aan en liep terug naar de bar. 'Alleen het idee van water, Lidewij,' droeg hij op.

'Ja, ik snap het,' zei ze met een accent dat net Amerikaans leek.

Het tweede drankje arriveerde. De ruggengraat van Van Houten rechtte zich weer uit respect. Hij schopte zijn slippers uit. Hij had heel lelijke voeten. Hij was nogal hard bezig het hele concept van de geniale auteur voor mij te verpesten. Maar hij had de antwoorden.

'Nou, uh,' zei ik, 'Ten eerste willen we u bedanken voor het etentje van gisteravond en—

'We hebben gisteravond hun etentje betaald?' vroeg Van Houten aan Lidewij.

'Ja, bij Oranje.'

'Ah, natuurlijk. Nou, geloof me als ik zeg dat je daar niet mij voor te danken hebt, maar Lidewij die uitermate getalenteerd is als het aankomt op het uitgeven van mijn geld.'

'Het was ons genoeg,' zei Lidewij.

'Naja, hoe dan ook bedankt,' zei Augustus. Ik kon irritatie in zijn stem horen.

'Dus hier ben ik,' zei Van Houten na een momentje. 'Wat zijn je vragen?'

'Uh,' zei Augustus.

'Hij leek zo intelligent in zijn brieven,' zei Van Houten over Augustus tegen Lidewij.

'Misschien heeft de kanker zich inmiddels ook gevestigd in zijn hersenen.'

'Peter,' zei Lidewij verafschuwd.

Ik was ook verafschuwd, maar er was toch iets fijns aan een man die zo afgrijselijk was dat hij ons niet met ongepast respect behandelde. 'We hebben inderdaad een aantal vragen,' zei ik. 'Ik had het er al over in mijn email. Ik weet niet of u het zich herinnert?'

'Nee, dat doe ik niet.'

'Zijn geheugen is nogal slecht,' zei Lidewij.

'Was het maar zo'n feest,' reageerde Van Houten.

'Dus, onze vragen,' herhaalde ik.

'Ze gebruikt het koninklijk meervoud,' zei Peter tegen niemand in het bijzonder. Nog een slok. Ik wist niet waar whisky naar smaakte, maar als het ook maar iets leek op champagne kon ik me niet voorstellen hoe hij zo snel zo veel kon drinken op dit tijdstip in de ochtend. 'Ben je bekend met de schildpadparadox van Zeno?' vroeg hij mij.

'We hebben een aantal vragen over wat er gebeurt met de personages na het einde van het boek, en dan voornamelijk de moeder van—'

'Je maakt hier de verkeerde aanname dat ik jouw vraag moet horen om hem te kunnen beantwoorden. Ben je bekend met de filosoof Zeno?' Ik schudde licht mijn hoofd. 'Jammer. Zeno was een pre-Socratische filosoof van wie er wordt gezegd dat hij veertig paradoxen heeft gevonden in het wereldbeeld dat werd voorgesteld door Parmenides—Je bent natuurlijk bekend met Parmenides,' zei hij en ik knikte dat ik inderdaad bekend was met Parmenides, hoewel dat niet zo was. 'Goddank,' zei hij. 'Zeno specialiseerde zich professioneel in het ontmaskeren van de ongelijkheden en simplicaties van Parmenides, wat niet heel moeilijk was aangezien Parmenides het altijd en over alles spectaculair fout had. Parmenides is waardevol op precies dezelfde manier dat het waardevol is om een kennis te hebben die iedere keer het verkeerde paard uitkiest bij het paardenrennen. Maar Zeno's meest belangrijke—wacht, geef me even snel een indicatie van hoe bekend jullie zijn met Zweedse hip-hop.'

Ik kon niet inschatten of Peter Van Houten een grapje maakte. Na een moment gaf Augustus voor mij antwoord. 'Amper,' zei hij.

'Oké, maar ik neem aan dat je wel bekend bent met Afasi och Filthy's tweede album *Fläcken*.'

'Dat zijn we niet,' antwoordde ik voor ons beiden.

'Lidewij, draai 'Bomfalleralla' meteen.' Lidewij liep naar een MP3speler toe, draaide aan een knop en drukte toen op een ander knopje. Een rapnummer schelde uit alle hoeken van de kamer. Het klonk als ieder ander rapnummer, behalve dan dat de woorden Zweeds waren.

Nadat het voorbij was keek Peter Van Houten ons verwachtingsvol aan met zijn kleine ogen wijd gespreid. 'Ja toch?' vroeg hij. 'Ja toch?'

Ik zei: 'Het spijt me meneer, maar we spreken geen Zweeds.'

'Nee, natuurlijk doe je dat niet. Ik ook niet. Wie spreekt er nou in godsnaam Zweeds? Het belangrijke is niet wat voor een nonsens de stemmen uitkramen, maar wat de stemmen voelen. Je weet toch zeker wel dat er maar twee emoties zijn, liefde en angst, en dat Afasi och Filthy tussen die twee kunnen schipperen met een behendigheid die men normaliter niet vindt in hip-hop muziek buiten Zweden. Zal ik het nogmaals voor je draaien?'

'Maakt u een grapje?' zei Gus.

'Pardon?'

'Is dit een soort optreden?' Hij keek op naar Lidewij en vroeg, 'Nou?'

'Ik ben bang van niet,' antwoorde Lidewij. 'Hij is niet altijd zo—dit is ongebruikelijk—'

'Oh, hou je mond, Lidewij. Rudolf Otto zei dat als je het sacrale nog niet tegen was gekomen, als je geen absurde ontmoeting had gehad met mysterium termendum, dat zijn werk dan niet voor jou was. En ik zeg tegen jullie, jonge vrienden, dat als jullie het moedige antwoord van Afasi och Filthy's op angst niet kunnen horen dat mijn werk dan ook niets voor jullie is.'

Ik kan dit niet genoeg benadrukken: Het was een volkomen normaal rapnummer, behalve dan dat het in het Zweeds was. 'Ehm,' zei ik. 'Dus over *Een vorstelijke beproeving*. Als het boek afloopt staat de moeder van Anna op het punt om—

Van Houten onderbrak me en terwijl hij praatte tikte hij net zo lang op zijn glas totdat Lidewij het weer vulde. 'Dus Zeno staat het meest bekend om zijn schildpadparadox. Laat ons voorstellen dat je in een wedstrijd verweekelt bent met een schildpad. De schildpad heeft een voorsprong van tien meter. In de tijd dat jij die tien meter hebt gerend is de schildpad hooguit één meter verder gekomen. En in de tijd die jij ervoor nodig hebt om die afstand te rennen is de schildpad weer een eindje verder gekomen en zo gaat het maar door tot in de eeuwigheid. Jij bent sneller dan de schildpad, maar je kunt hem nooit inhalen; je kunt alleen maar zijn voorsprong inkorten.'

'Natuurlijk kun je de schildpad ook gewoon voorbij rennen zonder na te denken over de mechanismes die erachter schuil gaan, maar de vraag hoe je dit kan doen blijkt uitermate gecompliceerd te zijn en niemand had het ooit echt opgelost totdat Cantor ons liet zien dat sommige oneindigheden groter zijn dan andere oneindigheden.'

'Ehm,' zei ik.

'Ik neem aan dat dit je vraag beantwoord,' zei hij vol vertrouwen waarna hij weer een flinke teug uit zijn glas nam.

'Niet echt,' zei ik. 'We vroegen ons af, na het einde van *Een vorstelijke beproeving*—'

'Ik verwerp alles uit dat waardeloze boek,' onderbrak Van Houten mij.

'Nee,' zei ik.

'Pardon?'

'Nee, dat is niet acceptabel,' zei ik 'Ik begrijp dat het boek midden in het verhaal ophoudt omdat Anna doodgaat of te ziek wordt om verder te gaan, maar u heeft gezegd dat u ons zou vertellen wat er daarna met iedereen gebeurt en daarom zijn wij hier, en wij, *ik*, moet dit weten.'

Van Houten zuchtte. Na nog een slok zei hij, 'Oké, prima. Wiens verhaal wil je horen?'

'De moeder van Anna, De Nederlandse tulpenman, de hamster Sisyphus, ik bedoel gewoon—wat gebeurt er met iedereen.'

Van Houten sloot zijn ogen en ademde uit met gebolde wangen. Toen keek hij omhoog naar de houten balken die kruislings over het plafond liepen. 'De hamster,' zei hij na een poosje. 'De hamster wordt geadopteerd door Christine'—zij was een van Anna's vrienden voordat ze ziek werd. Dat was logisch. Christine en Anna hadden in een paar scènes met Sisyphus gespeeld. 'Hij wordt geadopteerd door Christine en leeft nog een paar jaar door na het einde van het boek en sterft dan vredig in zijn hamsterslaapje.'

Nu kwamen we ergens. 'Geweldig, zei ik. 'Geweldig. Oké, dus de Nederlandse tulpenman. Is hij een oplichter? Trouwen de moeder van Anna en hij met elkaar?'

Van Houten staaarde nog steeds naar de balken op het plafond. Hij nam een slok. Het glas was alweer bijna leeg. 'Lidewij, ik kan het niet. Ik kan het niet. Ik kan het niet.' Hij richtte zijn blik op mij. 'Er gebeurt niets met de Nederlandse tulpenman. Hij is geen oplichter of zelfs wel een oplichter; hij is God. Hij vertegenwoordigt overduidelijk God op een metaforisch niveau en om te vragen wat er met hem gebeurt is het intellectuele equivalent van vragen wat er gebeurt met de lichaamsloze ogen van doktor T.J. Eckleburg in *Gatsby*. Trouwen hij en de moeder van Anna met elkaar? We hebben het hier over een boek, lief kind, niet een of ander historische ontdekkingstocht.'

'Dat weet ik, maar je hebt toch wel eens gedacht over wat er met hen gebeurt, als personages bedoel ik, onafhankelijk van hun metaforische betekenis of zo.'

