

‘The meeting point between thought and flesh’

Translating Sebastian Faulks’ *Human Traces*



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Introduction

The British author Sebastian Faulks has often named his novel *Human Traces* his personal favourite. “I feel I have made something. It is a bit like a sculpture”, the author states in an interview with Kate Kellaway from *The Observer*. After the novel was published in 2005, *Human Traces* quickly became a UK best seller and was widely debated and reviewed. Many critics applauded the “long, ambitious, and intellectually demanding” work (Simon Wessely), Faulks’ virtuosity and his elegant and touching prose. Dealing with the question of what makes us human, with sanity and insanity, cognition, psychiatry and evolution, the novel tackles several interesting topics in a remarkable manner. Faulks’ “integration of ideas and narrative” (*The Guardian*), the “elusive fusion of emotion and intelligence” (*The New York Times*), the mix of encyclopaedic and prosaic style, is one aspect of the novel many reviewers noticed as being extraordinary. Some argued however that it is at times the cause of problems, as they sometimes found the scientific dialogues forced and unnatural. However, none of the critics regarded the novel as a failure, and the work remains positively esteemed by the critics as well as the public. Despite the success of Faulks’ novel, it has never been translated in Dutch, in contrast to all of Faulks’ other works. Even his 2015 work *Where My Heart Used to Beat* already has a Dutch translation. Moreover, the before-mentioned mix of scientific terminology with prose, the aspects of the many different registers and perspectives, and the thematic duality, make the novel an interesting case for translation and for research in the field of translation studies. In this thesis, I will examine the way in which these characteristic traits of Faulks’ *Human Traces* can be transferred best into Dutch in a consistent manner, without losing the original effect of the novel. The first chapter of this thesis deals

with two of the most extraordinary characteristics of Faulks' style in *Human Traces*, namely the mix of a scientific register with a prosaic one and the multi-vocality of the text. In the second chapter, an analysis of other translation problems, following the model developed by Christiane Nord, is provided. The third chapter contains the translation of the selected passage from *Human Traces*. This passage (pages 365-374 of Faulks' novel) was chosen because it displays many of the major characteristics of the novel, such as the many different registers: scientific as well as prosaic language and a mix of the two. These features, as well as some of the protagonist(s)'s major characteristic traits, struggles, reflections and concerns, are visible in the fragment. Additionally, the passage is also a somewhat 'round' chapter, with a clear beginning and ending. Lastly, after the translation and conclusion of this research, the thesis ends with an appendix containing the source text.

Chapter 1. Twigs and Branches: Methodology

To fully grasp the complexity of translating Faulks' *Human Traces*, an examination of its specific genre and characteristics must be provided. Because the novel falls within a relatively under-researched genre, which could be dubbed 'psychiatric fiction', combining scientific terminology and prose, the translation methodology must be adapted to suit this specific niche. In Faulks' work, the (historical-) psychiatric terminology fused with the prose is a characteristic and interesting aspect, yet also a problematic one. Another key feature of the novel is its multi-vocality, by which I mean the presence of many different distinct voices and perspectives in the novel, which derives partly from its psychiatric content. This feature will be discussed in the second section of this methodology. Since sources that combine these different types of narration and translation do not (yet) exist, the methodology of this thesis will combine sources on medical translation and sources on the translation of fiction, focusing on the translation of different voices and registers in narrative.

1.1 Wonders and Laws: Studying Psychiatric Fiction

Firstly, in non-fictional medical translation, accuracy, reliability and non-ambiguousness are important qualifications to focus on, as is stressed by several scholars (Pilegaard 160; Montalt 79). Vicent Montalt states that this does not only go for the more obvious forms of medicine, but also for, amongst others, "nursery, public health, pharmacology, psychiatry [and] psychology" (79). Thus, to address the terminology in Faulks' novel, which employs an almost encyclopaedic style in some places concerning the psychiatric discourse and therefore values accuracy about as much as any medical work, these qualifications will be kept in mind. To achieve the

standard of accuracy in the translation, the nature of the different kinds of terminology must be analysed. Both Montalt and Morten Pilegaard describe a classification of genres in medical texts, and argue that any translator of medical texts should be aware of these distinctions. Montalt argues that there exist four separate categories of medical texts: research (such as original articles, case reports, and doctoral theses), professional (such as clinical guidelines, summaries of product characteristics, disease classifications, nomenclatures, vademecums, clinical histories), educational (such as course books, fact sheets for patients, patient information leaflets, popularizing articles), and finally, commercial (such as drug advertisements, catalogues of medical equipment, press releases for new drugs) (80-81). Similarly, Pilegaard distinguishes between languages of medical education, medical occupation, medical journalism, the language between doctor and patient, and medical technical language (159). Throughout *Human Traces*, many of these categories can be detected, and the translated passage includes several. Many times, professional language is used when theories by scientists from all over the world are discussed in several manners, for example, by Thomas describing his bookcase:

Next to Chiarugi, he placed a copy of Johann Reil's *Rhapsodies of the Psychological Method of Cure in Mental Alienation*, the first book, as far as he knew, to have stated that madness was not a supernatural visitation, but an affliction of the tissues of the brain, in a way that pneumonia is an ailment of the lung, no less physical for being invisible (Faulks 133).

Furthermore, the educational category is visible multiple times, for example in Charcot's lectures at the Salpêtrière: "After the aura,' said Charcot, 'the premonition of the rising attack, comes the *globus hystericus*, the patient's sensation that her uterus has risen in her abdomen and threatens to choke her. Next will come a sub-epileptic

seizure. This is the first phase proper” (Faulks 211). Furthermore, research language is also used, for example in Jacques’ case study of Fräulein Katharina: “The clinical picture was further complicated by what one might term superficial anxiety states, expressed in a chronic insomnia, a tendency to low spirits, and a somewhat morbid fear of animals” (Faulks 382-83). Moreover, the quoted passages from original medical articles, such as J. Hughlings Jackson’s (Faulks 623), also fall within this category, as well as both Thomas’s and Jacques’ speeches. Montalt’s commercial category and Pilegaard’s medical technical language are not evidently present in the novel, but Pilegaard’s variant of doctor/patient language seems to play a major role throughout the work. In the passage this thesis focuses on, a very specific kind of doctor/patient communication is visible too, namely between Thomas and Jacques schizophrenic brother, Olivier, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In the beginning of the passage, dealing with Kraepelin’s work, language of medical occupation (or research language) is also used, and later on, the reader has access to Thomas’s own thoughts with regard to psychology.

Because the medical terminology is used in very different manners and most of the time adapted to fit in the prose, the translator should analyse these manners prior to the translation process and ask him or herself several questions concerning the source text, such as ‘In what way is the terminology used and what is its effect?’ ‘Is the unit of text a quote from an existing text or has it been rephrased or paraphrased?’ ‘Is accuracy called for in this case or should the unit be dealt with creatively in order to stay true to the prosaic style?’ and ‘Is the terminology part of the character’s specific voice, or is it universally accepted as a form of medical communication?’ Additionally, all of the terminology in *Human Traces* is historical (18th and 19th century) and deals with psychology and psychiatry from different countries and even

continents, so most terms are, from a contemporary perspective, out-dated. To deal with certain expressions from the passage, such as ‘circular insanity’, ‘dementia praecox’, and ‘county asylum’, equivalents must be found by researching works on the *history* of psychiatry in the target language, in this case, Dutch.

