

Translating *The Time Traveler's Wife*

*Now from his breast into his eyes the ache
of longing mounted, and he wept at last,
his dear wife, clear and faithful, in his arms,
longed for as the sunwarmed earth is longed for by a swimmer
spent in rough water where his ship went down
under Poseidon's blows, gale winds and tons of sea.
Few men can keep alive through a big surf
to crawl, clotted with brine, on kindly beaches
in joy, in joy, knowing the abyss behind:
and so she too rejoiced, her gaze upon her husband,
her white arms round him pressed as though forever.*

-from The Odyssey

Homer

Translated by Robert Fitzgerald

Cilia de Vries, 3015505

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Introduction

Why is love intensified by absence? (1)

I must have picked up some good things about *The Time Traveler's Wife*, because in May 2009, during my internship at a translation agency in Amsterdam, I saw the novel in a book shop and purchased it without thinking twice. From the first page, which I read in the train back to Utrecht, I was hooked. The following week or two I tried to read from the novel as much as possible, becoming more and more moved by these star-crossed lovers, Henry and Clare, and their story. I ended up reading the final pages sobbing like a baby. Believe me when I say that this is no exaggeration.

My point being: this novel blew me away, and my personal love for the story made me want to examine it further, delve into its structure and use it for my MA thesis. So this is what I did. I even translated a bit of this rather voluminous book, though I found it rather difficult to live up to the English source text. In any case, this translation process was very interesting, albeit scary.

This, of course, leads me to the discussion of my thesis. The following chapters serve the purpose of answering the following research question: What translation problems does this novel pose and what are the possible ways to deal with them? In connection with this, the following sub question has been dealt with: What are the characteristics of this novel's written style and how is this style connected to these difficulties in translation?

Chapter one deals with the writer and novel's background, attaining a better understanding of where the story came from in order to better answer the question that is answered in chapter two, namely: which aspects of this novel should be analysed and how will I do this? I have picked three fragments of the novel to translate, each of which holds specific translation

problems. I wanted these excerpts to be representative of the novel in itself, so each of these fragments has a different focaliser and is part of a pivotal moment in the story. The lively language in this novel is sure to make for some interesting translation problems, the most significant being (a) humour, and (b) figurative language. I discussed these with the help of translation theories on the matter. In chapters three, four and five these three passages are analysed with regard to their style and the translation problems they pose. Here I focused on the problems that are encountered during the translation process, trying to make sense of them by using the translation theories that were discussed in the previous chapter. I deal with a number of jokes that I encountered in the first two parts of my translation of *The Time Traveler's Wife*. What are the humorous devices that are used, what are their characteristics and how does the humour of the first fragment differ from the humour in the second fragment, which is narrated by young Clare? Similarly, I discuss the translation problems that relate to the poetic figurative language that is particularly present in the third and final excerpt. The sixth chapter consists of my own translation accompanied by my notes and comments. In these notes, the existing Dutch translation of the novel is also involved.

In the end I reach a conclusion on the translational problems in *The Time Traveler's Wife*, a novel that, though it has a science fiction-esque premise, is essentially a romantic story that is much more overwhelming and well-written than you might initially expect. Hopefully my enthusiasm will catch on.

One final word of advice: Read the book. Skip the film.

Chapter One: The Novel

Don't you think it's better to be extremely happy for a short while, even if you lose it, than to be just okay for your whole life? (55)

1.1 *The Time Traveler's Wife*

The Time Traveler's Wife is an innovative, bestselling novel that has stolen the hearts of millions. It is a story about two people, Henry DeTamble and Clare Abshire, and their beautiful but complex relationship. Henry has a genetic disorder called 'chrono-displacement', which makes him go back or forth in time involuntarily. Henry started time travelling when he was five; pulled to moments that are of emotional value to him, at times he just vanishes and arrives in the present or future. He cannot take anything with him, so he always has trouble finding clothes and shelter. During these visits Henry is forced to pickpocket and resort to other illegal activities in order to obtain food or clothes. Many of these things he learns from his future self. The story is told in a non-chronological order, but here the main events are arranged chronologically. Clare meets Henry for the first time when she is six years old and he is 35. He has travelled back in time to Clare's childhood.

The mechanics of time travel in this book need to be clarified. In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, there is only a single timeline. This is no *Back to the Future* where parallel universes can be created. Here, everything has already happened and nothing can be changed. Though Henry is 35 when he first travels to Clare's childhood, this has also already happened: 'present' Clare, married to Henry, remembers him visiting her when she was six. It was the first time she met him. No separate timeline is formed because of this event.

