

# **Translating Scotland's Skagboys**

Bachelor Thesis English Language and Culture, Utrecht University

Marit Leenders

3696952

Supervisor: Cees Koster

Second Reader: Onno Kusters

April 2014

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Theoretical Framework	
2.1 Function of the Scottish Dialect	4
2.2 Translating a Dialect	8
2.3 Other Translation Problems in <i>Skagboys</i>	11
3. Conclusion	15
Works Cited	17
Appendix A Translation	18
Appendix B Source Text	30

## Introduction

In 2012, Irvine Welsh's book *Skagboys* was published. This prequel of the cult classic *Trainspotting* completed the Trainspotting Trilogy, consisting of *Trainspotting*, *Porno* and *Skagboys*. It follows the characters Mark Renton, Simon 'Sick Boy' Williamson, Daniel 'Spud' Murphy and Frances Begbie in their journey from relatively innocent teenagers to young men addicted to heroin, who will do anything in the chase for their next shot. This group of friends, situated in the harbour city of Leith, consists of many different personalities. Mark Renton is the semi-intellectual one who leads a double life as a student at the university of Aberdeen where he hides from the problems created by society, his friends and his severely handicapped brother. Sick Boy uses his intellect and his charm to get what he wants, especially from the other sex. Spud is a naive man with a heart of gold who has been unlucky his entire life and always sees the good in other people. Begbie is a severely aggressive alcoholic who detests everything to do with drugs. Together they depict the victims of the drug scene that was booming in Edinburgh and of the society that had no place for people like them.

*Trainspotting*, published in 1993, was the first book of the trilogy and became a great success, even internationally, which led to the need for translations. The strongest point of the Trainspotting Trilogy have been claimed to be the portrayal of the harsh reality of Edinburgh's grimmer areas, and includes the use of Scottish vernacular. Because the Scottish dialect plays a significant role in the books, it leads to questions about how to translate this dialect. Although there are many different strategies for translating a text, translators all agree on the same thing, namely that translating a source text (ST) written in a dialect is extremely difficult. One of the reasons why it is so challenging, is that a dialect often has "a set of social associations" (Hyde Parker 47). It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to find a dialect in

the target language (TL) that consists of exactly the same associations the author had in mind when deciding to use a particular dialect in the novel.

Because of the importance and the many associations of a dialect, a ST written in a dialect is often seen as being untranslatable. This raises the question why it was thought necessary to have a translation of *Skagboys* at all, if translating this text would cause its strongest and most important feature to disappear. The decision to translate the *Trainspotting* Trilogy probably leads back to the success of the film-adaption of the first part of this trilogy. If the film had not been as successful as it was, this first book, followed by the rest of the trilogy, would probably not have been translated. This can be said because the Dutch translation of *Trainspotting* was not published until after the successful film adaption in 1996. Three years is a long time for a successful book to be translated, which emphasises the importance of the successful film. Because of this sudden international success of the film, the need for a translation occurred. After seeing the film-adaption, people wanted to read the book, but the Scottish dialect in the original version was too hard to read for those unfamiliar with the dialect. This need for non-native speakers of English to be able to read these books also led to the translation of Welsh's later work.

This paper will focus on the Scottish dialect used in *Skagboys*, especially regarding identity. What role does the dialect play in creating the wanted identity, how is this achieved and what happens to this identity when translating the dialect?

## **2.1 Function of the Scottish Dialect**

When reading the prologue of *Skagboys*, the reader is propelled backwards in time to Scotland in the 1980's. More specifically, readers find themselves in the middle of one of the many strikes that occurred during this period. Mark Renton, one of the main protagonists, and his father are preparing to get on one of the National Union of Mineworker's buses to go to a

mining strike. The initial scene paints a picture of the striking working-class protesting against Thatcher's government. During this scene, it becomes clear that Thatcher's regime is the beginning of a downward spiral for not only the miners, but also for Mark Renton, who starts off as a student at the University of Aberdeen without any significant problems before his life starts to crumble down.

The setting of the strike not only emphasises the environment in which Renton grew up, namely the lower parts of society, but also underlines the importance of nationalism. By starting off the story with such a well-known phenomenon, namely a miners' strike in the north of England, the reader is introduced to the political situation. This introduction offers an insight into the life of the lower class in Edinburgh in the 1980's and the reader is straight away thrown into the harsh environment in which the protagonists of *Skagboys* grew up.

Throughout the initial scene, Welsh includes the accents of the various characters. The reader finds that Renton is judging the people he meets purely based on their accents. Especially the English accents cannot count on a sympathetic judgement and the English characters are associated with the stereotypes linked to their accents. Since this passage is entirely written in a strong Scottish dialect, the reader understands the importance of the Scottish setting and the sense of the Scots belonging together.

To understand the nationalistic feeling that the Scots have, and therefore also the importance of both having as well as using a dialect of their own, it is useful to look at a part of Scotland's history. History is part of a so called "shared emotional connection" (McMillen 9); people who share this connection by having a mutual history, have a feeling of belonging to the group with the same history. This means that history often is a binding factor for people, especially in difficult situations and times, which strengthens the nationalistic feeling. A shared history, and therefore the sense of belonging together, also plays an important part in creating the identity of a nation.

When looking at the drastic increase of drugs, and heroin in particular, the 1980's was a hectic decade in Edinburgh. The combination of the massive unemployment in the 1970's combined with the cheap import of heroin, resulted in large numbers of heroin-addicts. These numbers were much higher in Scotland than in the rest of Britain. In Thatcher's Britain, "Scots were losers, young people were losers, the unemployed were losers" states Bell. According to Welsh, being English was seen as the standard. Scottish, on the other hand, was nothing more than a second rank nationality (Edemariam).

The increase of heroin use eventually led to an increase of HIV positive people. All of these facts also occur in Welsh's books and are frequently returning plotlines, which results in the books coming across as more realistic and the situation therefore as more barbarous. If the reader is aware of the situation in Scotland, and Edinburgh in particular, then the novel turns into a political protest, especially because of the politically charged strike at the beginning of *Skagboys*. When reading the novel with the facts about Scotland's excessive heroin abuse, the fight against the oppressing political parties and characters who find themselves in the same, sometimes inhumane situation, the nationalistic role that the dialect plays becomes clear once again; Scotland struggles with the difficult situation in the 1980's and the use of the Scottish dialect underlines the emphasis of Scotland's identity as one nation in this struggle against the political oppression led by English parties. As with a shared history, a shared language, or dialect in this case, can create a sense of belonging together and is also part of a nation's identity. For instance, people can use language to associate or disassociate themselves with other groups. The dialect creates a bond between the Scottish characters and shows that they are all in this situation together, as one group. The power of bonding through the use of dialect becomes clear in certain passages in which Renton switches between dialects, namely Standard English and Scottish. Sociolinguists state that the phenomenon of switching between dialects is caused by the speaker's desire to belong to a certain social group or to actively

show that they do not want to be associated with a group (Meyerhoff 27). In Renton's case, the use of Standard English and Scottish represent his student life and his life in Leith respectively. These two lives consist of two different social groups, each with their own different kind of language. One of the first instances in which the switch between dialects happens is in the passage right before the miners' strike at the start of the novel. This initial passage is written in a diary-like style and therefore lets the reader in on Renton's thoughts, which makes the change of dialect even more important. Renton starts off writing in Standard English, but after almost two pages, he corrects himself with the words: "FUCKIN DAEIN IT AGAIN!!" (Welsh 4). Before this correction, he was writing about the university residences in Aberdeen, the place far away from Edinburgh where his academic life takes place. It is a passage about his own personal life as an intellectual student; the only time and place he is far away from his youth and the situation of the working class he grew up in. To show the distance between his two separate lives, this first passage is written in the dialect associated with an educated life, namely Standard English. After this correction, however, he switches to the Scottish dialect. The switch also indicates the change in subject and therefore a change in the people he associates himself with at that very moment; he changes from writing about his university life to writing about the strike, and thus also about his connection with the working class. The dialect can be used to create a difference between various circumstances and to show the bond between different lifestyles.