James Holmes argues in his article “Rebuilding the Bridge at Bommel: Notes on the Limits of Translatability” that poetry functions on three different levels: in a linguistic context, a literary intertext and a socio-cultural situation (39-40). These contexts could be seen, according to Holmes, as three levels on which translation problems can be analysed: a strategy that can be used not only for poetry, but for all (literary) texts, it seems, although the category of the literary intertext is more appropriate for poetry than prose in many cases. Holmes states that on these three levels, a translator must consistently make a choice between naturalising versus exoticising, and between historicising versus modernising. On the socio-cultural level of *Human Traces*, I would argue that a strategy “with an emphasis on *retention*” (Holmes 41) is fitting, so following exoticising and historicising strategies. Thus, for example, with regard to the (historical-) psychiatric terminology, an assessment should also be made concerning the choice between an exoticising and naturalising strategy: must the terminology in one or several places be adapted to the Dutch discourse of the time? As stated before, I would argue that an exoticising strategy would be fitting for a novel as *Human Traces*, since so many foreign terminologies, names and expressions are used, which are most of the time also crucial to the story, and the characters do not really seem to be bound to one single country or culture throughout the novel. Therefore words such as ‘schloss’ in the passage can simply be left retained, as well as place names, such as ‘Heidelberg’. The choice between historicification and modernisation on a socio-cultural level is also quite interesting

here, even though it is perhaps a more obvious one. Because the subject of the novel is the history of psychology and psychiatry, applying a modernising strategy would mean changing the entire novel and almost all of its characteristics. Contemporary equivalents would have to be found for the scientists and their texts, for the way in which the patients are treated in the novel, for the context and nature of the protagonists' studies, and so on. With regard to the terminology, diseases such as 'hysteria' and expressions such as 'asylum' and 'lunatic' are out-dated (and even politically incorrect, maybe) and would never be used nowadays. Also, "because [nowadays] authors (and translators) are likely to encounter more English than Dutch scientific texts, they may regard certain rhetorical characteristics of English scientific texts simply as 'scientific' and therefore employ them in Dutch scientific texts as well" (De Rijke 18). So, when modernising the text, many of the terms used in the translation would probably be in English. Similarly, treatments for diseases as 'dementia preacox', or schizophrenia, are improved and regarded very differently nowadays (at least in the Dutch and English socio-cultural context), as they no longer consist of occasional conversations. On the linguistic level, a modernising strategy would mean that the larger part of the (historical) vocabulary and syntax would be changed, which are very significant characteristics of Faulks' style too, since he embedded his plot in a 18th and 19th century context in a realistic and true manner. Consequently, a modernised translation of this novel on Holmes' socio-cultural and linguistic levels would result in a whole different story, and therefore, the strategy of historicisation is the only reasonable choice here if equivalence is desired.

Moreover, most of the historical psychological terminology is rather universal and has an equivalent in Dutch, such as 'manic-depressive illness' ('manisch-depressieve stoornis') and 'psychopathic predisposition' ('psychopathische

predispositie’). Consequently, the translation of these terms does not cause immediate problems and are mostly a matter of (sometimes extensive) research. However, the more culturally-specific psychiatric expressions, as is seen in the sentence “In the older books, causes of insanity were divided into moral and physical, the former including ‘loss of several cows’ and ‘overexcitement at the Great Exhibition’” (Faulks 366), are more problematic. I have chosen to deal with these terms by searching for their most common equivalents in Dutch, in order to keep the historical value intact.

A translator of the novel in its entirety, or a translator working within this genre, would perhaps need to consider other resources and tools available to achieve the best result. For example, it would be helpful to be able to review the records of Dutch asylums from the 18th and 19th century, as well as Dutch reports on the education of psychiatry of that time (if they exist). Moreover, it would perhaps be useful to consult with a Dutch specialist in (historical) psychiatry, who fully understands the use, the (un)commonness and meanings of certain terminologies, treatments and expressions, and who has a better insight in the narrative of, for example, the schizophrenic character Olivier. Therefore, it could be fruitful to create a translation team composed of translators with expertise in literary fiction and (professional) medical/ psychiatric translation, so that the combination of genres is dealt with by a combination of translators, and the translation of the novel becomes a real unity. It took Faulks five years of extremely extensive research and writing to complete and present this novel as a convincing and true historical-psychiatric work; therefore, the translator of Faulks’ novel owes it to the diligent writer to examine and research the major theme of the novel, namely historical psychiatry, thoroughly, and to deal with it respectfully and carefully.

1.2 (Non-) Existent Voices: Translating Multi-vocality

Another characteristic of Faulks's style is, next to his use of several registers, the presence of multiple separate voices. Cecilia Alvstad and Gunilla Anderman examine in their work the translation of different voices in narrative. According to Anderman, giving each character a voice of his or her own requires [...] that the translator first has an awareness of where the characters live, their social position and their own, personal idiosyncrasies in the source culture, and also the ability to find the lexical and grammatical means of matching expressions in the target language (7).

Before analysing the idiolects of the different characters, which Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short define as “the linguistic ‘thumbprint’ of a particular person: [...] the features of speech that mark him off as one individual from another” (134), a general analysis of Faulks' language in *Human Traces* will be made, using Leech's and Short's “checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories” (60). In his work and thus in the passage as well, Faulks employs, but also brings together, a scientific and a prosaic discourse, which is reflected in his use of language and vocabulary. In general, when discussing psychological research, Faulks, applies a critical distance in his style, using vocabulary that is most of the time complex and more formal, since it consists mainly of specialised language. Also, adjectives are much less frequently used in the scientific discourse, as opposed to the vocabulary dealing with the characters, which is more coloured by adjectives and less distant. This is visible, for example, when comparing the following fragments: “Kraepelin developed the idea and went on to call it ‘manic-depressive illness’. The second category of psychosis he called ‘premature dementia’ or dementia praecox” (Faulks 366) and “The warmth was manifest in an exasperated affection on Thomas's side, a sort of habitual and

frustrated brotherly love, and, on Olivier's by a manifest anxiety and bizarre behaviour if ever Thomas went away" (Faulks 368). However, probably to bridge the enormous gap between the encyclopaedic and prosaic style, Faulks frequently intermixes the two extremes by the use of shorter, more direct sentences in the character and plot passages ("In the summer of the following year, his father died and he returned to Torrington with Sonia for the funeral" (Faulks 367)), but more importantly, by personalising the psychiatric/psychological discourse. By letting the characters reflect on and make use of the scientific discourse, the distance between the two types of narrative decreases. This is detectable in the following fragment from the passage:

He pictured the misrouting of electrical impulses over all those years, the auditory area chronically aflame with non-existent voices; he imagined the damage done by years of short-circuit in the brain, the build-up and overspill of chemicals at the point of electrical exchange; and in his mind's eye he saw not local 'lesions' but entire pathways burned away, like the landscape after the scorched-earth retreat of a vandal army (Faulks 372).

Here, the psychological vocabulary is fused with Thomas's mind and thoughts, so the terminology elegantly becomes more prosaic and part of Thomas's distinct character. The almost invisible omniscient narrator here is much less distant than in other, more describing and factual fragments, such as the beginning of the passage, dealing with Kraepelin. For a translator, it is important to be aware of these stylistic shifts in narrative and vocabulary. In short, not only the terminology present in *Human Traces* requires attention, as the stylistic characteristics of Faulks's fusion of discourses are equally noteworthy and challenging.