'Ze zijn fictieel,' zei hij terwijl hij weer op zijn glas tikte. 'Er gebeurt niets met hen.'

4.8. HOOFDSTUK18: WILIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Er stonden maar twee auto's op de parkeerplaats. Ik stopte naast zijn auto. Ik opende de deur. De interieurverlichting sprong aan. Augustus zat bedekt in zijn eigen kots in de bestuurderstoel met zijn handen tegen zijn buik aan gedrukt precies waar de maagsonde naar binnen ging. 'Hoi,' mompelde hij.

'Oh God, Augustus, we moeten echt naar het ziekenhuis.'

'Alsjeblieft, kijk er alleen even naar.' Ik moest kokhalzen van de lucht, maar ik leunde voorover om de plek boven zijn navel waar ze de sonde hadden aangebracht te inspecteren. De huid van zijn buik was warm en vuurrood.

'Gus, ik denk dat er iets geïnfecteerd is geraakt. Ik kan dit niet oplossen. Waarom ben je hier? Waarom ben je niet thuis?' Hij gaf over en had niet eens meer de energie om zijn mond van zijn schoot weg te draaien. 'Oh, lieffie,' zei ik.

'Ik wilde een pakje sigaretten kopen,' mompelde hij. 'Ik was mijn pakje verloren. Of ze hebben het van me afgepakt. Ik weet het niet. Ze zeiden dat ze een nieuwe voor me gingen halen, maar ik wilde. Ik wilde het zelf doen. Nog één klein dingetje zelf doen.'

Hij staarde recht vooruit. Stilletjes pakte ik mijn telefoon en keek even omlaag om 911 te draaien.

'Het spijt me,' zei ik tegen hem. *911, wat is uw noodgeval?* 'Hoi, ik sta bij het tankstation op de hoek van 86th en Ditch en ik heb een ambulance nodig. De grote liefde van mijn leven heeft een maagsonde die het niet meer doet.'

Hij keek me aan. Het was verschrikkelijk. Ik kon hem amper aankijken. De Augustus Waters van de scheve glimlachjes en de ongerookte sigaretten was verdwenen en vervangen door dit wanhopige vernederde wezen dat nu hier onder mij zat.

'Dit is het. Ik kan niet eens meer roken.'

'Gus, ik hou van je.'

'Waar is mijn kans om iemands Peter van Houten te zijn?' Hij sloeg slapjes op het stuur en de auto toeterde terwijl hij huilde. Hij leunde zijn hoofd achterover en keek omhoog. 'Ik haat mezelf ik haat mezelf ik haat dit ik haat dit ik walg van mezelf ik haat het ik haat het ik haat het laat me godverdomme alsjeblieft gewoon doodgaan.'

Volgens de conventies van het genre behield Augustus Waters zijn gevoel voor humor tot het bittere einde, zakte de moed hem niet één keer in de schoenen en vloog zijn levenslust als een ontembare arend tot zo'n grote hoogte dat de wereld zijn vreugdevolle ziel niet meer kon bevangen.

Maar dit was de waarheid: een meelijwekkend jongentje die met alle geweld niet meelijwekkend wilde zijn, schreeuwend en huilend, vergiftigd door een geïnfecteerde maagsonde die hem in leven hield, maar niet genoeg in leven.

Ik veegde zijn kin af en pakte zijn gezicht beet en knielde naast hem neer zodat ik zijn ogen kon zien, die nog wel leefden. 'Het spijt me. Ik zou willen dat het net zo was als die ene film met de Perzen en Spartanen.'

'Ik ook,' zei hij.

'Maar dat is het niet,' zei ik.

'Dat weet ik,' zei hij.

'Er zijn geen slechteriken.'

'Ja.'

'Zelfs kanker is niet echt een slechterik: kanker wil eigenlijk alleen in leven blijven.'

'Ja.'

'Het komt goed,' vertelde ik hem. Ik kon de sirenes horen.

'Oké,' zei hij. Hij was zijn bewustzijn aan het verliezen.

'Gus, je moet me beloven dat je dit niet nog een keer gaat proberen. Ik zal sigaretten voor je halen oké?' Hij keek me aan. Zijn ogen tolde in hun kassen. 'Je moet het beloven.'

Hij knikte een beetje en toen sloten zijn ogen terwijl zijn hoofd op zijn nek draaide.

'Gus,' zei ik. 'Blijf bij me.'

'Lees me wat voor,' zei hij terwijl de ambulance ons verdomme met gillende sirenes voorbij reed. Dus, terwijl ik wachtte op dat ze zouden omkeren en ons zouden vinden, droeg ik het enige gedicht op dat ik mij voor de geest kon halen, 'De rode kruiwagen' van William Carlos Williams.

er hangt zoveel af

van

een rode krui-

wagen

glanzend van regen-

water

naast de witte

kippen

Williams was een dokter. Het leek mij dan ook een gedicht van een dokter. Het gedicht was afgelopen, maar de ambulance reed nog steeds van ons weg, dus bleef ik doorschrijven.

En er hangt zoveel af, vertelde ik Augustus, van een blauwe hemel die wordt opengesneden door overhangende takken van bomen. Er hangt zoveel af van de transparante maagsonde die uit de darmen van een jongen met blauwe lippen barst. Er hangt zoveel af van deze observeerder van het universum.

Half bij bewustzijn keek hij even naar mij en mompelde, 'En jij zegt dat je geen poëzie schrijft.'

4.9. HOOFDSTUK 23: LAATSTE ONTMOETING MET VAN HOUTEN

'Je hebt onze reis niet bedorven, egoïstische klootzak, wij hebben een geweldige reis gehad.'

'Ik probeer het,' zei hij. 'Ik zweer je dat ik het aan het proberen ben.' Het was toen dat ik mij realiseerde dat Peter Van Houten een dode in zijn familie had. Ik dacht na over de eerlijke manier waarop hij geschreven had over kinderen met kanker; het feit dat hij niet tegen me kon praten in Amsterdam behalve om te vragen of ik me expres als haar had gekleed; zijn kutte gedrag tegenover mij en Augustus; zijn pijnlijke vraag over de relatie tussen de hevigheid van pijn en de waarde daarvan. Hij zat daarachter te drinken, een oude man die al jarenlang dronken was. Ik dacht aan een statistiek waarvan ik wilde dat ik hem niet kende: De helft van alle huwelijken strandt een jaar na de dood van een kind. Ik keek terug naar Van Houten. Ik reed over de Collegestraat en stopte achter een rij geparkeerde auto's en vroeg: 'Je had een kind die overleden is?'

'Mijn dochter,' zei hij. 'Ze was acht. Ze leed prachtig. Zal nooit gezaligd worden.'

'Ze had leukemie?' vroeg ik. Hij knikte. 'Net als Anna,' zei ik.

'Net als Anna, ja.'

'Je was getrouwd?'

'Nee. Naja, niet meer op het moment van haar overlijden. Het duurde ondragelijk lang voordat we haar kwijtraakten. Leed verandert je niet, Hazel. Het onthult je.'

'Leefde je bij haar?'

'Nee, aanvankelijk niet, hoewel we haar tegen het einde naar New York hebben gebracht, waar ik woonde, voor een serie experimentele martelingen die de alleen kwelling van haar dagen vergrote zonder ze te verlengen. '

Na een seconde zei ik, 'Dus het is net alsof je haar een tweede leven hebt gegeven waar zij een tiener kon worden.'

'Ik denk dat dat een goede evaluatie is,' zei hij en voegde snel toe 'Ik neem aan dat je bekend bent met het treinprobleem van Philippa Foot?'

'En dan kom ik bij je thuis en ik ben gekleed als het meisje waarvan je hoopte dat zij dat zou worden en je wordt daardoor, soort van, helemaal van je a propos gebracht.'

'Er rijdt een trein een stuk spoor af,' zei hij.

'Je domme gedachte-experiment boeit me niet,' zei ik.

'Hij is eigenlijk van Philippa Foot.'

'Of de hare dan,' zei ik.

'Ze snapte niet waarom het gebeurde,' zei hij. 'Ik moest haar vertellen dat ze zou overlijden. Haar maatschappelijk werker zei dat ik het haar moest vertellen. Ik moest haar vertellen dat ze ging sterven dus vertelde ik haar dat ze naar de hemel zou gaan. Ze vroeg of ik daar ook zo zijn en ik zei dat ik er niet zou zijn, nog niet. Maar uiteindelijk wel, zei ze, en ik beloofde dat ja, natuurlijk, heel snel. En ik vertelde haar dat we in de tussentijd daarboven een geweldige familie hadden die voor haar zouden zorgen. En ze vroeg me wanneer ik daar zou zijn en ik zei snel. Tweeëntwintig jaar geleden. '

'Het spijt me.'

'Mij ook.'

Na een poosje vroeg ik, 'Wat gebeurde er met haar moeder?'

Hij glimlachte. 'Je bent nog steeds op zoek naar je vervolg, jij kleine rat.'

Ik lachte terug. 'Je moet naar huis,' zei ik hem. 'Ga ontzuichten. Schrijf een tweede boek. Doe dat waar je goed in bent. Niet iedereen heeft het geluk om ergens goed in te zijn.'

Hij staaide me een lange tijd aan door de spiegel. 'Oké,' zei hij.

'Ja. Je hebt gelijk. Je hebt gelijk.' Maar zelfs terwijl hij het zei trok hij al weer zijn nagenoeg lege fles whisky tevoorschijn. Hij nam een slok, deed de dop op de fles en opende de deur. 'Tot ziens, Hazel.'

'Het ga je goed, Van Houten.'

Hij ging op de stoep achter de auto zitten. Terwijl ik keek hoe hij langzaam kleiner werd in de achteruitkijkspiegel trok hij de fles tevoorschijn en voor één seconde leek het alsof hij hem op de stoep zou laten liggen. En toen nam hij een slok.

5. DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON OF TRANSLATIONS

The Dutch translation of *TFIOS, Een weeffout in onze sterren (EWIOS)*, was published in March 2013, roughly 2 months after the *TFIOS* publication in English. The translation was done by Nan Lenders with the aid of a project scholarship from the Nederlands Letterenfonds. Nan Lenders has translated over 50 books and is mostly known for her translations of children's literature and YAL novels from writers such as Aidan Chambers, Cynthia Voigt and Magaret Mahy. A list of her published translations is included in the appendices in section 8 (Table 5). Over the course of her career she has become more active in the translation of adult literature and from 2003 onwards she has primarily translated adult novels and non-fiction. *EWIOS* is her first published foray back into YAL since 2003. In this section I will discuss her translation based on the translation problems and decisions I discussed in sections 2 and 3.

5.1. CONVERSATIONAL TONE AND IDIOLECT

For the translation of the conversational tone between Hazel and the narratee, and Hazel and Augustus, Lenders and I made many of the same choices. Looking for instance at the translation of the sarcastic remark Hazel makes about Patrick we can see that Lenders and I both attempted to preserve the humour Hazel displays and had the same idea about who was being addressed:

EN MISSCHIEN ZIJN JULLIE OOK WEL ZULKE GELUKSVOGELS!(Lenders 8).

EN JULLIE KUNNEN MISSCHIEN WEL NET ZULKE BOFKONTEN ZIJN!

We both attempted to retain the humorous tone that is present in many of Hazel's and Augustus' conversations:

'Altijd is hun ding. Ze zullen altijd van elkaar houden en zo. Als ik zeg dat ze elkaar het woord het afgelopen jaar vier miljoen keer hebben ge-sms't, denk ik dat ik aan de lage kant zit' (Lenders 19).

'Altijd is hun ding. Ze zullen altijd van elkaar houden of zoiets. Mijn voorzichtige schatting is dat ze elkaar het woord altijd het afgelopen jaar al een keer of 4 miljoen hebben ge-sms't.'

In this particular instance, I attempted to mimic the set up of the joke in the source text by foregrounding the conservativeness of the guess before giving the number. Lenders inverted the two elements, which was not exactly necessary as : "Ik denk dat ik aan de lage kant zit als ik zeg dat ze elkaar het woord het afgelopen jaar vier miljoen keer hebben ge-sms't," would work just as well, but this kind of inversion is both possible and reads as naturally Dutch. Furthermore, the connection between the two elements is maintained and the inversion does not harm the humorous quality of the utterance.

An interesting difference can be found between our translations in the passage where Hazel delivers an angry rant when she sees Augustus smoking:

'Meen je dat nou?' vroeg ik. 'Denk je dat dat stoer is? Oh, mijn god, nu heb je echt alles verpest.'

'Alles?' vroeg hij, terwijl hij zich naar me toe draaide. De sigaret bungelde onaangestoken in zijn mondhoek die niet lachte.

'Alles van een jongen die niet onaantrekkelijk of onintelligent of anderzins onaanvaardbaar is en die naar me staart en me wijst op het incorrecte gebruik van letterlijkheid en me vergelijkt met een actrice en vraagt of ik bij hem thuis naar een film kom kijken. Maar natuurlijk is er altijd een *hamartia* en de jouwe is dat je, o, mijn god, ook al heb je verdomme kanker gehad, geld geeft aan een bedrijf in de ruil voor de kans om nog meer kanker te krijgen. O, mijn god. Laat ik je verzekeren dat het klote is als je niet kunt ademen. Wat een afknapper' (Lenders 20).

'Meen je dit nou *serieus?*' vroeg ik. 'Denk je echt dat dat cool is? Oh mijn God, je hebt *dit hele ding* echt helemaal verpest.'

"Welk hele ding?" vroeg hij terwijl hij zich omdraaide naar mij. De sigaret hing onaangestoken uit de mondhoek zonder glimlach.

"Het hele ding waar er een jongen is die niet onaantrekkelijk is of dom is of op de een of andere manier onacceptabel en die naar mij staart en het foutieve gebruik van het woord letterlijk weet aan te duiden en me dan vergelijkt met actrices en vraagt of ik een film bij hem thuis wil komen kijken. Maar natuurlijk is er altijd een *hamartia* in het spel en de jouwe is dat je, oh mijn God, desondanks het feit dat je GODSAMME KANKER HEBT GEHAD, geld geeft aan een bedrijf in ruil voor de kans om NOG MEER KANKER te vergaren. Oh, mijn god. Laat me je even verzekeren dat niet kunnen ademen? Echt zwaar KLOTE is. Enorm teleurstellend. *Enorm.*'

In the source text certain words are capitalized and marked with italics in order to indicate Hazel's inflection and tone of voice. The same occurs in the final sentence: "let me just assure

you that not being able to breathe?", where the ungrammatical usage of the question mark indicates Hazel rising inflection (20). These graphological markers are absent from the Lenders translation and it is slightly unclear as to why they are absent, as in other parts of the text these markers are maintained, as earlier in the translation the line about being as lucky as Patrick remains marked with capitals. In this passage only the word *hamartia* is still marked with italics, possibly to indicate its importance to the story. I hesitate to ascribe these graphological changes to Lenders alone as this choice may have been made by the editorial department rather than herself.

In the passage where Augustus breaks down in the parking lot of a gas station I noted the singular usage of the word "fucking". Lenders has utilized the same strategy as I did for the usage of swear words: use euphemistic version of the word "godverdomme" in all instances where a euphemistic version of the word "fucking" appeared to increase the emotional importance of Augustus' break down when he finally does use the word "godverdomme" / "fucking." I also noted the possibility of translating the endearment "sweetie", which Hazel uses here, concordantly in order to maintain its relation to the other times it is used in the novel. Lenders appears to have not picked up on this as she uses different variations of the word "lieverd" for the translation of sweetie:

'Dat is echt essentieel. Ik bedoel, is dit verdomme mijn arm of een dartbord? 3) Praat niet op een neerbuigend toontje.' 'Hoe gaat het, liefje?' vroeg ik zo overdreven mogelijk. 'Ik steek nu een naald in je. Misschien doet dat een beetje au'(Lenders 65).

'Hij gaf over zonder ook maar de kracht te hebben om zijn hoofd opzij te draaien. 'Ach, lieverd toch,'zei ik' (Lenders 201).

In the translation of this particular passage I attempted to emphasize the difference between the Augustus Waters who is shown here and the Augustus Waters who is shown at the start of the novel by inserting several diminutives. Lenders on the other hand chose not to do so:

Hij keek naar me omhoog. Het was afschuwelijk. Ik kon nauwelijks naar hem kijken. De Augustus Waters van de scheve lachjes en de onaangestoken sigaretten was verdwenen, vervangen door dit wanhopige, vernederde schepsel onder me (Lenders 201).

Maar dit was de waarheid, een meelijwekkende jongen die wanhopig graag niet meelijwekkend wilde zijn, schreeuwend en huilend, vergiftigd door een geïnfecteerde sonde die hem in leven hield, maar niet genoeg in leven (Lenders 202).

I would argue that particularly in the case of "jongen" a diminutive form such as "jongentje" or even "jochie" would have perhaps fitted in better with the tone of the narration, as Hazel is contrasting the fantastical vision people usually have of cancer patients with the harsh reality. Furthermore, it would have served to reinforce the reduction of Augustus to a real boy, as opposed to pretentious young man, who is scared of and wailing in the face of death.

In translating the interactions between Van Houten and Hazel and the letters he writes to Augustus Lenders and I both played around with the T-V distinction in Dutch. Our strategy for Van Houten turned out to be largely the same, save for one critical point. Van Houten uses the more informal "je" in Lenders' translation when he speaks face-to-face with Augustus and Hazel, but in his letters he distinguishes between Augustus and Hazel by addresses Augustus with the more formal and polite "u" form. On the surface it is a strange distinction to make, but it might be a subtle way of emphasizing the consistent lack of respect Van Houten shows towards Hazel. Hazel reminds him of his own daughter who has passed away from cancer and he is incapable of dealing with it. As a result he is consistently belligerent and abrasive towards Hazel, something which is heralded here by having him already address Hazel using the "je" form in his letters, showing that he is already incapable of distancing himself and remaining polite.

I also argued that after their confrontation in Amsterdam Hazel should no longer address Van Houten with "u" as she has lost all respect for him a figure of authority. Lenders' does not make this distinction, and her Hazel still addresses Van Houten with "u" after their confrontation. Only in the instances when she yells at him, or starts calling him "bastard" or

"douchepants", does Lenders' have Hazel make the switch to the "je" form. This might actually be a more preferable strategy as by only letting her use "je" in the instances where Hazel does start to swear or shout these moments are given more emphasis as moments where she breaks her normally polite character and thus

Regarding the translation of idiolect elements Lenders and I for the most part utilized the same strategy: maintain as much of the linguistic diversity of the character's speech as possible. This resulted in several differences regarding word choice, but these difference are not incredibly significant:

Source Text	My Translation	Lenders translation
grazed at a decrepit selection of cookies	een armzalig assortiment koekjes	het treurige koekjesassortiment
preternaturally huge	buitengewoon groot	Onnatuurlijk groot
like an indomitable eagle	als een ontembare arend	als een onverzettelijke adelaar
, that if you cannot hear Afasi och Filthy's bravadic response	dat als jullie het moedige antwoord van Afasi och Filthy's op angst niet kunnen horen	Als jullie de onverschrokken respons op angst van Afasi oCh Filthy niet kunnen horen

The main difference between our translations when it comes to idiolect is to be found in the way we dealt with the Dutch accent. Though we both declined using an eye-dialect or purposefully making the language the Dutch characters use ungrammatical an interesting difference does occur when it comes to the following interaction:

"We don't speak Dutch," Gus shouted back. **One of the others shouted a translation: 'The beautiful couple is beautiful'** (165).