The second passage in which this switch between dialects is used to form a connection between different groups, is when Renton is in rehab. Again, this is written in the style of a diary. This time, the switch from Standard English to Scottish dialect shows a change in his behaviour. He is writing down a conversation between his friend Spud and himself, but realises halfway through that he is trying to be different and that he does not want to pretend to be different anymore. This happens through the use of crossing out words and repeating

them, only to write them in the Scottish dialect the second time: “*That* is more like how I sound in my head heid. Sometimes. Mair like. Sometimes. Why try tae sound different? Why the fuck be the same as every other cunt? Ah mean, whae’s fuckin interest does it serve?” (Welsh 423). The difference in behaviour here is that he seems to accept himself the way he truly is. He stops trying to be the person everyone expects him to be, namely the perfect man with a proper accent. This ideal person speaks Standard English and not Scottish. That is precisely what Welsh said about being Scottish in the 1980’s; English is seen as being good and Scottish just as a second-class nationality. However, by changing to his own Scottish dialect, Renton becomes part of the rest of the people in rehab again, because, when looking at how he wrote the conversations down between himself and the other characters, it is clear that the rest of this group is still using the Scottish dialect.

## 2.2 Translating a Dialect

Although using a dialect in the source language (SL) can create an extra dimension to the story and give more depth to characters’ personalities, therefore making it easier for readers to relate to the characters, it is almost impossible to recreate the same effect in a translation. This is because this extra dimension is more than simply stating where a story is situated; dialects always have certain associations. These associations can be used by authors so they do not have to go into great detail about certain aspects of the characters. They can simply rely on the stereotypes the audience is already familiar with to explain the situation, and, if it is relevant for the story, these associations can also emphasise the history of the area to which the dialect belongs. As Bonaffini puts it, the power of a dialect “lies in its essential ‘otherness’, [...] in its different history[.]” (279). This different history is embedded in the dialect because of the often universally known stereotypes and connotations, but disappears in the translation the moment a translator decides not to include the dialect in the target text



(TT). However, the difficult decision to lose the dialect needs to be made because the connotations belonging to dialects in general are culture specific and therefore strictly belong to a specific country or area, making it thus nearly impossible to find a dialect in the TL that has exactly the same connotations. Many translators therefore agree that it is better to translate a dialect into standard language. As Landers states: “[D]ialect is always tied, geographically and culturally, to a milieu that doesn’t exist in the target-language setting. Substitution of an ‘equivalent’ dialect is foredoomed to failure. The best advice about trying to translate dialect: don’t.” (117). This leaves the translator in a difficult position, since the dialect is such an important, if not the most important feature, especially when looking at Welsh’s *Trainspotting* Trilogy. However, the fact that this important feature should not be translated into a dialect of the TL does not mean that there is no way of translating a dialect at all. There are features of the TL that a translator can use in order to partly recreate the extra dimension created by the dialect. A problem that occurs when translating a dialect, is that one of the main literary functions of that dialect, namely that of creating a particular identity, disappears. One of the solutions to this problem is for a translator to “[opt] for a sociolect instead” (Gambier 209). A sociolect is the kind of language associated with a particular social group. Peter Trudgill defines it as “a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speakers’ social background rather than geographical background” (122). By using a sociolect, a translator can still create a sense of identity without using a dialect. One of the features of a sociolect that can be used in *Skagboys* is the use of discourse markers. An example of frequently used discourse markers in Dutch are ‘weet je wel’ and ‘zeg maar’. These discourse markers underline a casual and informal setting. By using the combination of colloquial language and discourse markers, the emphasis is on everyday, spoken language, rather than the written language. Because one of the goals of a dialect is to show that the characters sound like realistic people who do not talk in a formal written language, the combination of the two

strategies can function as replacement for this particular goal of the dialect. However, a translator has to keep in mind what the character is like and cannot simply add many discourse markers that do not exist in the ST and do not fit into the idiolect of the character. This said idiolect, meaning a person's unique use of language, consists of the language used by junkies from a working class environment. This means that it should represent the same sort of group in the target culture and should not divert too much from the original idiolect. The main goal of the translator should therefore not be to find as many ways as possible to translate the dialect itself, but rather to make sure that readers of the translation can still read the novel without entirely losing the effect created by the dialect. Readers should not get the suspicion that the original book is written in a variant of English that is far from standard and that they are missing out on something.

Even though there many strategies of translating a dialect, there will always be situations in which a translator has to accept that certain features of a dialect will disappear in the TT. One of these situations is when characters intentionally change their dialect in order to come across as being smarter for instance. A similar situation can also be seen in *Skagboys*. One of the situations in which the difference of dialect usage will get lost in translation, is the difference between certain characters. For example, the characters Spud and Frances Begbie have stronger accents than Mark Renton and Sick Boy. The varying degree of how strong the dialects are between the various characters can be used to indicate a difference in social class; it can be said that Spud and Begbie belong to a different social class than Renton and Sick Boy because of their stronger dialects. Renton and Sick Boy use a lighter version of the Scottish dialect and use less typically Scottish vernacular. They are also the two characters who realise they can change people's perception of them by changing their dialect, a strategy they happily use when trying to lose the prejudices that the Scottish lower class is associated with.

The difference in dialect use works perfectly well in the ST and it helps the reader to identify the different narrators, since there are different characters narrating the various chapters throughout the book. This means that the author does not have to point out which character is narrating, because the specific language use and thickness of the dialect belonging to that particular character already does that. However, when translating these passages, it can be challenging to make this shift in narrator clear to the reader. Often, these differences can also be noticed through the specific idiolect of the characters, but it is more difficult to realise which character is narrating based on language use only. Because the TT cannot benefit from the dialect the same way the original text can, it sometimes takes the reader a couple of sentences to realise which character is narrating a particular chapter.

Because translators cannot make use of the same effects that the dialect has when creating the identity of a character, they will have to look carefully at the personalities of the characters in order to come up with the suiting language use and a fitting sociolect. In some situations, especially when a character pretends to be different by switching between the Scottish dialect and standard English, the reader of the ST will understand that the character is acting differently. Meanwhile, the reader of the TT will have to look at the character's changing behaviour towards the situation to understand why the character is acting differently. This is generally not a problem, but it does mean that certain things can and will get lost in translation.

### **2.3 Other Translation Problems in *Skagboys***

Apart from the obvious problem of translating the Scottish dialect in *Skagboys*, which is used to a great extent in this book, there are other problems to be found as well. For instance, some culture specific elements such as rhyming slang are unknown to the Dutch audience, since neither the Dutch language, nor any of its dialects, are familiar with this element. However,

this problem can easily be solved by simply translating the word that the rhyming slang represents. This does mean that the translator has to be familiar with this phenomenon to understand what the actual meaning of this rhyming slang is. It can especially be tricky when a word rhymes with several words and can thus have several meanings. Phrases like ‘Lou Reed’ can mean both ‘weed’ and ‘speed’. Because of this ambiguity, the translator has to look at the text and the context of the situation with great precision to avoid mistakes that would make the reader aware of the translator’s fingerprint. Although rhyming slang is a cultural specific element, it does not play a great role in creating a character’s identity. It can therefore easily be translated into its actual meaning without any significant loss of identity.

Another linguistic feature that is important in *Skagboys*, is the specific language use of the characters. Even if it had not been written in a dialect, the language that is used consists of many swearwords and particular words that belong to this group of drug users. This is part of their idiolect and thus of their identity. It can therefore be difficult to translate this into a different language without making subtle but crucial changes. However, because these groups occur in almost every society, readers will probably be familiar with some of the terminology used by the characters. The only problem is that the majority of this terminology is English, which raises the question whether it should be translated or not, since it can be distracting to constantly read English words in a translation. It can be said that, since some of these words are actually used in the Dutch language as well, it is not necessary to try and come up with a translation for every single word that is part of this particular language used by the characters. Phrases like ‘cold turkey’ are so integrated into the Dutch language that it would be unnatural for the reader to come across a Dutch equivalent that is hardly used. Also, by using some of these English words, the translator will partially maintain the idiolect of the characters, which can, to some extent, help to make up for the loss of the dialect.

Since there are no strict rules for translating dialects, other than the advice of refraining from doing so, it can be helpful to look at other translations in which the translator had to face the same problem. A great example of such a translation is *Trainspotting*, the sequel of *Skagboys* and translated by Ton Heuvelmans. When reading his translation, it becomes clear that he did not choose to translate everything concerning the specific language use of the characters simply into Dutch. He chose for the solution of not translating these words in some cases and in other cases, if there was a fitting Dutch equivalent, to do translate them. If everything had been translated into Dutch, the characters would probably have come across as rather formal and would not have sounded as if they were a group of drug users. By maintaining some English words, the characters become more realistic and lively, which reinforces their personalities.

