

MASTER THESIS



TRANSLATING THE DUAL VOICES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS IN *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED*

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1 INTRODUCTION

“Proper words in proper places, make the true definition of style.”

— Jonathan Swift

This quote shows the importance of choosing words properly, but do proper words in proper places really make the true definition of style? There is no true definition of style, at least not in Foer’s novel *Everything is Illuminated*. Foer creates two different narrative voices that have their own style and both of these forms are created in a different manner. On the one hand, the voice of Jonathan writes in a literary way, while the voice of Alexander, on the other hand, writes in a peculiar way because of his Ukrainian origin and limited knowledge of English. His style is not created by putting words in their proper places, but by putting words in a different context which results in a humorous effect. This ‘incorrect’ context could, however, also be the proper place, because a humorous effect is achieved. This thesis studies these narrative structures and focuses on their translation problems and the possible solutions for these problems.

The first chapter deals with the contextualization of both the author and his novel *Everything is Illuminated*. The novel is analysed as a postmodernist work of fiction and some of the postmodernist ideas are pointed out. Then the focus is shifted to three characteristics of *Everything is Illuminated*, which are the two narrative voices of Jonathan and Alexander and the technique of stream of consciousness in the end of the novel. These characteristics are considered in a theoretical framework and are analysed for translational purposes. Several translation strategies are discussed, for example, the strategies of Grit regarding the ‘fictional realia’ – the mythical names in *Everything is Illuminated* – and the strategies of Nord regarding objective translation problems.

The aim of this thesis is to find out which translation problems occur in translating the different characteristics of *Everything is Illuminated* and what the

possible – and most advisable – solutions are to these problems. Chapter four studies a translation in practice of three different passages and I will compare my own translation with the published translation of Peter Abelsen in chapter five. The final chapter shortly concludes with the main ideas presented in this thesis and illuminates the translation problems of *Everything is Illuminated*. Moreover, this final chapter offers the most advisable solutions for translating the characteristics of this novel.

2 CONTEXTUALIZATION

2.1 THE AUTHOR

"It was a revelation," he said. "It had never occurred to me that there was such a thing as 'my writing.' I thought the thing I was doing was just fulfilling the assignments."

— Jonathan Safran Foer

PERSONAL LIFE

The American author Jonathan Safran Foer was born in Washington D.C. on February 21, 1977. He grew up in a Jewish household. His father, Albert Foer, is a lawyer and also the founder of the American Antitrust Institute. His mother, Esther Safran Foer, is a Polish émigré and “the president of a public-relations company, FM Strategic Communications” (Solomon, al. 16). Jonathan has two brothers, who are an editor and a freelance journalist respectively. In 2004 Jonathan married the writer Nicole Krauss and they have two sons.

EDUCATION

In the mid-1990's Foer followed classes at Princeton University, where he took an “introductory fiction writing course with Joyce Carol Oates” (Nash, al. 1). Oates took an interest in his writing and was Foer’s advisor when he wrote his undergraduate thesis. In 1999, Foer went to the Ukraine to find out about his grandfather’s life and this trip resulted in his thesis that turned out to be a draft of his first novel, “Everything is Illuminated.” In the same year, he also graduated with a degree in philosophy.

WRITING CAREER

His first novel, *Everything is Illuminated*, was published in 2002 by Houghton Mifflin and in 2005 this novel was turned into a film by Liev Schreiber. The second novel that Foer wrote is *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, which is about Oskar Schell

who loses his dad to the attacks of 9/11. This novel was published in 2005 and was also turned into a film. In 2009 his first work of non-fiction was published, *Eating Animals*, which is about vegetarianism. His third novel was published in 2010, *Tree of Codes*, and in 2012 *The New American Haggadah* was released, which was edited by him.

RECEPTION FOER AND *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED*

While he attended Princeton, Foer won several prizes, for example, the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior Creative Writing Thesis prizes and in 2000 the Zoetrope: All Story Fiction Prize. Beside writing his own stories, “he also edited *A Convergence of Birds: Original Fiction and Poetry Inspired by the Work of Joseph Cornell*” in 2001 (Birnbaum, al. 1). For his first novel ‘Everything is Illuminated’, Foer received the “Guardian first book award 2002 and the National Jewish Book Award” (Gibbons, al. 1).

The reception of Foer and his first novel are mostly positive, although some critics call his work ‘immature’ and Foer’s novel is criticised by Ivan Katchanovski for the fact that “NOT Everything is Illuminated”. He accuses Foer of “omitting crucial facts” and especially facts that include “an important link to the Czech Republic” (al. 1). Another critic, Brooke Allen, points out both negative and positive characteristics of Foer’s first novel. She calls Foer’s novel “an inventive but immature fictional excursion, sometimes pleasant, sometimes just pretentious” (141).

It seems that critics remain sceptical when it comes to a first novel, but that does not take away that Foer’s first novel received a great deal of attention and was very successful. What stands out in this novel is its originality, as Siddhartha Deb puts it: “[w]hat is original and thoughtful in this novel far outweighs the derivative and the superficial, making it an engaging declaration of artistic intent” (55).

2.2 THE NOVEL: *Everything is Illuminated*

2.2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE NOVEL

Everything is Illuminated consists of three different narrative lines. The novel begins with the voice of Alexander Perchov, a Ukrainian guy who serves as the translator and guide for an agency called *Heritage Touring* that guides Jewish people in their search for their family's history. Two of the narrative lines are written by Alex. One of the narrative lines tells the story of the recent trip of Jonathan, Alex and his grandfather and the seeing-eye bitch, a dog that accompanies their trip because Alex's grandfather claims he is blind. They are searching for Trachimbrod, the place where Jonathan hopes to find the woman who saved his grandfather from the Nazis. The other narrative line written by Alex consists of letters to Jonathan about his own life and the story Jonathan is writing. These letters show a possible growing friendship, mainly from Alex's side, and as the novel develops the writing of Alex also shows an improvement. The last narrative line is the story that Jonathan Safran Foer, the character has the same name as the author of the novel, writes about the history of Trachimbrod.

THE STORY

The novel opens with Alexander Perchov who acts as the translator and guide for Jonathan, a Jewish-American writer who travels to the Ukraine in search for information about his Jewish grandfather. This story is told from Alex's point of view, which sometimes creates a humorous effect because of his broken English. His knowledge of English is limited and he uses a thesaurus as his tool, which creates an ungrammatical but creative style. A good example can be given from his first letter to Jonathan, where he writes:

“I hanker for this letter to be good. Like you know, I am not first rate with English. In Russian my ideas are asserted abnormally well, but my second

tongue is not so premium. I undertaked to input the things you counselled me to, and I fatigued the thesaurus you presented me, as you counselled me to, when my words appeared too petite, or not befitting. If you are not happy with what I have performed, I command you to return it back to me. I will persevere to toil on it until you are appeased.” (Foer 23)

Besides using the wrong simple past, Alex uses words like ‘hanker’ and ‘premium’, a word that he especially seems to prefer.

Alex and his grandfather work for *Heritage Touring* and, at first, Alex thinks that it is strange for a Jew to come to the Ukraine. However, when Jonathan reveals his plans and shows Alex and his grandfather the photograph of Augustine, the woman who saved Jonathan’s grandfather from the Nazis, they fall in love with the photograph and are willing to help Jonathan to find this woman. Eventually, they find a woman that seems to be Augustine, but calls herself Lista, and she leads them to Trachimbrod, which is now nothing more than an empty field, and she tells them about how the Nazis murdered the townspeople. The woman gives them a box marked ‘In-Case’ and from this box they discover that Alex’s grandfather was the man who pointed out his best friend as a Jew, so the Nazis killed him instead of Alex’s grandfather.

Throughout the novel, Alex sends Jonathan letters that reflect on the story about their recent trip and the story that the fictional Jonathan Safran Foer is writing. The first letter is written on the 20th of July 1997 and the last letter, written by Alex’s grandfather, is written on the 22nd of January 1998. These letters are written after their trip and add to the gradual change in the character of Alex in his account of their trip, as these letters show the final development in his character. Alex is, at first, very boastful about his life. Alex mentions, for example, all the girls ‘he is carnal with’, but when the novel develops, his writing becomes more honest. In addition, Alex’s letters are even more honest and result in him taking responsibility for himself and his family. Therefore, these letters show the maturation of Alex. Furthermore, instead

of praising Jonathan's novel, Alex starts criticising Jonathan's work, because Jonathan's ideas seem inconsiderate. In one of his last letters, however, he tells Jonathan that they should no longer criticise each other, because their writing is now in one voice: "With our writing, we are reminding each other of things. We are making one story, yes?" (144). Different from the other letters, Alex finishes his last letter with 'Love' instead of 'Guilelessly'. This shows the willingness of Alex to forgive and leave history behind for what it is, but as Alex tries to become friends, Jonathan never responds but instead ends his novel with a fragment from *The Book of Recurrent Dreams* that describes the horrifying effects of what the Nazis did.

The novel written by the fictional Jonathan tells the story of Trachimbrod and what the history of the shtetl – a small Jewish town – of Jonathan's grandfather was like according to the imagination of Jonathan. This story begins in 1791, when the wagon of Trachim B, a member of the town, crashed into the river. Only the newborn baby survives the accident and this is the main character of Jonathan's story, Brod. She is Jonathan's great-great-great-great-great-great-grandmother and is adopted by Yankel. The story is mainly about expressing love, memories and chance. When Yankel dies, Brod marries the Kolker and when he dies the story shifts to Jonathan's grandfather Safran. Jonathan describes, for example, Safran's wedding day and he visits the statue of the Kolker. Safran is later the only man who escapes the Nazis, as he is saved by a woman named Augustine.

At the end of the novel, all narrative lines seem to come together as Alex and Jonathan become one voice, when they both write about the past. Alex discovers that his idea of love and family is not realistic and he is finally able to take responsibility. Both Jonathan and Alex are now aware of what happened and because of this they become each other's equals in that they both write about the horrible events of the past. The novel ends with a letter from Alex's grandfather to Jonathan in which he tells Jonathan that if he reads this it means that Alex is alive and that he, Alex's grandfather, has died, because he killed himself. Moreover, this letter shows Jonathan that Alex stood up against his father and took responsibility for his family.

2.3 A POSTMODERNIST FICTION

“Postmodernism can include self-reflexive, meta-fictional novels or more disparate literary forms like the non-fiction novel, essay, autobiography and combinations of realism and fantasy” (Smyth 13). Especially the last part ‘combinations of realism and fantasy’ is true for Foer’s *Everything is Illuminated*. In this novel Foer creates two different worlds. Firstly, the world of Trachimbrod, which is partly a realistic place as many Jews were killed by the Nazis, but also partly fantastic, because a lot of details are part of the author’s imagination. The story about the Kolker, the husband of Brod, is a great example of “the fantastic” (Kohn 146). As McHale points out, “[g]rotesque imagery of the human body, a direct inheritance from carnival practices, is also highly typical of postmodernist fiction” (173). This is also the case in Foer’s novel with the Kolker who got a “disk-saw blade [...] in the middle of his skull” (Kohn 146), which he survives but it ruins his marriage. This postmodernist idea of realism combined with fantasy partly reveals the nature of Foer’s novel, where reality and fantasy are mixed.

Furthermore, this postmodernist characteristic is also present in the two narrative voices, because both voices are unreliable as they mix reality with fantasy. As the author, Foer is able to alternate between the two narrative lines and eventually mix them. Foer also uses the strategy of ‘mimetic relativism’ which presents the idea that the world is “projected as open to radically different interpretations which neither characters nor readers are in a good position to choose between” (Smyth 150). Neither the characters nor the readers are able to interpret what is real. Both characters are writing a story: Jonathan is a writer who is writing a fictional novel about the past and Alex gives an account of the recent trip. It becomes clear that Jonathan’s story is more fictional than Alex’s story, but the reader cannot be assured that Alex’s point of view is completely realistic, because Alex’s knowledge of English is limited. Moreover, because *Everything is Illuminated* is a postmodernist work, the idea is present that language influences our, and Alex’s,

interpretations of reality. According to Collado-Rodriguez, this postmodernist idea that “language has a pervasive grip on our interpretations of reality” is present in Foer’s novel, which is reflected in the character of Alex as he thinks that “writing a novel is merely a matter of representing a formulaic, mass-mediated reality” (56). Therefore, the reader cannot interpret Alex’s writing neither as realistic nor as fantastic. This postmodernist idea “is [also] humorously dealt with [...] by a narrator-as-author” (56). The fact that Jonathan carries the same name as the author gives the reader reason to doubt what is real and what is part of both of the Foer’s fantasy.

According to McHale, another characteristic of postmodernist fiction is the act of focusing on the written word in the novel. This characteristic is present in Foer’s novel, not only through the letters from Alex to Jonathan and the story of Jonathan, but also *in* the story of Jonathan, for example, through *The Book of Recurrent Dreams* and *The Book of Antecedents*. These books present dreams and antecedents of the people that live or lived in Trachimbrod. All in all, *Everything is Illuminated* presents itself as a postmodernist work of fiction, of which the characteristics must be examined in the process of translating the novel.