Lenders has translated the entire interaction into Dutch:

'We spreken geen Nederlands,'riep Gus terug. Een van de anderen vertaalde: 'Op het fantastisch mooie stel!' (Lenders 135)

I would argue that in the case of the shouted translation maintaining the English "The beautiful couple is beautiful" is important because otherwise the interaction appears incongruous. After all why would the other person shout a translation of Dutch, in Dutch after Gus has admitted they do not speak Dutch? What makes this particular instance even stranger is the fact that during other instances Lenders did maintain English words, for instance in the case of "Dat wist ik doordat Patrick, de leider van de Praatgroep en de enige persoon boven de achttien in die ruimte, ons elke week weer zat door te zagen over dat hart van Jezus en dat wij, jonge *survivors*, daar precies in het heel erg heilige hart van Christus zaten en zo" and in the case of "Eindelijk taxieden we naar de startbaan en de piloot riep om: '*Cabinecrew, ready for take-off*'" (Lenders 7-8; 121).

5.2. CSES AND INTERTEXTUALITY

For the translation of the CSEs both Lenders and I have attempted to maintain the foreign setting. For the passage where Hazel dials 911, we both decided to maintain the emergency services number, as well as the usage of the English street names:

Ik haalde stilletjes mijn telefoon tevoorschijn en keek omlaag om 911 te bellen. 'het spijt me,' zei ik. 'Negen-één-één, wie wil je spreken: politie, brandweer of ambulance?' 'Hi, ik sta op de snelweg bij Eighty-Sixth Street en Ditch en ik heb een ambulance nodig. De grote liefde van mijn leven heeft een kapotte sonde' (Lenders 201).

Stilletjes pakte ik mijn telefoon en keek omlaag om 911 te draaien. 'Het spijt me,' zei ik tegen hem. *negen-één-één, wat is uw noodgeval?* 'Hoi, ik sta bij het tankstation op de hoek van Eighty-Sixth en Ditch en ik heb een ambulance nodig. De grote liefde van mijn leven heeft een kapotte sonde.'

Lenders has added in the word "Street" in her translation of the street names in order to clarify the fact that Hazel is naming street names, whereas I added in a clarification regarding the corner location. Lenders made a slight error here in translating Speedway with "snelweg", as Speedway is the name of the gas station they are parked at rather than the type of road they are parked on. Lenders also slightly shifted the setting to the Netherlands when it comes to what the phone operator tells Hazel, as she uses the standard Dutch formulation: "wie wil je spreken: politie, brandweer of ambulance?" (201). I deliberately avoided using the Dutch standard utterance, though it must be said that readers are unlikely to be aware that there is a difference between what emergency services phone operators say in the USA and what they say in the Netherlands. It is odd, however, that this line is given as a part of the dialogue using quotation marks, whereas in the source text it is deliberately kept separate from the dialogue and marked with italics. As with the other graphological changes, I also hesitate to ascribe this particular change to Lenders, as the editorial department might be responsible for these particular choices.

For the translation of the CSEs that occur in the Amsterdam setting Lenders and I also appeared to have tried to maintain the foreignness of Hazel:

Terwijl we in een brede, drukke straat op tram 1 stonden te wachten, zei ik tegen Augustus: 'Dit pak draag je zeker naar begrafenis?''

'Nou, nee, ' zei hij. 'Dat is lang niet zo mooi.'

De blauwwitte tram stopte bij de halte en Augustus gaf onze kaartjes aan de bestuurder die ons uitlegde dat we ze voor een ronde sensor moesten houden (Lenders 132).

Terwijl we wachtten voor tram 1 op een brede straat vol met verkeer, zei ik tegen Augustus, 'Ik neem aan dat dit het pak is dat je naar begrafenis draagt?'

'Om eerlijk te zijn, nee,' zei hij. 'Dat pak is bij lange na niet zo mooi als deze.'

De blauwwitte tram arriveerde en Augustus gaf onze kaarten aan de bestuurder die uitlegde dat we ze voor een soort ronde sensor heen en weer moesten zwaaien.

We both forewent attempting to translate "cards" as "OV-chipkaart", but Lenders went one step further with this word than I to emphasize the foreignness and translated "cards" to "kaartjes", implying a connection with paper tickets. For what they need to do with the cards: Lenders described the actual action one needs to undertake in order to get an OV-chip card reader to register the card, which is to hold it still in front of the sensor. I stayed closer to the source text in order to emphasize Hazel's unfamiliarity with the system: "dat we ze voor een soort ronde sensor heen en weer moesten zwaaien."

Regarding the strategy utilized for the translation of intertextual elements we both appeared to have had the same idea of using already existing translations if available rather than attempting a translation ourselves. This led to many commonalities, as the translation of the William Carlos Williams poem, 'the Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and the title of *An Imperial*

Affliction were all derived from the same sources. For the translation of the poem titles we have also had the same line of thought: use the Dutch title, if available.

The only point on which we differed was the translation of the Shakespearean quotations. Nan Lenders used a variety of sources for the translation of the Shakespeare quotes and our choices turned out to be the same for the most part, as we both looked towards Komrij and Honders for the translation of the *Romeo and Juliet* allusion and the Sonnet 55 quotation. The points where we differ are the translation of the *Hamlet* allusion and the *Julius Caesar* allusion. Lenders included a list of the sources from which her intertextual elements were derived, but both the *Hamlet* and the *Julius Caesar* allusion are remarkably absent. Comparing her translation of the *Hamlet* line "Ik dwaal af, maar waar het om gaat is," to the available translations of *Hamlet* in Dutch it would appear that she did not draw inspiration from them. It is likely that Lenders either missed the allusion here or deliberately treated it as a non-allusion, because the expression itself has become a stereotypical allusion which might have led her to have simply treated this particular instance as a colloquial expression.

The translation of the *Julius Caesar* quotation is interesting, because she does list a source for the other *Julius Caesar* allusion which occurs in later in the novel: Burgersdijk. The translation used for the *Julius Caesar* allusion in Van Houten's letter is also derived from this source but it appears to have undergone some changes :

Niet door een weeffout in onze sterren, Brutus, Neen door onszelve zijn wij klein en nietig (Lenders 94).

Niet door de schuld van ons gesternte, Brutus,

Neen, door onszelve zijn wij klein en nietig (Burgersdijk).

The last line appears to be quoted directly from the Burgersdijk translation, as it is identical to the one used in the translation. However, the first line was changed slightly in the Lenders translation. The format mimics that of the Burgersdijk translation but the phrase "een weeffout

in onze sterren" is not only inconsistent not only with the Burgersdijk translation, it also does not appear to have been derived from any other Dutch *Julius Caesar* translation. It is likely that the translation of this particular phrase was influenced by the choice of the title and was adjusted to fit the title rather than the other way around, in order to maintain the link between the title and the allusion. I hesitate to ascribe this change to Lenders alone as well, as it is highly likely that the marketing department at Lemniscaat had a hand in deciding what the best and most appealing title was for a Dutch audience. Though our strategies were different our chosen titles for the translation differ very little:

Een weeffout in onze sterren (Lenders).

De fout in onze sterren

The usage of "weeffout" instead of "fout" in the title and the quotation reinforces the connection between the predetermined nature of fate and the usage of stars to indicate fate and is perhaps more clear than just using "fout".

It is interesting to note that in *TFIOS Van Houten* only quotes part of the Shakespearean line: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars/But in ourselves," rather than the full quote: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves that we are underlings" (111 ; *Julius Ceasar* 1.2). However, in the Lenders translation the full quote was included. This decision to include the last part of the quote was probably motivated by the format and particularly the word order of the Burgersdijk translation. Shortening the Burgersdijk quote in the same way as the original would have resulted in an incomprehensible piece of text: "Niet door een weeffout in onze sterren, Brutus, Neen door onszelve".

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to look at the kind of translation problems which presented themselves when translating the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* and to examine the possible and most desirable solutions for those problems. In order to do so I first gave a general background of young adult literature in section 1 in order to contextualize the novel and work towards explaining the background of some of the considerations I had in making certain translation choices for an adolescent audience, especially regarding the translation of the CSEs and the intertextual elements.

I chose to approach the notion of translation problems in *TFIOS* from two angles: style and intertextuality. I discussed the notion of style in regard to translation in section 2 and in this discussion of *TFIOS* I primarily focused on the areas of conversational tone and idiolect. Dealing with these two areas as a source of translation problems yielded several interesting issues, such as the translation of a dialect when it is translated into a language from where it originates. Tone in the form of conversational tone appears to be something which is always touched upon, but rarely fully researched in translation studies. I have made an attempt to see how tone affects translation in this thesis to a certain degree, but the subject will undoubtedly profit from further research. It was a rewarding exercise as *TFIOS* utilizes many different conversational tones. On the other hand, a major component of conversational tone is the notion of address and in this aspect examining *TFIOS* was slightly less rewarding as modern works frequently do not have the same variety in style of address as more older works like Austen's *Emma*. In section 5 I discussed the Dutch translation of *TFIOS*, *Een weeffout in onze sterren*, which was done by Nan Lenders. For the most part Lenders and I made the same choices regarding the preservation of the style of the novel, though the execution might have differed here and there. However, in some instances our choices differed greatly, as could be seen in the way we dealt with maintaining certain English phrases or how we dealt with the style of address in the conversations between Hazel and Peter Van Houten.

The translation of intertextuality, which I discussed in section 3, was interesting in particular due to the sheer amount of options available. In my theoretical section I explained that recreating the intertextual links between an allusion and its source text, and the relation people have with an allusion in the source culture, in translation is a difficult and often arduous endeavor. In my translation I, however, found that most of the choices I made about the translation of allusions were not necessarily determined by their relation to their source text or the relation between the allusion and the reading public, but by the way the allusion functioned within the text and its relation to either a certain theme or its function on a characterizing or interpersonal level. The same motive appears to have guided Lenders, as she too consistently made the choice to preserve the intertextual elements in the context of how they fit into the translated text rather than how they fit into the web of intertextuality present in the source culture, as could be seen from her adjustments to the Burgersdijk translation.