Another characteristic one should be aware of when translating any literary work, as Anderman argues, but especially Faulks' work, is the idiolects of his many characters. In the selected passage, only Thomas's and Olivier's idiolects are visible, but in different manners. As the chapter is narrated from Thomas's perspective, the reader has access to his mind. Thus, apart from in direct speech, he is also sometimes represented through "free indirect thought" (Leech, Short 270) and "narrative report[s] of [...] thought act[s]" (Leech, Short 271). Faulks applies multiple times what Leech and Short call "the un-obtrusive change from one mode to another, sometimes called 'slipping'" (272), as he sometimes leaves an ambiguity around who is speaking: the unidentified narrator, or a character. This occurs, for example, in the rhetorical question "and surely this progress at least gave grounds for hope?" (Faulks 367) and when Thomas seems to wander off in his conversation with Olivier. In this conversation, a distinctive form of communication is portrayed, namely that between a psychiatrist and his (schizophrenic) patient. Thomas's kind and patient voice is here characterised by repetition, as he keeps restating his questions using the same kind of sentence structures, and, to use his own words, by "a kind of bluntness" (Faulks 368). Opposed to Thomas's idiolect is Olivier's, whose mind is still inaccessible to the reader and whose voice is marked by his disease. It is almost impossible to connect and communicate with him, and he frequently gets lost in his own mind. As is shown later in the novel, Olivier is most of the time not even able to hear what another person is saying to him, because of the many voices speaking in his head. Since these voices are loud and he keeps responding to them as well, the logic in his utterings are sometimes hard to follow: "we do not understand schizophrenic discourse because, as self-conversation, it is a speech act intended to be understood by the speaker, not the listener" (Szasz 534). This results in him making conversational errors, which "can be

communicative, in the sense that they may indicate something of the speaker's character or state of mind: frequency of hesitations, for instance, may be a sign of nervousness, tentativeness or careful weighing of words" (Leech, Short 133). Because of the noise in his head, Olivier speaks in short sentences most of the time, responding to Thomas and to several conversational partners that only exist in his mind. When confronted with things he does not know or understand, his speech is marked by hesitations and pauses, which shows indeed his state of mind.

So, by making these kinds of analyses regarding the voices and perspectives in Faulks' work, following Anderman's advice and using Leech's and Short's methods, the translator reaches the awareness necessary to fully convey the depth and psychological complexity of Faulks' novel.

Chapter 2. Established Patterns: Nord's Categories

Christiane Nord argues that, prior to translating any text, a translator must analyse the source text, for which she provides four categories of translation problems in her article in *Denken over Vertalen* (2010). She states that these categories should be dealt with in the most effective way, which is, according to her, a “top-down” manner (147). Following this advice, a translator should start with what Nord calls pragmatic problems. These translation problems arise because of the differences between the communicative situations and context of the source text and target text, for example differences in time and place and possible foreknowledge of the source and/or target audience. Next, the category of culture specific translation problems, so problems caused by differences in norms and conventions of the source and target culture, should be analysed. This category involves so-called culture specific elements, or CSE's. The third category Nord describes is the one consisting of the language specific translation problems, which originate from the differences between the specific (lexical) structures and grammar of the languages in question. The last type of translation problem is identified by Nord as text specific, and shows the individuality and character of the source text. Following this model of source text analysis, an examination will be made of the translation problems in the passage from *Human Traces*, which will be illustrated with several examples.

In the translated passage, and in almost the entire novel as well, there seem to be few cases of translation problems that fall within the categories of pragmatic and culture specific. Only in the parts dealing with the characters' childhood and upbringing, in which they are still influenced and surrounded by the culture of the country of their birth, and are therefore still less hybrid, these types of problems

occur. In the rest of the novel and in the narrative of the passage as well (apart from occasional memories and reminiscences about the past) pragmatic and culture specific problems are barely visible, as no single culture lies at the basis of the story. Just as the psychiatric patients the characters (and mainly Thomas and Jacques) encounter on a daily basis, their identities are scattered as well, since they have moved several times to different countries, have problematic relationships with the country and culture of their birth and are both married to women of a different nationality. The novel revolves around the history of psychiatry, and, in discussing a widespread historical development, transcends the boundaries of culture and geography.

However, because the work deals with psychiatry in the 18th and 19th century, there are examples of pragmatic and culture specific problems that are historically defined. Nevertheless, these examples are less significant here, as the source text audience and the target text audience have a comparable amount of foreknowledge with regard to the historical context. In the passage, there are only two real cases, both part of Thomas's memories, that could be seen as examples of pragmatic problems, one of which is the mentioning of the "Great Exhibition" (Faulks 366). As the Great Exhibition was a historical event that took place in Britain, the British audience of the source text might have more knowledge regarding this fact than a potential Dutch target audience. However, the term appears to have a common Dutch equivalent, which is '*Eerste Wereldtentoonstelling*', so I chose to use this term, accompanied by a footnote, as I aimed to change the historical setting as little as possible. Similarly, when remembering his time at university, Thomas thinks about "one of the fellows of his old college at Cambridge" (Faulks 370), which shows an academic structure a Dutch audience is not familiar with. A group of fellows at an old university, such as Cambridge, form the governing body of a college, which is an independent

department of the university. The Dutch word ‘college’ can in fact be used to refer to the English university department, but the translation of ‘fellow’ had to be made more explicit to be understandable for the target audience: ‘*één van de leden van het bestuur*’.

Since no real examples of culture specific translation problems are visible in the passage, I will move on to Nord’s third category, that of the language-specific problem. In general, this might be the largest category of translation problems, so naturally, not all of them will be examined here. However, some aspects of the English text repeatedly caused trouble in the translation process. Because of Faulks’ consistent use of a fairly high, elegant and polite register, many differences between the English and Dutch characteristics of this kind of register become visible when translating. For one, polite British expressions such as tag-questions are very typical for the source language: ‘haven’t you?’, ‘does he?’ and ‘isn’t it?’ became ‘*toch?*’, ‘*of wel?*’ en ‘*of niet?*’ Moreover, some adverbs and adjectives Faulk uses, such as “oddly cogent” (370), “his voice was gentle and explanatory” (370) and “tirelessly expository” (372), were problematic when translating, as these combinations are less common in Dutch. Therefore, in translating these challenging adverbs and adjectives, different Dutch constructions had to be made. “There was something oddly cogent in his understanding of the world” (370), for example, became “*zijn opvatting van de wereld had op een vreemde manier iets overtuigends*”. Similarly, long sentences, sometimes split with a semicolon, are also more usual in English than in Dutch, so in the translation many long sentences had to be split in two shorter ones. Also, ‘ing’-forms (such as the present and past continuous and the gerund) are very frequently used in English and in the source text, but this grammatical category is only sporadically used in Dutch writing. Thus, the constructions “reading the definition in

Kraepelin” (366), “hiding naked in an alleyway” (367) and “Thomas regretted mentioning the Seamstress” (369) were all changed in Dutch: “*toen Thomas de definitie in Kraepelins werk las*”, “*waar hij zich naakt in een steeg had verstoppt*” and “*Thomas had er spijt van dat hij de Naaister had genoemd*”. In some instances, the ing-forms are used rhetorically in Faulks’ work, such as in the phrases: “the urban poor who came to stand in front of his trestle table in the hall, waiting to be assigned a ward number, waiting for an instant name for their distress” (366). Here, the repetition is used stylistically, so I wanted to maintain this structure in de Dutch text too: “*wachtend op de toewijzing van een afdelingsnummer, wachtend op een kant-en-klare benaming voor al hun problemen*”. Another example of a language specific problem, is the ambiguousness of the verb ‘to watch’ in English. The verb occurs three times in the selected passage, but means something slightly different in every case, which cannot be translated in Dutch with only one word every time. When it is stated about Thomas that “he liked watching [Olivier]” (370), it means that he likes looking at him peacefully, but when the text says: “He watched when their faces grew puzzled” (372), it means that he studied them, as patients, hopelessly, as there was nothing he could do, and when Thomas “watched as Daisy took him out beneath the stairs into the cloister” (374), the passage has an almost melancholic or sentimental feeling, since Thomas watches a scene, absorbed in thought. In the translation, these implicit meanings were brought across by the use of other words and constructions. For the first example, the verb is translated as simply “*naar hem te kijken*”, the second example of the verb is translated as “*hij bestudeerde*” and the third as “*hij keek toe*”.