3 TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

3.1 JONATHAN'S VOICE

The first chapter written by Jonathan begins on March 18, 1791, when Trachim B's wagon hits "the bottom of the Brod River" (Foer 8). This narrative line is clearly a work of fiction, because the events are described in great detail and are often more fantastic than realistic. Moreover, the names of the people in Trachimbrod appear to be mythical, as some of the names are 'Bitzl Bitzl R' or 'the Well-Regarded Rabbi' (8). These Synagogue's congregants form a Jewish community, divided into the Slouchers and the Uprighters, that searches for a name for the town. This is done by taking it to a vote, but the first outcome is very disagreeable according to the townspeople, because they have a loathing for the squire Sofiowka to which the town is named after, and therefore the "Well-Regarded Rabbi called for another vote" (51). This chapter, where the Rabbi calls for another vote, is translated in chapter four, because it is full of mythical names and typographical devices and these factors create translation problems that are analysed in this chapter. One of these typographical devices is the use of sentences in capital letters by the Rabbi, and another example is the use of italics, when the thoughts of the townspeople are presented. These varieties in typography mark some of the different styles in the novel, and this variety in style is an apparent translation problem throughout the novel. It is necessary that all the different voices in the novel are heard and distinguished by the translator. The aim of the translator is to achieve a target text with the same function and effect on the reader as the source text. However, before analysing these and other characteristics of Jonathan's narrative, it is important to look at Jonathan's character, in relation to Alex, the storyline and meaning of Jonathan's fictional novel.

3.1.1 JONATHAN'S CHARACTER AND HIS NOVEL

According to Menachem Feuer, Jonathan's voice seems to be "both more consistent and more independent of outside influence" than Alex's voice (36). This becomes clear in the comments that Alex makes on Jonathan's chapters, as Alex criticises the tragic events in Jonathan's novel by making suggestions, for example, as follows: "If I could utter a proposal, please allow Brod to be happy. Please. Is this such an impossible thing?" (143). Jonathan, however, does not change his story. He finishes his story with a passage of *The Book of Recurrent Dreams*, which describes 'the dream of end of the world' and shows how Trachimbrod was destroyed by the Nazis. Jonathan's choice to end the novel with this passage shows that he is still not ready to let go of the past and the reason for this is that he discovered very little about his grandfather Safran on his trip. In the chapters about this recent trip, written by Alex, it becomes clear that Alex who had no expectations of this tour, in contrast to Jonathan, does discover the truth about his family.

Jonathan's voice seems very consistent and independent, which is reflected in his novel, as he does not take into account Alex's suggestions. His novel does, however, affect Alex's character, a character that experiences a lot of change. The ideas that Alex had about his life and family turn out to be naïve when Alex realises the truth about the past and what his grandfather did. In one of his last letters, Alex writes: "We are talking, Jonathan, together, and not apart. We are with each other, working on the same story, and I am certain that you can feel it." (214). This is true in the sense that they are both trying to live with the terrible events of the past. Here, the two stories "collide in the same time span [and the] two characters need to face each other", which Collado-Rodriguez calls the author's 'strategy of refraction' (58). This is a stylistic device of the implied author, as both of the narrative lines and letters are composed in a way that they harmonize with each other.

When translating the voice of a character like Jonathan, being well informed about the character's ideas and his attitude is necessary, because a character is often exposed by the language he uses and this is even more noticeable in Alex's character.

Moreover, the differences between these two characters create the variety in styles, which is a general translation problem that is further explained in the analysis of Alex's character. This thesis now shifts to the more specific translation problems of Jonathan's story.

3.1.2 MYTHICAL NAMES

Most of the names in *Everything is Illuminated*, such as 'Borderland', 'ÚPRIGHTLAND' and 'Fault Line', sound mythical or are representing an idea. These three names represent the town that is called 'Trachimbrod' by the second vote and can be categorized as 'fictional realia', as they are fictional culture specific terms (Grit 189). These names are historical and geographical concepts that are invented by Jonathan Safran Foer. Although these names are fictional, the translational approach can be similar. Before turning to the translation strategies, Grit advises to analyse the text type. Foer's novel has been analysed a postmodernist work of fiction and therefore the reader expects fictional elements. There are many fictional elements in, for example, the events in the town Trachimbrod. Although this town is partly a realistic place as many Jews were killed by the Nazis, it is also partly fantastic, because a lot of details are part of the author's imagination. These postmodernist elements – the combination of realistic and fictional elements – have to be transformed into the target text by using Grit's strategies that allow the translator to create similar elements with the same effect, for example, by translating the most important elements of the name.

The mythical names in Jonathan's narrative line evoke a fictional atmosphere and the names should have the same denotation or connotation in the target text. The target group crosses cultural borders and the translator has to determine whether the denotation or connotation is important for the target group and how the denotation or connotation can be adequately transformed into the target language (Grit 191). As for the names in *Everything is Illuminated*, these are all fictional and have no denotation. Therefore, it is not the denotation but the connotation that is of

importance in these names. The connotations of the names evoke a certain image of the Jewish community and these connotations have to be transformed into a target language, which can be achieved by applying several of Grit's strategies. Grit analyses several possibilities and after discussing these strategies, this thesis will focus on the most advisable solution, which will also be applied in my translation of the mythical names.

Grit discusses several strategies for translating cultural specific terms that will be analysed in a similar way, but different because the names in Foer's novel are fictional and not real. The first possible strategy is to preserve the cultural specific term, which means that the expression in the source language remains unchanged in the target text.. An example Grit gives is the Dutch paper 'de Volkskrant' that remains 'de Volkskrant' in another language. This strategy is, however, not applicable for the names in Foer's novel, because these names represent an idea and when the names remain untranslated, this idea will not be translated into the target language. The second possible strategy is a loan translation, where the expression in the source language is translated word-for-word. Grit, however, emphasises that this strategy is only possible when the expression is a compound of independent units in the target language (192). Therefore, this second approach is also not applicable, as well as two other strategies that Grit discusses, because these strategies are for existing expressions and not for fictional purposes.

In two of Grit's other possibilities, he offers useful strategies for translating the names in *Everything is Illuminated*. The first of these two is a translation that only represents the most important element of the name. He gives an example of 'havo', which falls under a specific Dutch education, and is translated to English with 'secondary school', which is more general. In *Everything is Illuminated*, the name 'Gefilteville' can be translated with 'Gefiltevis', which is what Abelsen did in the published translation. The second useful strategy is the strategy of adaptation, where the function of the expression in the target language is the most important. Therefore, it is more a translation of the function than of the content (193). This adds to the first

strategy in that the meaning and the sound of the names should function in the same or in a similar way as in the source language. Therefore, the combination of these two strategies of Grit offers a solution to the problems that occur when translating the mythical names in *Everything is Illuminated*.

Regarding Foer's novel, the connotations of the names are most important. In the second paragraph of the first passage that has been translated, several names emerge, for example, the 'Upright Synagogue', 'Gefilteville' and the 'Uprighters' and the 'Slouchers'. These names can be categorized as 'fictional realia' and the connotation of these names is most important. When applying Grit's strategy, the most important elements of the names 'Uprighters' and 'Slouchers' are translated into the target language, which are the meaning of 'upright' and 'slouch' and the sound and length of these words. From the words of the Rabbi becomes clear that the Uprighters are considered as good people and the Slouchers as bad. This connotation is conveyed in the meaning of the words 'upright' and 'slouch', as the first means 'rechtopstaand', 'oprecht', 'eerlijk' or 'langwerpig', while the second means 'slappe houding', 'zoutzak', or 'waardeloos geval'. Moreover, the connotation of the words 'uprighters' and 'slouchers' is derived from the length and sound of the words. Therefore, I chose to translate 'Uprighters' with 'Oprechters' and 'Slouchers' with 'Zoutzakken'. Although 'Zoutzakken' contains three syllables instead of two, the meaning and sound of the word are similar to that in the source text. Moreover, it functions in a similar manner and has a similar effect on the reader. This approach is a combination of Grit's strategies, as the most important elements of the name – the meaning, sound and length – are translated and have a similar function in the target text. According to Grit, strategies often overlap and this does not create problems, but only strengthens a strategy. For the other names like 'Borderland', 'Fault Line' and 'Lock-and-Key' the same strategy can be applied, as both the meaning and the sound of these words are of importance.

Grit also presents two questions that evaluate the applied strategy, or strategies, of a translator (191). In the translating process, the connotations become

clear by examining the correlation between the source- and target text. Furthermore, the translation should be as short as possible and as long as is necessary, which adds to the meaning and sound of words. When a name in the source language is long and is translated with a short word, then the connotation and meaning are likely to be different from that of source text, because the length of words also represents certain ideas. This is true for several names in the novel. The reference to ‘The Well-Regarded Rabbi’, for example, represents both respect and a certain elegance, as the ‘rhythm’ of the name represents his elegance. When this name would be translated with ‘Eervolle Rabbijn’ instead of ‘Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn’, then the shortness of this translation would not be truthful to the elegance – or rhythm – of the name.

3.1.3 TYPOGRAPHICAL DEVICES

Throughout the novel resound multiple voices. Not only those of Jonathan and Alex, but also the voice of the Rabbi or of the townspeople. According to Lisa Propst, this “belongs to a long Jewish history. A Jewish tradition of multi-vocality” (38). She especially mentions the “acceptance of [these] disparate voices,” which means an “acceptance of a shared history [that] involves a concomitant willingness to respect conflicting narratives” (38). She believes that this is part of a Jewish tradition and is present in *Everything is Illuminated*, but this multi-vocality is also a postmodernist feature, especially when the two narrative lines are eventually mixed, as their voices become more similar when they both write about the war and their past. The two main characters are, however, each others opposites, as they have a very different background. They both experience and reflect on their experiences in a different manner, not to speak of their nature. But beside these two main voices, the Rabbi is willing to listen to the multiple voices of the townspeople. This respect for multiple voices, part of a Jewish tradition and postmodernist fiction, becomes clear in the following quote:

For as the Venerable Rabbi once enlightened, AND IS WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY SANE, STRICTLY MORAL, ABOVE-AVERAGE, PROPERTY-HOLDING, OBSERVANT ADULT JEWISH MALE IS BORN WITH A VOICE THAT MUST BE HEARD, SHALL WE NOT HEAR THEM ALL? (Foer 50).

The author uses a typographical device for the voice of the Rabbi, as he uses capital letters for his words. The effect of this device is that the reader sees the Rabbi as a man who is constantly hollering words, so that he radiates authority. Moreover, the Rabbi's voice becomes clearly marked from the other voices and in this way Foer distinguishes the Rabbi's style from the others. It becomes clear from the rest of the novel that he is a respected man, as they dub him 'Well-Regarded Rabbi' and 'Venerable Rabbi'. This is, however, not the only typographical device that Foer applies. The author also uses italics, for example, in the chapters of Jonathan, where the dialogue is italicized. Although Jonathan hardly ever makes a note to Alex, when he does, his words are also in italics. Another example of words in italics can be found in the chapter that is analysed hereafter, where the townspeople reflect on what is meant with the word 'purposes' (51).

As for the translation problems, these typographical devices do not create problems, because the capital letters and sentences in italics can be adopted in the target language. Moreover, these typographical devices are a help for the translator because they distinguish several of the styles in Foer's novel. Therefore, the main problem is the diversity of style; these typographical devices help the reader, and the translator, to distinguish between some of the different styles. All the different voices of the novel, even those who are not marked typographically, have to be heard by the translator and this can be achieved by analysing the characters of, for example, Alex and Jonathan thoroughly. Therefore, this thesis will now focus on the character of Alex and his idiolect.

3.2 THE PECULIAR DISCOURSE OF ALEX: 'TRAPPED IN LANGUAGE'

"But I do not do these things because we are family. I do them because they are common decencies. That is an idiom that the hero taught me."

— Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything is Illuminated*

Everything is Illuminated begins with the other voice of the novel: the voice of Alex. He begins the novel with an introduction of himself, his family and his life. Throughout the novel, Alex calls Jonathan the hero of his novel and, with Jonathan as his role model, his English improves. His chapters seem more realistic than those of Jonathan, as it is an account of their recent trip, but also because of the letters that Alex writes to Jonathan throughout the novel. In these letters he reflects on both of the stories and points out the fantastic elements of Jonathan's story. This makes Alex's own story more believable, although it becomes clear that his story is also unrealistic, because his character changes throughout the novel and he mentions that he lied before. Moreover, the reader cannot rely on Alex's interpretations, because *Everything is Illuminated* is a postmodernist work and, therefore, the idea is present that Alex's knowledge of language influences his interpretations of reality.

ALEX'S CHARACTER, HIS NOVEL AND HIS LETTERS TO JONATHAN

According to Menachem Feuer, it is clear that "Alex's central deception is to use [...] comic narrative to endear himself to Jonathan" (26). This is especially noticeable in the beginning of the novel and in the letters he writes to Jonathan, where he writes that he is always out with friends, spending money, and "performing so many things that can spleen a mother" (Foer 1). He wants to make an impression on Jonathan, but this changes gradually throughout the novel. Alex becomes more honest and sincere, as he realises that Jonathan is not interested in his boastful stories. The development of Alex can be analysed as an "evolutionary pattern", as his knowledge of English improves corresponding to the development of his character (Leech & Short 46).

While Jonathan is independent and consistent, Alex is not. He is, in fact, the opposite of Jonathan's character. He depends on his family and especially on Jonathan, as he wants to impress Jonathan. Furthermore, he is inconsistent, because he changes for Jonathan's sake. This change, however, makes him a better person, as he becomes more honest. Furthermore, Alex reflects Jonathan's story on himself, as he mentions in one of his letters that: "I have learned many momentous lesson from your writing, Jonathan. One lesson is that it does not matter if you are guileless, or delicate, or modest. Just be yourself" (178-78). Alex does not only apply this lesson in his own life, but becomes genuinely interested in the truth about his own family.