There are undoubtedly other areas which can be explored for the translation of a novel like *TFIOS* and the translation of YAL, such as the translation of humour or youth language. I briefly touched upon these in my section about conversational tone and dialect, but they would also be an excellent area of research in and of themselves when it comes to YAL.

7. SOURCE TEXTS

7.1. EPIGRAPH

As the tide washed in, the Dutch Tulip Man faced the ocean: “Conjoiner rejoinder poisoner concealer revelator. Look at it, rising up and rising down, taking everything with it.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“Water,” the Dutchman said. “Well, and time.”

—PETER VAN HOUTEN, *An Imperial Affliction*

7.2. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Late in the winter of my seventeenth year, my mother decided I was depressed, presumably because I rarely left the house, spent quite a lot of time in bed, read the same book over and over, ate infrequently, and devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time to thinking about death.

Whenever you read a cancer booklet or website or whatever, they always list depression among the side effects of cancer. But, in fact, depression is not a side effect of cancer. Depression is a side effect of dying. (Cancer is also a side effect of dying. Almost everything is, really.) But my mom believed I required treatment, so she took me to see my Regular Doctor Jim, who agreed that I was veritably swimming in a paralyzing and totally clinical depression, and that therefore my meds should be adjusted and also I should attend a weekly Support Group.

This Support Group featured a rotating cast of characters in various states of tumor-driven unwellness. Why did the cast rotate? A side effect of dying.

The Support Group, of course, was depressing as hell. It met every Wednesday in the basement of a stone-walled Episcopal church shaped like a cross. We all sat in a circle right in the middle of the cross, where the two boards would have met, where the heart of Jesus would have been.

I noticed this because Patrick, the Support Group Leader and only person over eighteen in the room, talked about the heart of Jesus every freaking meeting, all about how we, as young cancer survivors, were sitting right in Christ’s very sacred heart and whatever.

So here’s how it went in God’s heart: The six or seven or ten of us walked/wheeled in, grazed at a decrepit selection of cookies and lemonade, sat down in the Circle of Trust, and listened to Patrick recount for the thousandth time his depressingly miserable life story—how he had cancer in his balls and they thought he was going to die but he didn’t die and now here he is, a full-grown adult in a church basement in the 137th nicest city in America, divorced, addicted to video games, mostly friendless, eking out a meager living by exploiting his concertastic past, slowly working his way toward a master’s degree that will not improve his career prospects, waiting, as we all do, for the sword of Damocles to give him the relief that he escaped lo those many years ago when cancer took both of his nuts but spared what only the most generous soul would call his life.

AND YOU TOO MIGHT BE SO LUCKY!

Then we introduced ourselves: Name. Age. Diagnosis. And how we're doing today. I'm Hazel, I'd say when they'd get to me. Sixteen. Thyroid originally but with an impressive and long-settled satellite colony in my lungs. And I'm doing okay.

Once we got around the circle, Patrick always asked if anyone wanted to share. And then began the circle jerk of support: everyone talking about fighting and battling and winning and shrinking and scanning. To be fair to Patrick, he let us talk about dying, too. But most of them weren't dying. Most would live into adulthood, as Patrick had.

(Which meant there was quite a lot of competitiveness about it, with everybody wanting to beat not only cancer itself, but also the other people in the room. Like, I realize that this is irrational, but when they tell you that you have, say, a 20 percent chance of living five years, the math kicks in and you figure that's one in five . . . so you look around and think, as any healthy person would: I gotta outlast four of these bastards.)

The only redeeming facet of Support Group was this kid named Isaac, a long-faced, skinny guy with straight blond hair swept over one eye.

And his eyes were the problem. He had some fantastically improbable eye cancer. One eye had been cut out when he was a kid, and now he wore the kind of thick glasses that made his eyes (both the real one and the glass one) preternaturally huge, like his whole head was basically just this fake eye and this real eye staring at you. From what I could gather on the rare occasions when Isaac shared with the group, a recurrence had placed his remaining eye in mortal peril.

Isaac and I communicated almost exclusively through sighs. Each time someone discussed anticancer diets or snorting ground-up shark fin or whatever, he'd glance over at me and sigh ever so slightly. I'd shake my head microscopically and exhale in response.

7.3. CHAPTER 1: AUGUSTUS AND HAZEL FIRST MEETING

Mom wasn't there yet, which was unusual, because Mom was almost always waiting for me. I glanced around and saw that a tall, curvy brunette girl had Isaac pinned against the stone wall of the church, kissing him rather aggressively. They were close enough to me that I could hear the weird noises of their mouths together, and I could hear him saying, "Always," and her saying, "Always," in return.

Suddenly standing next to me, Augustus half whispered, "They're big believers in PDA."

"What's with the 'always'?" The slurping sounds intensified.

"Always is their thing. They'll always love each other and whatever. I would conservatively estimate they have texted each other the word always four million times in the last year."

A couple more cars drove up, taking Michael and Alisa away. It was just Augustus and me now, watching Isaac and Monica, who proceeded apace as if they were not leaning against a place of worship. His hand reached for her boob over her shirt and pawed at it, his palm still while his

fingers moved around. I wondered if that felt good. Didn't seem like it would, but I decided to forgive Isaac on the grounds that he was going blind. The senses must feast while there is yet hunger and whatever.

"Imagine taking that last drive to the hospital," I said quietly. "The last time you'll ever drive a car."

Without looking over at me, Augustus said, "You're killing my vibe here, Hazel Grace. I'm trying to observe young love in its many-splendored awkwardness."

"I think he's hurting her boob," I said.

"Yes, it's difficult to ascertain whether he is trying to arouse her or perform a breast exam." Then Augustus Waters reached into a pocket and pulled out, of all things, a pack of cigarettes. He flipped it open and put a cigarette between his lips.

"Are you serious?" I asked. "You think that's cool? Oh, my God, you just ruined the whole thing."

"Which whole thing?" he asked, turning to me. The cigarette dangled unlit from the unsmiling corner of his mouth.

"The whole thing where a boy who is not unattractive or unintelligent or seemingly in any way unacceptable stares at me and points out incorrect uses of literality and compares me to actresses and asks me to watch a movie at his house. But of course there is always a hamartia and yours is that oh, my God, even though you HAD FREAKING CANCER you give money to a company in exchange for the chance to acquire YET MORE CANCER. Oh, my God. Let me just assure you that not being able to breathe? SUCKS. Totally disappointing. Totally."

"A hamartia?" he asked, the cigarette still in his mouth. It tightened his jaw. He had a hell of a jawline, unfortunately.

"A fatal flaw," I explained, turning away from him. I stepped toward the curb, leaving Augustus Waters behind me, and then I heard a car start down the street. It was Mom. She'd been waiting for me to, like, make friends or whatever.

I felt this weird mix of disappointment and anger welling up inside of me. I don't even know what the feeling was, really, just that there was a lot of it, and I wanted to smack Augustus Waters and also replace my lungs with lungs that didn't suck at being lungs. I was standing with my Chuck Taylors on the very edge of the curb, the oxygen tank ball-and-chaining in the cart by my side, and right as my mom pulled up, I felt a hand grab mine.

I yanked my hand free but turned back to him.

"They don't kill you unless you light them," he said as Mom arrived at the curb. "And I've never lit one. It's a metaphor, see: You put the killing thing right between your teeth, but you don't give it the power to do its killing."

"It's a metaphor," I said, dubious. Mom was just idling.

"It's a metaphor," he said.

"You choose your behaviors based on their metaphorical resonances . . ." I said.

“Oh, yes.” He smiled. The big, goofy, real smile. “I’m a big believer in metaphor, Hazel Grace.”

I turned to the car. Tapped the window. It rolled down. “I’m going to a movie with Augustus Waters,” I said. “Please record the next several episodes of the ANTMmarathon for me.”

7.4. CHAPTER 7: LETTER FROM VAN HOUTEN

He reached for my hand again, but this time to slip into it a heavily folded sheet of stationery on the letterhead of Peter Van Houten, Novelist Emeritus.

I didn’t read it until I got home, situated in my own huge and empty bed with no chance of medical interruption. It took me forever to decode Van Houten’s sloped, scratchy script.

Dear Mr. Waters,

I am in receipt of your electronic mail dated the 14th of April and duly impressed by the Shakespearean complexity of your tragedy. Everyone in this tale has a rock-solid hamartia: hers, that she is so sick; yours, that you are so well. Were she better or you sicker, then the stars would not be so terribly crossed, but it is the nature of stars to cross, and never was Shakespeare more wrong than when he had Cassius note, “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves.” Easy enough to say when you’re a Roman nobleman (or Shakespeare!), but there is no shortage of fault to be found amid our stars.

While we’re on the topic of old Will’s insufficiencies, your writing about young Hazel reminds me of the Bard’s Fifty-fifth sonnet, which of course begins, “Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme; / But you shall shine more bright in these contents / Than unswept stone, besmear’d with sluttish time.” (Off topic, but: What a slut time is. She screws everybody.) It’s a fine poem but a deceitful one: We do indeed remember Shakespeare’s powerful rhyme, but what do we remember about the person it commemorates? Nothing. We’re pretty sure he was male; everything else is guesswork. Shakespeare told us precious little of the man whom he entombed in his linguistic sarcophagus. (Witness also that when we talk about literature, we do so in the present tense. When we speak of the dead, we are not so kind.) You do not immortalize the lost by writing about them. Language buries, but does not resurrect. (Full disclosure: I am not the first to make this observation. cf, the MacLeish poem “Not Marble, Nor the Gilded Monuments,” which contains the heroic line “I shall say you will die and none will remember you.”)