The fourth and last of Nord’s categories is that of the text specific problem. As discussed in the first chapter, the biggest challenge of translating *Human Traces* probably is the stylistic mix of scientific discourse and prose, which causes a large

part of the translation problems. Since this characteristic of the text has already been discussed extensively, this chapter will focus on some other text specific problems. In the passage, many problems occur when dealing with the conversation between Olivier and Thomas. Because of Olivier's disease, the conversational language is very specific to the situation and the descriptions of his behaviour are also fairly ambiguous, as it never really becomes clear what he is doing and why he is doing it. For example, one of the voices in Olivier's head he identifies as "the Carver". Even though he is mentioned several times in this passage, and later on in the novel in the passage in which Olivier's perspective is shown, not much is known about this unseen character. Olivier states that sometimes the Carver passes him information, that he "can always hear the Carver" (521) and that he hates them, "the Carver and the others, but they are me" (523). All the voices he hears are named after their 'professions', it seems: the Sovereign, the Seamstress, the Acrobat, which are pretty straightforward. The Carver, however, is a somewhat ambiguous name, but still has the connotation of a somewhat impressive character, which is supported by the fact that Olivier can always hear him. So, something like the Dutch "*Kerver*" would not work. After some deliberation, I decided to specify the name more, and to make it a real profession, so that it matches the other voices more in Dutch. However, "*Houthakker*" would not work, since it would have fairy-tale connotations. Eventually, the Carver became the "*de Slager*", since it is an old profession and answers to that kind of impressive figure. Another example of an unclear part of Olivier's speech is when he responds to Thomas's question about the Garden of Eden with "Eden, eaten. Not eaten" (373). In the chapter later on in the novel, in which the reader has access to Olivier's mind, it becomes clear that the voices in his head are so loud, that he cannot even hear what the 'real' people around him are saying, so that their conversations consist of many

misunderstandings: ““I am asking you some simple questions. Who is the President of the Republic?’ What in public? Something in public? Present? I must say something. Try an answer. ‘I have no present’” (Faulks 522). However, because the reader has no insight into Olivier’s mind, some aspects of his speech remain unclear, which is a challenge for a translator. In the case of the misunderstanding around the Garden of Eden, I chose to maintain the rhyme first instead of the right tense, so that it becomes clear that Olivier’s mind does something particular with the sound of the word. The second ‘not eaten’ had to be translated according to tense, because Thomas responds to this, asking him if he would like to (eat something). Moreover, Faulks applies this degree of ambiguity also in his descriptions of Olivier’s behaviour. For example, the exact nature of the “dismissive, brushing movements” (371) is not specified, and with the last phrase: “his fingers still fluttering in their rapid pattern of touch” it does not become clear what exactly he is doing. Therefore, the translator has to interpret it him or herself and create his or her own imagery regarding these scenes.

Chapter 3: Translation

Later dat jaar las Thomas de nieuwe editie van Emil Kraepelins *Compendium der Psychiatrie*¹. Kraepelin had een frustrerend ballingschap in Estland achter de rug, waar het feit dat hij de taal niet beheerste zijn vorderingen belemmerde. Bij terugkomst in Duitsland was hij naar Heidelberg gegaan, waar hij zijn longitudinale onderzoek naar het beloop van levensbedreigende ziekten vervolgde. Door middel van een enorm arsenaal aan systeemkaarten begon hij twee terugkerende patronen van psychose te onderscheiden. Het eerste patroon was door dokters van het Salpêtrière ‘kringloopwaanin’ gedoopt, aangezien perioden gekenmerkt door grote euforie en manie en episoden van diepe depressie elkaar afwisselden. Kraepelin werkte het idee verder uit en besloot het ‘manisch-depressieve stoornis’ te noemen. De tweede categorie van psychose noemde hij ‘voortijdige dementie’ of *dementia praecox*.

Toen Thomas de definitie in Kraepelins werk las, herkende hij het onmiddellijk als de ziekte van Olivier². Kraepelin stelde dat de basis ervan een ‘psychopathische predispositie’ was; het was, met andere woorden, een aangeboren hersenaandoening. De intentie die achter de monumentale onderneming van Kraepelins onderzoek lag ontroerde Thomas: hij wilde als dokter hulp kunnen bieden wanneer een vrouw hem vroeg ‘Zal mijn man zijn ziekte te boven komen? Wat gaat er nu met hem gebeuren?’ Ongeveer drie kwart van de patiënten die aan *dementia praecox* leden zou gestaag verslechteren, concludeerde Kraepelin, maar de rest kon weer beter worden.

¹ As translated in Shorter, 116, by Tinke Davids.

² I chose to translate Olivier’s disease as ‘de ziekte van Olivier’ and not ‘Oliviers ziekte’, since Faulks seems to play with the unit’s meaning: it is the disease Olivier has, but Thomas and Jacques have started to use it as if it is a scientific term. In Dutch it is more common to name official diseases like this (e.g. ‘de ziekte van Pfeiffer’).

Enthousiast wees Thomas Jacques op de passage in Kraepelin, met het idee dat de wetenschap dat de ziekte van zijn broer eindelijk een naam had hem zou bemoedigen, maar Jacques zei dat de term een aantal jaren geleden al bedacht was door een Fransman genaamd Morel en leek het enthousiasme van Thomas niet te kunnen delen. Thomas zag het als een stap in de goede richting. Hij dacht terug aan de logboeken van het gesticht en de verscheidenheid aan kleurrijke en onwetenschappelijke diagnoses die daarin stonden: oude-vrijsterswaanzin, huwelijksnachtpsychose, maanziekte. In de oudere boeken werden de oorzaken van waanzin onderverdeeld in de categorieën moreel en fysiek, waarbij de eerste onder andere ‘verlies van verscheidene koeien’ en ‘te grote opwinding bij de Eerste Wereldtentoonstelling³’ bevatte. Hij zag de grijze en vuile gezichten van de stadsarmen die voor zijn schraagtafel verschenen, wachtend op de toewijzing van een afdelingsnummer, wachtend op een kant-en-klare benaming voor hun problemen om vervolgens de almaar kleiner wordende gang in te worden gestuurd en te verdwijnen.

Kraepelin had psychosen onderverdeeld in die mét heftige stemmingswisselingen en die zonder. Patiënten uit de eerste categorie kwamen er regelmatig weer bovenop, uit de laatste was dat ongebruikelijk. Hij had patronen vastgesteld, bijna een volledige nosologie. Dat was toch zeker een hoopgevende vooruitgang?

³ The Great Exhibition, which I translated as ‘*Eerste Wereldtentoonstelling*’, of 1851 in Hyde Park, London, is seen as the first universal exhibit dealing with culture and industry. It was organised by, amongst many others, Prince Albert. Since this is a specific great historical event, I did not choose for a naturalising strategy. Moreover, these diagnoses were used in these exact words at Colney Hatch Asylum in 1851, so creating a whole new Dutch diagnosis did not seem appropriate.

Wat hij aan Franz had beschreven als het ‘quichoteske’⁴ element bleef in Thomas voortleven, omdat hij merkte dat er voor hem nog steeds dingen waren om tegen te rebelleren. In de zomer van het daaropvolgende jaar stierf zijn vader en keerde hij met Sonia terug naar Torrington voor de begrafenis. Zijn broer Edgar vertelde hem dat hij met Lucy en hun vijf kinderen in het huis zou trekken. Hij vroeg of Thomas een aandeel wilde in het familiebedrijf in de graanteelt en beloofde hem een boerenhoeve. Edgar leek verbijsterd toen Thomas hem uitlegde dat hij een beroep en een leven had in Karinthië. Het was net, dacht Thomas, alsof Edgar meende dat hij op een of andere onduidelijke manier een grapje maakte. ‘Laat het me weten als je je bedenkt’, zei Edgar, toen het tijd was om afscheid te nemen, terwijl zijn hand op Thomas’ schouder rustte. ‘Ik zal proberen altijd een plek voor je vrij te houden.’ Thomas vroeg zich af of het vooral zo was dat Edgar dacht dat hij Sonia uit Engeland had weggehaald en dat als hij terug zou komen, zij hem misschien zou volgen. Het was zeker waar dat Torrington niet hetzelfde was zonder haar. Zijn moeder was totaal van haar stuk door de dood van haar man, bovendien was ze zelf ook oud aan het worden en had een stukje van het nodige zelfvertrouwen om een dergelijk huishouden de moeite waard te maken verloren; Lucy was geen onvriendelijk meisje, dacht hij, maar werd totaal opgeslokt door de kinderen. Aan de andere kant gaf hun rumoer het huis een bewoond gevoel en Sonia kon niet op twee plaatsen tegelijk zijn.