As becomes clear, Alex changes throughout his novel and the reader can see this change especially through the letters he writes to Jonathan, as he reflects Jonathan's story and his ideas on himself. Contrary to Jonathan, Alex discovers the truth about his family and that he should be truthful. The letters have an important role in Alex's search for the truth, about his family and himself. From these letters also emerges the idea that Jonathan was not interested in becoming friends during their trip and in the end of the novel, Alex becomes independent and takes responsibility for his family. In his last letter Alex calls Jonathan a coward for "living in a world that is "once-removed,"" with these words he is saying that Jonathan refuses to forgive and with that he refuses any friendship (240). Alex, however, is able to ask for forgiveness and took Jonathan's advice of 'Just be yourself' and finally told his father what he really thought.

DISCOURSE OF ALEX

As Feuer wrote, Alex is "both intentionally and unintentionally humorous, as he believes his language is "proper" when in fact it is not" (26). This is true for the beginning of the novel, but when Alex changes, his language also improves. Alex's speech cannot be analysed as a dialect, because a dialect is a variety of an official language and corresponds "to geographical, class or other division of society" (Leech & Short 134). Alex's use of language can, however, be analysed as an idiolect, which

refers to the “‘thumbprint’ of a particular person: to the features of speech that mark him off as one individual from another” (134). Alex’s discourse distinguishes him from other people and is unique, as he mixes formal and informal words and is not always grammatical. Moreover, not only does an idiolect belong to an individual, an idiolect also “‘reflects one’s own linguistic capabilities and, in that sense, is fully determined by facts about oneself” (Heck 61). This is true for Alex, as his linguistic capabilities are poor, which resulted from ‘facts about himself’. He did not learn English properly, and instead he uses a thesaurus because he thinks it will improve his English. His English does, however, not improve from this tool, but mainly from the interaction with Jonathan. Furthermore, an idiolect becomes noticeable in a text because of the choices that are made by the author. According to Coulthard, these choices can consist of choices in vocabulary or in repetition of certain words. These “‘preferred words” can serve as a signature for that person (1). In Foer’s novel, Alex prefers certain words over others and this preference follows from his use of the thesaurus, which becomes clear from Alex’s own words: “‘I fatigued the thesaurus you presented me, as you counselled me to, when my words appeared to be too petite, or not befitting” (23). In other words, Alex uses a thesaurus and chooses words that, according to him, sound better or fancier and, as a result, he uses words like ‘premium’, ‘rigid’ or ‘currency’ repeatedly.

In addition, Alex’s idiolect determines his relation with Jonathan, as Jonathan takes the role of the teacher and Alex that of the learner. Moreover, a small difference can be found between the letters that Alex writes to Jonathan and the chapters of their trip. The letters to Jonathan, for example, are only addressed to Jonathan, while the chapters of their trip also concentrates on the “‘implicit reader,” which is also the case in the chapters of Jonathan (Leech & Short 216). Furthermore, the letters are written in a later time, as the letters vary from the 20th of July 1997 to the 22nd of January 1998. From the first letter becomes clear that the trip was a while ago – the date is not mentioned – and therefore Alex’s register in his letters can differ from that

in his chapters. Hence the focus will be shifted to the specific translation problems of Alex's idiolect and the possible strategies that can be applied.

NORD'S APPROACH

In her approach, Christiane Nord identifies several translation problems. On the one hand, she distinguishes subjective translation difficulties and, on the other hand, objective translation problems. The subjective translation difficulties depend on the competence of the translator and the circumstances of the translation process, while the objective translation problems are independent of the competence of the translator or the translation process. Nord distinguishes the objective translation problems into four categories: pragmatic, culture-specific, language-specific and text-specific translation problems (147). Firstly, pragmatic translation problems follow from the differences in the communicative situations of the source text and the target text. Secondly, culture-specific translation problems follow from two different cultures that carry different norms and conventions. Thirdly, language-specific translation problems follow from the differences in, for example, the structures of the source text and the target text. Lastly, text-specific translation problems are specific for an individual text and the solution to this problem cannot be applied to other texts.

As for *Everything is Illuminated*, especially the last two translation problems are noticeable in this novel. In translating this novel, language-specific problems that occur are the length or the grammatical structure of the text. In the process of translating from English to Dutch, the Dutch text is often longer than the English text. An additional problem is the gerund, which is of common use in English, but not in Dutch. Therefore, the sentence has to be restructured or becomes automatically longer. Furthermore, the translation problems in Foer's novel are mainly text-specific. The idiolect of Alex, for instance, is a text-specific translation problem, because his writing reflects his unique personality. The words and tone in which he writes are specific to him and this text.

IDIOLECT IN TRANSLATION

The characteristics of the idiolect of Alex are the choice of words, the repetition of certain words and the effect that these words have. The idiolect of Alex is mainly characterized by his mistakes and register. These mistakes are often caused by words that look similar and Alex who has chosen the incorrect word as a result. An example of such a mistake is the word 'oblongated', where Alex intends to say 'obligated'. However, his style is mostly created by his register, especially in his choice of adjectives and verbs. The words chosen by Alex create a typical style and the translator can choose between several strategies for translating this style. The translator could turn to the strategies of Holmes, who distinguishes several translation strategies. According to him, a translator can choose between exoticization and historization, which means that his or her strategy is alienating, or between naturalization and modernization, which means that the translator transforms the source text into a target text that is closer to the target group (185-86). The translator could, however, also choose to neutralize and vary between these strategies of Holmes.

In the case of Alex's idiolect, the translator has to choose exoticization, because his lexis is distinctive for his personality. 'Oblongated' should therefore not be translated with 'verplicht', which would be the strategy of neutralizing, but with a verb that is similar to 'verplicht', for example, 'verricht'. Another example is Alex's first sentence in his letter to Jonathan: "It made me a tickled-pink person to receive your letter, and to know that you are reinstated at university for your conclusive year" (52). This sentence shows the humorous effect of Alex's idiolect, as his speech distinguishes him from other people and is unique. In translating the uniqueness of Alex, the choices of vocabulary and repetition of certain words cannot be ignored, because these features partly create Alex's personality. In the first sentence Alex uses the adjectives 'tickled-pink' and 'conclusive'. Both of these words are chosen by Alex with the use of a thesaurus. Normally, one would not use 'tickled-pink' in this context, because it is informal and instead of 'conclusive year', one would use, for

example, 'final year'. The best solution to this translation problem is the strategy of exoticization, which means that 'tickled-pink' and 'conclusive' are marked in the target text.

The translation strategy of exoticization is, however, not always clear-cut and often overlaps with naturalization. The translator could for one word choose the strategy of exoticization, but also that of naturalization for another word when there is no similar translation in the target language. The translator could choose to naturalize Alex's first sentence by neutralizing 'tickled-pink' and translating a neutral word in the source text that is originally not intended to have a humorous effect to an informal word in the target text. The effect would then remain the same, but this is only advisable when there is no direct translation in the target text in the first place. This strategy of 'compensating' is one of the possibilities, but the best solution would be to translate – if possible – the sentence in a similar manner, so that the words in the target text have an optimum effect. 'Tickled-pink person' could then be translated with 'opgetogen persoon', because both of the sentences have an exoticizing effect on the reader.

Furthermore, the words that repeatedly return have to be translated with the same words throughout the target text. This consistency is relevant, because Alex's idiolect or style is an important feature of his character. In translating these words, the translator could apply the same 'strategy' as Alex by using synonyms. Other strategies that the translator could apply are to 'add' or 'delete' a word all together, although this last option is not advisable for this text, because it would not be truthful to the style of the text. Moreover, 'adding' a word is only advisable when it is necessary, according to the translator, for the target text, because it would not be on a level with the source text otherwise. The most suitable solution would be, however, to find a similar word in the target text, in the incorrect context, or when this not possible to compensate.

An example of a word that repeatedly returns in the source text is 'currency', that could be translated with 'valuta's' in the target text, because a Dutch native

speaker normally does not use that word in an everyday context. The translator then uses Alex's strategy, by consulting a thesaurus to find a similar word in the target text. Americans would normally speak of 'money' and Dutch people of 'geld'. Therefore, the same effect is achieved in the translation of 'currency' with 'valuta's', because they are both seldom used in this context. In this translation, the translator applies a similar strategy as Alex by focusing on the choices of vocabulary and repetition of certain words, because they serve as a signature for his personality. This is also the strategy of exoticization, as the translator looks for a similar word in the target text, and this strategy of Holmes is the most advisable solution to the translation problems of Alex's idiolect.

3.3 FEATURES OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Towards the end of the novel, the two voices, as well as the voice of Alex's grandfather, are turning into one voice. As Alex's grandfather confesses the truth about the past, Alex translates this for Jonathan, who discovers that Alex's past is very close to his, but in a different way. Moreover, Alex discovers the truth about his past, as his grandfather tells him about his best friend Herschel and that he, his wife and Herschel were very close friends. Alex's grandfather says that "[i]t was as if he was in our family" (245). Then Alex's grandfather continues and tells Alex, and Alex tells this to Jonathan by translating, how the Nazis lined them up and made them point out Jews. Alex's grandfather and his wife were the only ones who knew Herschel and the fact that he was a Jew. When the Nazis asked Alex's grandfather to point out a Jew, he had to choose between his best friend and his family, and therefore he told the Nazis 'heisaJew', as the words gradually fuse and the dialogue turns into one long sentence without punctuation. According to Lisa Propst, "Alex's grandfather falls within what Primo Levi terms the "Gray Zone", where the distinction between victim and collaborator blurs" (43). Jonathan is, however, not able to forgive Alex and his grandfather and still refuses any form of friendship.

In these final chapters the central meaning of 'illumination' becomes explicitly clear, as the confession of Alex's grandfather is "reproduced [in] a stream-of-consciousness narrative" (Collado-Rodriguez 63). This stream of consciousness narrative, or fragmented speech, represents the "posttraumatic condition" of Alex's grandfather, but also becomes that of Alex as he discovers the truth about the past and about himself (63). From a translational point of view, the stream of consciousness technique is an interesting characteristic of the novel. This technique symbolizes ideas, feelings and trauma, and the focus on the differences between English and Dutch is especially important. Moreover, the worlds regarding a realistic history and a fictional world in the end of the nineties have to be recreated by the translator.

STYLISTIC AND TYPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

According to Fludernik, who wrote an introduction to narratology, the phrase 'stream of consciousness' represents "snatches of thoughts, visual impressions or spontaneous reactions in incomplete sentences, random words and phrases or repetitious language" (81). These 'spontaneous reactions in incomplete sentences' are especially present in *Everything is Illuminated*. The problem with the term 'stream of consciousness' for Foer's novel is, however, that in this novel the dialogue of Alex and his grandfather is not a stream of 'thoughts' but more a stream of 'speech'. Most of the features of the stream of consciousness technique are nevertheless characteristic for the abovementioned passage of Foer's novel and in this thesis it is therefore referred to as the stream of consciousness technique. The term 'interior monologue' also refers to the same technique and Leech describes other features of this term as follows: "[t]he interior monologue of thought, like the spontaneous speech of conversation, takes place in real time, and is impelled by its own momentum – asking questions, seeking and giving answers to problems, interrupting its own train of ideas, launching new topics" (143). The passage of Foer's novel contains memories and feelings, but it also is 'like the spontaneous speech of conversation' that is interrupted by Alex, who asks questions because he wants to discover the truth. Moreover, his grandfather is 'seeking and giving answers' on memories that were suppressed for a long time. These characteristics are all features of the stream of consciousness.

The speech of Alex's grandfather is reproduced in "the fragmented manner associated with victims" (Collado-Rodriguez 63). Moreover, this passage of Foer's novel contains typographical features that contribute to the other features of the stream of consciousness, for example, the memories and feelings that come back. The first typographical feature of the stream of consciousness technique in the passage that is translated in chapter four of this thesis is the lack of quotation marks. The passage begins with the words of Alex: "(Do you remember what he did next, Jonathan? He ..." (247) and then the point of view turns to Alex's grandfather, who

remarks that he murdered Herschel. A switch has been made from the third person 'he' to the first person 'I', regarding the grandfather. Moreover, the words 'I murdered Herschel' are not written between quotation marks and when Alex, for example, asks 'Were you scared', this sentence is immediately followed with 'I was scared'. The passage reads as follows: "It was dark but I could still see this. Were you scared? I was scared, although I knew that I was not the one they wanted. How did you know? We knew about them. Everyone knew." (247-48). The lack of quotation marks is one of the typographical features of the stream of consciousness technique, because it strengthens the pace of the conversation that presents the memories and feelings of Alex's grandfather. Another typographical feature is the lack of punctuation. The last full stop occurs on page 250. After the words "It was not forever before he was the only Jew remaining ...", the sentences are fused into one long sentence. Moreover, several words are joined together, for instance, the utterance 'shotthismaninthehead' (250). These typographical features recreate the pace of the conversation and the memories that come back.

These three typographical features of the stream of consciousness all contribute to the pace of the dialogue. Omitting the quotation marks and full stops, creates long sentences that reflect the effect of those words on both Alex and his grandfather. The words are an account of what happens on that moment: a conversation that takes place and finally reveals the truth about what happened in that past. And because it all happens so fast, Foer applied this technique to recreate the pace of the dialogue. In addition, this passage is written by Alex and he gives an account of the conversation that took place. To make Alex's story believable, he should have been taking notes while his grandfather spoke, and the speech of Alex's grandfather accelerates which makes it hard for Alex to keep up with his notes of the conversation. Therefore, the fused words and sentences are a logical result, because Alex has to write down the words while his grandfather is speaking. This approach of the stream of consciousness technique also has an effect on the reader, as the reader is now led to believe that Alex is scribbling frantically to keep up with what

his grandfather tells. Therefore, the strategy applied by Foer is not only a technique to reproduce the trauma that Alex's grandfather has experienced, but also to make the story more believable for the reader.