Clare grows up with Henry in her life; 'future' Henry keeps visiting her with intervals of weeks, months or years, during which time she comes to truly love him. On her eighteenth birthday, she sleeps with him for the first time.

It is when Clare is 20 and Henry is 28 that they finally catch up with each other in the present. This is the first time Henry meets Clare, though she has known him for her entire life. Clare, a beautiful art student, and Henry, a librarian at the Newberry Library in Chicago, start a passionate relationship. It is not long before they marry, though Henry's frequent absence is very difficult for Clare. She never knows where he is and if he is safe. Things become even more difficult when the couple cannot seem to conceive a child. Henry's genetic anomaly results in Clare having six miscarriages, which devastates her emotionally. Eventually, Henry decides to have a vasectomy. However, as strange fate will have it, one night a Henry from the past visits Clare, they make love and Clare gets pregnant. A daughter is born: Alba.

Alba is also diagnosed with chrono-displacement, but unlike her father, she is more in control over her time travelling: sometimes, she can even make herself travel back or forth in time willingly. One day, Henry travels to the future, to his daughter when she is ten years old. That is the day he learns about his death.

When he is 43, Henry is unable to find shelter during one of his time travels. It is night and very cold and Henry suffers from hypothermia and frostbite. When he comes back to the present, his feet need to be amputated. This is the last year of his life. Henry is helpless; without his feet, he has no way of taking care of himself in the past or future. The last time Henry time travels he goes to 1984, Clare's childhood. He lands in the middle of the woods, unable to move, and is accidentally shot by Clare's brother. Back in the present, Henry dies in Clare's arms.

Clare's life is never the same after Henry's death. Alba still sees him from time to time by travelling back in time herself or when she is visited by a Henry from the past, but Clare is never

visited by him. Instead, she waits for him, as she has done her entire life. A letter from Henry tells her that they will meet again, finally, when she is an old woman: he describes how, in his forties, Henry has travelled (or will travel) to the future, thereby meeting an old Clare. In the final chapter of the novel, Clare is 82. Henry arrives at last and takes her into his arms.

1.2 The Author

Audrey Niffenegger, author of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, was born in 1963 in South Haven, Michigan. She is not only a writer, but also a visual artist and has exhibited visual books, paintings, drawings and comics since 1987¹. She was trained in Chicago at the School of the Art Institute. Niffenegger currently teaches writing, letterpress printing, lithography, intaglio, and book making at the Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts.

It was back in 1997 when Niffenegger had the idea of a book about a time traveller and his wife. She first intended for it to be a graphic novel, but decided the story would work better in prose. *The Time-Traveler's Wife*, her debut novel, came out in 2003 and quickly became an international bestseller. A film version of the novel, starring Eric Bana and Rachel McAdams, recently came out. (Reviews were mixed, ranging from the film being enjoyably romantic to it being messy and unsatisfying.)

Niffenegger's second novel, *Her Fearful Symmetry*, was published in the United States in September 2009. The Dutch translation by Jeannet Dekker, *De tweeling van Highgate*, came out in February 2010. Niffenegger's other work includes three graphic novels: *Three Incestuous Sisters* (2005), *The Adventuress* (2006) and *The Night Bookmobile* (2010).

¹ Her artwork can be viewed at audreyniffenegger.com.

Niffenegger has lived in or around Chicago for most of her life. The city provides the background for *The Time Traveler's Wife*; real places such as the Newberry Library and the Field Museum are important to the novel's story. Niffenegger herself has said that she did this on purpose, that she wanted the fantastical aspects of the novel to be grounded in settings that are real, and described in a realistic, documentary-like tone (Bond). On *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Niffenegger has said: "I wanted to write a book about waiting. I wanted to write about a perfect marriage that is tested by something outside the control of the couple. The title came to me out of the blue, and from the title sprang the characters, and from the characters came the story"².