⁴ “[...] There is something of Don Quixote in me, I suppose. Where I see a windmill, I will take my lance and saddle up [...] We must all try to keep the quixotic element,’ said Thomas. ‘Throw the old knight a pie. Give oats to Rosinante.’” (Faulks 365). Since the Dutch spelling of Don Quixote is most of the time ‘Don Quichot’, I translated ‘quixotic’ as ‘quichoteske’, even though the expression is much less used in Dutch than in English.

Bij zijn terugkomst in het Schloss⁵ vernam Thomas dat Olivier op een nacht in de stad was gevonden, waar hij zich naakt in een steeg had verstopt. Niemand wist zeker hoe hij überhaupt in het centrum had weten te komen –vermoedelijk was hij meegegaan met een van de koopmannen die elke dag leveringen kwamen brengen – maar het was lastig geweest om de politieagent die hem naar een cel had gebracht ervan te verzekeren dat hij ongevaarlijk was voor de buitenwereld en voor zichzelf. Jacques had collega's uit het ziekenhuis, waar hij en Thomas nog een kliniek hadden, gemobiliseerd om garant te staan voor hun beider kwalificaties en goede status. Hij beloofde plechtig dat het incident zich niet zou herhalen en uiteindelijk werd Olivier onder zijn hoede vrijgelaten. De grootste zorg van de politieman leek te zijn geweest dat Oliviers naaktheid toevallige voorbijgangers had geschokt.

De volgende ochtend kwam Olivier zoals gewoonlijk langs de spreekkamer van Thomas. Hij was ondertussen vier jaar in het Schloss en de twee hadden een hechte band gekregen. De warmte tussen hen was te zien door een ongeduldige affectie van Thomas' kant, een soort gebruikelijke en gefrustreerde broederliefde, en van die van Olivier door een zichtbare ongerustheid en eigenaardig gedrag wanneer Thomas wegging.

Thomas sprak altijd op een rustige manier, maar hij was erachter gekomen dat hij ook recht voor z'n raap kon zijn en dat Olivier, indien hij niet verontrust was, goed reageerde op een zekere directheid.

‘Wil je wat van het drankje dat je zo loom maakt?’

⁵ I chose to capitalise the word ‘schloss’ here, as it seems a bit awkward in the translation, as well as in the source text, to leave it un-capitalised, since there are equivalents for the term. By capitalising it, the attempted ‘couleur locale’ remains intact and the source text is not drastically changed, but the word just refers to the name of the institution, namely ‘Schloss Seeblick’, instead of the type of architecture.

Olivier gaf geen antwoord. Hij raakte beide armleuningen van de stoel aan, waarna hij zijn vingers geluidloos samenbracht, toen elke hand terug naar de armleuning, en toen⁶ weer samen, en zo door zonder onderbreking. Hij leek bang om deze reeks bewegingen ook maar een seconde te onderbreken.

‘Hoe voel je je, Olivier? Voel je je beter vandaag? Voel je je beter nu we allemaal terug zijn?’

Olivier wierp een vluchtige blik over zijn linkerschouder. Zijn lippen bewogen, maar voor zover Thomas kon zien sprak hij niet, of tenminste, niet tegen hem. Het zou een van die dagen worden waarop het lastig zou zijn om Oliviers⁷ aandacht vast te houden, maar dit was wel vaker het geval.

‘Olivier, weet je nog wat er gebeurd is? Weet je nog dat je naar een cel werd gebracht door de politie?’

Nog steeds kwam er geen antwoord, maar dit verbaasde Thomas niet, aangezien Olivier niet graag geconfronteerd zou willen worden met dit onderwerp.

‘Wie zei dat je je kleren uit moest doen?’

‘Wat zei je?’

‘Wie zei dat je je kleren uit moest doen?’

‘De Vorst.’

Thomas leunde naar voren: eindelijk had hij Oliviers aandacht.

‘De Vorst? Je hebt me al eerder over hem verteld, toch? Maar hij spreekt niet vaak zelf tegen je, of wel?’

Olivier haalde zijn schouders op. ‘Soms. Er zijn een aantal mensen. De Slager komt. Of de Naaister. Soms zijn er meer.’

⁶ To maintain the repetitive stylistic structure of this sentences, and because the lack of linking words was not as natural in Dutch, I chose to add another ‘(en) toen’ to the sentence.

⁷ To prevent confusion, the subject of “his attention” is specified here.

‘Wat bepaalt of er meer dan één zal zijn?’

Olivier haalde zijn schouders op: zijn interesse was niet echt gewekt door de vraag. ‘Dat hangt ervan af of de boodschap belangrijk is.’

‘En zijn ze er nu? Is de Naaister er nu?’

Olivier keek omhoog over zijn linkerschouder. ‘Ja, ze is er nu. Ik ga niet naar markt, ik ga daar niet nog ‘ns⁸ heen. Zij zijn allemaal vreemdelingen en ze hebben de boeken gelezen. Dus waarom zou ik ze uitlenen aan—’

‘Olivier.’ Thomas had er spijt van dat hij de Naaister had genoemd, want nu praatte Olivier tegen haar in plaats van tegen hem. Hij stond op. ‘Praat met me.’

Hij voelde Oliviers onderzoekende blik. Zijn keuze – wie te aan te spreken – was duidelijk weloverwogen.

‘Tijdens onze laatste ontmoeting,’ zei Thomas, ‘vertelde je me iets over je gedachten: dat die gedeeld worden met anderen. Herinner je je dat?’

‘Ja, natuurlijk. Zowel de Vorst als de President van de Republiek kunnen alles zien wat ik denk. Ik hoef hem niet te schrijven.’

‘Welke Republiek?’

‘De Franse Republiek.’

‘Wat is de naam van de President?’

‘De President.’

‘Woon je in Frankrijk?’

‘Natuurlijk.’ De vraag bracht Olivier niet van zijn stuk. ‘Er zijn vijf of zes mensen die een lijst met verraders hebben. Zij hebben een lijst van alle ziekten van de wereld met de bijbehorende behandelingen⁹. Het is een heel goed bewaard geheim.’

⁸ Here, Olivier employs a more informal register, in contrast to his later scientific discourse. Therefore, I chose to transfer this kind of language into Dutch as well by abbreviating the word ‘eens’.

‘Hoe weet jij ervan?’

‘Ik weet het gewoon. Ik ontvang boodschappen. Soms vertelt de Slager het me. Of ik lees het in boeken, zie je. Het staat niet geschreven in de regels, niet in de gedrukte regels. Nee, nee, je ziet het niet gewoon staan wanneer je het boek opent. Het staat tussen de regels, dát is waar ik het kan zien. De Monarchie zal terugkeren. Ik ben erover ingelicht.’

‘Maar hoe?’

Olivier keek hem eigenaardig aan. Thomas werd soms herinnerd aan één van de leden van het bestuur van zijn toenmalige college aan Cambridge: een man die zo overtuigd was van de verhevenheid van zijn eigen kennis dat hij deze niet leek te willen delen met iemand van een lagere intellectuele rang. Hij beantwoordde vragen met dezelfde lichtelijk medelijdende blik die Olivier hem nu gaf.