I digress, but here’s the rub: The dead are visible only in the terrible lidless eye of memory. The living, thank heaven, retain the ability to surprise and to disappoint. Your Hazel is alive, Waters, and you mustn’t impose your will upon another’s decision, particularly a decision arrived at thoughtfully. She wishes to spare you pain, and you should let her. You may not find young Hazel’s logic persuasive, but I have trod through this vale of tears longer than you, and from where I’m sitting, she’s not the lunatic.

Yours truly,

Peter Van Houten

It was really written by him. I licked my finger and dabbed the paper and the ink bled a little, so I knew it was really real.

“Mom,” I said. I did not say it loudly, but I didn’t have to. She was always waiting. She peeked her head around the door.

“You okay, sweetie?”

“Can we call Dr. Maria and ask if international travel would kill me?”

7.5. CHAPTER 8: EMAIL FROM LIDEWIJ

Dear Hazel,

I have received word via the Genies that you will be visiting us with Augustus Waters and your mother beginning on 4th of May. Only a week away! Peter and I are delighted and cannot wait to make your acquaintance. Your hotel, the Filosoof, is just one street away from Peter’s home. Perhaps we should give you one day for the jet lag, yes? So if convenient, we will meet you at Peter’s home on the morning of 5th May at perhaps ten o’clock for a cup of coffee and for him to answer questions you have about his book. And then perhaps afterward we can tour a museum or the Anne Frank House?

With all best wishes,

7.6. CHAPTER 11: DINNER IN HOLLAND

Waiting for the number one tram on a wide street busy with traffic, I said to Augustus, “The suit you wear to funerals, I assume?”

“Actually, no,” he said. “That suit isn’t nearly this nice.”

The blue-and-white tram arrived, and Augustus handed our cards to the driver, who explained that we needed to wave them at this circular sensor. As we walked through the crowded tram, an old man stood up to give us seats together, and I tried to tell him to sit, but he gestured toward the seat insistently. We rode the tram for three stops, me leaning over Gus so we could look out the window together.

Augustus pointed up at the trees and asked, “Do you see that?”

I did. There were elm trees everywhere along the canals, and these seeds were blowing out of them. But they didn’t look like seeds. They looked for all the world like miniaturized rose petals drained of their color. These pale petals were gathering in the wind like flocking birds—thousands of them, like a spring snowstorm.

The old man who'd given up his seat saw us noticing and said, in English, "Amsterdam's spring snow. The iepen throw confetti to greet the spring."

We switched trams, and after four more stops we arrived at a street split by a beautiful canal, the reflections of the ancient bridge and picturesque canal houses rippling in water.

Oranje was just steps from the tram. The restaurant was on one side of the street; the outdoor seating on the other, on a concrete outcropping right at the edge of the canal. The hostess's eyes lit up as Augustus and I walked toward her. "Mr. and Mrs. Waters?"

"I guess?" I said.

"Your table," she said, gesturing across the street to a narrow table inches from the canal. "The champagne is our gift."

Gus and I glanced at each other, smiling. Once we'd crossed the street, he pulled out a seat for me and helped me scoot it back in. There were indeed two flutes of champagne at our white-tableclothed table. The slight chill in the air was balanced magnificently by the sunshine; on one side of us, cyclists pedaled past—well-dressed men and women on their way home from work, improbably attractive blond girls riding sidesaddle on the back of a friend's bike, tiny helmetless kids bouncing around in plastic seats behind their parents. And on our other side, the canal water was choked with millions of the confetti seeds. Little boats were moored at the brick banks, half full of rainwater, some of them near sinking. A bit farther down the canal, I could see houseboats floating on pontoons, and in the middle of the canal, an open-air, flat-bottomed boat decked out with lawn chairs and a portable stereo idled toward us. Augustus took his flute of champagne and raised it. I took mine, even though I'd never had a drink aside from sips of my dad's beer.

"Okay," he said.

"Okay," I said, and we clinked glasses. I took a sip. The tiny bubbles melted in my mouth and journeyed northward into my brain. Sweet. Crisp. Delicious. "That is really good," I said. "I've never drank champagne."

A sturdy young waiter with wavy blond hair appeared. He was maybe even taller than Augustus. "Do you know," he asked in a delicious accent, "what Dom Pérignon said after inventing champagne?"

"No?" I said.

"He called out to his fellow monks, 'Come quickly: I am tasting the stars.' Welcome to Amsterdam. Would you like to see a menu, or will you have the chef's choice?"

I looked at Augustus and he at me. "The chef's choice sounds lovely, but Hazel is a vegetarian." I'd mentioned this to Augustus precisely once, on the first day we met.

"This is not a problem," the waiter said.

"Awesome. And can we get more of this?" Gus asked, of the champagne.

“Of course,” said our waiter. “We have bottled all the stars this evening, my young friends. Gah, the confetti!” he said, and lightly brushed a seed from my bare shoulder. “It hasn’t been so bad in many years. It’s everywhere. Very annoying.”

The waiter disappeared. We watched the confetti fall from the sky, skip across the ground in the breeze, and tumble into the canal. “Kind of hard to believe anyone could ever find that annoying,” Augustus said after a while.

“People always get used to beauty, though.”

“I haven’t gotten used to you just yet,” he answered, smiling. I felt myself blushing. “Thank you for coming to Amsterdam,” he said.

“Thank you for letting me hijack your wish,” I said.

“Thank you for wearing that dress which is like whoa,” he said. I shook my head, trying not to smile at him. I didn’t want to be a grenade. But then again, he knew what he was doing, didn’t he? It was his choice, too. “Hey, how’s that poem end?” he asked.

“Huh?”

“The one you recited to me on the plane.”

“Oh, ‘Prufrock’? It ends, ‘We have lingered in the chambers of the sea / By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown / Till human voices wake us, and we drown.’”

Augustus pulled out a cigarette and tapped the filter against the table. “Stupid human voices always ruining everything.”

The waiter arrived with two more glasses of champagne and what he called “Belgian white asparagus with a lavender infusion.”

“I’ve never had champagne either,” Gus said after he left. “In case you were wondering or whatever. Also, I’ve never had white asparagus.”

I was chewing my first bite. “It’s amazing,” I promised.

He took a bite, swallowed. “God. If asparagus tasted like that all the time, I’d be a vegetarian, too.” Some people in a lacquered wooden boat approached us on the canal below. One of them, a woman with curly blond hair, maybe thirty, drank from a beer then raised her glass toward us and shouted something.

“We don’t speak Dutch,” Gus shouted back.

One of the others shouted a translation: “The beautiful couple is beautiful.”

7.7. CHAPTER 12: CONVERSATION WITH VAN HOUTEN

He took a long drink, then grimaced. "I do not have a drinking problem," he announced, his voice needlessly loud. "I have a **Churchillian relationship** with alcohol: I can crack jokes and govern England and do anything I want to do. Except not drink." He glanced over at Lidewij and nodded toward his glass. She took it, then walked back to the bar. "Just the idea of water, Lidewij," he instructed.

"Yah, got it," she said, the accent almost American.

The second drink arrived. Van Houten's spine stiffened again out of respect. He kicked off his slippers. He had really ugly feet. He was rather ruining the whole business of authorial genius for me. But he had the answers.

"Well, um," I said, "first, we do want to say thank you for dinner last night and—"

"We bought them dinner last night?" Van Houten asked Lidewij.

"Yes, at Oranje."

"Ah, yes. Well, believe me when I say that you do not have me to thank but rather Lidewij, who is exceptionally talented in the field of spending my money."

"It was our pleasure," Lidewij said.

"Well, thanks, at any rate," Augustus said. I could hear annoyance in his voice.

"So here I am," Van Houten said after a moment. "What are your questions?"

"Um," Augustus said.

"He seemed so intelligent in print," Van Houten said to Lidewij regarding Augustus. "Perhaps the cancer has established a beachhead in his brain."

"Peter," Lidewij said, duly horrified.

I was horrified, too, but there was something pleasant about a guy so despicable that he wouldn't treat us deferentially. "We do have some questions, actually," I said. "I talked about them in my email. I don't know if you remember."

"I do not."

"His memory is compromised," Lidewij said.

"If only my memory would compromise," Van Houten responded.

"So, our questions," I repeated.

"She uses the royal we," Peter said to no one in particular. Another sip. I didn't know what Scotch tasted like, but if it tasted anything like champagne, I couldn't imagine how he could drink so much, so quickly, so early in the morning. "Are you familiar **with Zeno's tortoise paradox?**" he asked me.

“We have questions about what happens to the characters after the end of the book, specifically Anna’s—”

“You wrongly assume that I need to hear your question in order to answer it. **You are familiar with the philosopher Zeno?**” I shook my head vaguely. “Alas. Zeno was a pre-Socratic philosopher who is said to have discovered forty paradoxes within the worldview put forth by Parmenides—surely you know Parmenides,” he said, and I nodded that **I knew Parmenides, although I did not.** “Thank God,” he said. “Zeno professionally specialized in revealing the inaccuracies and oversimplifications of Parmenides, which wasn’t difficult, since Parmenides was spectacularly wrong everywhere and always. Parmenides is valuable in precisely the way that it is valuable to have an acquaintance who reliably picks the wrong horse each and every time you take him to the racetrack. But Zeno’s most important—wait, give me a sense of your familiarity with Swedish hip-hop.”

I could not tell if Peter Van Houten was kidding. After a moment, Augustus answered for me. “Limited,” he said.

“Okay, but presumably you know Afasi och Filthy’s seminal album *Fläcken*.”

“We do not,” I said for the both of us.

“Lidewij, play ‘Bomfalleralla’ immediately.” Lidewij walked over to an MP3 player, spun the wheel a bit, then hit a button. A rap song boomed from every direction. It sounded like a fairly regular rap song, except the words were in Swedish.

After it was over, Peter Van Houten looked at us expectantly, his little eyes as wide as they could get. “Yeah?” he asked. “Yeah?”

I said, “I’m sorry, sir, but we don’t speak Swedish.”