Audrey Niffenegger's books all share a strong sense of unity and a vision that is distinctly peculiar. "The thing that unites all my work is narrative," she has said. "I'm interested in telling stories, and I'm interested in creating a world that's recognizable to us as ours, but is filled with strangeness and slight changes in the rules of the universe"³. *The Time Traveler's Wife* fits in well with Niffenegger's other work. Her art and books share a number of common themes, such as love, intimacy and death. While love and intimacy (whether between sisters or lovers) is important, a more macabre note is always struck. Niffenegger sees herself as much as an artist as a writer and all of Niffenegger's work seems to share this presence of death: in her artwork, skeletons are frequently found; her main illustrated novel that she worked on for years, *Three Incestuous Sisters*, is a haunting, gothic, dark tale about longing and loss. Finally, Niffenegger's most recent venture, *Her Fearful Symmetry*, is a modern ghost story about two identical twin sisters set around Highgate Cemetery in London. The gothic story deals with sisterhood, identity and death. Another theme in this novel is that of love transgressing natural barriers, which is basically the main theme of *The Time Traveler's Wife*. More on that in the following section.

² <http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm?author_number=928>, 25 January 2010.

³ Segretto, Mike. <<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/writers/writerdetails.asp?cid=1106335>>, 14 February 2010.

1.3 Reception and Themes

Upon its publication in the United States, *The Time Traveler's Wife* became a great success and sensation. The novel was praised by *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *People Magazine* and others. John O'Connell from *The Times* wrote: "As *The Time Traveler's Wife* showed, Audrey Niffenegger is a sly, audacious writer who smuggles profoundly transgressive material into her work using the Trojan horse of romantic drama." The novel was also called "[A]n unabashed homage to love, a tear-jerker of the first order which also happens to be an absorbing existential exploration of 'being' and temporality" (*Literary Review*). Though most reviewers praised its premise and well-rounded characters, a few criticised the novel's style, calling it melodramatic and clichéd.

The Time Traveler's Wife was nominated for several awards and won the Exclusive Books Boeke Prize in 2005 and the British Book Award in 2006. The novel was translated into Dutch by Jeannet Dekker and published in the Netherlands by Uitgeverij Arena (Amsterdam) in 2004, entitled *De vrouw van de tijdreiziger*. Reviews were critical, but generally positive. For instance, *NRC Handelsblad* criticised Niffenegger's style, saying the novel reads like a film script, but also called it "een ode aan liefde en trouw" (Steinz). According to *de Volkskrant*, *The Time Traveler's Wife* is a novel "die je onverbiddelijk inpakt" (Bouman).

Dutch publisher Arena has two main points of focus: "bewogen vrouwenlevens en literaire romans voor een breed publiek".⁴ *The Time Traveler's Wife* is headed under the second category and is described as a real page-turner on the website. The novel is accessibly written, thus suited for a broad audience, and its themes and style elevate it beyond generic fiction to the 'literary' genre. In her essay "Inquisitiveness and Desire", Audrey Niffenegger herself names the themes of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, being: "mutants, love, death, amputation, sex, and time".

⁴ <<http://www.boekenarena.nl>>, 5 January 2010.

Indeed, as most critics have also recognised, this novel deals with much more than science fiction and love. Though the novel explores the notion of time travel, this provides only a background to the true story. A science fiction novel would be far more concerned with, for instance, the technicalities of travelling through time. Here, time travelling is not exactly a theme; it is a device, a metaphor for the problems and complications we find in relationships - or, more positively viewed, a supernatural explanation for why two people can have a feeling that they have known each other for their entire lives. Henry and Clare struggle to have a normal relationship because of Henry's disorder; their love is competing with something that is out of their hands entirely. Also significant is the feeling of waiting, which Clare experiences to its fullest, and the sense of destiny that comes with falling in love, which is applicable to this novel in a literal sense: after all, Clare and Henry are meant to be together and this time-travelling business can do nothing to prevent the fact.

This leads to what seems to be the main message of the novel, namely that love conquers everything: it goes beyond the borders of time, beyond the borders of life and death. It is for a reason that the novel ends with an excerpt from Homer's *Odyssey* (see front page of this thesis): in the end the two lovers, whether they be Odysseus/Penelope or Henry/Clare, are finally able to meet again.⁵ Although there is no denying the romanticism here, the novel has a distinctly darker tone as well. Niffenegger names mutants, death and amputation as themes, which are indeed some of the heavier themes of the novel. Henry has the burden of living with his condition; and eventually, he loses his feet because of it, after which he will soon die.