Olivier sprak nu tamelijk kalm, wat Thomas altijd als een goed teken zag. Hij vond het prettig om naar hem te kijken, naar deze knappe man van achtendertig, wiens grijzende haar, net als zijn baard, er tegenwoordig verzorgder uitzag. Zijn opvatting van de wereld had op een vreemde manier iets overtuigends. De ordening ervan gaf een indruk van compleetheid, bijna van schoonheid, en op zijn betere momenten bereikte Olivier een zekere mate van sereniteit. Zijn stem was zachtaardig terwijl hij dingen verklaarde en op zulke momenten werd Thomas overmand door liefde voor hem.

Het was Thomas duidelijk dat Olivier een enorme hoeveelheid emotionele energie had gestopt in het begrijpen van de wereld zoals deze zich aan hem voordeed

⁹ Because it is not specified if the “illnesses” Olivier mentions are also of a mental kind (which could very well be in this context), the “cures” he is speaking about are translated with “*behandelingen*”, as this maintains the ambiguity. Also, it seemed less natural in Dutch to simply state “*en zij hebben de behandelingen*”; therefore, the word “*bijbehorende*” was added.

–niet alleen energie, maar ook rede en creatief intellect. Deze verstandelijke vermogens waren duidelijk gescheiden van het sensorische gedeelte van zijn hersenen dat hem deed geloven dat er een vrouw aan zijn zijde stond en een wezen op zijn dijbeen, waarover hij om de zoveel tijd wegwuivende, vegende bewegingen maakte.

‘...en ik kan de inhoud van boeken die ik niet heb gelezen begrijpen, omdat ik uitverkoren ben,’ vervolgde Olivier.

‘Weet je door wie je bent uitverkoren?’

Olivier dacht na. ‘Wist je dat God het vuur in de lucht heeft gebruikt om de wereld te reinigen van de zonde?’

‘Nee, dat wist ik niet.’

‘Echt niet? Het is best simpel. Ik heb zegenende krachten. Die zijn aan me geschonken.’

‘Door wie?’

‘Door God. Zie je, wanneer een wolk gevormd wordt, wordt de druk langzaam verhoogd door de damp die zich binnenin verzamelt. Als deze druk te hoog wordt, krijg je onweer. Dit is hoe de mensheid voor het eerst uit de Hemel naar beneden kwam.’

‘In een wolk?’

‘Ja.’

‘Ben jij in de Hemel geweest?’

Oliviers vingers bewogen zich heel snel in hun vaste ritme. ‘Ja, ik ben in de Hemel geweest.’

‘Wat is daar gebeurd?’

‘Jezus wiegde me.’

‘Jezus wiegde je?’

‘Ja. In zijn armen.’

Thomas zweeg, in de hoop dat Olivier verder zou vertellen, maar toen zag hij hem omhoog kijken alsof hij naar een andere stem luisterde.

‘Wat gebeurde er nog meer in de Hemel?’

‘Wat?’

‘Je was aan het vertellen over de Hemel. Dat Jezus je in zijn armen nam. Wat is er daar nog meer gebeurd?’

Olivier wiegde langzaam naar achter en naar voren op zijn stoel. Toen Thomas voor het eerst begonnen was met zijn gesprekken met hem (hij aarzelde om deze een ‘behandeling’ te noemen), was Olivier onvermoeibaar geweest tijdens zijn verklaringen en uiterst geduldig tijdens zijn uiteenzettingen over het universum waarin hij woonde. Vaak was hij er enthousiast over en verlangde hij ernaar om alle wonderen en wetten ervan met Thomas te delen. Niemand had ooit de tijd genomen hem ernaar te vragen en hij leek er plezier in te hebben om erover te vertellen. Thomas merkte dat hij de laatste tijd een beetje minder levendig was: iets wat hij ook in het provinciale¹⁰ gesticht had geobserveerd bij patiënten die aan dezelfde ziekte leden. Tegen de tijd dat ze de leeftijd van ongeveer veertig bereikten, verloren ze geleidelijk aan de strijd bij het maken van een samenhangend wereldbeeld: ze leken minder in staat om zelfs ook maar alledaagse verbanden te leggen. Soms stelde Thomas zich het binnenste van hun hersenen voor als het stelsel van twijgen en takken van een eikenboom, maar dan misschien een miljoen keer zo compact. Hij bestudeerde het verward worden van hun gezichten en de vertraging van hun spraak. Hun logica werd zwak en de inhoud van hun zinnen raakte gevangen in een cirkel van

¹⁰ I chose to translate “the county asylum” as “*het provinciale gesticht*” as the English counties and Dutch ‘*provincies*’ are not exactly the same, but comparable in many ways.

herhalingen en dwaalde af naar non-sequiturs. Hij stelde zich de misdirectie van elektrische impulsen in de loop der jaren voor: het auditieve gedeelte voortdurend gloeiend door niet-bestaande stemmen. Hij stelde zich de schade voor berokkend door jarenlange kortsluiting in de hersenen en zag voor zijn geestesoog niet alleen plaatselijke ‘laesies’, maar hele weggebrande kanalen¹¹, zoals het verschroeide landschap dat achterblijft na de aftocht van een vandalenleger.

‘Olivier?’

‘Ja.’

‘Wat gebeurde er nog meer in de Hemel?’

Olivier veegde krachtig over de pijpen van zijn broek. ‘Ik kreeg er het vermogen om talen te spreken, de gave der tongen.’

‘En kun je andere talen spreken?’¹²

‘Ja, dat kan ik.’

‘Welke talen?’

‘Ik spreek Duits. Ik spreek het Hoogduits, het fatsoenlijke Duits. Dat heet het Koninklijke Duits, niet het andere, het Nasale Duits. Omdat dat gesproken wordt door de neus, weet je. Het is een andere taal. Ik heb het geleerd van mijn moeder.’

‘Je moeder?’

‘Ja. Mijn echte moeder is Jeanne d’Arc. Wij zijn afstammelingen van Jezus Christus. De Vorst heeft me onze stamboom gegeven: ik heb het allemaal zwart op wit.’

¹¹ The word “pathways” in the source text fits in with the scientific, neurological register as well as with the metaphor of the landscape in the next phrase. To keep this double meaning, the word “*kanalen*” was chosen in the translation, as it has a medical connotation and refers at the same time to an aspect of a landscape.

¹² The phrase ‘And do you speak other languages?’ became ‘*En kun je andere talen spreken?*’ instead of something like ‘*En spreek je andere talen?*’, so that Olivier’s reaction could be natural as well: ‘*Ja, dat kan ik*’ instead of ‘*Ja, dat doe ik*’.

‘Dus ben je dan ook familie van de Maagd Maria?’

‘Nee, nee. Zij was niet zijn moeder. Nee, nee. Elizabeth was zijn echte moeder: de moeder van Johannes de Doper. Maria was niet de echte moeder van Jezus. Ik kan mijn afkomst terugvoeren tot Adam.’

‘Heb je ooit een bezoek gebracht aan de Hof van Eden¹³?’

‘Eden, eten. Niet gegeten.’

‘Wil je dat? Is er iets wat we kunnen doen om je gelukkiger te maken? Ben je blij met je kamer in het Schloss? Het is een mooi uitzicht, of niet? Over het meer?’

Olivier keek verward.

‘Waarom ben je hier, Olivier? Wat doe je hier?’

‘Ik ben hierheen gestuurd om een of andere reden.’ Hij leek wat van zijn oude enthousiasme terug te winnen en zijn pedante karakter begon weer door te schemeren.

‘Zie je, ik heb door middel van een bepaalde formule het aantal cellen in mijn brein kunnen berekenen en daardoor ben ik uniek. Mijn gedachten worden zelfs voor het nageslacht opgeslagen. En ik denk dat dát is waarom ik hier ben.’

‘Ik bedoelde hier, in dit gebouw, in dit gedeelte van Oostenrijk-Hongarije.’

Olivier zei niets. Hij was weer verdwaald.

‘Hoe oud ben je, Olivier?’

‘Ik ben twintig. Ik ben twintig jaar oud.’