Furthermore, the use of swearwords also plays an important part in shaping the characters. Swearing, together with the idiolect, is part of the characters' personality, so it has to be treated with care. Throughout the entire book almost only two different swearwords are used. This means it can be quite tricky to translate these, for it can quickly become repetitive. Again, it can be useful to look at *Trainspotting* and its translation, which features the same characters as *Skagboys* and therefore the same speech patterns. In his translation, Heuvelmans decided not to translate these the main swearwords into two fixed words, but he used a greater variety. By doing this, he created a certain rhythm to the sentences and avoided the problem of repetition. It can be said that this added rhythm might be a way of replacing some of the effects of the dialect (Koster 45).

However, the repetition is not the only problem that can be caused by the swearwords. The amount of swearwords used by the characters is so high that it is nearly impossible to find a sentence without a swearword of any kind. In the ST, this seems to be no problem at all; it is as if the Scottish dialect allows the characters to be ruder without sounding too harsh and it

might even soften the meaning of these words. Because the TT has no dialect to do this, swearwords can come across as more offensive and this can thus cause the reader to become distracted and struggle to relate to the characters. By looking at the translation of *Trainspotting*, it can be seen how Ton Heuvelmans dealt with this high amount of swearwords:

“The cunt’s awright now though! It fuckin sais! Nae fuckin herm done tae nae cunt. N even if thir wis, so fuck? Some fuckin rich American cunt whae shouldnae even fuckin be here in the first place. Whae gies a fuck about that cunt? N you ya cunt, you’ve chibbed some cunt before; Eck Wilson, at the school, so dinnae you fuckin start gaun aw fuckin squeamish.” (Welsh 154).

The Dutch translation, however, not only has less swearwords, but also a greater variety of swearwords:

“Die lul maakt het toch goed nou? Staat er zelf in! Niemand een haar gekrenkt godverdomme! En ook al was dat wel zo, wat de fuck? Zo’n rijke klote Amerikaan, die hier godverdomme niet eens thuishoort. Wat kan jou zo’n kankerlul schelen? En jij, lul, jij hebt zelf ook iemand gestoken; Eck Wilson, op school, dus jij moet nodig fuckin braaf lopen doen.” (Heuvelmans 151)

As can be seen in these two passages, the original has almost twice as many swearwords and uses two main swearwords, whereas the translations has a greater variety. By reducing the amount of swearwords, the text becomes easier to read, yet it still manages to use the same idiolect.

There are, however, also typically Scottish words and concepts that are less easy to translate, for there is no literal translation for these words. In such cases, the translator can opt to translate these words or concepts into their Dutch equivalent. This is especially the case with nicknames that have a familiar connotations for native speakers of English, but not for

the Dutch readers. An example of this is calling someone from Glasgow ‘Weedgie’, which is derived from ‘Glaswegian’ and has a negative connotations in this case. As Dutch readers probably will not make this connection, the best solution is simply to translate this nickname into ‘iemand uit Glasgow.’ The disadvantage is that by doing this, the TT becomes even more distanced from the ST. The distance created by the loss of these Scottish words and concepts is probably not big enough to lose the connection and its associations with the Scottish situation in itself, but unfortunately, the other major element that strengthens this connection is lost as well, namely the Scottish dialect. Especially since the fact that the story is set in Scotland plays an important role, this distance can cause the reader to miss a lot of the political implications. However, readers of the Dutch translation might not be as familiar with the situation in Scotland as native speakers of English reading the original version, so in that case it would not be a problem; readers of the translation would not see the connection between the typically Scottish words and the situation in Scotland which is never explicitly mentioned by Welsh, but is obviously implied.

## **Conclusion**

When translating a text written in a dialect, translators can come across several challenging obstacles that, in the case of Welsh’s *Skagboys*, mainly have to do with maintaining the cultural as well as the social aspect of a dialect. To refrain from creating unwanted associations added by a dialect of the TL, the best possible solution seems to be to translate a dialect into a standard language. However, this solution means that any underlying and thus not specifically mentioned details, such as the stereotypical features that often go together with a dialect, will get lost in the TT. This loss however seems to be impossible to prevent, which means that it has to be accepted that not all effects created by a dialect can be maintained.

Apart from adding stereotypical features, a dialect can have more functions, for example making the characters easier to relate to by making them sound like people that exist in everyday life. This is especially true in the lower-class situation in *Skagboys*, where it almost would have been unnatural for the characters to speak without any noticeable dialect. These functions can partly be replaced by using strategies such as inserting words used in colloquial speech rather than the more formal written language and by adding discourse markers, again to emphasise the importance of a more informal language.

Other difficulties, such as specific language use, can be solved by looking at the personalities of the characters and finding a fitting idiolect in the TL.

Although the Scottish dialect in *Skagboys* proves to be difficult to translate, it is not entirely impossible to find ways to treat it when translating. The most important thing that has to be kept in mind, however, is that finding a way to translate the dialect is not the main goal, but, in the end, it is to make sure that the reader of the TT reads the same story as the reader of the ST.



## Works Cited

- Bonaffini, Luigi. "Translating Dialect Literature". *World Literature Today*. 71.2 1997: 279-288. Print.
- Heuvelmans, Ton, trans. *Trainspotting*. By Irvine Welsh. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1996. Print.
- Hyde Parker, Rebecca and Karla Guadarrama García. *Thinking Translation: Perspectives from Within and Without*. Florida: BrownWalker Press, 2008. Print.
- Edemariam, Aida and Kirsty Scott. "What happened to the Trainspotting Generation?" *The Guardian*. 15 August 2009. Web. 11 March 2013.
- Gambier, Yves and Luc van Doorslaer. *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 4*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013. Online.
- Koster, Cees. "Treinen Spotten. 'Kut. Fuck. Klote. Shit.': Het Engels in het Nederlands" *Filter* 4.1 (1997): 40-46. Print.
- Landers, E. Clifford. *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press Ltd, 2001. Print.
- McMillen, David W. and David M. Chavis George. "Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory" *Journal of Community Psychology*. 14.1 1986: 6-23. Print.
- Meyerhoff, Miriam. *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. Abington: Routledge, 2011. Print.
- Trudgill, Peter. *A Glossary of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.
- Welsh, Irvine. *Skagboys*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2012. Print.
- Welsh, Irvine. *Trainspotting*. London: Vintage, 2004. Print.

## Appendix A: Translation

### pp. 6-9

‘Kom op gozer, de taxi is er,’ zegt hij, misschien een beetje beschaamd door haar aandacht, en hij kijkt door de gordijnen naar buiten voordat hij zich omdraait om m’n oma op haar voorhoofd te kussen. Dan pakt ze mijn hand. ‘Jij bent de beste, jongen, de beste van ze allemaal,’ fluistert ze in alle serieusheid. Ze zegt dit iedere keer dat ik haar zie, al sinds ik een klein jochie ben. Vroeger gaf dit me een goed gevoel, tot ik erachter kwam dat ze dit tegen al haar kleinkinderen zei en zelfs tegen de kinderen van de burenen! Maar ze zal het vast menen op het moment dat ze het zegt.

#### *De beste van ze allemaal.*

Ze laat mijn hand los en geeft de tas<sup>1</sup> aan pa. ‘Waag het eens de thermoskan kwijt te raken die in de tas zit, David Renton,’ zegt ze streng.

‘Ja mam, ik zei toch dat ik hem niet uit het oog zal verliezen,’ zegt hij schaapachtig, alsof hij plotseling weer een sullige tiener is geworden. Hij maakt zich klaar om te gaan, maar oma houdt hem tegen. ‘Je vergeet iets,’ zegt ze, en haalt drie kleine glaasjes uit de kast die ze vervolgens met whisky vult. M’n pa rolt met zijn ogen. ‘Mam...’

Ze hoort hem niet. Ze toost, wat ons dwingt om te volgen, ook al heb ik een hekel aan whisky en is dit het laatste wat ik wil zo vroeg in de ochtend. ‘Op ons, wie is er als wij - verdomd weinig en ze zijn allemaal dood!’ kraakt oma.

Pa slaat zijn glas<sup>2</sup> in een keer achterover. Die van oma is al leeg, door middel van een soort van osmose, want ik zag niet eens dat ze het glas aan haar lippen zette. Het kost mij

---

<sup>1</sup> The literal translation of this word, ‘duffel bag’, would not fit within the same register as the rest of the text, since the Dutch word ‘plunjezak’ is far less common than the English word. I therefore chose to translate it into a less specific word that does not stand out from the rest of the text.

<sup>2</sup> I inserted ‘zijn glas’ instead of the reference word that is used in the ST, because, in my opinion, the word that is being referred to, i.e. the glass, is too far away to use a reference word without causing the reader to have to look back to understand what is being referenced to.

twee moeizame slokken om het weg te krijgen. ‘Kom op jongen, je bent een Renton,’ zegt ze streng.