Furthermore, the first person narrative of Alex's grandfather switches back to the third person narrative on page 252, as Alex speaks about his grandfather to Jonathan. In this last part of the passage, Alex reflects his grandfather's past on himself and this passage is clearly ended with a sentence of Alex's grandfather, that does not lack quotation marks or any punctuation: ""And now," he said, "we must make sleep."" (252).

POSTMODERNIST FEATURE

In his novel, Foer applies a stylistic device, as he "layers text within text" (Collado-Rodriguez 43). According to McHale, the act of focusing on the written word in a novel is a postmodernist feature. Foer created, for example, *The Book of Recurrent Dreams* and *The Book of Antecedents*. Both of these books contain reproductions of dreams and events that are once written down by the townspeople. The fictional Jonathan ends his novel with a passage from the first of these two books, and in this passage Foer also applied the stream of consciousness technique. This passage includes no string of thoughts, feelings or memories, but a string of fictional events. Foer uses this strategy to effect the reader by reproducing the horrid actions of the Nazis. The passage of *The Book of Recurrent Dreams* is called 'The dream of the end of the world' (272). It is a passage from Brod's point of view that describes how the river is filled with bodies. In this passage, Foer also uses a typographical device, as he uses capital letters for the words 'PLEASE' and the sound of a crying baby. These capitalized words intensify the impact of the actions of the Nazis, and also have an effect on the reader.

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN TRANSLATION

The typographical features of the stream of consciousness technique in *Everything is Illuminated* are the lack of quotation marks, punctuation and words that are put together, which results in long sentences that reproduce the pace of the dialogue or events. The Dutch target text turns out longer than the English source text, and this can create difficulties in comprehending the target text. According to Nord, this difference can partly be ascribed to language-specific translation problems (147). The English in this passage is, however, the English of Alex, which means that the sentences are not grammatically correct. In analysing the above-mentioned passage, it turns out that Alex hardly uses the gerund. The translator can possibly profit from this English of Alex, however, the length can still create translation problems.

Furthermore, the length of the words that are put together are important, because they recreate the pace of the conversation and therefore the effect of these clustered words has to be the same. The group of words 'Iamsoafraidofdyng' can be translated with 'ikbenzobangomdoodtegaan', because these words can be uttered in the same rapid manner as in the source text, as they both have eight syllables. The same amount of syllables is not necessary, but the clustered group of words in the target text should not be too long to pronounce. In the target text, a similar effect of the words and sentences can be achieved by applying the strategy of exoticization, as the clustered words will have an alienating effect. With this translation strategy, the pace of the dialogue is recreated.

Other solutions to the problem of length can be to segment the words and sentences, but this would take away the effect and style of the novel. Therefore, to segment this passage is rather an option than a solution and is not advisable. Another option would be to shorten the sentence, but this is also not advisable, because it would not be truthful to the source text. The best solution would be to translate the same group of words and sentences and aim for a similar amount of syllables, so that the effect remains the same. The translator could, however, choose to compensate. He or she could then choose a different set of words to fuse, but the

effectiveness of this strategy is questionable, because most of the 'fused words' frequently return in the text and this may not be the case with a different set of words. In translating the features of the stream of consciousness technique in *Everything is Illuminated*, the length and comprehensibility of the features are important, because the features will then be transformed into the target text effectively. The passage has, partly, no quotation marks and punctuation and contains fused groups of words that result in a difficult style. In translating this style, the effect on the reader is very important. The translator has to create a target text with a similar function and this can be achieved by applying the strategy of exoticization.

4 TRANSLATION IN PRACTICE

4.1 PASSAGE ONE: The voice of Jonathan

ANOTHER LOTTERY, 1791

THE WELL-REGARDED RABBI paid half a baker's dozen of eggs and a handful of blueberries for the following announcement to be printed in Shimon T's weekly newsletter: that an irascible magistrate in Lvov had demanded a name for the nameless shtetl, that the name would be used for new maps and census records, that it should not offend the refined sensibilities of either the Ukrainian or the Polish gentry, or be too hard to pronounce, and that it must be decided upon by week's end.

A VOTE! the Well-Regarded Rabbi proclaimed. *WE SHALL TAKE IT TO A VOTE.* For as the Venerable Rabbi once enlightened, *AND IF WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY SANE, STRICTLY MORAL, ABOVE-AVERAGE, PROPERTY-HOLDING, OBSERVANT ADULT JEWISH MALE IS BORN WITH A VOICE THAT MUST BE HEARD, SHALL WE NOT HEAR THEM ALL?*

The next morning a polling box was placed outside the Upright Synagogue, and the qualifying citizens queued up along the Jewish/Human fault line. Bitzl Bitzl R voted for "Gefilteville"; the deceased philosopher Pinchas T for "Time Capsule of Dust and String." The Well-Regarded Rabbi cast his ballot for "*SHTETL OF THE PIOUS UPRIGHTERS AND THE UNMENTIONABLE SLOUCHERS WITH WHOM NO RESPECTABLE JEW SHOULD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO UNLESS THE HOT SPOT IS HIS IDEA OF A VACATION.*"

The mad squire Sofiowka N, having so much time and so little to do, took it upon himself to guard the box all afternoon and then deliver it to the magistrate's office in Lvov that evening. By morning it was official: resting twenty-three kilometers southeast of Lvov, four north of Kolki,

and straddling the Polish-Ukrainian border like a twig alighted on a fence was the shtetl of Sofiowka. The new name was, much to the dismay of those who had to bear it, official and irrevocable. It would be with the shtetl until its death.

Of course, no one in Sofiowka called it Sofiowka. Until it had such a disagreeable official name, no one felt the need to call it anything. But now that there was an offense—that the shtetl should be that shitead's namesake—the citizens had a name *not* to go by. Some even called the shtetl Not-Sofiowka, and would continue to even after a new name was chosen.

The Well-Regarded Rabbi called for another vote. *THE OFFICIAL NAME CANNOT BE CHANGED*, he said, *BUT WE MUST HAVE A REASONABLE NAME FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES*. While no one was quite sure what was meant by purposes—*Did we have purposes before? What, exactly, is my purpose among our purposes?*—the second vote seemed unquestionably necessary. The polling box was placed outside the Upright Synagogue, and it was the Well-Regarded Rabbi's twins, this time, who guarded it.

The arthritic locksmith Yitzhak W voted for "Borderland." The man of law Isaac M for "Shtetlprudence." Lilla F, descendant of the first Sloucher to drop the book, persuaded the twins to let her sneak in a ballot, on which was written "Pinchas." (The twins also voted: Hannah for "Chana," and Chana for "Hannah.")

The Well-Regarded Rabbi counted the ballots that evening. It was a tie; every name got one vote: Lutsk Minor, *UPRIGHTLAND*, New Promise, Fault Line, Joshua, Lock-and-Key... Figuring that the fiasco had gone on long enough, he decided, reasoning that this is what God would do in such a situation, to pick a slip of paper randomly from the box and name the shtetl whatever it should say.

He nodded as he read what had become familiar script. *YANKEL HAS WON AGAIN*, he said. *YANKEL HAS NAMED US TRACHIM-BROD*.

4.1.1 TRANSLATION

NOG EEN VERLOTING, 1791

De Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn¹ betaalde met een half bakkersdozijn eieren en een handjevol bosbessen om de volgende mededeling te publiceren in de wekelijkse nieuwsbrief van Shimon T: dat een heetgebakerde magistraat in Lvov een naam had geëist voor de naamloze sjetel,² dat de naam gebruikt zou worden voor nieuwe kaarten en volkstellingen, dat de naam noch het Oekraïense noch het Poolse volk voor het hoofd mag stoten³, en niet te moeilijk mag zijn om uit te spreken, en dat de naam aan het einde van de week moet zijn vastgesteld.

EEN STEMMING! Verkondigde de Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn. WE ZULLEN EROVER STEMMEN. Want zoals de Eerbare Rabbijn eens onderrichtte, EN ALS WE GELOVEN DAT ELKE GEESTELIJK GEZONDE, STRIKT MORELE, BOVENGEMIDDELDE, GRONDBEZITTENDE, BELIJDENDE VOLWASSEN JOODSE MAN IS GEBOREN MET EEN STEM DIE GEHOORD MOET WORDEN, ZOUDEN WIJ DAN NIET ALLE STEMMEN MOETEN HOREN?⁴

De volgende ochtend werd er een stembus voor de Oprechte Synagoge neergezet en de stemgerechtigde burgers vormden een rij langs de Joods-Menselijke breuklijn.⁵ Bitzl Bitzl R stemde voor “Gefiltestad,”⁶ de onlangs overleden filosoof

¹ This passage begins with one of the names that creates an image of the Jewish community and in translating this name, a similar effect has been achieved in this translation, as the elegance of this name is created by the ‘rhythm’ of the syllables.

² I changed the spelling of ‘shtetl’ into ‘sjetel’, because this word can be spelled in both ways and ‘sjetel’ is closer to the Dutch spelling.

³ ‘Offend someone’s sensibilities’ means ‘iemand’s gevoelens kwetsen’. The part ‘iemand’s gevoelens kwetsen’ does not, however, fit into this sentence, because it is more often used for an individual or a small group and not for gentry. I chose to translate this part with the expression ‘voor het hoofd stoten’, because this carries a more general meaning. This idea of translation derives from the comparison with the published translation, as this translation also used another expression.

⁴ Here, the author uses a typographical device for the voice of the Rabbi, as he uses capital letters for his words. This clearly distinguishes the Rabbi’s voice from the others and therefore this device is translated into the target text.

⁵ Page 10 of the novel explains what is meant with the ‘Jewish/Human fault line’. On this page, Foer describes how the shtetl is divided into “two sections: the Jewish Quarter and the Human Three-Quarters” (10). The Jewish Quarter are concerned with the “so-called sacred activities”, while the

Pinchas T voor “Tijdcapsule van Stof en Touw.” De Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn bracht zijn stem uit op “SJTETL VAN DE VROME OPRECHTERS EN DE ONBETAMELIJKE ZOUTZAKKEN⁷ WAAR GEEN ENKELE FATSOENLIJKE JOOD IETS MEE TE MAKEN ZOU MOETEN HEBBEN TENZIJ HET EEUWIGE VUUR⁸ ZIJN IDEE VAN PLEZIER IS.”

De krankzinnige landheer Sofiowka N, die alle tijd had en heel weinig te doen, nam de taak op zich om de bus de hele middag te bewaken en diezelfde avond af te leveren bij het kantoor van de magistraat in Lvov. De volgende ochtend was het officieel: drieëntwintig kilometer ten zuidoosten van Lvov, vier ten noorden van Kolki en gespreid over de Pools-Oekraïense grens als een takje dat was neergestreken op een hek, lag de sjetel Sofiowka. De nieuwe naam was, tot grote ontzetting voor degenen die hem moesten verdragen, officieel en onherroepelijk. De naam zou de sjetel niet verlaten tot zijn dood.

Natuurlijk noemde niemand in Sofiowka het Sofiowka. Voordat de officiële naam zo onaangenaam was geworden, had niemand het nodig gevonden om het ergens naar te noemen. Maar nu er sprake was van een groot ongenoegen – dat de sjetel de naamgenoot van die schoft moest zijn – hadden de burgers wel een naam die het *niet* moest zijn. Sommigen noemden de sjetel zelfs niet-Sofiowka en bleven dat dan ook doen nadat er een nieuwe naam was gekozen.

activities of the Human Three-Quarters are “concerned with the humdrum of daily existence” (10). The Jewish part is the religious part, while the Human part is secular. Moreover, Foer describes that the Upright Synagogue was “straddling the two” (10).

⁶ Bitzl Bitzl R is referred to as ‘the good gefiltefishmonger’ on page 8 of the novel. Therefore, the name he gives to the town has to do with his occupation. ‘Gefiltefish’ would have been translated with the Dutch name ‘Gefilte fisj’. In this translation, ‘Gefilte’ remains the same and only ‘ville’ has to be translated with ‘stad’. The translation becomes ‘Gefiltestad’, of which the meaning becomes clear from the earlier reference to the occupation of Bitzl Bitzl R.

⁷ In chapter three, I discussed the importance of the meaning of ‘upright’ and ‘slouch’ in the words ‘Uprighters’ and ‘Slouchers’. Therefore, I translated these words with ‘Oprechters’ and ‘Zoutzakken’. Both the meaning and sound of the words are similar to those in the source text, as it functions in a similar manner and has a similar effect on the reader.

⁸ According to Cain, a hot spot is “a region on the Earth’s surface that has experienced volcanism for a long time” (par, 1). In the context of Foer’s novel, it is a terrible place to be, because it is extremely hot and one would not survive being there. With this information, and the religious context of the novel, I thought the ‘Eternal Fire’ would be the truthful interpretation. Furthermore, this translation would *function* in a similar manner, because it evokes a negative image and definitely is not ones ‘idea of vacation’.

De Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn riep opnieuw een stemming uit. DE OFFICIËLE NAAM KAN NIET VERANDERD WORDEN, zei hij, MAAR WE MOETEN EEN AANVAARBARE NAAM HEBBEN VOOR ONZE EIGEN DOELEINDEN. Terwijl voor niemand eigenlijk duidelijk was wat er bedoeld werd met doeleinden – *hadden we hiervoor ook al doeleinden? Welk doeleind had ik dan precies?*⁹ – leek de tweede stemming zonder meer nodig. De stembus werd voor de Oprechte Synagoge neergezet en deze keer bewaakten de tweeling van de Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn de stembus.

De slotenmaker met artritis Yitzhak W stemde voor “Grensgebied.” De rechtsgeleerde Isaac M koos “Sjtetlbeleid.”¹⁰ Lilla F, nakomeling van de eerste Zoutzak die het boek had laten vallen, overtuigde de tweeling om haar een stembiljet te laten toevoegen, waarop stond “Pinchas.” (De tweeling stemde trouwens ook: Hannah voor “Chana” en Chana voor “Hannah.”)