Thomas wist dat dit de leeftijd was waarop hij uit huis was weggehaald en naar het gesticht was gestuurd door de oude Rebière.

‘En heb je nog broers en zussen?’

‘Ja, ik heb een broer.’

¹³ This sentence is structured like this, so that the word ‘Eden’ comes last. In the source text, Olivier reacts directly to this last word, trailing off into his own world, so in the translation, this word had to be the last of the sentence.

‘Hoe oud is hij?’

‘Hij is... Hij is... Ik weet niet hoe oud hij is.’

‘Waar is hij op dit moment?’

‘Hij is... Hij is op school.’

Thomas stond op. ‘Ik heb genoeg met je gesproken deze ochtend.’ Hij legde zijn hand op Oliviers arm. ‘Het lijkt me goed dat je wat gaat wandelen in de zon en daarna iets lekkers neemt voor de lunch.’

Hij begeleidde Olivier naar de deur en keek hoe Daisy hem naar buiten bracht, onder de trappen door de kloostergang in, terwijl zijn vingers in hun ongrijpbare ritme bleven speuren over de oppervlaktes van zijn wereld¹⁴.

¹⁴ The last phrase of the passage was very problematic in the translation process, as its poetic rhythm is practically untranslatable in Dutch. So, another poetic Dutch phrase had to be created. However, because the specific nature of Olivier’s movements remains unclear, I had to imagine it myself, which is why the phrase differs from the ‘original’ sentence. I chose to focus on the fact that Olivier’s movements might make sense to him, but perhaps seem random to the rest of the world: the movements are “ongrijpbaar”, and his fingers “speuren”, but it might make sense in “zijn wereld”.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have attempted to contribute to the field of translation studies by taking some steps in a relatively under-researched genre. Because *Human Traces*, one of Faulks' biggest works, has many interesting and characteristic aspects, the most extraordinary perhaps being the mix of the scientific and prosaic registers, a methodology had to be created accordingly. To tackle scientific discourse, articles by Montalt and Pilegaard were used to categorise, analyse, and deal with the different kinds of medical language. When examining the psychological terminology in this text, or in this genre, I found it might be useful to answer several questions regarding these scientific expressions, which I formulated in chapter 1.1. For the selected passage, mainly the question 'Is accuracy called for in this case or should the unit be dealt with creatively in order to stay true to the prosaic style?' seemed important, next to the other more practical questions, for example about the origin of the term. This question was more important than the other ones formulated in the first chapter, since the passage particularly shows the intertwining of prosaic, and almost poetic, language with scientific language. In the second chapter, when dealing with Faulks' style, the implications of these different registers are also shown. Through a close reading and analysis of the stylistic elements of the passage, following Leech and Short, a kind of categorisation could be made of the registers: in the first part of the passage the language seems purely scientific, while the part after that solely deals with plot, in which Faulks employs a different style. In the last part of the passage, Faulks frequently mixes the two. Moreover, an analysis of the different idiolects of the characters also proved to be very helpful.

When finishing this thesis, it dazzled me what “the meeting point between thought and flesh”, what makes us human, is capable of. The enormous amount of effort Faulks put in this work, the elegance with which he discusses such complex and major subjects, the originality of the fusion of registers: it is all an example of the amazing things (human) nature can accomplish. This thesis covers only a very small part of this monumental work, so if there should ever be a translator who takes on the task of translating the entire novel, much elaborate and varied research should be done, as there is much more to find and to admire in Faulks’ *Human Traces*.

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Appendix: The Source Text

Later that year Thomas read the new edition of Emil Kraepelin's *Handbook of Psychiatry*. Kraepelin had suffered a frustrating exile in Estonia, where his inability to speak the language had prevented him from making progress; on his return to Germany, however, he had gone to Heidelberg, where he continued to study the long-term course of severe illness. With the help of an enormous card-index, he had begun to identify two repeating patterns of psychosis. The first had been baptised 'circular insanity' by doctors at the Salpêtrière, because periods of high elation and mania alternated with passages of profound depression; Kraepelin developed the idea and went on to call it 'manic-depressive illness'. The second category of psychosis he called 'premature dementia' or dementia praecox.

Reading the definition in Kraepelin, Thomas recognised it immediately as Olivier's disease. Its basis, Kraepelin stated, was a 'psychopathic predisposition'; in other words, it was a biological brain disease. Thomas was moved by the intentions that lay behind the monumental industry of Kraepelin's research: he wanted to be able, as a doctor, to help the woman who asked, 'Will my husband recover from his illness? What will happen to him now?' About three quarters of those suffering from dementia praecox grew steadily worse, Kraepelin concluded; but the remainder might grow well again.

Thomas enthusiastically pointed out the passage in Kraepelin to Jacques, thinking he would be encouraged to know that his brother's illness finally had a name; but Jacques said the term had been coined by a Frenchman called Morel some years before, and did not seem able to share Thomas's enthusiasm. To Thomas, it looked like progress. He remembered the ledgers in the asylum, and the multiplicity of colourful and unscientific diagnoses: old maid's insanity, honeymoon psychosis, moon madness. In the older books, causes of insanity were divided into moral and physical, the former including 'loss of several cows' and 'overexcitement at the Great Exhibition'. He saw the faces, grey and dirty, of the urban poor who came to stand in front of his trestle table in the hall, waiting to be assigned a ward number, waiting for an instant name for their distress, then set to vanish down the shrinking corridor.

Kraepelin had divided psychoses into those with violent swings of mood, and those without. From the former, patients tended to emerge, from the latter they were unlikely to. He had established patterns, something close to a nosology, and surely this progress at least gave grounds for hope?

What he described to Franz as the 'quixotic' element survived in Thomas because he found there were still things for him to despise or rebel against. In the summer of the following year, his father died and he returned to Torrington with Sonia for the funeral. His brother Edgar told him he would be moving into the house with Lucy and their five children; he asked if Thomas would like to join him in the

family grain business and promised him a farmhouse. Edgar seemed bemused when Thomas explained that he had a profession and a life in Carinthia; it was, as though, Thomas thought, Edgar believed that he was in some obscure way joking. 'Write and let me know if you change your mind,' Edgar said, his hand on Thomas's shoulder when the time came to say goodbye. 'I will always try to keep a place open for you.' Thomas wondered if it was just that Edgar felt he had taken Sonia away from England and that if he returned, she might follow. It was certainly true that without her Torrington was not the same. His mother was bewildered by her husband's death, was herself growing old and had lost some of the self-belief necessary to make such a household seem worthwhile; Lucy was a kind enough girl, he thought, but overwhelmed by children. At least their noise made the house feel inhabited, and Sonia could not be in two places at once.

Back at the schloss, he learned that Olivier had been found one night in the city, hiding naked in an alleyway. No one was certain how he had got into town in the first place – presumably he had gone with one of the tradesmen who came to deliver each day – but it had been difficult to reassure the police who took him into a cell that he posed no danger to the public or to himself. Jacques enlisted colleagues from the hospital, where he and Thomas still had a clinic, to vouch for their qualifications and good standing. He undertook to make certain there would be no recurrence of the incident, and Olivier was released into his care. The policeman's major concern, it

appeared them, had been that Olivier's nakedness might have affronted people who happened to be walking by.

The next morning, Olivier came down to Thomas's consulting room as usual. He had been at the schloss for four years, and they had grown close to one another. The warmth was manifest in an exasperated affection on Thomas's side, a sort of habitual and frustrated brotherly love, and, on Olivier's by a manifest anxiety and bizarre behaviour if ever Thomas went away.

Thomas always spoke gently, but he had learned that he could also be direct and that, provided he was not alarmed, Olivier often responded well to a kind of bluntness.

'Would you like some of the drink that makes you feel drowsy?'