Dan knikt pa naar me en gaan we op weg. ‘Ze is een vreselijke vrouw,’ zegt hij liefkozend, terwijl we in de grote zwarte taxi stappen en mijn maag brandt. Ik zwaai terug naar haar fragiele silhouet, terwijl ze in de duistere straat in de deuropening staat, en probeer de dwaze oude taart te dwingen weer naar binnen te gaan, de warmte in.

Glasgow, dat is hoe we het vroeger op de basisschool leerden schrijven: *Granny Likes A Small Glass of Whiskey*<sup>3</sup>.

Het is nog steeds pikdonker en Glasgow<sup>4</sup> ziet er spookachtig uit op een maandagmorgen om vier uur, terwijl de taxi de stad in kraakt en stommelt. Het meurt hier; een of andere gore zak heeft hier gisteravond gekotst en het is nog steeds te ruiken. ‘Jezus Christus.’ De oude heer wappert met zijn hand voor z’n neus. M’n pa is een grote, breedgeschouderde gozer, terwijl ik meer op m’n moeder lijk qua bouw: sprieterig en mager. Zijn haar is echt blond (ook al wordt het nu grijs), in tegenstelling tot dat van mij, wat, hoe erg ik het ook probeer te verbergen, simpelweg rood is. Hij draagt een bruine corduroy jas, wat er eerlijk gezegd best goed uitziet, ook al wordt het verpest door een Glasgow Rangers badge, wat naast zijn Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers badge zit, en hij ruikt sterk naar Blue Stratos.

De bus staat op ons te wachten op het lege plein achter Argyle Street. Sommige stakers worden lastiggevallen door een kleingeld-schrapende zwerver die telkens de nacht in strompelt, terugkomt en hetzelfde trucje probeert. Ik stap de bus in om maar weg te komen

---

<sup>3</sup> It was possible to translate this sentence into a Dutch one and even to maintain the same atmosphere of granny drinking whiskey. However, I decided to maintain the English version. The reason for this was to keep the connection with the English language and therefore with Scotland. Also, the reader should not be underestimated, for they will still understand this sentence perfectly well.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Weedgieville’ is used in the ST, but since Dutch readers will probably not be familiar with this name for Glasgow, I chose to use the city’s regular name. Even though this means that the degrading attitude Mark Renton has towards Glasgow is lost when using the standard name for this city, the readability of the text will improve, which is more important.

van deze strontvlieg. Die klootzak is walgelijk; hij heeft geen trots, geen normen en waarden<sup>5</sup>. Zijn gestoorde ogen rollen in zijn kassen en die rubberen lippen zijn in dat paarse gezicht geperst. Hij is verrot geslagen door het systeem en het enige wat de parasiet kan doen, is bedelen bij mensen die wel het lef hebben om terug te vechten. ‘Eikel’, hoor ik mezelf snauwen.

‘Rustig aan,<sup>6</sup> jongen.’ Pa heeft meer een Glasgow-accent; dat gebeurt als hij uit de trein van Edinburgh stapt bij Queen Station. ‘Je weet niet wat er met die jongen is gebeurd.’

Ik zeg niks, maar ik wil niet weten wat er met die stumper is gebeurd. In de bus zit ik naast pa en een paar van zijn oude maten van de Govan werf. Alles is goed, want ik voel me sterker met hem verbonden dan ik de afgelopen tijd heb gedaan. Het lijkt veel te lang geleden sinds we samen iets hebben gedaan, gewoon met z’n tweeën. Hij is alleen best stil en in gedachten verzonken, waarschijnlijk bezorgd omdat mijn kleine broertje, Davie, weer in het ziekenhuis is opgenomen.

Er is genoeg drank in de bus, maar niemand mag er aan komen tot we teruggaan, dan vieren we dat we die schurftige vrachtwagens gestopt hebben! Er is wel genoeg te eten; oma Renton heeft bergen sandwiches gemaakt met wit, sponzig Sunblest brood: kaas en tomaat en ham en tomaat, het lijkt net alsof we naar een begrafenis gaan!

In de bus lijkt het echter meer op een voetbalwedstrijd dan een kerkhofparade of een staking; er hangt een sfeer van een grote bekerfinale, met al die spandoeken voor de ramen. De helft van de mensen in onze bus zijn stakende mijnwerkers, van mijnen in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, de Lothians en Fife; de andere helft zijn vakbondsmannen zoals de oude heer, en overige medereizigers, zoals ikzelf. Ik was blij toen pa me vertelde dat hij een plaats voor me

---

<sup>5</sup> For the translation of these words, I chose to use an existing phrase rather than the literal translation. This is because ‘normen en waarden’ is a well-known phrase and is frequently used, especially when it comes to political subjects. It therefore shows Renton’s involvement and interest in politics and emphasises the importance of politics in the situation.

<sup>6</sup> A literal translation sounds too elaborate in this situation and does not seem to have the same register in Dutch as it has in English. That is why I used a short sentence that shows both the strictness of the father towards his son as well as his gentle side towards people who have become the victim of Thatcher’s regime.

had; de politieke nerds op de universiteit zouden retejaloers zijn dat ik in een van de officiële National Union of Mineworker's bussen zat!

De bus is nog niet ver Glasgow uit als de nacht verandert in een mooie groen-blauwige vroege-zomerochtend lucht. Ondanks het vroege tijdstip, zijn er al een aantal auto's op de weg, waarvan sommige toeteren om ons te steunen met onze staking.

Ik kan in ieder geval wel een gesprek voeren met Andy, de beste maat van mijn vader. Hij is een magere, zout-van-de-aarde<sup>7</sup> gozer uit Glasgow<sup>8</sup>, een ex-lasser en levenslang lid van de Communist Party<sup>9</sup>. Over zijn benige gezicht zit een bijna doorzichtige, nicotinegele huid. 'Dus, je gaat in September weer terug naar de universiteit, hè Mark?'

'Ja, maar een paar van ons gaan volgende maand eerst met de InterRail door Europa reizen. Heb de afgelopen tijd mijn oude baantje als klusjesman opgepakt om wat poen bij elkaar te krijgen.'

'Ja, het leven is goed als je jong bent. Geniet er van, zeg ik altijd maar. Heb je een vriendin op die universiteit?'

Voor ik antwoord kan geven, vangt pa het gesprek op. 'Ik hoop het niet, anders zal Hazel door het lint gaan. Leuk meisje,' zegt hij tegen Andy, dan draait hij weer naar mij en zegt, 'Wat doet ze ook alweer, Mark?'

'Etalagedecoratie. Bij Binns op de West End, de warenhuizen, zeg maar,' zeg ik tegen Andy.

Een grote, tevreden grijns verschijnt op het gezicht van mijn vader. Als die klootzak eens wist hoe de relatie tussen Hazel en mij was, zou hij niet de hele tijd over haar doorzeiken. ~~Een vreselijk~~. Maar dat is een ander verhaal. De oude jongen is gewoon blij om

---

<sup>7</sup> Phrase in the source text, 'salt-ay-the-earth', comes out of the Bible, and shows the intellect of Mark Renton, so I decided to maintain this phrase as it is used in the Dutch version of the Bible.

<sup>8</sup> As with the decision to translate 'Weedgieville' into 'Glasgow', I chose to translate 'Weedgie' into 'gozer uit Glasgow' to make it understandable and maintain the flow of the sentence.

<sup>9</sup> I did not use a Dutch variant for this political party, because by maintaining the original name, the connection with the existing political party remains undamaged.

me met een meisje te zien, na zich jarenlang zorgen te hebben gemaakt dat ik misschien een nicht was vanwege mijn muzieksmaak. Mijn puberteit was extreem glam-rock en ik<sup>10</sup> was een punktiener. ~~En dan was er die keer dat Billy me betrapte bij het aftrek~~

Ander verhaal.

### pp. 422-425

Verder dan dat kwam ik niet, aangezien er werd aangeklopt en Spud naar binnen stormde. Hij was nogal van streek, en merkte niet dat mijn handen *in* mijn trainingsbroek zaten. Hij zat tobkend op de kleine rieten stoel en zoog op zijn onderlip. ‘Mensen zeggen dingen... deze plek is een pure nachtmerrie... ik voel me klote, Mark, puur klote, en mensen praten alleen maar onzin.’