De Eerbiedwaardige Rabbijn telde de stembiljetten diezelfde avond nog. Het was gelijk stand, elke naam had één stem: Kleine Lutsk, OPRECHTLAND, Nieuwe Belofte, Breuklijn, Jozua, Slot-en-Grendel...¹¹ Aangezien het fiasco al lang genoeg had geduurd, besloot hij, in overtuiging dat dit is wat God zou doen in zulke situaties, willekeurig een biljet uit de bus te pakken en de sjtetl te noemen naar wat er dan ook op zou staan.

Hij knikte terwijl hij het inmiddels bekend geworden handschrift las. YANKEL HEEFT OPNIEUW GEWONNEN, zei hij. YANKEL HEEFT ONS TRACHIMBROD GENOEMD.

⁹ Here, Foer uses another typographical device for how the townspeople reflect on what is meant with the word ‘purposes’ and this is translated in the target text so that the text functions in a similar manner.

¹⁰ The same strategy for ‘Uprighters’ and ‘Slouchers’ can be applied for ‘Borderland’ and ‘Shtetlprudence’, as both the meaning and the sound of these words are the most important. When translating these fictional names, I focused on the length, meaning and sound of the words.

¹¹ These six names are translated according to the same strategy as applied earlier. I focused on the meaning, length and function of the word to achieve the same effect in the target text.

4.2 PASSAGE TWO: The peculiar discourse of Alex

23 September 1997

Dear Jonathan,

It made me a tickled-pink person to receive your letter, and to know that you are reinstated at university for your conclusive year. As for me, I still have two years of studies among the remnants. I do not know what I will perform after that. Many of the things you informed me in July are still momentous to me, like what you uttered about searching for dreams, and how if you have a good and meaningful dream you are oblongated to search for it. This may be cinchier for you, I must say.

I did not yearn to mention this, but I will. Soon I will possess enough currency to purchase a plane voucher to America. Father does not know this. He thinks I disseminate everything I possess at famous discotheques, but as proxy for I often go to the beach and roost for many hours, so I do not have to disseminate currency. When I roost at the beach I think about how lucky you are.

It was Little Igor's fourteen birthday yesterday. He made his arm broken the day yore, because he fell again, this time from a fence he was hiking on, if you can believe it. We all tried very inflexibly to make him a happy person, and Mother prepared a premium cake that had many ceilings, and we even had a small festival. Grandfather was present, of course. He inquired how you are, and I told him that you would be reverting to university in September, which is now. I did not inform him about how the guard stole Augustine's box, because I knew that he would feel ashamed, and it made him happy to hear of you, and he is never happy. He wanted for me to inquire if it would be a possible thing for you to post another reproduction of the photograph of Augustine. He said that he would present you currency for any ex-

penses. I am very distressed about him, as I informed you in the last letter. His health is being defeated. He does not possess the energy to get splenored often, and is usually in silence. In truth, I would favor it if he yelled at me, and even if he punched me.

Father purchased a new bicycle for Little Igor for his birthday, which is a superior present, because I know Father does not possess enough currency for presents such as bicycles. "The poor Clumsy One," he said, extending to put his hand on Little Igor's shoulder, "he should be happy on his birthday." I have girdled a picture of the bicycle in the envelope. Tell me if it is awesome. Please, be truthful. I will not be angry if you tell me that it is not awesome.

I resolved not to go anywhere famous last night. Instead I roosted on the beach. But I was not in my normal solitude, because I took the photograph of Augustine with me. I must confess to you that I examine it very recurrently, and persevere to think about what you said about falling in love with her. She is beautiful. You are correct.

Enough of my miniature talking. I am making you a very boring person. I will now speak about the business of the story. I perceived that you were not as appeased by the second division. I eat another slice for this. But your corrections were so easy. Thank you for informing me that it is "shit a brick," and "shitting bricks," and also "to come in handy." It is very useful for me to know the correct idioms. It is necessary. I know that you asked me not to alter the mistakes because they sound humorous, and humorous is the only truthful way to tell a sad story, but I think I will alter them. Please do not hate me.

I did fashion all of the other corrections you commanded. I inserted what you ordered me to in the part about when I first encountered you. (Do you in truth think that we are comparable?) As you commanded, I removed the sentence "He was severely short," and inserted in its place, "Like me, he was not tall." And after the sentence "'Oh,' Grandfather said, and I perceived that he was still departing from a dream," I added, as you commanded, "About Grandmother?"

With these changes, I am confident that the second part of the story is perfect. I was unable to ignore observing that you again posted me currency.

For this I again thank you. But I parrot what I uttered before: if you are not appeased by what I post to you, and would like to have your currency posted back, I will post it back immediately. I could not feel proud in any other manner.

I toiled very hard on this next section. It was the most rigid yet. I attempted to guess some of the things you would have me alter, and I altered them myself. For example, I did not utilize the word “spleen” with such habituality, because I could perceive that it made you on nerves by the sentence in your letter when you said, “Stop using the word ‘spleen.’ It’s getting on my nerves.” I also invented things that I thought would appease you, funny things and sad things. I am certain that you will inform me when I have traveled too far.

Concerned about your writing, you sent me many pages, but I must tell you that I read every one of them. The Book of Recurrent Dreams was a very beautiful thing, and I must say that the dream that we are our fathers made me melancholy. This is what you intended, yes? Of course I am not Father, so perhaps I am the rare bird to your novel. When I look in the reflection, what I view is not Father, but the negative of Father.

Yankel. He is a good man, yes? Why do you think he made to swindle that man so many years ago? Perhaps he needed the currency very severely. I know what this is like, although I would never swindle any person. I found it stimulating that you made another lottery, this time to dub the shtetl. It made me think about what I would dub Odessa if I was given the power. I think that I might dub it Alex, because then everyone would know that I am Alex, and that the name of the city is Alex, so I must be a very premium person. I also might name it Little Igor, because people would think that my brother is a premium person, which he is, but it would be good for people to think so. (It is a queer thing how I wish everything for my brother that I wish for myself, only more rigidly.) Perhaps I would name it Trachimbrod, because then Trachimbrod could exist, and also, everyone here would purchase your book, and you could become famous.

I am regretted to end this letter. It is as proximal a thing as we have to talking. I hope you are appeased by the third division, and as always, I ask for

your forgiveness. I attempted to be truthful and beautiful, as you told me to.

Oh, yes. There is one additional item. I did not amputate Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior from the story, even though you counseled that I should amputate her. You uttered that the story would be more “refined” with her absence, and I know that refined is like cultivated, polished, and well bred, but I will inform you that Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior is a very distinguished character, one with variegated appetites and seats of passion. Let us view her evolution and then resolve.

*Guilelessly,
Alexander*

4.2.1 TRANSLATION

23 September 1997

Beste Jonathan,

Het maakte mij een opgetogen¹² persoon om je brief te ontvangen en te lezen dat je weer deel van de universiteit bent voor jouw doorslaggevende jaar.¹³ Wat mij betreft, ik heb nog twee resterende studiejaren te gaan. Ik weet nog niet wat ik daarna zal presteren. Veel van de dingen waarover je me informeerde¹⁴ in juli zijn nog steeds gedenkwaardig voor mij, bijvoorbeeld wat je zei over dromen najagen en hoe je, als je een goede en gewichtige droom hebt, verricht¹⁵ bent hem na te jagen. Dit is voor jou misschien gemakkelijker, moet ik zeggen.

Ik verlangde er niet naar om dit te benoemen, maar ik doe het toch. Binnenkort zal ik genoeg valuta's bezitten om een vliegticket naar Amerika te bemachtigen. Vader weet dit niet. Hij denkt dat ik alles wat ik bezit rondstrooi in beroemde discotheken en als uitvlucht daarvoor ga ik vaak naar het strand en verblijf daar vele uren, zodat ik ook geen valuta's rond hoeft te strooien. Wanneer ik op het strand verblijf, denk ik aan wat een geluksvogel jij bent.

Gisteren was de veertiende verjaardag van Kleine Igor. Hij maakte de dag ervoor zijn arm kapot, omdat hij weer was gevallen, deze keer van een hek waaraan hij omhoog aan het

¹² 'Tickled-pink' both means 'delighted' or 'very pleased' and creates a translation problem regarding the register, as it is an informal expression. I chose to translate this with 'opgetogen', which is not informal, but is not often used in this context. The strategy applied is that of exoticization, because this choice of word has an alienating effect.

¹³ In this sentence, 'conclusive' is part of Alex's choice of vocabulary. Therefore, I chose to translate this with 'doorslaggevend'. Furthermore, I chose to translate 'reinstated at university' with 'weer deel van de universiteit bent', because it adds to Alex's speaking level.

¹⁴ This is one of the words that Alex uses repeatedly and that I translated consistently with 'informeerde'. This is a problem regarding register and therefore I applied Alex's strategy by consulting a thesaurus.

¹⁵ In this sentence Alex uses 'oblongated' instead of 'obligated', which becomes clear on page 101 where Alex writes: "I am obligated (thank you, Jonathan) to..." (101). I chose to translate 'oblongated' with 'verricht' instead of the implied meaning of 'verplicht'. This has the same effect on the reader and in a translation of the novel (and not only these passages), the translator could translate 'I am obligated (thank you, Jonathan) to...' with "Ik ben verplicht (dankje, Jonathan) om...".

klimmen was. Ongelooflijk hè? We probeerden allemaal heel hardnekkig¹⁶ om van hem een blij persoon te maken en Moeder bereidde een hoogwaardige taart met veel bedekkingen¹⁷ en we hielden zelfs een klein feestje. Natuurlijk was Grootvader er ook. Hij vroeg hoe het met je gaat en ik vertelde hem dat je in september, wat het nu al is, terug zou keren naar de universiteit. Ik informeerde hem niet over hoe de bewaker de doos van Augustine had gestolen, omdat ik wist dat hij zich zou schamen en het maakte hem blij om van je te horen en hij is nooit blij. Hij wilde dat ik zou vragen of het voor jou mogelijk was om nog een reproductie van de foto van Augustine op te sturen. Hij zei dat hij je valuta's zou geven voor de kosten. Ik ben zeer bevreesd¹⁸ voor hem, wat ik je al informeerde in de laatste brief. Zijn gezondheid wordt vernietigd. Hij bezit de energie niet om driftig¹⁹ te worden en is vaak in stilte. In werkelijkheid, zou ik het prefereren als hij tegen me schreeuwde en zelfs als hij me zou slaan.

Vader heeft een nieuwe fiets aangeschaft voor de verjaardag van Kleine Igor, wat een superieur cadeau is, omdat ik weet dat Vader niet genoeg valuta's bezit voor cadeaus zoals fietsen. "De arme klungel," zei hij, terwijl hij zich uitstreekte om zijn hand op de schouder van Kleine Igor te leggen, "hij verdient het om blij te zijn op zijn verjaardag." Ik heb een foto van

¹⁶ Here, Alex's choice of word is very typical and creates a humorous effect. What he means is that they tried very hard, but instead he uses the word 'inflexibly', that means 'stubborn' or 'obstinate'. I translated this word with 'hardnekkig', which means 'stubborn' but also contains the word 'hard' in it. In this way, the meaning and incorrect choice of word becomes very clear to the reader, while the effect on the reader remains the same.

¹⁷ In the source text Alex writes that "Mother prepared a premium cake that had many ceilings" (52). 'Premium' is one of the words that Alex seems very fond of, because he uses it repeatedly throughout the novel. The translation should therefore be applicable to several contexts. The meaning that is intended with 'premium' is something that is of high-quality. I translated 'premium' with 'hoogwaardig' (high-quality), as this word also fits in other contexts. As for 'ceilings', I translated this word with 'bedekking', because the meaning becomes clear but the word sounds odd in this context and the effect of the word remains the same. The strategy applied is Alex's strategy of using a thesaurus.

¹⁸ Although it seems that Alex fears his grandfather, by the way the sentence is formed, this is actually the effect of Alex's choice of vocabulary. 'Distressed' has both the meaning of 'sad' and 'fearful'. In Dutch, 'bevreesd' only means 'scared' and therefore the ambiguity disappears. However, the word does function in a similar manner, because the context creates the intended meaning of Alex.

¹⁹ The translation of 'spleen' has to fit in this context as well as in the context when Alex writes about how he tried not to use the word 'spleen' (54). I chose to translate 'spleen' with 'driftig', because the 'g'-sound of this word could also get on someone's nerves (page 54 of the source text). The word spleen has also been used on the first page of the novel, in the utterance 'Alex-stop-spleening-me'. In this different context, my translation is applicable, as a possible translation is: 'Alex-maak-me-niet-driftig'.

de fiets ingesloten in de enveloppe. Is hij niet geweldig? Wees alsjeblieft oprecht. Ik zal niet boos worden als je tegen me zegt dat hij niet geweldig is.

Gisteravond besloot ik om niet naar een beroemde discotheek te gaan. In plaats daarvan verbleef ik op het strand. Maar deze keer was ik niet eenzaam, omdat ik een foto van Augustine bij me had. Ik moet je bekennen dat ik hem herhaaldelijk heb bestudeerd en ik blijf nadenken over wat je zei over verliefd worden op haar. Ze is prachtig. Je bent correct.