Olivier did not answer. He touched each arm of the chair, then put his fingers soundlessly together, then each hand back to the chair arm, back together and so on without interruption. This was a sequence of movements he seemed frightened to abandon at any time.

'How do you feel, Olivier? Do you feel better today? Do you feel better now that we are all back?'

Olivier glanced up over his left shoulder. His lips moved, though as far as Thomas was aware he did not speak, at least not to him. It would be one of those days

on which it was going to be difficult to engage his attention, but this was often the case.

‘Olivier, do you remember what happened? Do you remember being taken into a cell by the police?’

Still there was no answer, though Thomas was not surprised, since this was not something Olivier would wish to confront.

‘Who told you to take your clothes off?’

‘What did you say?’

‘Who told you to take your clothes off?’

‘The Sovereign.’

Thomas leaned forward; at last he had Olivier’s attention.

‘The Sovereign? You’ve told me about him before, haven’t you? But he doesn’t speak to you often himself, does he?’

Olivier shrugged. ‘Sometimes. There are a number of people. The Carver comes. Or the Seamstress. Sometimes there are more.’

‘What determines if there is to be more than one?’

Olivier shrugged, not really interested by the question. ‘It depends if the message is important.’

‘And are they here now? Is the Seamstress here now?’

Olivier looked up over his left shoulder. ‘Yes, she’s here now. I won’t go to market, I won’t go back there. They are all foreigners and they have read the books. So why should I lend them to—’

‘Olivier.’ Thomas regretted mentioning the Seamstress, because now Olivier was talking to her instead of him. He stood up. ‘Talk to me.’

He felt himself appraised by Olivier’s gaze; it was clearly a reasonable choice for him – which one to address.

‘Last time we met,’ said Thomas, ‘you told me something of your thoughts, how they are shared with other people. Do you remember?’

‘Yes, of course. What I think can be seen by the Sovereign and by the President of the Republic. I have no need to write to him.’

‘Which Republic?’

‘The Republic of France.’

‘What’s the President’s name?’

‘The President.’

‘Do you live in France?’

‘Of course.’ Olivier was unruffled by the question. ‘There are five or six people who have a list of traitors. They have a list of all the illnesses in the world and they have the cures. It is a very well kept secret.’

‘How do you know about it?’

‘I just know. I receive messages. Sometimes the Carver tells me. Or I can read it in books, you see. It is not in the lines, not in the printed lines. No, no, you would not open the book and just see it there. It is between the lines, that is where I can see it. The Monarchy will return. I have been informed.’

‘But how?’

Olivier gave him a curious look. Thomas was sometimes reminded of one of the fellows of his old college at Cambridge, a man so secure in his superior knowledge that he seemed reluctant to impart it to anyone of lesser intellectual standing; he responded to questions with the same slightly pitying expression that Olivier now directed at him.

Then Olivier spoke quite calmly, something which Thomas always took to be a good sign. He liked watching him, this handsome man of thirty-eight; his greying hair was trimmer these days, as was his beard. There was something oddly cogent in his understanding of the world; the scheme had a completeness, almost a beauty, and in his better moments Olivier achieved a measure of serenity. His voice was gentle and explanatory, and at such moments Thomas felt overcome by love for him.

It was clear to Thomas that Olivier had put a vast amount of emotional energy into understanding the world as it appeared to him; not only energy, but reason and creative intellect as well. These mental faculties were clearly separate from the perceptual area of his brain which told him that there was a woman at his shoulder

and a creature on his thigh, where he occasionally made dismissive, brushing movements.

‘...and I can understand the contents of books I have not read, because I have been chosen,’ Olivier was saying.

‘Do you know by whom you have been chosen?’

Olivier considered. ‘Do you know that the fire in the sky is how God cleansed the world of sin?’

‘No, I did not know that.’

‘Really? It’s quite simple. I have the powers of blessing, they were given to me.’

‘By whom?’

‘By God. You see, when a cloud forms, there is a slow increase of pressure from the vapour gathering inside. If this bears down too hard, you will have thunder. That is how mankind first came down from Heaven.’

‘In a cloud?’

‘Yes.’

‘Have you been to Heaven?’

Olivier’s fingers were moving very rapidly through their rhythm. ‘Yes, I have been to Heaven.’

‘What happened there?’

‘Jesus held me.’

‘Jesus held you?’

‘Yes. In his arms.’

Thomas said nothing, hoping Olivier would continue, but then saw him glance up, as though listening to another voice.

‘What else happened in Heaven?’

‘What?’

‘You were telling me about Heaven. How Jesus took you in his arms. What else happened there?’

Olivier rocked slowly backward and forward on his chair. When Thomas had first begun his conversations with him (he hesitated to call it ‘treatment’), Olivier had been tirelessly expository, extremely patient in his explanations of the universe he inhabited; often he seemed enthusiastic about it, eager to share with Thomas its wonders and its laws. No one had ever taken the time to ask him before, and he seemed to enjoy talking about it. These days, he was a little less lively, Thomas noticed, and that was something he had observed with patients suffering from the same disease in the county asylum. By the time they reached the age of about forty, they began to lose the fight to make a cogent world; they seemed less able to make even workaday connections. Sometimes Thomas pictured the inside of their brains as being something like the network of twigs and branches in an oak tree, though

perhaps a million times more dense. He watched them when their faces grew puzzled and their speech slowed down; the logic became tenuous; the content of the sentences began to loop, repeat and trail off into non-sequiturs. He pictured the misrouting of electrical impulses over all those years, the auditory area chronically aflame with non-existent voices; he imagined the damage done by years of short-circuit in the brain, the build-up and overflow of chemicals at the point of electrical exchange; and in his mind's eye he saw not local 'lesions' but entire pathways burned away, like the landscape after the scorched-earth retreat of a vandal army.

'Olivier?'

'Yes.'

'What else happened in Heaven?'

Olivier brushed vigorously at his trouser legs. 'I was given the powers of speaking languages, the gift of tongues.'

'And do you speak other languages?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Which languages?'

'I speak German. I speak the High German, the proper German. It is called Royal German, not the other one, which is the Nasal German. You know, because that is spoken through the nose. It's a different language. I learned that from my mother.'

'Your mother?'

‘Yes. My real mother is Joan of Arc. We are descended from Jesus Christ. The Sovereign has given me the genealogy, I have it all written down.’

‘So are you also related to the Virgin Mary?’

‘No, no. She was not his mother. No, no. Elisabeth was his real mother, the mother of John the Baptist. Mary was not Jesus’s real mother. I can trace my lineage back to Adam.’

‘Have you ever been to the Garden of Eden?’

‘Eden, eaten. Not eaten.’

‘Would you like to? Is there anything we can do to make you feel happier? Do you like your room in the schloss? It is a good view, isn’t it? Across the lake?’

Olivier looked puzzled.

‘Why are you here, Olivier? What are you doing here?’

‘I have been sent here for some reason.’ He seemed to regain some of the old enthusiasm, and a little of the donnish quality returned. ‘You see, there is a formula by which I have worked out the number of cells in my brain and in this way I am unique. My thoughts are in fact recorded for posterity. And I think that is why I am here.’

‘I meant here, in this building, in this part of Austria-Hungary.’

Olivier said nothing. He was lost again.

‘How old are you, Olivier?’

‘I am twenty. I am twenty years old.’

Thomas knew that this was the age at which he had been removed from home and sent to the asylum by old Rebière.

‘And do you have any brothers and sisters?’

‘Yes, I have a brother.’

‘How old is he?’

‘He is...He is...I don’t know how old he is.’

‘Where is he now?’

‘He is...He is at school.’

Thomas stood up. ‘I have spoken to you enough this morning.’ He laid his hand on Olivier’s arm. ‘I think you should go for a walk in the sunshine and then have something nice to eat at lunch.’

He escorted Olivier to the door and watched as Daisy took him out beneath the stairs into the cloister, his fingers still fluttering in their rapid pattern of touch.