Ik zei dat hij zich geen zorgen hoefde te maken, dat Sick Boy en Swanney alleen maar aan het opscheppen waren. Dat het allemaal bullshit<sup>11</sup> was.

‘Maar waarom moet hij dat soort dingen over Alison zeggen? Alison is een gaaf wijf!’

‘Omdat hij een gestoorde klootzak is, gozer. Vergeet al die seksistische onzin, het is gewoon een piswedstrijd<sup>12</sup> tussen die twee. Al die eikels mogen dan wel als verkrachters praten als ze bij elkaar zijn, maar ze zullen later allemaal onder de plak zitten bij hun vrouw en zich zorgen maken<sup>13</sup> over hun dochters. Ze doen zich gewoon anders voor.’ Hij keek me somber en beschuldigend<sup>14</sup> aan, als een kind dat net te horen heeft gekregen dat de Kerstman niet bestaat. Zijn blik schoot van mij naar de grond en weer terug, alsof hij moed verzamelde

---

<sup>10</sup> I inserted a personal pronoun to make the sentence more natural.

<sup>11</sup> This word is commonly used in the TL as well and a translation would even sound unnatural, which leads to the simple solution of maintaining the English word.

<sup>12</sup> I inserted an idiom here that was not used in the ST. I decided to do this because it fits exactly with the character’s description and it also fits within the register used by the character.

<sup>13</sup> I deleted the swearword that is used in the ST. It sounds unnecessarily harsh in the TT due to a lack of dialect, which leads to the option of leaving it out entirely.

<sup>14</sup> I made two separate adjectives out of an adverb and an adjective, since the TL does not support adverbs the same way as the SL does, making it unnatural to maintain the adverb in the TT.

om iets te zeggen, en barstte toen los. ‘Jij en Matty... jullie<sup>15</sup> stolen het geld van de Cat Protection League. Van Mrs Rylance! Uit de winkel!’

~~Dat hebben we zeker gedaan. Dat is de reden dat we hierheen moesten, vanwege wat pokke geld. Als je je bedenkt hoeveel moeite we moesten doen om het open te krijgen.~~

FUCK DAT<sup>16</sup>

‘Dat deden we, ja. Zo kwam ik hier terecht, voor een paar verdomde pieken in een stinkende plastic collectebus. De moeite die we moesten doen om het open te krijgen... Daardoor belandden we in de fucking cel. Een of andere grappenmaker die even wilde laten zien dat junkies het slechte voorbeeld geven. Een pokke-collectebus!’

‘Nou, je had het ook niet moeten doen, Mark,’ zeurde Spud, ‘niet bij die oude Mrs Rylance, niet bij die katten... want het is niet, zegmaar, als stelen uit een winkel, het is een collectebus, weetjewel, een oude vrouw, die haar best doet voor dieren die in de steek gelaten zijn<sup>17</sup>. Een goed doel voor dieren, zegmaar.’

‘Ik snap het, vriend, ik snap het,’ zeg ik terwijl ik met mijn hand wapper om dit te ondersteunen. ‘Als ik een fortuin heb verdiend, zal ik een grote cheque uitschrijven aan de Cat Protection League en de Lothian Cat Rescue<sup>18</sup>.’

‘Een cheque,’ herhaalde hij zacht, terwijl deze gedachte hem leek te kalmeren, hoewel onze katachtige vrienden de laatste kutten zullen zijn ~~die iets van mijn geld te zien krijgen.~~

---

<sup>15</sup> In the ST, this word, ‘you’, is first written in Standard English, only to be rewritten in Scottish dialect. Since the translation lacks a dialect, this sort of rewrite is impossible to recreate. This means that the only solution is to have the standard word only in the translation and to delete the word written in dialect, even if this means that the switch in Renton’s head from Standard English to the Scottish dialect will get lost.

<sup>16</sup> I changed the position of this sentence from before to after the sentences that are crossed out. The reason for this is because in the ST, the previous sentence is full of words originally written in Standard English which are then rewritten into Scottish dialect. Since the translation does not have these words in the rewritten dialect, the ‘Fuck dat’ would not have made any sense. That is why I moved this particular sentence to after the sentences that are crossed out, in order to make sense again.

<sup>17</sup> Transition from adjective to a description of the adjective used in the source text, since a natural sounding suiting adjective in the TL was difficult to find.

<sup>18</sup> By maintaining the English names for these cat rescue organisations instead of changing them into Dutch organisations, the connection with the setting in Scotland remains visible. Also, it will not pose a problem for the reader, since the reader should not be underestimated in their knowledge of foreign languages.

DIE OOK MAAR EEN CENT VAN MIJN GELD KRIJGEN<sup>19</sup>. (Zo klink ik in mijn hoofd kop. Soms. Ongeveer. Soms. Waarom zou je anders willen klinken? Waarom in vredesnaam hetzelfde klinken als elke andere lul? Ik bedoel, in wiens voordeel is dat, verdomme<sup>20</sup>?)

Dus ik zeg tegen Spud, ‘Kijk, mijn plan is om af te kicken, en om daarna het gebruik onder controle te houden. Nooit boven de, laten we zeggen, zo’n twee of drie gram per week uitkomen. Maak dat een vaste regel. Blijf op het punt waar je wel de buzz krijgt, maar de ontwenningverschijnselen mild zijn zodra er een tekort is, en je het uit kan zitten met pijnstillers en Valium tot de zaken weer als vanouds zijn. Het is wetenschap, Danny. Of wiskunde. Alles heeft een optimum punt. Ik werd gewoon te roekeloos en ging voorbij die van mij.’

‘Dat nieuwe meissie dat hier kwam, die Audrey; zij ziet er uit als een aardig meissie, weetje? Ging gewoon naast me zitten bij het ontbijt.’ Hij gedroeg zich plotseling als een verlegen basisschooljochie, iets wat vaker gebeurt als vrouwen in beeld komen. ‘Ze zegt niet veel, weetje, dus ik keek haar aan en zei van, “Je hoeft niks te zeggen, maar als je wilt praten, in privé ofzo, dan ben ik hier, zegmaar.” Ze knikte alleen.’

‘Dat was erg aardig, Spud. Ga ervoor, man. Ik zou haar zeker zo doen. Zonder twijfel.’

‘Nee, zo was het niet,’ protesteerde hij verlegen, ‘Ze is een aardig meisje, en ik probeerde haar gewoon te helpen, weetjewel?’

‘Alsnog, je bent hier bijna weg, Spud, vrij om indruk te maken op alle schone dames in de haven met je bijna-doodervaringen en afkickverhalen.’

‘Nee, ik wil niet teruggaan naar Leith. Er is daar niks te doen.’ Hij schudde zijn hoofd. ‘Ik ben gewoon niet klaar, man...’

---

<sup>19</sup> Change in register to signify change in dialect. A low-key register can partly substitute some features of a dialect.

<sup>20</sup> I moved the swearword to another position in the sentence, since the TL does not support swearwords the same way as the SL does.



Toen legde hij zijn ~~hoofd~~ kop in zijn handen en ik voelde mezelf verstenen toen hij ~~begon te huilen~~ begon te janken. Echt janken, hoge, snotterige, kinderlijke halen. ‘Ik heb dingen helemaal verpest... met me ma...’

Ik legde mijn arm om hem heen; het was net alsof ik een pneumatische drillboor omhelsde. ‘Wow, kom op, Danny, rustig aan, makker...’

Hij keek me aan, gezicht rood en vol snot. ‘... als ik maar gewoon een baan kon vinden, Mark... en een vriendin... iemand om om te geven...’

Toen deed Sick Boy de deur open. Hij rolde nuchterig met zijn ogen terwijl Spud in zijn rode, bloeddoorlopen kijkers wreef. ‘Onderbreek ik iets?’

Spud sprong op. ‘Jij moet stoppen met Alison af te kraken! Je moet je mond dicht houden over haar, oké! Hoe jij met meissies omgaat... HET IS VERKEERD, WEETJE! HET IS GEWOON HELEMAAL VERKEERD!’

‘Daniel...’ zei Sick Boy, terwijl hij zijn handpalmen omhooghield, ‘.... Wat is er mis?’

‘JIJ! MENSEN ZOALS JIJ!’

Ze stonden tegenover elkaar, schreeuwend, gezichten centimeters<sup>21</sup> van elkaar vandaan. ‘Jij moet verdomme eens genaaid worden!’

‘En jij moet mensen met respect behandelen!’

‘Bespaar me de uitgemolken axioma’s<sup>22</sup>.’