“Well, of course you don’t. Neither do I. Who the hell speaks Swedish? The important thing is not whatever nonsense the voices are saying, but what the voices are feeling. Surely you know that there are only two emotions, love and fear, and that Afasi och Filthy navigate between them with the kind of facility that one simply does not find in hip-hop music outside of Sweden. Shall I play it for you again?”

“Are you joking?” Gus said.

“Pardon?”

“Is this some kind of performance?” He looked up at Lidewij and asked, “Is it?”

“I’m afraid not,” Lidewij answered. “He’s not always—this is unusually—”

“Oh, shut up, Lidewij. Rudolf Otto said that if you had not encountered the numinous, if you have not experienced a nonrational encounter with the *mysterium tremendum*, then his work was not for you. And I say to you, young friends, that if you cannot hear Afasi och Filthy’s bravadic response to fear, then my work is not for you.”

I cannot emphasize this enough: It was a completely normal rap song, except in Swedish. “Um,” I said. “So about *An Imperial Affliction*. Anna’s mom, when the book ends, is about to—”

Van Houten interrupted me, tapping his glass as he talked until Lidewij refilled it again. “So Zeno is most famous for his tortoise paradox. Let us imagine that you are in a race with a tortoise. The tortoise has a ten-yard head start. In the time it takes you to run that ten yards, the tortoise has maybe moved one yard. And then in the time it takes you to make up that distance, the tortoise goes a bit farther, and so on forever. You are faster than the tortoise but you can never catch him; you can only decrease his lead.

“Of course, you just run past the tortoise without contemplating the mechanics involved, but the question of how you are able to do this turns out to be incredibly complicated, and no one really solved it until Cantor showed us that some infinities are bigger than other infinities.”

“Um,” I said.

“I assume that answers your question,” he said confidently, then sipped generously from his glass.

Not really,” I said. “We were wondering, after the end of *An Imperial Affliction*—”

“I disavow everything in that putrid novel,” Van Houten said, cutting me off.

“No,” I said.

“Excuse me?”

“No, that is not acceptable,” I said. “I understand that the story ends midnarrative because Anna dies or becomes too sick to continue, but you said you would tell us what happens to everybody, and that’s why we’re here, and we, I need you to tell me.”

Van Houten sighed. After another drink, he said, “Very well. Whose story do you seek?”

“Anna’s mom, the Dutch Tulip Man, Sisyphus the Hamster, I mean, just—what happens to everyone.”

Van Houten closed his eyes and puffed his cheeks as he exhaled, then looked up at the exposed wooden beams crisscrossing the ceiling. “The hamster,” he said after a while. “The hamster gets adopted by Christine”—who was one of Anna’s presickness friends. That made sense. Christine and Anna played with Sisyphus in a few scenes. “He is adopted by Christine and lives for a couple years after the end of the novel and dies peacefully in his hamster sleep.”

Now we were getting somewhere. “Great,” I said. “Great. Okay, so the Dutch Tulip Man. Is he a con man? Do he and Anna’s mom get married?”

Van Houten was still staring at the ceiling beams. He took a drink. The glass was almost empty again. “Lidewij, I can’t do it. I can’t. I can’t.” He leveled his gaze to me. “Nothing happens to the Dutch Tulip Man. He isn’t a con man or not a con man; he’s God. He’s an obvious and unambiguous metaphorical representation of God, and asking what becomes of him is the intellectual equivalent of asking what becomes of the disembodied eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg in *Gatsby*. Do he and Anna’s mom get married? We are speaking of a novel, dear child, not some historical enterprise.”

“Right, but surely you must have thought about what happens to them, I mean as characters, I mean independent of their metaphorical meanings or whatever.”

“They’re fictions,” he said, tapping his glass again. “Nothing happens to them.”

7.7. CHAPTER 18: WILIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

There were only two cars in the lot. I pulled up next to his. I opened the door. The interior lights came on. Augustus sat in the driver’s seat, covered in his own vomit, his hands pressed to his belly where the G-tube went in. “Hi,” he mumbled.

“Oh, God, Augustus, we have to get you to a hospital.”

“Please just look at it.” I gagged from the smell but bent forward to inspect the place above his belly button where they’d surgically installed the tube. The skin of his abdomen was warm and bright red.

“Gus, I think something’s infected. I can’t fix this. Why are you here? Why aren’t you at home?” He puked, without even the energy to turn his mouth away from his lap. “Oh, sweetie,” I said.

“I wanted to buy a pack of cigarettes,” he mumbled. “I lost my pack. Or they took it away from me. I don’t know. They said they’d get me another one, but I wanted . . . to do it myself. Do one little thing myself.”

He was staring straight ahead. Quietly, I pulled out my phone and glanced down to dial 911.

“I’m sorry,” I told him. Nine-one-one, what is your emergency? “Hi, I’m at the Speedway at Eighty-sixth and Ditch, and I need an ambulance. The great love of my life has a malfunctioning G-tube.”

He looked up at me. It was horrible. I could hardly look at him. The Augustus Waters of the crooked smiles and unsmoked cigarettes was gone, replaced by this desperate humiliated creature sitting there beneath me.

“This is it. I can’t even not smoke anymore.”

“Gus, I love you.”

“Where is my chance to be somebody’s Peter Van Houten?” He hit the steering wheel weakly, the car honking as he cried. He leaned his head back, looking up. “I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this I disgust myself I hate it I hate it I hate it just let me fucking die.”

According to the conventions of the genre, Augustus Waters kept his sense of humor till the end, did not for a moment waiver in his courage, and his spirit soared like an indomitable eagle until the world itself could not contain his joyous soul.

But this was the truth, a pitiful boy who desperately wanted not to be pitiful, screaming and crying, poisoned by an infected G-tube that kept him alive, but not alive enough.

I wiped his chin and grabbed his face in my hands and knelt down close to him so that I could see his eyes, which still lived. "I'm sorry. I wish it was like that movie, with the Persians and the Spartans."

"Me too," he said.

"But it isn't," I said.

"I know," he said.

"There are no bad guys."

"Yeah."

"Even cancer isn't a bad guy really: Cancer just wants to be alive."

"Yeah."

"You're okay," I told him. I could hear the sirens.

"Okay," he said. He was losing consciousness.

"Gus, you have to promise not to try this again. I'll get you cigarettes, okay?" He looked at me. His eyes swam in their sockets. "You have to promise."

He nodded a little and then his eyes closed, his head swiveling on his neck.

"Gus," I said. "Stay with me."

"Read me something," he said as the goddamned ambulance roared right past us. So while I waited for them to turn around and find us, I recited the only poem I could bring to mind, "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams.

so much depends

upon

a red wheel

barrow

glazed with rain

water

beside the white

chickens.

Williams was a doctor. It seemed to me like a doctor's poem. The poem was over, but the ambulance was still driving away from us, so I kept writing it.

And so much depends, I told Augustus, upon a blue sky cut open by the branches of the trees above. So much depends upon the transparent G-tube erupting from the gut of the blue-lipped boy. So much depends upon this observer of the universe.

Half conscious, he glanced over at me and mumbled, "And you say you don't write poetry."

7.8. CHAPTER 23: CONVERSATION WITH VAN HOUTEN

"You didn't ruin our trip, you self-important bastard. We had an awesome trip."

"I am trying," he said. "I am trying, I swear." It was around then that I realized Peter Van Houten had a dead person in his family. I considered the honesty with which he had written about cancer kids; the fact that he couldn't speak to me in Amsterdam except to ask if I'd dressed like her on purpose; his shittiness around me and Augustus; his aching question about the relationship between pain's extremity and its value. He sat back there drinking, an old man who'd been drunk for years. I thought of a statistic I wish I didn't know: Half of marriages end in the year after a child's death. I looked back at Van Houten. I was driving down College and I pulled over behind a line of parked cars and asked, "You had a kid who died?"

"My daughter," he said. "She was eight. Suffered beautifully. Will never be beatified."

"She had leukemia?" I asked. He nodded. "Like Anna," I said.

"Very much like her, yes."

"You were married?"

"No. Well, not at the time of her death. I was insufferable long before we lost her. Grief does not change you, Hazel. It reveals you."

"Did you live with her?"

"No, not primarily, although at the end, we brought her to New York, where I was living, for a series of experimental tortures that increased the misery of her days without increasing the number of them."

After a second, I said, "So it's like you gave her this second life where she got to be a teenager."

"I suppose that would be a fair assessment," he said, and then quickly added, "I assume you are familiar with Philippa Foot's Trolley Problem thought experiment?"

"And then I show up at your house and I'm dressed like the girl you hoped she would live to become and you're, like, all taken aback by it."

"There's a trolley running out of control down a track," he said.

"I don't care about your stupid thought experiment," I said.

"It's Philippa Foot's, actually."

"Well, hers either," I said.

"She didn't understand why it was happening," he said. "I had to tell her she would die. Her social worker said I had to tell her. I had to tell her she would die, so I told her she was going to heaven. She asked if I would be there, and I said that I would not, not yet. But eventually, she said, and I promised that yes, of course, very soon. And I told her that in the meantime we had great family up there that would take care of her. And she asked me when I would be there, and I told her soon. Twenty-two years ago."

"I'm sorry."

"So am I."

After a while, I asked, "What happened to her mom?"

He smiled. "You're still looking for your sequel, you little rat."

I smiled back. "You should go home," I told him. "Sober up. Write another novel. Do the thing you're good at. Not many people are lucky enough to be so good at something."

He stared at me through the mirror for a long time. "Okay," he said. "Yeah. You're right. You're right." But even as he said it, he pulled out his mostly empty fifth of whiskey. He drank, recapped the bottle, and opened the door. "Good-bye, Hazel."

"Take it easy, Van Houten."

He sat down on the curb behind the car. As I watched him shrink in the rearview mirror, he pulled out the bottle and for a second it looked like he would leave it on the curb. And then he took a swig.