Genoeg van mijn miniatuurgepraat. Ik maak een zeer saai persoon van je. Ik zal nu praten over het verhaal. Ik zag dat je niet zo bevredigd was met de tweede divisie. Ik zal nog wat zoete broodjes bakken.²⁰ Maar je correcties waren behoorlijk makkelijk. Bedankt dat je me informeerde dat het "in z'n broek doen" en "in z'n broek schijten"²¹ is en ook "van pas komen." Het is zeer nuttig voor mij om de correcte uitdrukkingen te kennen. Het is noodzakelijk zelfs. Ik weet dat je me vroeg om mijn fouten niet te wijzigen omdat ze humoristisch klinken, en humoristisch de enige oprechte manier is om een treurig verhaal te vertellen, maar ik denk dat ik ze zal wijzigen. Haat me alsjeblieft niet.

Ik heb de andere correcties die je had aanbevolen wel uitgevoerd. Wat je me had bevolen over toen ik je voor het eerst ontmoette, heb ik er tussengevoegd. (Denk je werkelijk dat we vergelijkbaar zijn?) Zoals je had aanbevolen, heb ik de zin "Hij was zeer klein," verwijderd en op die plaats "Net als mij, was hij niet lang" er tussengevoegd. En na die zin "'O,' zei Grootvader en ik zag dat hij nog steeds vertrokken was van een droom," heb ik zoals je had aanbevolen "Over Grootmoeder?" toegevoegd.

Met deze wijzigingen, ben ik ervan overtuigd dat het tweede deel van het verhaal perfect is. Ik was niet in staat om te negeren dat ik zag dat je me alweer valuta's had gestuurd. Hiervoor bedank ik je weer. Maar ik papegaai wat ik eerder al zei: als je niet bevredigd bent

²⁰ In the source text Alex writes 'I eat another slice for this', what refers to the expression 'eat humble pie', which becomes clear in Alex's first letter on page 23 where he writes 'I must eat a slice of humble pie for ...'. This expression can be translated with 'een toontje lager zingen' or 'zoete broodjes bakken'. Because the source text uses an expression that refers to food, I chose to use 'zoete broodjes bakken' in my translation, as it also refers to food. Alex, however, does not use 'eat humble pie', but instead he uses 'eat another slice'. The expression deviates from the original expression, and I chose to add 'nog wat' in my translation, so that the expression is used loosely.

²¹ The source text uses an expression that has two versions and, therefore, I also used an expression with two versions, while the meaning remains the same.

met wat ik je stuur, en je je valuta's graag teruggestuurd wil hebben, zal ik het meteen terugsturen. Ik kan me niet trots voelen op een andere manier.

Ik heb hard gewerkt aan het volgende deel. Dit was tot nu toe het meest stoeve²² deel. Ik heb geprobeerd om een aantal van de dingen die jij me zou laten wijzigen te raden en die heb ik zelf al gewijzigd. Ik heb bijvoorbeeld niet heel vaak het woord "driftig" gebruikt, omdat ik kon zien dat dit op je zenuwen werkte door de zin in je brief toen je zei: "Gebruik het woord 'driftig' niet meer. Het werkt op mijn zenuwen." Ik heb ook dingen bedacht waarvan ik dacht dat ze je zouden bevredigen, grappige dingen en treurige dingen. Ik weet zeker dat je me zult informeren wanneer ik te ver ben gegaan.

Wat betreft jouw schrijven, je stuurde me veel pagina's, maar ik moet je zeggen dat ik ze allemaal gelezen heb. Het Boek van Periodieke Dromen was iets heel moois en ik moet je zeggen dat de droom waarin wij onze vaders zijn me melancholisch maakte. Dit is wat je bedoelde, ja? Natuurlijk ben ik niet vader, dus misschien ben ik de uitzondering voor je boek. Wanneer ik in de weerspiegeling kijk, dan zie ik niet Vader, maar het negatief van Vader.

Yankel. Hij is een goede man, ja? Waarom denk je dat hij lang geleden die man gezwendeld heeft? Misschien had hij de valuta's zeer hard nodig. Ik weet hoe dat is, hoewel ik nooit iemand zou zwendelen. Ik vond het stimulerend dat je nog een verloting maakte, deze keer om de titel van de sjtetl te benoemen. Het liet me denken aan hoe ik Odessa zou benoemen als ik de macht had ontvangen. Ik denk dat ik het misschien Alex zou benoemen, omdat iedereen dan zou weten dat ik Alex ben en dat de naam van de stad Alex is, dus dan moet ik wel een zeer hoogwaardig²³ persoon zijn. Ik zou het misschien ook wel Kleine Igor noemen, omdat mensen dan zouden denken dat mijn broertje een hoogwaardig persoon is, wat ook wel zo is, maar het zou goed zijn voor mensen om dat te denken. (Vreemd is dat, hoe ik alles dat ik wens ook voor mijn broertje wens, alleen dan nog stoever.) Misschien zou ik het Trachimbrod

²² This is a clear example of Alex's use of a thesaurus. Rigid is one of the synonyms for 'hard', but means something different. 'Rigid' can only be used for material (or an expression) and not for hard work. Therefore, I searched for a word that was close to the intended meaning, by applying Alex's strategy.

²³ This shows that my translation of 'premium' also functions in another context. Earlier, I discussed the word 'premium' as one of the words that Alex uses repeatedly and that it should function in a different context also.

noemen, omdat Trachimbrod dan kon bestaan en iedereen hier ook jouw boek zou aanschaffen en dan kon jij beroemd worden.

Ik ben betreurd om deze brief te moeten eindigen. Dit is het meest naburige²⁴ wat we hebben naast praten. Ik hoop dat je bevredigd bent met de derde divisie en, net als altijd, vraag ik je vergiffenis. Ik heb geprobeerd om oprecht en prachtig te zijn, zoals je tegen me zei.

O ja. Nog één aanvullend bericht. Ik heb Sammy Davis Junior Junior niet geamputeerd²⁵ van het verhaal, ook al raadde je me aan dat ik haar moest amputeren. Je zei dat het verhaal meer “geraffineerd” zou zijn met haar afwezigheid en ik weet dat geraffineerd²⁶ iets betekent als gecultiveerd, beschaafd en welgemanierd, maar ik zal je informeren dat Sammy Davis Junior Junior een zeer voornaam karakter is. Een karakter met uiteenlopende begeertes en passies. Laten we haar evolutie bekijken en dan besluiten.²⁷

Goedhartig,

Alexander

²⁴ What Alex means with ‘proximal a thing’ is that writing is very close to talking. A translation of ‘proximal’ would be ‘dichtstbijzijnd’, but this translation does not match with the structure of the Dutch sentence. I looked for synonyms (Alex’s strategy) and found ‘naburig’, which fits better in the structure of the sentence. This is a language-specific problem, because the structure of English creates difficulties in the Dutch target text.

²⁵ Alex uses the verb ‘amputate’, which can be easily translated with ‘amputeren’, as the meaning, sound and effect remains the same.

²⁶ In the source text, several definitions of ‘refined’ are given and when ‘refined’ is translated, these definitions are also applicable in the target text, as I chose the following words that can be definitions of ‘geraffineerd’: ‘gecultiveerd’, ‘beschaafd’ and ‘welgemanierd’.

²⁷ I chose to translate ‘resolve’ with ‘besluiten’ and not ‘beslissen’, because this creates an ambiguity. ‘Besluiten’ is both a synonym for ‘beslissen’, but it can also mean ‘to end’, which is what Alex does as he ends his letter on this moment. In this case, I applied the strategy of ‘adding’, which adds to the effect of Alex’s idiolect.

4.3 PASSAGE THREE: Stream of consciousness

(Do you remember what he did next, Jonathan? He examined the photograph again, and then placed it on the table again, and then he said, Herschel was a good person, and so was I, and because of this it is not right what happened, not anything of it. And then I asked him, What, what happened? He returned the photograph to the box, you will remember, and he told us the story. Exactly like that. He placed the photograph in the box, and he told it to us. He did not once avoid our eyes, and he did not once put his hands under the table. I murdered Herschel, he said. Or what I did was as good as murdering him. What do you mean? I asked him, because what he said was such a potent thing to say. No, this is not true. Herschel would have been murdered with or without me, but it is still as if I murdered him. What happened? I asked. They came in the most darkest time of the night. They had just come from another town, and would go to another after. They knew what they were doing, they were so logical. I remember with very much precision the feeling of my bed shaking when the tanks came. What is it? What is it? Grandmother asked. I moved from bed, and I examined out of the window. What did you see? I saw four tanks, and I can remember them in every aspect. There were four green tanks, and men walking along the sides of them. These men had guns, I will tell you, and they were pointing them at our doors and windows in case that someone should try to run. It was dark

but I could still see this. Were you scared? I was scared, although I knew that I was not the one they wanted. How did you know? We knew about them. Everyone knew. Herschel knew. We did not think it would happen to us. I told you, we believed in things, we were so foolish. And then? And then I told Grandmother to get the baby, your father, and to take him into the cellar and not to manufacture any noise but also not to become overly afraid because we were not the ones that they wanted. And then? And then they stopped all of the tanks and for a moment I was so foolish to think that it was over, that they had decided to return to Germany and end the war because nobody likes war not even those who survive it, not even the winners. But? But they did not of course they had only stopped the tanks in front of the synagogue and they came out of their tanks and moved into very logical lines. The General who had blond hair put a microphone to his face and spoke in Ukrainian he said that everyone must come to the synagogue everyone with no omissions. The soldiers punched on every door with their guns and investigated the houses to be certain that everyone should be in front of the synagogue I told Grandmother to return upstairs with the baby because I feared that they would discover them in the basement and shoot them because of their hiding. Herschel I thought Herschel must escape how can he escape he must run now run into the darkness perhaps he has already run perhaps he heard the tanks and ran but when we arrived at the synagogue I saw Herschel and he saw me and we stood next to each other because that is what friends do in the presence of evil or love. What is going to happen he asked me and I told him I do not know what is going to happen and the truth is that not one of us knew what was going to happen although every one of us knew that it would be evil. It captured so long for the soldiers to finish their investigating of the houses it was very important to them to be certain that everyone was in front of the synagogue. I am so scared Herschel said I think I am going to cry. Why I asked why there is nothing to cry for there is no reason to cry but I will tell you that I too wanted to cry and I too was afraid but not for myself for Grandmother and for the baby. What did they do? What happened next? They made us stand in lines and I was next to Anna on the one side and Herschel on the other side some of the women were crying and this was be-

cause they were very afraid of the guns that the soldiers were holding and they thought that all of us were going to be killed. The General with blue eyes put the microphone to his face. You must listen carefully he said and do everything that is commanded or you will be shot. Herschel whispered to me I am very scared and I wanted to tell him run your chances are better if you run it is dark run you have no chances if you do not but I could not tell him this because I was afraid that I would be shot for speaking and I was also afraid of yielding to Herschel's death by admitting it be brave I said with as little volume as I could manufacture it is necessary that you be brave which I know now was such a stupid thing to utter the stupidest thing I have ever uttered be brave for what? Who is the rabbi the General asked and the rabbi elevated his hand. Two of the guards seized the rabbi and pushed him into the synagogue. Who is the cantor the General asked and the cantor elevated his hand but he was not so quiet about death as the rabbi he was crying and saying no to his wife no no nonono and she lifted her hand to him and two guards seized her and put her in the synagogue also. Who are the Jews the General asked into his microphone all the Jews move forward but not one person moved forward. All of the Jews must move forward he said again and this time he shouted it but again not one person moved forward and I will tell you that if I were a Jew I would also not move forward the General went to the first line and he said into his microphone you will point out a Jew or you will be considered a Jew the first person he went to was a Jew named Abraham. Who is a Jew the General asked him and Abraham trembled Who is a Jew the General asked again and he put his gun to Abraham's head Aaron is a Jew Aaron and he pointed to Aaron who was in the second row which is where we were standing. Two guards seized Aaron and he was resisting very much so they shot him in the head and this is when I felt Herschel's hand touch mine. Do as you are commanded the General with a scar on his face shouted into his microphone or. He went to the second person in the line who was a friend of mine Leo and he said who is a Jew and Leo pointed to Abraham and he said that man is a Jew I am sorry Abraham two guards secured Abraham into the synagogue a woman in the fourth row tried to run away with her baby in her arms but the General shouted something in German that

most terrible horrible ugly disgusting vile monstrous language and one of the guards shot her in the back of the head and they pulled her and her baby who was still alive into the synagogue. The General went to the next man in line and the next and everyone was pointing at a Jew because nobody wanted to be killed one Jew pointed at his cousin and one pointed at himself because he would not point at another. They secured Daniel into the synagogue and also Talia and Louis and every Jew there was but for some reason that I will never know Herschel was never pointed to perhaps this is because I was his only friend and he was not so social and many people did not even know he existed I was the only one who would know to point at him or perhaps it was because it was so dark that he could not be seen anymore. It was not forever before he was the only Jew remaining outside of the synagogue the General was now in the second row and said to a man because he only asked men I do not know why who is a Jew and the man said they are all in the synagogue because he did not know Herschel or did not know that Herschel was a Jew the General shot this man in the head and I could feel Herschel's hand touching mine very lightly and I made certain not to look at him the General went to the next person who is a Jew he asked and this person said they are all in the synagogue you must believe me I am not lying why would I lie you can kill them all I do not care but please spare me please do not kill me please and then the General shot him in the head and said I am becoming tired of this and he went to the next man in line and that was me who is a Jew he asked and I felt Herschel's hand again and I know that his hand was saying please please Eli please I do not want to die please do not point at me you know what is going to happen to me if you point at me do not point at me I am afraid of dying I am so afraid of dying I am so afraid of dying I am so afraid of dying who is a Jew the General asked me again and I felt on my other hand the hand of Grandmother and I knew that she was holding your father and that he was holding you and that you were holding your children I am so afraid of dying I am so afraid of dying I am so afraid of dying I am so afraid of dying and I said he is a Jew who is a Jew the General asked and Herschel embraced my hand with much strength and he was my friend he was my best friend I would have let him kiss Anna and even make love to her but I am I and my wife is my

me he said these things to us and Jonathan where do we go now what do we do with what we know Grandfather said that I am I but this could not be true the truth is that I also pointed at Herschel and I also said he is a Jew and I will tell you that you also pointed at Herschel and you also said he is a Jew and more than that Grandfather also pointed at me and said he is a Jew and you also pointed at him and said he is a Jew and your grandmother and Little Igor and we all pointed at each other so what is it he should have done he would have been a fool to do anything else but is it forgivable what he did can he ever be forgiven for his finger for what his finger did for what he pointed to and did not point to for what he touched in his life and what he did not touch he is still guilty I am I am I am I am I?)