The notion of time travel automatically leads to the question whether free will exists or whether everything in life is pre-determined. This is a constant deterministic undercurrent in the novel. The characters frequently touch upon it as well: "He said something interesting: he said

⁵ For the Dutch edition, the 1991 *Odyssey* translation by Imme Dros was used.

that he thinks there is only free will when you are in time, in the present. He says in the past we can only do what we did, and we can only be there if we were there” (58). Here, Henry is having a discussion with himself – literally – and realises that he cannot change the past. In that sense, he only has free will in the present, but on the other hand: if everything has already happened, the present is also the past. Another, more existential, quotation from the novel: “Maybe I’m dreaming you. Maybe you’re dreaming me; maybe we only exist in each other’s dreams and every morning when we wake up we forget all about each other” (70). This sentence forms part of a conversation between Henry and a twelve-year-old Clare. Clare asks Henry if he is real and receives this as a reply.

The previously-mentioned *Odyssey* reference is not accidental. In fact, Clare is quite often compared to Penelope, waiting for her husband - Odysseus/Henry - to return home. This is the overlapping allusion that comes back numerous times; namely, how the story of Henry and Clare compares to the *Odyssey*. And just like in the *Odyssey*, the love story between the two characters unfolds through flashbacks in time. The following is narrated by Clare:

The compelling thing about making art - or making anything, I suppose - is the moment when the vaporous, insubstantial idea becomes a solid there, a thing, a substance in a world of substances. Circe, Nimbue, Artemis, Athena, all the old sorceresses: they must have known the feeling as they transformed mere men into fabulous creatures, stole the secrets of the magicians, disposed armies: ah, look, there it is, the new thing. Call it a swine, a war, a laurel tree. Call it art. The magic I can make is small magic now, deferred magic. Every day I work, but nothing ever materializes. I feel like Penelope, weaving and unweaving. (274)

Clare goes on and compares Henry to Odysseus, only he is a different kind of artist, “a disappearing artist”. The point of this comparison is ultimately making clear the hardships of waiting that Clare has to endure. “Now every absence is a nonevent, a subtraction, an adventure I

will hear about when my adventurer materializes at my feet, bleeding or whistling, smiling or shaking” (275).

Just like the real setting of Chicago, literary references are successfully used to ground the novel and set it in this reality. Other works that are quoted or referred to are for instance J. B. Priestley's *Man in Time*, Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Ninth Duino Elegy*, *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and poems by Emily Dickinson. See for instance the following example, where *The Ninth Duino Elegy* by Rilke is quoted: “I sip my coffee and try to feel time revert, try to erase the difference between now and then. It is only my memory that holds me here. Time, let me vanish. *Then what we separate by our very presence can come together*”⁶ (515).

The passage where Henry is shot, which is foreshadowed earlier in the novel, illustrates the use of something resembling stream-of-consciousness:

Saturday, October 27, 1984/Monday, January 1, 2007 (Henry is 43, Clare is 35)

HENRY: The sky is blank and I'm falling into the tall dry grass *let it be quick* and even as I try to be still the crack of a rifle sounds, far away, surely nothing to do with me but no: I am slammed to the ground, I look at my belly which has opened up like a pomegranate, a soup of entrails and blood cradled in the bowl of my body; it doesn't hurt at all *that can't be right* but I can only admire this cubist version of my insides *someone is running* all I want is to see Clare before *before* I am screaming her name *Clare, Clare* and Clare leans over me, crying, and Alba whispers, “Daddy....” (499)

In all, the more profound themes of the novel, its existential questions, the literary allusions and the refreshing science fiction-like take on a love story are what make this novel more than a chick flick or a simple romantic drama. Bearing in mind that literary novels tend to put their layered themes, allusions and descriptive narration first and the pacing of the story second, this is something to remember whilst translating.

⁶ Quotation from *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, translated by Stephen Mitchell (1982). In the Dutch edition, the translation by W.J.M. Bronzwaer was used.

Chapter Two: Aspects of Style & Translation Theories

We laugh and laugh, and nothing can ever be sad, no one can be lost, or dead, or far away: right now we are here, and nothing can mar our perfection, or steal the joy of this perfect moment.

(241)

2.1 Style and Translation

This chapter looks into the different aspects of the style of *The Time Traveler's Wife* in light of its translation. The general knowledge about the novel's themes and context has been established; now we must look at the more individual features of the text. Not all of this novel's characteristics are worth analysing; however, some aspects of its style are definitely interesting.

Translation scholars have built on the notion that a source text needs to be analysed prior to its translation. Scholars such as Christiane Nord and Hans G. Hönl have presented models for textual analysis. For instance, Christiane Nord's *Text Analysis in Translation* (1988/91) stresses the importance of the 'translation-oriented text analysis' in order to obtain the competence needed to make an accurate translation. In the translation process, text analysis is the first vital step. Nord gives four types of translation problems: pragmatic translation problems (which arise as a result of situational differences between the source text and target text); convention-related translation problems; linguistic translation problems and finally text-specific translation problems (Nord 167). These text-specific translation problems are the most interesting here, since it can be said that the 'style' of this text – though 'style' is, admittedly, a rather vague concept – leads to translation problems.