‘Denk maar niet dat je hier onderuitkomt komt door moeilijke woorden te gebruiken,’ schreeuwde Spud, terwijl zijn gezicht rood aanliep en zijn ogen waterden. ‘Ik zeg dat je mensen met respect moet behandelen!’

‘Ja, en jou heeft het fucking veel goed gedaan!’

---

<sup>21</sup> Conversion of inches to centimetres, despite the general idea of maintaining as many cultural specific elements as possible. Since the measurement is used as a description of the situation, it is easier for the reader to read this in familiar measurements.

<sup>22</sup> The character Sick Boy uses this word to come across as smart and superior, which is why a similar word with a high register is used in the TL.

‘JE ZIT IN EEN AFKICKKLINIEK, VRIEND!’

‘IK HEB TENMINSTE MEER DAN ÉÉN HAND NODIG OM HET AANTAL VROUWEN TE TELLEN DIE IK HEB GEHAD!’

‘EEN VAN DEZE DAGEN ZAL IEMAND DIE GROTE BEK VAN JE DICHTSLAAN!’

‘EN DAT GA JIJ DOEN ZEKER?’

Het geluid van de ruzie drong door de flinterdunne muren heen en Len en Skinny-Specky stormden de kamer binnen om iedereen te kalmeren. Mooi niet dat ik tussen die twee in zou komen: laat ze het maar lekker uitvechten. Hoewel Spud een goedaardige gozer is, kan hij behoorlijk ruziemaken als hij een goede reden heeft en ik wed dat hij Sick Boy wel aankan. Het zou een behoorlijk mooi spektakel zijn om de twee te zien vechten.

#### pp. 546-548

En hij kijkt naar Sick Boy die nu zijn hoofd gebogen heeft en alles lijkt te snappen...

‘Wat? Wat heb *jij* gedaan?’ Renton stopt in de donkere straat en kijkt naar zijn vriend.

Sick boy voelt dat er iets zijn weg door zijn lichaam probeert te wurmen en door zijn mond wil ontsnappen, maar het moet tegengehouden worden. In plaats daarvan komt hij met een afleidingsmanoeuvre. ‘Matty...’

‘Rot op<sup>23</sup> met die teringlijer<sup>24</sup>.’

En nu is Sick Boy dankbaar voor Renton’s onderbreking, zodat hij die zin zelf niet af hoefde te maken. *Goddank dat het altijd om die egoïstische klootzak<sup>25</sup> moet gaan.* ‘Maar... ik

---

<sup>23</sup> The word ‘fuck’, used in the ST, has many meanings, most of which are difficult to translate into a single word. That is why I decided to turn this sentence of originally two words into a more extensive sentence. By doing this, the meaning also becomes clearer.

<sup>24</sup> I added a swearword to make up for the replacement of the word ‘fuck’ earlier in the sentence with a weaker swearword. Renton’s disapproval of Matty still had to be made clear, which I did by translating ‘him’ into ‘teringlijer’.

<sup>25</sup> I changed the neutral ‘him’ into ‘egoïstische klootzak’ for several reasons. First of all to make up for the loss of the swearword at the beginning of the sentence. Second of all to show Sick Boy’s opinion of Renton: Sick

geloof die kut degene was... die Janey Andersson erbij gelapt heeft met die bijstandsfraude. Ik begon er ooit over tegen hem, gewoon tussendoor, dat was nogal stom.’ Hij kijkt Renton aan, en probeert te zien of hij de leugen koopt. ‘Ik geloof verdomme dat hij haar heeft verklikt, Mark.’

‘Nee...’ zegt Renton onzeker, ‘zelfs hij zou niet zo diep zinken.’

Sick Boy geeft zich over, en laat de wilskracht die zijn misselijke en vergiftigde lichaam samen hield, verslappen, in een poging zichzelf te straffen met de golf van misselijkheid die daarop volgt. ‘Ik voel me gewoon zo fuckin<sup>26</sup> ziek.’

‘Ik ook. Maar we zijn er bijna, gozer. We hoeven nog maar even vol te houden.’

Elm Row nadert, gevolgd door Montgomery Street. Buiten bij de deur die naar de trap leidt<sup>27</sup>, vechten ze om zich te herpakken. ‘Nadat we het laatste restje Valium achterover geslagen hebben,’ zegt Sick Boy met waterende ogen, ‘is het genoeg. Het is klaar, Mark. Ik heb genoeg skag gehad voor de rest van m’n leven.’

Zijn overtuiging is zo sterk en vastbeslotenheid zo zeker, dat Renton zichtbaar is aangedaan. Hij voelt zijn ogen vochtig worden als het beeld van Keezbo, gevangen in niemandsland, op zijn netvlies brandt. ‘Je hebt gelijk,’ zegt hij, terwijl hij de schouder van zijn vriend licht aantikt, ‘we zijn klaar hier,’ en ze kijken beiden naar de hemel, niet in staat om de deur naar de trap door te gaan, en volledig ontmoedigd door het angstaanjagende vooruitzicht van de ijzige hoeveelheid treden naar hun flat op de bovenste verdieping.

*We zijn klaar hier.*

En met dat besef, terwijl hij omhoog kijkt naar de vrijgevigheid en helderheid van de sterren, voelt Renton zich verheven, alsof hij beloond is met een soort van eeuwige jeugd; het

---

Boy often sees his friend as a sort of semi-intellectual person who thinks he is quite smart because he went to university.

<sup>26</sup> I decided to maintain this word in its original position in this case, because it is often used in this way in Dutch as well, which makes it unnecessary to try and find a translation. It also fits into the speech pattern of the character.

<sup>27</sup> The phrase that is used in the ST has no simple translation in the TT, which means that a description is the best solution, even if this seems a strangely elaborate description.

idee dat hij de kroonprins<sup>28</sup> van de wereld was en deze moest delen met elke menselijk ziel. Binnenkort zal hij weer vrij zijn. Hij herinnert zich hoe Nietzsche<sup>29</sup> zich tegen het eind van zijn leven realiseerde dat je nihilisme niet simpelweg de rug toe kon keren; je moest er doorheen leven en er hopelijk aan de andere kant uitkomen om het achter te laten.

*Heroïne*

Dat meisje bij de inbraak. Hoe *wist* hij eigenlijk wat hij moest doen?

*Kleine Davie*

Als hij niet in dat huis was geweest, toekijkend hoe ze voor hem hadden gezorgd, had hij nooit de koelbloedige connectie gemaakt: ze heeft shit genomen, we moeten het eruit krijgen. Hoe? Zout water. Die neusholtes stonden in zijn hersenen gebrand door het verhitte kernen van zijn gestreste broertje, wat ervoor heeft gezorgd dat hij weet hoe hij met iemand in paniek om moet gaan. Één heldere ster in de hemel schijnt naar hem, als een verzekerende knipoo. En hij kan er niks aan doen, kan de gedachte niet onderdrukken: *De Kleine Man*.

Sick Boy ziet zichzelf als een gevangene van zijn eigen leugens. Hij staat iedere dag voor de scheerspiegel en kijkt toe hoe die ogen steeds killer en meedogenlozer worden bij het aanzien van de dicterende drugs en de brute hardheid van de wereld. Maar het zijn de leugens die hij zichzelf en anderen heeft voorgelegd die hem deze extravagantie toestaan. Nu voelt hij iets schrijnends in zijn ziel bewegen, en deze keer beseft hij opgetogen dat het wel eens de waarheid zou kunnen zijn die zich naar de oppervlakte probeert te werken. Hij hoest voorzichtig om dit gevoel weg te krijgen. ‘Één ding, Mark, ik weet dat wat er ook gebeurt, welke streken een van ons ook uithaalt, we zullen altijd samen zijn en achter elkaar staan,’ zegt hij serieus, terwijl zijn borst langzaam op en neer gaat. ‘We slaan ons hier samen doorheen,’ en hij loopt naar de trap, wat Renton dwingt om te volgen.

---

<sup>28</sup> I added an idiom here, which fits into the philosophical mood Renton is in whilst thinking about his life. The fact that he sees himself as someone who inherits the world, also supports Sick Boy’s opinion of him being egoistic. The word ‘kroonprins’ therefore fits perfectly in this situation.

<sup>29</sup> I decided to make a few changes to the order of this sentence to give it a natural flow which makes the sentence less choppy and therefore easier to read.