8. APPENDICES

TABLE 1: SONNET 55

Author	Year	translations
Burgersdijk	1886	Geen marmerbeeld, geen vorstelijk grafgesteent' Dat dit mijn machtig lofdicht overleeft, Dit lied, dat hooger roem en glans u leent, <i>Dan steenen, waar de Tijd zijn smet aan kleeft. –</i>
Moulijn-Haitsma Mulier	1923	Geen marmer, noch 't vergulde monument Voor vorsten overleeft dit machtig rijm, Durender glans heb ik u ingeprent, <i>Dan d'ongewasschen steen, bemorsd met moddrig slijm, (...).</i>
Decroos	1930	Vergulde vorstenbeelden, praalgrafsteenen Gaaf dit mijn machtig vers in duur te boven, Dat u een hooger luister zal verleenen <i>Dan hardsteen door den slordgen tijd bestoven</i>
Verwey	1933	Niet marmer, noch 't vergulde praalgesticht Van vorsten overleeft dit machtige rijm. Schiirender blinkt uw beeld in mijn gedicht <i>Dan steen door Tijd besmeurd met slordig slijm.</i>
Messelaar	1958	De vorstenpraal in marmersteen en goud Vergaat, terwijl dit machtig vers blijft leven, Dat met meer luister heel uw faam behoudt <i>Dan zuilen doen waaraan Tijds smetten klevan.</i>
Van Elden	1959	Geen marmer, geen vergulde vorstenzerk Zullen dit machtig klinkdicht overleven, Oneindig weidser spiegelt u mijn werk <i>Dan stoffig steen waar tijds smetten klevan.</i>
Jonk	1979	Geen marmer en geen gulden monument Van vorsten heeft zo'n grote onsterfelijkheid Als jij, die in verzen beter wordt gekend <i>Dan steen, verwaarloosd en besmeurd met tijd</i>
Verstegen	1993	Geen marmer noch het gulden praalgraf van Een vorst leeft langer dan dit sterk gedicht, Waarin jij stralender zult blinken dan <i>Een vuile zerk, door veile tijd ontwricht.</i>
De Roy van Zuydewijn	1997	Geen marmersteen of gouden koningsgraf

		Reikt over dit verreikend rijmdicht heen, Want daarin geef je een heller lichtschijn af <i>Dan door slons tijd met vuil besmeurde steen.</i>
Van der Krogt	1997	een marmersteen noch het vergulde graf Van prinsen overleeft mijn dichterswerk; Want daarvan straalt jouw faam veel rijker af, <i>Dan van een door de Tijd besmeurde zerk.</i>
Honders	2011	Geen marmer, geen goudglanzend monument Voor heersers overleeft dit machtig rijm; Jij glanst hier feller dan in vuil cement Dat sloerie tijd bezoedelt met haar slijm.

TABLE 2: ROMEO AND JULIET

Author	Year	Romeo and Juliet Prologue
Van Lennep	1852	Twee spruiten, voortgeteeld uit wederzijdschen stam, Ontgloeien voor elkaër in teed're liefdevlam.
Kok	1880	Twee spruiten van den wederzijdschen stam Beminnen op 't noodlottig eerst ontmoeten,
Burgersijk	1886	Uit dezer haters lend'nen is gesproten Een minnend paar, ten ondergang gewijd.
C. Buddingh'		Uit dezer haters lend'nen is gesproten Een minnend paar, ten ondergang gewijd.
Van Looy	1910	Uit het noodlottig ras dier huizen-in-strijd, Een paar gelieven, voorbeschikt ontsproot
Weremeus BUning	1942	Uit dezer vijanden fatale schoot Een liefdespaar, dat 't lot geen kansen gaf,
Courteaux	1965	En uit de lenden van die haters sproot Een lievend paar, door 't grimmig lot gemerkt
Komrij	1984	Uit bloeddoordrenkte lendenen creëren De kampen twee geliefden die, misleid Door lot en sterren, jammerlijk creperen
Jonk	1991	Het stel dat uit die beide kampen sproot, wier liefde onder slecht gesternte staat,

TABLE 3: HAMLET

Author	Year	Hamlet To be or not to be
P.P. Roorda van Eijsinga	-	Ja, Daar is't punt
A.S. Kok	1880	Ja, Daar zit de zwaarigheid
Burgersdijk	1882	... ja, dit stremt...
Van Suchtelen	1947	... Dáár wringt de schoen...
Voeten	1960	... Daar zit de knoop ...
Courteaux	1978	Ja, daar wringt het ;
Komrij	1986	... ah, zie de valkuil...
Jonk	1991	Dat is het probleem:
Binervoet en Henkes	2000	... ja, dat is het hem ...
De Roy van Zuydewijn	2003	Ai, daar zit de kneep;
Ouweneel	2004	Ja, daat zit 'm de kneep.
Verstegen	2013	Ah, daar wringt het;

TABLE 4: JULIUS CAESAR

Author	Year	Julius Ceasar Cassius
Shakespeare	-	Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings
Opzoomer	1860	Soms is de mensch de meester van zijn lot: De fout, mijn Brutus, ligt niet in de sterren, Maar in ons zelf, dat wij zoo nietig zijn.
Burgersdijk	1887	Soms is de mensch zelf meester van zijn lot ; Niet door de schuld van ons gesternte, Brutus, Neen, door onszelve zijn wij klein en nietig.
Marcellus	1908	En toch ben ik de maker van mijn lot! "t Is niet der Goden schuld, mijn waarde Brutus,— Het is de onze, dat wij zoo gebukt gaan.
Koster	1910	Soms zijn de menschen meester van hun lot: De fout ligt, vriend, in ons gesternte niet, Maar in ons zelf, dat wij zoo nietig zijn
Courteaux	1978	De mens is vaak de meestervan zijn lot. Niet ons gesternte, Brutus, draagt de schuld Als wij nu nietelingen zijn, maar wij.
Hawinkels	1978	Maar soms zijn mensen meester van hun lot: Niet aan de sterren, Brutus, aan ons zelf Is het te wijten dat wij knechten zijn.
Jonk	1991	De mens is soms zelf meester van zijn lot: de schuld, Brutus, ligt niet in ons gesternte, maar in onszelf, dat wij zo nietig zijn.
De roy van Zuydewijn	2003	Maar soms kan men zijn lot in handen nemen: Het ligt niet aan de sterren, beste Brutus, Maar aan onszelf, dat wij maar knechten zijn.

TABLE 5: TRANSLATIONS NAN LENDERS

Title	Original Author	Year	Genre as determined by the Royal Dutch library
De zilveren meren: verhalen uit de Kalevala	K Bosley	1979	Children's literature
De vrouw man	Joanna Russ	1980	Adult literature
Gevangen in de diepte	R. Geline	1980	Children's literature
Alleen op een verlaten eiland	Ginny McCreynolds	1980	Children's literature
De werkelijkheid is anders	Zibby Oneal	1981	Children's literature
Het geheim van de grot	Aidan Chambers	1984	Children's literature
Tirannen	Aidan Chambers	1895	Children's literature
De vondeling	Nina Bawden	1986	Children's literature
Zomerlicht	Zibby Oneal	1986	Children's literature
Werk Zoeken	Susan Cheever	1987	Adult fiction
Bastiaanse bonte Bende	Margaret Mahy	1987	Children's literature
Baby's dagboek	Hendrika Willebeek le Mair	1988	Children's literature
Crisis als kans	Verena kast	1988	Non-fiction
Onbereikbaar dichtbij	Rosemarie von Schach	1989	Children's literature
Olifantekaas en nijlpaademelk	Margaret Mahy	1990	Children's literature
Een wild paard getemd	Susan Hinton	1990	Children's literature
De grote eik van dimpole	Janet Taylor Lisle	1991	Children's literature
De ondergronders	Margaret Mahy	1992	Children's literature
Straatvlinders	Lesley Beake	1992	Children's literature
Ontevrede	Lesly Beake	1993	Children's literature
Orfie	Cynthia Voigt	1992	Children's literature
De blinde reiziger	Lesley Beake	1994	Children's literature
Met het mes op tafel	Cynthia Voigt	1995	Children's literature
De bende van Fortuin	Margaret Mahy	1995	Children's literature
Bijna een fortuin	Margaret Mahy	1996	Children's literature
Fortuin gezocht	Margaret Mahy	1996	Children's literature
Gevangen in de stilte	Margaret Mahy	1996	Children's literature
Kwaaie meiden	Cynthia Voigt	1997	Children's literature
Raadsels rond Fortuin	Margaret Mahy	1997	Children's literature
Dochter van Shizuko	Kyoko Mori	1989 8	Children's literature
Het meer van de duizend stemmen	Nancy Farmer	1998	Children's literature
Van Kwaad tot erger	Cynthia Voigt	1998	Children's literature
Dansen langs de rand	Han Nolan	1999	Children's literature
Kinderen van de maanvalk	Peter Dickinson	1999	Children's literature
De windzinger van Aramant	William Nicholson	2000	Children's literature
Aramant in slavernij	William Nicholson	2001	Children's literature
Keizerin Fortuna	Sara Ryan	2002	Children's literature
Requiem voor Chopin	Benite Eisler	2003	Biografisch
Het land van de groene geesten	Pascal Khoo Thwe	2005	Autobiography
Een avond in het paleis van de rede	James R. Gaines	2006	Historical fiction
Noem me bij jouw naam	André Aciman	2007	Adult literature
Het mannelijk oog	Joe Treasure	2008	Adult literature

De logica van ht moorden	André Aciman	2009	Adult literature
De vlindermoskee	G. Willow Wilson	2010	Autobiography
Bevlogen	Joe Treasure	2011	Adult literature
Een weeffout in onze sterren	John Green	2012	Adult literature
De spiegelwereld van Willia sutton	J.R. Moehringer	2012	Adult literature
De Fluitspeler	Ron Rash	2013	Adult literature

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