“And now,” he said, “we must make sleep.”

4.3.1 TRANSLATION

(Herinner je je nog wat hij²⁸ daarna deed, Jonathan? Hij bestudeerde de foto opnieuw en legde hem toen weer op de tafel en zei toen, Hersjel²⁹ was een goed persoon, en ik ook, en daarom is het niet goed wat er is gebeurd, allemaal niet.³⁰ En toen vroeg ik hem, Wat³¹, wat is er gebeurd? Hij legde de foto terug in de doos, zoals je zult herinneren, en hij vertelde ons het verhaal. Zo ging het precies. Hij plaatste de foto in de doos en vertelde het aan ons. Hij ontweek onze ogen niet één keer en hij hield zijn handen geen één keer onder de tafel. Ik³² heb Hersjel vermoord, zei hij. Of wat ik heb gedaan leek er in ieder geval veel op. Wat bedoelt u?³³ Vroeg ik hem, omdat zijn woorden zo doorslaggevend waren. Nee, dit is niet waar.³⁴ Hersjel zou met of zonder mij ook vermoord zijn, maar het voelt nog steeds alsof ik hem vermoord heb. Wat is er gebeurd? Vroeg ik. Ze kwamen in het donkerste uur van de nacht. Ze kwamen net van een ander dorp vandaan en zouden daarna naar het volgende gaan. Ze wisten wat ze deden, ze waren zeer logisch. Ik herinner me nog heel nauwkeurig hoe mijn bed schudde toen de tanks kwamen. Wat is het? Wat is het? Vroeg Grootmoeder. Ik stond op en keek onderzoekend³⁵ uit het raam. Wat zag u? Ik zag vier tanks en ik kan

²⁸ This passage begins with the words of Alex, when he speaks of his Grandfather in third person.

²⁹ As well as 'Sjitel', I chose to use the Dutch spelling of this name, which is 'Hersjel'.

³⁰ This sentence is the first example of one of the typographical features of the stream of consciousness technique, as it lacks quotation marks.

³¹ Foer uses a capital letter to mark the word 'what', because this word would normally have quotation marks. This capital letter and the commas take away the ambiguity that could have been created otherwise. A sentence like 'ik vroeg hem wat, wat is er gebeurd' is more difficult to interpret for the Dutch target group, because the Dutch reader will initially interpret this sentence like 'I asked him something'. However, the capital letter and commas create enough clarity for the reader to interpret the sentence as Foer intended.

³² Here, Alex's grandfather takes over the narrative, as he speaks in first person narrative.

³³ In English, Alex addresses his Grandfather with 'you', but in translating this to Dutch, the translator has to choose between 'jij' or 'u'. The first is a familiar form of address, while the second is a polite form. Because of the age difference, Alex addresses his Grandfather with 'u', but Alex's Grandmother, on the other hand, addresses her husband with 'jij'. According to Nord, this problem is a language-specific translation problem.

³⁴ This is an example of the pace of this dialogue, as it changes rapidly between Alex and his grandfather.

³⁵ It is Alex who writes this story and therefore the choice of vocabulary is still incorrect or odd.

ze nog heel goed voor de geest halen. Vier groene tanks en aan de zijkanten ervan liepen mannen. Deze mannen droegen geweren, zal ik je vertellen, en ze richtten ze op onze deuren en ramen voor het geval dat iemand zou proberen te vluchten. Het was donker, maar ik kon dit alsnog zien. Was u bang? Ik was bang, ook al wist ik dat ze mij niet moesten hebben.³⁶ Hoe wist u dat? We hadden over ze gehoord. Iedereen. Ook Hersjel. We dachten niet dat het ons zou overkomen. Ik zei al, we geloofden in dingen, we waren zo dwaas. En toen?³⁷ En toen zei ik tegen Grootmoeder dat ze de baby moest halen, jouw vader, en hem mee moest nemen naar de kelder en geen geluid moest produceren, maar ook niet heel bang moest worden omdat ze ons niet moesten hebben. En toen? En toen stopten ze alle tanks en heel even dacht ik dwaas genoeg dat het voorbij was, dat ze hadden besloten om terug te gaan naar Duitsland en de oorlog zouden eindigen omdat niemand van oorlog houdt zelfs niet degenen die het overleven, zelfs de winnaars niet. Maar? Maar dat deden ze natuurlijk niet ze stopten de tanks alleen maar voor de synagoge en ze kwamen uit hun tanks en marcheerden in hele logische rijen. De Generaal die blond haar had hield een microfoon bij zijn gezicht en sprak in het Oekraïens hij zei dat iedereen naar de synagoge moest komen iedereen zonder uitzonderingen. De soldaten sloegen met hun geweren op alle deuren en onderzochten de huizen om er zeker van te zijn dat iedereen voor de synagoge zou zijn ik zei tegen Grootmoeder dat ze weer naar boven moest komen met de baby omdat ik bang was dat ze hen zouden ontdekken in de kelder en ze zouden doodschieten omdat ze zich verstoppen. Hersjel dacht ik Hersjel moet ontsnappen hoe kan hij ontsnappen hij moet nu wegrennen nu wegrennen in de duisternis misschien is hij al weggerend misschien heeft hij de tanks gehoord en is hij weggerend maar toen we bij de synagoge aankwamen zag ik Hersjel en hij zag mij en we stonden naast elkaar omdat vrienden dat doen in de aanwezigheid van kwaad of liefde. Wat gaat er gebeuren vroeg hij mij en ik zei hem ik weet niet wat er

³⁶ Another example of the pace of this dialogue: 'Were you scared' is immediately followed by 'I was scared'.

³⁷ Alex's interruptions are another feature of the stream of consciousness technique, because they recreate the pace of the conversation and the memories and feelings that come back.

gaat gebeuren en het klopt dat niemand van ons wist wat er ging gebeuren hoewel ieder van ons wist dat het kwaadaardig zou zijn. Het veroverde³⁸ zo lang voor de soldaten om hun onderzoek van de huizen af te ronden het was erg belangrijk voor ze om er zeker van te zijn dat iedereen voor de synagoge was. Ik ben zo bang zei Hersjel ik denk dat ik ga huilen. Waarom vroeg ik waarom er is niets om voor te huilen want er is geen reden om te huilen maar ik zal je zeggen dat ik ook wilde huilen en dat ik ook bang was niet voor mezelf maar voor Grootmoeder en de baby. Wat deden ze? Wat gebeurde er daarna? Ze lieten ons in rijen staan en aan de ene kant naast me stond Anna en Hersjel aan de andere kant sommige vrouwen huilden omdat ze erg bang waren voor de geweren die de soldaten vasthielden en ze dachten dat we allemaal gedood zouden worden. De Generaal met blauwe ogen hield de microfoon bij zijn gezicht. Jullie moeten goed luisteren zei hij en doen wat er bevolen wordt of je zult doodgeschoten worden. Hersjel fluisterde naar me ik ben erg bang en ik wilde hem zeggen ren weg je kansen zijn groter als je wegrent het is donker ren weg je hebt geen kans als je dat niet doet maar ik kon dit niet tegen hem zeggen omdat ik bang was dat ik doodgeschoten zou worden omdat ik sprak en ik was ook bang om toe te geven aan Hersjel's dood door te erkennen dat het dapper was ik zei met zo weinig mogelijk volume dat ik kon produceren³⁹ het is noodzakelijk dat je dapper bent waarvan ik nu weet dat het zo dom was om te zeggen het domste wat ik ooit heb gezegd dapper zijn voor wat? Wie is de rabbijn⁴⁰ vroeg de Generaal en de rabbijn hief zijn hand omhoog. Twee van de bewakers grepen de rabbijn en duwden hem in de synagoge. Wie is de voorzanger vroeg de Generaal en de voorzanger hief zijn hand omhoog maar hij was niet zo rustig als de rabbijn over de dood hij huilde

³⁸ This sentence shows another example of Alex's choice of vocabulary. In the source text he writes 'It captured so long', which is not grammatically correct. I chose to translate this with 'Het veroverde zo lang', which is also ungrammatical. Moreover, the choice of the word 'captured' can be interpreted in a different manner – the Jews are captured by the Nazis – and with my translation, this ambiguity remains.

³⁹ This is an example of a choice of word where the translator has to be consistent. I translated 'manufacture' with 'produceren', because I also used this translation in the beginning of this passage.

⁴⁰ It is remarkable that 'Rabbi' is not written with a capital letter and that 'the General' is written with a capital letter. This typographical feature is therefore translated into the target text.

en zei nee tegen zijn vrouw nee nee neeneenee en zij strekte haar hand naar hem uit en twee bewakers grepen haar en stopten haar ook in de synagoge. Wie zijn de Joden vroeg de Generaal in de microfoon alle Joden stap naar voren maar geen enkel persoon stapte naar voren. Alle Joden moeten naar voren stappen zei hij weer en deze keer schreeuwde hij het maar weer stapte geen enkel persoon naar voren en ik zal je zeggen dat ik ook niet naar voren zou stappen als ik een Jood was de Generaal ging naar de eerste rij en hij zei in zijn microfoon jullie zullen een Jood aanwijzen of als een Jood worden beschouwd hij ging als eerste naar de Jood Abraham. Wie is een Jood vroeg de Generaal hem en Abraham huiverde Wie is een Jood vroeg de Generaal weer en hij hield zijn geweer tegen Abraham's hoofd Aaron is een Jood Aaron en hij wees naar Aaron die in de tweede rij stond waar wij ook stonden. Twee bewakers grepen Aaron en hij verzette zich heel erg en dus schoten ze hem door zijn hoofd en toen voelde ik dat Hersjel's hand de mijne aanraakte. Doe wat je wordt bevolen riep de Generaal met een litteken op zijn gezicht in de microfoon of anders⁴¹. Hij ging naar de tweede persoon in de rij die een vriend van me was Leo en hij zei wie is een Jood en Leo wees naar Abraham en hij zei die man is een Jood het spijt me Abraham twee bewakers sloten Abraham op in de synagoge een vrouw in de vierde rij probeerde weg te rennen met haar baby in haar armen maar de Generaal riep iets in het Duits die meest vreselijke afschuwelijke lelijke walgelijke ellendige monsterlijke taal en een van de bewakers schoot haar door haar achterhoofd en ze sleepten haar en haar baby die nog steeds leefde in de synagoge. De Generaal ging naar de volgende man in de rij en de volgende en iedereen wees naar een Jood omdat niemand gedood wilde worden één Jood wees naar zijn neef en een ander wees naar zichzelf omdat hij niet naar iemand anders wilde wijzen. Ze sloten Daniel op in de synagoge en Talia en Louis ook en elke Jood die er was maar om de een of andere reden die ik nooit zal kennen werd er nooit naar Hersjel gewezen misschien omdat ik zijn enige vriend was en hij niet zo sociaal was en veel mensen niet eens wisten dat

⁴¹ In my comparison with the published translation, I added the word 'anders', because the meaning of the sentence becomes more clear in this way.

hij bestond ik was de enige die wist dat er naar hem gewezen kon worden of misschien kwam het doordat het zo donker was dat hij niet meer gezien kon worden.⁴² Het duurde niet eeuwenlang voordat hij de enige overgebleven Jood buiten de synagoge was de Generaal stond nu in de tweede rij en zei tegen een man omdat hij het alleen aan mannen vroeg ik weet niet waarom wie is een Jood en de man zei ze zijn allemaal in de synagoge omdat hij Hersjel niet kende of niet wist dat Hersjel een Jood was de General schootdezemandoorzijnhoofd⁴³ en ik voelde dat Hersjel's hand heel licht de mijne raakte en ik zorgde ervoor dat ik niet naar hem keek de Generaal ging naar de volgende persoon wie is een Jood vroeg hij en deze persoon zei ze zijn allemaal in de synagoge u moet me geloven ik lieg niet waarom zou ik liegen u kunt ze allemaal doden het kan me niet schelen maar alstublieft spaar mij alstublieft dood mij niet alstublieft en de Generaal schoothemdoorzijnhoofd en zei toen⁴⁴ ik word hier moe van en hij ging naar de volgende man in de rij en dat was ik wie is een Jood vroeg hij en ik voelde Hersjel's hand opnieuw en ik weet dat zijn hand zei alsjeblieftalsjeblieft Eli alsjeblieft ik wil niet dood alsjeblieft wijs niet naar mij je weet wat er met me gaat gebeuren als je naar me wijst wijs niet naar mij ik ben bang om dood te gaan ik ben zo bang om dood te gaan ik ben zobangomdoodtegaan ikbenzobangomdoodtegaan wie is een Jood vroeg de Generaal me opnieuw en ik voelde aan mijn andere kant de hand van Grootmoeder en ik wist dat ze je vader vasthield en dat hij jou vast hield en dat jij jouw kinderen vasthield ik ben zo bang

⁴² From here, the sentence becomes one long sentence without any punctuation. The feature applied by Foer reaches its most extreme form, as the sentence does not contain any punctuation and several words are clustered together. The features of the stream of consciousness technique are strengthened and this shows that the message of the story also reaches its climax. The words start to cluster more and more, when Alex's grandfather reaches the point in his story where he has to tell that he 'murdered' his best friend Herschel.