‘Dat weet ik, gozer,’ zegt Renton, bijna afgeleid door het licht van de sterren, tot de zware deur achter hen dichtslaat en het licht dooft. ‘*Cold turkey*<sup>30</sup> staat op het menu en we gaan er gewoon voor, geen enkel fuckin probleem. Hier stopt het voor mij,’ lacht hij in het donker, terwijl hij de stenen treden op stormt. ‘Ik heb door dit hele skag-gedoe alles gezien. Het was leuk zolang het duurde, maar de drugs kunnen ons niks nieuws meer bieden, afgezien van nog meer ellende, en daar heb ik nu wel genoeg van, verdomme.’

‘Inderdaad,’ stemt Sick Boy in. ‘We slaan ons er wel doorheen.’

Begeleidt door een straaltje licht van de trapverlichting, bereiken ze de top van de overloop. Als ze voordeur van het slot halen en de koude flat instappen, explodeert de telefoon in een oorverdovend gerinkel.

Ze kijken elkaar voor een stille seconde aan, waarin alles instort.

---

<sup>30</sup> Since this phrase is well-known in the TL, it is not necessary to translate it. An advantage of maintain the original phrase is that it fits within the right register and prevents the text from becoming too formal.

## Appendix B: Source Text

### pp. 6-9

‘C’mon, pal, the cab’s here,’ he says, maybe a bit abashed at her fussing, as he looks through the curtains outside tae the street, before turning and kissing my gran on her forehead. Then she grabs my hand. ‘You’re the best ay them, son, the best ay them aw,’ she whispers in urgent confidence. She’s said this every time ah’ve seen her since ah wis a bairn. Used tae make us feel great, till ah found oot she said it tae aw her grandchildren, and her neighbour’s kids! Ah’m sure she means it at the time, but.

#### *The best ay them aw.*

She releases the grip and hands Dad the duffel bag. ‘Dinnae you be losin the Thermos flask in that bag, David Renton,’ she ticks.

‘Aye, Maw, ah telt ye ah’d keep an eye oan it,’ he says sheepishly, like he’s become a surly teenager again. He starts tae go, but she stops him. ‘You’re forgettin something,’ she says, and goes tae the sideboard and produces three small glesses, which she proceeds tae fill up wi whiskey. Ma dad rolls his eyes. ‘Maw...’

She isnae hearin him. She raises a gless, forcing us tae follow, although ah hate whiskey n it’s the last thing ah want this early in the morning. ‘Here’s tae us, wha’s like us – damn few n thir aw deid!’ Gran croaks.

Dad knocks his back in a oner. Gran’s has already gone, by some kind ay osmosis, as ah didnae even see her pit the gless tae her lips. It takes me two retching gulps to get it doon. ‘C’mon, son, yir a Renton,’ she chides.

Then Dad nods tae me and we’re off. ‘She’s an awfay wumin’, he says with affection, as we climb intae the big black taxi, ma stomach burning. Ah wave back at her small figure, standing in the doorway in the murky street, willing the daft auld bat tae git back inside, intae the warm.

Glasgow. That was how we learned tae spell it at primary school: *Granny Likes A Small Glass Of Whiskey.*

It's still pitch dark and Weedgieville is spooky at four o'clock on a Monday morning, as the cab creaks and rumbles intae toon. It's minging in here; some dirty fucker's puked fae last night and ye can still smell it. 'Jesus Christ.' The old boy waves his hand in front ay his neb. Ma dad's a big, broad-shoodird sort ay gadge, whereas ah take mair eftir my mother in build: sticklike and rangy. His hair can genuinely be called blond (even though it's now greying), as opposed tae mine which, however ah try n dress it up, is basically ginger. He's wearing a broon cord jaykit, which ah have tae say is quite smart, though ruined by the Glasgow Rangers FC lapel badge, pinned next tae his Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers yin, and he fairly reeks ay Blue Stratos.

The bus is waitin fir us in the empty square behind Argyle Street. Some pickets are being harassed by a change-scrounging jakey whae keeps staggerin oaf intae the night then returning, always reprising the same routine. Ah climb oan the bus tae get the fuck away fae the pest. This cunt disgusts me; he's nae pride, nae politics. His deranged eyes roll and those rubber lips purse in that purple face. He's been beaten tae a pulp by the system, and aw the parasite can dae is try tae scrounge offay people whae've goat the bottle tae fight back. 'Wanker,' ah hear masel snap.

'Dinnae be sae quick tae judge, son.' Dad's accent is mair Glaswegian; stepping off the Edinburgh train at Queen Street does that. 'Ye dunno that boey's story.'

Ah say nowt, but ah dinnae want tae ken that minger's tale. Oan the bus, ah sit beside Dad and a couple ay his auld mates fae the Govan yards. It's good, cause ah feel closer tae him than ah've done in a while. It seems ages since we've done something thegither, just the two ay us. He's pretty quiet n thoughtful though, probably worried cause ay ma wee brother, oor Davie, being taken back intae the hoospital.

There's been plenty bevvie oan the bus, but naeboddy's allowed tae touch it till we head back, then we'll celebrate stoapin they fuckin scab lorries! Stacks ay nosh but; Granny Renton has made loads and loads ay sannies on white, spongy Sunblest bread: cheese and tomatay and ham and tomatay, like it's a funeral we're gaun tae!

Mind you, oan the bus it's mair like a fitba match than either boneyerd procession or picket; it has a big Cup Final vibe tae it, wi aw they banners hingin in the windaes. Half ay the people on oor coach are striking miners, fae pits in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, the Lothians and Fife; the other half trade unionists like the auld man, and assorted fellow travellers, like me. Ah was delighted when Dad telt us he'd got us a seat; the politicians at the uni would be jealous as fuck that ah wis oan one ay the official National Union ay Mineworker's buses!

The bus isnae that far out ay Glesgey before the night fades away intae a beautiful summer sky ay early-morning greeny-blue. Even though it's early, a few cars are on the road, some ay them blaring their horns at us in support ay the strike.

At least ah'm getting some conversation out ay Andy, whae's ma dad's best mate. He's a wiry, salt-ay-the-earth Weedgie boy, an ex-welder and lifelong CP member. His bony face had this almost translucent, nicotine-yellay skin stretched ower it. 'So, that'll be you back at the uni in September, eh, Mark?'

'Aye, but a few ay us are gaun oaf oan the InterRail acroas Europe next month, eh. Been back graftin at ma auld job as a chippy, tryin tae get some shekels thegither.'

'Aye, it's a great life when yir young. Make the maist ay it, that's my advice. Ye got a girlfriend at that university?'

Before ah can answer, Dad's ears prick up. 'Better no have, or that wee Hazel'll be daein her nut. Lovely wee lassie,' he says tae Andy, then turns tae me n goes, 'Whit is it she does again, Mark?'



‘Windae displays. At Binns at the West End, the department store, likes,’ ah tells Andy.

A big, contented crocodile smile spreads across my dad’s pus. If the cunt knew what Hazel and me’s relationship wis like, he widnae be sae keen tae bang oan about her aw the time. ~~A terrible~~ But that’s another story. The auld boy’s just chuffed tae see us wi a bird, worrying fir years ah was a possible buftie boy due tae ma musical tastes. Ah hud an aggressively glam-rock puberty, and was a teenage punk. ~~Then there was this time that oor Billy caught me wank~~

Another story.

**pp. 422-425**

That was as far as I got, as there was a knock and Spud burst in. He was in some distress, failing to notice that my hands were *inside* my tracky bottoms. He sat on the small basket chair fretting, sucking his bottom lip. ‘People are saying things... this place is a pure nightmare... ah feel shite, Mark, pure shite, n people are talking rubbish.’

I told him not to worry, that it was only Sick Boy and Swanney trying to show off. That it was all bullshit.

‘But how does he huv tae say they things about Alison? Alison’s a barry lassie!’

‘Because he’s a fucked-up arsehole, gadgie. Forget aw the sexist crap, it’s just them aw posturing tae each other. Aw these radges might talk like rapists among themselves, but they’ll aw grow intae hen-pecked husbands who’ll worry like fuck about their daughters. It’s just a pose.’

He looked at me in melancholy accusation, like a bairn who’s been told that Santa Claus doesnae exist. He kept glancing fae me tae the flair n back, as if building up to say

something, then he let fly. ‘You n Matty... ~~you~~ youse stole the Cat Protection League money! Off of Offay Mrs Rylance! ~~Out of the shop~~ Ootay the shoap!

FUCK THAT

~~‘We certainly did. That’s how we got here, for some poxy cash. When you think of the bother we had opening it.’~~ ‘We certainly did. That’s how I wound up here, for a few fuckin bob in a gantin plastic collection boax. The bother we had openin it... that’s what landed us in the fuckin cells! Some troll makin an example ay druggies! A poxy collection tin!’

‘Well, ye shouldnae huv done that, Mark,’ Spud bleated, ‘no tae auld Mrs Rylance, no tae the cats... cause it’s no likesay stealin oot ay shoaps, it’s a charity tin likesay, an auld woman, whae’s daein her best fir abandoned animals. Animal charity, likesay.’

‘Point taken, buddy, point taken,’ I waved a hand in emphasis. ‘When ah strike it rich, ah’ll write the CPL and Lothian Cat Rescue a big cheque.’

‘A cheque...’ he parroted blankly, the notion seeming to calm him down, though our feline pals will be the last cunts ~~to see any dosh I ever come into~~ TAE SEE ANY DOSH AH EVER COME INTAE. (*That* is more like how I sound in my ~~head~~ heid. Sometimes. Mair like. Sometimes. Why try tae sound different? Why the fuck be the same as every other cunt? Ah mean, whae’s fuckin interest does it serve?)

So ah tells Spud, ‘See, ma idea is tae get clean, then get the habit manageable. Never go ower, say, two or threeish grams a week. Make that a hard n fast rule. Stey at the point where ye git the buzz, but if thaire’s a drought, the withdrawal’s fuckin mild n ye can ride it oot oan painkillers n Vallies, till it’s biz as usual. It’s science, Danny. Or maths. Everything has an optimum point. Ah jist goat far too reckless and went past mine.’

‘That new lassie that’s came in, that Audrey; she seems a nice lassie, ken? Pure sat next tae me at breakfast,’ he went in that shy primary school qwally way he sometimes goes when manto flutter oantae the scene. ‘She doesnae say much, ken, so ah just looks at her n

goes, ‘Ye dinnae need tae say nowt, but if ye need tae talk, likesay in private, ah’m here, ken.’  
She jist nods.’

‘That was very thoughtful, Spud. Fire in there, mate. Ah’d certainly ride her. In a fuckin minute.’

‘Naw, it wisnae like that,’ he bashfully protested, ‘She’s a nice lassie, n ah wis jist tryin tae be helpful, ken?’

‘Still, you’ll be oot soon, Spud, free tae impress the fair maidens ay the Port wi yir near-death and rehab tales.’

‘Naw, ah dinnae want tae go back tae Leith. Thaire’s nowt tae dae.’ He shook his head. ‘Ah’m pure no ready, man...’

Then he put his ~~head~~ head in his hands and I felt masel turn tae stone as he ~~started to~~ ~~ery~~ started tae greet. Proper greeting, high, snivelling, wee bairnish whines. ‘Ah’ve messed things up that much... wi muh ma...’

I put ma airm roond him; it felt like hugging a workie’s pneumatic drill. ‘Whoah, c’moan, Danny, take it easy, mate...’

He stared up at us, face red, beak all snottery. ‘... if ah could jist git a joab, Mark... n a girlfriend... somebody tae care about...’

Then Sick Boy pushed the door open. He rolled his eyes camply, as Spud rubbed at his own red, bloodshot lamps. ‘Am I interrupting anything?’

Spud sprang to his feet.. ‘You kin stoap slaggin oaf Alison! You keep yir mouth shut about her, right! How you’re like wi lassies... IT’S WRONG, KEN! IT’S JIST PURE WRONG!’

‘Daniel...’ Sick Boy went, palms upturned, ‘...what’s wrong?’

‘YOU! PEOPLE LIKE YOU!’

They squared up, shouting at each other, faces inches apart. ‘You need tae git fucking laid!’ Sick Boy sneers.

‘N you need tae treat people wi respect!’

‘Spare me the tired axioms.’

‘Dinnae think ye can get oot ay it by using big words,’ Spud screamed, his face florid and eyes watering. ‘Ah sais ye need tae treat people wi respect!’

‘Aye, n it’s done you loads ay fucking good!’

‘YOU’RE IN REHAB N AW, SON!’

‘AT LEAST I NEED MAIR THAN ONE HAND TAE COUNT THE NUMBERS AY RIDES AH’VE HUD!’

‘YOU’RE GAUNNY GIT YIR BIG MOOTH SHUT ONE AY THESE DAYS!’

‘N YOU’RE GAUNNY DAE IT, LIKE?’

The palaver rippled through the centre’s wafer-thin walls and Len and Skinny-Specky burst in trying tae calm things doon. I was fucked if I was getting in between them: let them swedge away. Although a gentle soul, Spud can row when he has just cause and I’d wager he could take Sick Boy. It would’ve been damn fine sport tae see them exchange blows.

**pp. 546-548**

And he looks at Sick Boy who now has his head bowed, who seems to understand everything... ‘What? What have *you* done?’ Renton stops in the dark street and faces his friend.

Sick Boy feels something trying to twist up through his body and escape from his mouth, it has to be fought back. Instead he offers a diversionary gasp. ‘Matty...’

‘Fuck him.’

And now Sick Boy gives relieved thanks for Renton's intervention, preventing his own disclosures. *Thank fuck it always has tae be aboot him.* 'But... ah think it was that wee cunt... that grassed up Janey Anderson wi the benefits fiddle. Ah mentioned it tae him once, it was stupid, just in passing.' He looks at Renton, trying the lie for size. 'I think he fucking squealed, Mark.'

'Naw...' Renton says shakily, 'even he wouldnae stoop that low.'

Sick Boy buckles, allowing the will holding his queasy, bilious body and soul together to slacken, in order that he might punish himself with the ensuing rush of nausea. 'Ah jist feel so fuckin sick...'

'Me n aw. But we're nearly thaire, mate. We jist huv tae hud it thegither a bit longer.'

Elm Row approaches, followed by Montgomery Street. Outside the stair door, they fight to compose themselves. 'Eftir we doss back the last ay they Vallies,' Sick Boy say, eyes watering, 'that's it. It's over, Mark. Ah've done aw the skag ah'm ever gaunny dae.'

With his conviction so powerful and certainty so absolute, Renton is visibly moved. He feels his eyes moisten as the image of Keezbo, stranded in no-man's-land, burns in his skull. 'Too right,' he says, touching his friend lightly on the shoulder, 'we're done here,' and they both look up to the sky, unable to enter their stair door, completely drained in fearful anticipation of that cold multitude of steps to their top-floor flat.

*We're done here.*

And with that realisation, looking up to the munificence and radiance of the stars, Renton feels exalted, like he's been rewarded with a kind of eternal childhood; the idea that the whole of the earth was his to inherit, and to share with every human spirit. Soon he'll be free again. He recalls how, at the end of his life, Nietzsche realised that you couldn't simply turn your back on nihilism; you had to live through it and hopefully emerge out the other end, leaving it behind.

*Heroin.*

That girl at the break-in. How *did* he know what to do?

*Wee Davie*

Without being in that house, watching them tend to him, he's never have made the cold connection: she's taken shit, we need to get it up. How? Salt water. Those neural pathways had been scorched into his brain by the searing cries of his agitated brother, instilling that awareness of how to care for someone in distress. One bright star burns at him in the sky, like an affirming wink. And he can't help it, can't resist the thought: *The Wee Man.*

Sick Boy perceives himself as prisoner of his own lying lips. Standing every day at the shaving mirror, watching those eyes grow colder and more pitiless in face of the drug's dictates and the world's brutal coarseness. But it's the lies he's told to himself and others that permit him this extravagance. Now he feels something poignant stirring in his soul, and this time he realises in elation that it might even be a truth trying to bubble to the surface. He coughs it shakily from his throat. 'One thing, Mark, ah know that whatever happens, whatever stunts either ay us pull, it'll always be you n me, backing each other up,' he contends, his chest slowly rising and falling. 'We'll get through this thegither,' and he walks into the stair, compelling Renton to follow.

'Ah know that, mate,' Renton says, almost distracted under the luminosity of the stars, till the heavy door, closing behind them on the spring, extinguishes their light. 'Cauld turkey's on the menu and we'll dae it, nae fuckin bother. It's the end ay the line for me,' he smiles in the darkness, kicking the stone steps under his feet. 'Ah've taken this skag thing as far as it kin go. It wis a nice wee phase but there's nowt new the drug kin show us, other than mair misery, n ah'm fuckin well done wi aw that.'

'Too right,' Sick Boy agrees. 'Toughest skiers.'

Guided by the thin glow of a stair lamp, they reach the summit of their landing. As they unlock the front door and enter the cold flat, the phone explodes in a bone-shaking ring.

They look at each other for a frozen second, into which all time collapses.