⁴³ This is the first example of words that are clustered together. I focused on the pronunciation of these clustered groups of words, because it is important that the words have the same effect on the reader. In this translation, the reader is able to pronounce (or hear) the clustered words in one rapid flow.

⁴⁴ 'Then' does not fit in the part before, because 'shothiminthehead' should by Dutch rules be broken up: 'en toen schoot de Generaal...' or 'en de Generaal schoothem toen doorzijnhoofd'. Both of them do not work and therefore I chose to place 'then' in the next part, after 'and said I am...'. This is what Nord describes as a language-specific problem, because the problem is created by the differences in structure. Moreover, the strategy that is applied is the strategy of exoticization, as the clustered words have the same alienating effect.

om dood te gaan ik ben zobangomdoodtegaan ikbenzobangomdoodtegaan
ikbenzobangomdoodtegaan en ik zei hij is een Jood wie is een Jood vroeg de
Generaal en Hersjel greep mijn hand krachtig vast en hij was mijn vriend hij was
mijn beste vriend ik zou hem Anna hebben laten kussen en zelfs de liefde hebben
laten bedrijven met haar maar ik ben ik en mijn vrouw is mijn vrouw en mijn baby is
mijn baby begrijp je wat ik je vertel ik wees naar Hersjel en zei hij is een Jood deze
man is een Jood alsjeblijft zei Hersjel tegen mij en hij huilde zeg ze dat het nietwaar
is alsjeblijft Eli alsjeblijft twee bewakers grepen hem en hij verzette zich niet maar hij
huilde wel steeds meer en harder en hij riep zeg ze dat er geen Joden meer zijn
geenJodenmeer en dat je alleen maar zei dat ik een Jood was zodat je niet gedood zou
worden ik smeeek je Eli jebentmijnvriend laat me niet dood gaan ik ben zo bang om
dood te gaan ikbenzobang het komt wel goed zei ik tegen hem het komt wel goed
doe dit niet zei hij doe iets doe iets doeiets doeiets het komt wel goed het komt
welgoed tegen wie zei ik dat doe iets Eli doeiets ik ben zobangomdoodtegaan ik ben
zobang je weet wat ze gaan doen jebentmijnvriend zei ik tegen hem ook al weet ik
niet waarom ik dat zei op dat moment en de bewakers stopten hem in de synagoge
met de rest van de Joden en alle anderen stonden nog buiten om het
huilenvandebaby's te horen en het huilenvandevolwassenen en om de zwarte vonk
te zien toen de eerste lucifer werd aangestoken door een jongeman die niet veel
ouder kon zijn dan ik of Hersjel was of jij bent het verlichtte degenen die niet in de
synagoge waren degenen die niet dood gingen en hij gooide hem op de takken die
tegen de synagoge waren geduwd wat het zo afschuwelijk maakte was dat het
zotraag ging en hoe het vuur heelvaakdoofde en opnieuw moest worden
aangemaakt ik keek naar Grootmoeder en zekustemeopmijnvoorhoofd en ik
kustehaarophaarmond en onze tranenmengdenoponzelippen en ik kustejevader
daarna heel vaak ik pakte hem uit de armen van Grootmoeder en
ikhieldhemmetveelkrachtvast zo hard dat hij begon te huilen ik zei ik hou van je ik
hou van je ik hou van je ik hou van je ik hou van je ik hou van je ik hou van je ik

houvanje⁴⁵ ikhouvanje ikhouvanje ikhouvanje ikhouvanje ikhouvanje
ikhouvanjeikhouvanjeikhouvanjeikhouvanje en ik wist dat ik alles moest veranderen
om alles achter te kunnen laten en ik wist dat ik hem nooit kon toestaan om te
ontdekken wie ik was of wat ik had gedaan omdat het voor hem was wat ik had gedaan
het was voor hem dat ik wees en voor hem dat Hersjel was vermoord dat ik Hersjel
had vermoord en hierdoor is hij hoe hij is hij is hoe is hij omdat een vader altijd
verantwoordelijk is voor zijn zoon en ik ben ik en ik ben verantwoordelijk niet voor
Hersjel maar voor mijn zoon omdat ik hem vasthield met zoveel kracht dat hij huilde
omdat ik zoveel van hem hield dat ik liefde onmogelijk maakte en het spijt me voor
jou en voor Iggy en jij bent het die mij moet vergeven hij⁴⁶ zei deze dingen tegen ons
en wat doen we nu Jonathan wat doen we met wat we weten over dat Grootvader zei
ik ben ik maar dit kan niet waar zijn wat wel klopt is dat ik ook naar Hersjel wees en
ik ook zei hij is een Jood en ik zal je zeggen dat jij ook naar Hersjel wees en zei
hij is een Jood en je grootmoeder en Kleine Igor en allemaal wezen wenaar elkaar dus
wat had hij moeten doen hij zou eendwaas geweest zijn niets anders te doen maar het is
vergeeflijk wat hij deed kan hij ooit vergeven worden voor zijn vinger voor
wat zijn vinger deed voor waar hij naar wees en niet naar wees voor
wat hij aan heeft geraakt in zijn leven en wat hij niet aan raakte is hij nog schuldig ik ben ik
ben ik ben ik ben ik?)

“En nu,” zei hij, “moeten we slapen.”

⁴⁵ In Dutch, the translation of ‘I love you’ has four words ‘Ik hou(d) van je’. I chose to use two different forms of clustering. For applied ‘I love you’ four times, where ‘love you’ is fused together. In Dutch this creates more possibilities and therefore I chose to use ‘Ik hou van je’ and ‘Ik houvanje’ both two times, instead of using one form four times. Moreover, the official spelling of ‘I love you’ in Dutch is ‘Ik houd van je’, with a ‘d’ in the end’. This is, however, the official spelling and in a dialogue one would not use ‘houd’, but ‘hou’. The ‘d’ is not pronounced and I chose to translate this with this form.

⁴⁶ This is when the point of view switches back to ‘he’ for grandfather and ‘I’ becomes Alex again.

5 COMPARISON WITH PUBLISHED TRANSLATION

When I compared my translation of the first passage with that of the published translation, several differences came to light, for example, regarding the names in the novel. It seems that Abelsen applied the same strategy and translated the meaning of 'upright' and 'slouch' in the words 'Uprighters' and 'Slouchers'. He, however, chose the words 'rechtopstaanden' and 'onderuitgezakten' as the translation. These words have a similar meaning and therefore the connotations of these 'fictional realia' remain. When analysing the other names in the published translation, it becomes clear that Abelsen applied another strategy, the strategy of 'adaptation' (Grit 193). He adapted the name 'Gefilteville', as his translation of this name becomes 'Gefiltevis aan de Brod'. Moreover, he also adapted the spelling of other names, for instance, 'Sofiovka' (Sofiwka) and 'Jitschak' (Yitzhak). I, on the other hand, only adapted the spelling of names with the English 'sh' sound in 'Shtetl' and 'Herschel'. The main difference between the published translation and my translation of this first passage is that Abelsen applied the strategy of adaptation more often, which creates a similar text with the same function. Abelsen succeeds in translating the style as well, as he translates one sentence, for example, with 'Uiteraard noemde niemand in Sofiovka Sofiovka Sofiovka'. The repetition of the name 'Sofiovka' could have been prevented, but this style is similar to the writing style of Jonathan and, therefore, this strategy of 'compensation' creates a humorous effect in the target text.

In the second passage, Abelsen also applied other strategies. He chose to 'delete' the incorrect spelling of Alex of the word 'oblongated', which he translated with the neutralized noun 'verplichting', but he also chose to 'add' humorous words on places where there were no humorous words in the source text. Abelsen translated, for example, 'how lucky you are' with 'hoe fortuinlijk jij bent' and 'awesome' with 'geil'. Both of these choices in vocabulary lead to a similar humorous effect, as the target text functions in the same manner. Abelsen is, however, not always consistent in his choice of vocabulary. As analysed in the theoretical part of

this thesis, Alex's repetition of certain words are very important, because they reflect his personality in that he fancies some words above others. The clearest example of this inconsistency is the translation of the word 'spleen'. Abelsen translated 'to get splened often' with 'om vaak boos te zijn', while he later translated 'spleen' with 'verdrieten'. This inconsistency also appears in the translation of words like 'informed' or 'roosted', but despite this inconsistency Abelsen succeeded in creating a text that functions in the similar way as the source text, because he was able to translate Foer's style. This result is especially created by Abelsen's use of the strategy of compensating.

In analysing the translations of the last passage, Abelsen's translation showed almost no great differences with my translation. He chose to apply the strategy of 'exoticization' and translate Foer's style in a similar manner with no punctuation and quotation marks and he also preserved the clustered groups of words in his translation. I did, however, discover one error in the translation of Abelsen. His translation of a part of the long sentence reads: "de lucifer verlichtte de mensen die in de synagoge waren en de mensen die niet zouden sterven ..." (273). The source text, however, reads: "it illuminated those who were not in the synagogue those who were not going to die ..." (251), where the sentences have the same meaning but are presented in different words. Abelsen probably did not see the 'not' in the source text and interpreted the sentence incorrectly. This incorrect interpretation does, however, not create a shift on the macro-structure of the novel (Van Leuven-Zwart 227). Therefore, the scale of this problem remains on the level of micro-structure and creates no further problems.

All in all, the strategies applied by Abelsen create a target text that answers to the function of the source text, as the names, words and sentences have the same effect on the reader of the target text.

6 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, several ideas were presented about *Everything is Illuminated* and the different voices and their characteristics. Firstly, Foer's novel has been analysed as a postmodernist work of fiction, which shed a light on several aspects of the novel, for example, the combination of reality and fantasy in both the novel and the two narrative voices. These voices of Jonathan and Alex showed to be very different from each other, as Jonathan is independent and consistent, while Alex is not. However, these voices become more similar towards the end of the novel, as they both write about their past regarding the influence of the war.

The chapters of Jonathan mainly show fictional elements, of which the mythical names are the greatest example. These 'fictional realia' are culture specific terms that are translated into another culture and in this target language, the names should have the same connotation. This effect can be achieved by applying two strategies of Grit. The first is a translation that only represents the most important elements of a name, which are the meaning, sound and length. The example of the 'Uprighters' has clearly shown that the connotation is mainly achieved by translating the most important element, which is the meaning of 'upright'. In another example, that of the 'Well-Regarded Rabbi', the sound and length of this name seemed the most important element. The second strategy of Grit is the strategy of adaptation, where the function is most important. This thesis showed that these two strategies often overlap and that this does not create problems, but strengthens a strategy.

The multi-vocality in *Everything is Illuminated* seemed both to be characteristic for a Jewish tradition and postmodernist fiction. Moreover, the typographical devices distinguish several of these voices. However, not all the voices in Foer's novel are marked typographically. Therefore, it is necessary that the main characters are analysed by hearing and understanding all the different voices in *Everything is Illuminated* so that their different styles can be distinguished and translated into the target text.

The idiolect of Alex is especially interesting for a translational point of view, because his interpretations are influenced by his language, which is a postmodernist feature. Moreover, Alex's character develops an 'evolutionary pattern', as his language improves as well when his character develops. This idea adds to the fact that Alex's interpretations are influenced by his language. The better his language becomes, the more he understands what happened in the past.

As analysed in this thesis, Alex's speech is unique and this is noticeable in the choices in vocabulary and repetition of certain words. According to Nord, these features of Alex's idiolect create text specific translation problems and this thesis showed that the best solution to this problem is to apply Holmes' strategy of exoticization. Alex's mistake 'oblongated' will then be translated with a similar mistake in the target text and when Alex uses a formal register, for instance, 'informed' then the translator will also use a formal register. Another good solution – if possible – is to compensate. The best solution would, however, be to exoticize, because the frequency of Alex's 'preferred words' would then remain the same.

In the analysis of the third passage, the central meaning of illuminated became clear, as Alex's grandfather finally confesses the truth about his past in the form of the stream of consciousness technique. Even though there is no stream of thoughts, most of the features in this passage correspond to this technique and therefore I applied this term in this thesis. The conversation contains memories and feelings, and Grandfather's speech is often interrupted by Alex – which are all features of the stream of consciousness technique. Foer adds to this technique by applying typographical features, for example, omitting quotation marks and punctuation, which creates one long sentence in the second half of the analysed passage. These features recreate the pace of the conversation, but it is also possible that this technique is applied for the reader, because these features create the idea that Alex has to write the words down immediately and this idea makes Alex's story more believable. Moreover, the stream of consciousness technique in Foer's novel has been analysed as a language-specific translation problem, because the length of the

sentence creates difficulties in translating from English to Dutch, as the target text is often longer and therefore can be incomprehensible. The best solution to this problem is the strategy of exoticization, because the style of the source text is characteristic for the message of this passage.

In my comparison with the published translation, several differences came to light. Abelsen applied Grit's strategy of adaptation in his translation of the name 'Gefilteville' with 'Gefiltevis aan de Brod' and he applied the strategy of compensating more often. From this comparison can be concluded that my translation is more literally than Abelsen's translation. An advantage from this conclusion from my point of view can be that my translation is more consistent in, for example, the repeated words and from Abelsen's point of view that his translation adds more to the style of the target text. From the analyses in this thesis one strategy turns out to be the best solution to the analysed translation problems, which is the strategy of exoticization, because with this strategy the style – or variety of styles – in this novel can be translated into the target text.

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