A great deal has been written on the importance of literary style in relation to translating. Jean Boase-Beier, for instance, places great importance in style, claiming that the style of a literary text can in fact be perceived to be more important than its content, since it is through style that the inferred author's intentions are interpreted by the reader. For translators, stylistic devices play a key role in the process of translating; after all, translation largely consists of interpreting what the original author meant. Stylistic devices are "elements in the text which are unusual, striking, or simply indicative of attitude" (Boase-Beier 278). Though this is quite broadly put, according to Boase-Beier one needs to concentrate on the stylistic clues that stand out in a text. Translating literary texts means preserving these stylistics in order to reproduce the effect on the target audience. This is in line with the common perspective on translation, namely that the effect of the target text on the reader should be the same or similar to the effect the source text had on the original reader. Reasoning from the view that this style of the author should be maintained, the next logical step would be to find and become aware of the ST's stylistic devices, in order to be able to preserve them in the target text.

Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short's *Style in Fiction* formulates a method of analysing literary texts, calling this "an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language", to find "the artistic effect of the whole, and the way linguistic details fit into this whole" (60). They claim that in literary texts, style is a choice that the writer has made. Therefore, it is important to establish what the literary or aesthetic function of a particular style is (31). How does it affect the novel? By using the approach of style analysis that Short and Leech provide, this literary focus of a text should come forward. Short and Leech's method of analysis consists of four main categories: lexical and grammatical categories, figures of speech and cohesion and context. Of course, drawback of this method of analysis is that it is very exhaustive.

When trying to establish the main style or stylistic features of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, it is important to keep in mind that this novel consists of three parts or books:

I- The Man out of Time; II- A Drop of Blood in a Bowl of Milk; III- A Treatise on Longing.

These three books are made up of relatively short chapters, which are, in turn, divided into even shorter parts, which form the core of the book. These parts are either focalised by Henry or by Clare. Because Henry travels through time and he or Clare might be eight years old on one page and forty-five on another, each of these little chapters is headed by the particular date, time, and Henry and Clare's age. Roughly put, Book I focuses on Henry meeting young Clare, their meeting in the present and finally their marriage. Book II is about their married life and the happiness as well as hardships they face. It ends with Henry's death. Book III focuses on Clare and her life without Henry. The closing chapter is formed by their reunion. As a result of this fragmentation of the novel, the style differs greatly. Not only are there two different narrators, but since their age, experience and mood keeps changing so much, so does the way they describe and perceive things. For instance, Henry tends to make sarcastic comments and Clare, the artist, is generally somewhat more reflective in her writing. However, when things go downhill for Henry, he reflects more on death. Sentences like these follow: "If fervent memory could raise the dead, she would be our Eurydice, she would rise like Lady Lazarus from her stubborn death to solace us. (...) What will Clare have when I am gone?" (482) In general terms, though, it can be said that *The Time Traveler's Wife* is written in a very readable, straightforward way. There is a great deal of dialogue and situations and places are described relatively matter-of-factly. 'Common' dialogues like these, however, provide enough interesting translation problems because of the humour with which they are written. This humour is a pervasive aspect of the novel's style. In contrast to this, there are also the more meaningful, emotional passages like the one quoted above, where Henry and Clare reflect on their own feelings. It is here where the language

becomes most poetic: most metaphors and similes can be found here, as well as literary references and the occasional stream-of-consciousness-like descriptions. These two aspects of the novel's style - the humour and the figurative language that the novel abounds with - are interesting to analyse and are dealt with in the following sub chapters.

2.2 Humour

Humour is one of the more interesting aspects of style in *The Time Traveler's Wife* and Audrey Niffenegger's writing contains a good amount of it. Of the three excerpts I will be dealing with, Henry in particular speaks in a way that will probably put a smile on the reader's face and young Clare's part, too, is quite witty at times. The final chapter is the exception, since it is much heavier and sadder in tone. It can be difficult to pinpoint the exact devices of humour that are used, which is why I shall first discuss a number of significant theories on the matter.

Humour is a very common aspect of our everyday lives. However, finding an adequate definition of humour is tricky, since humour not only lies embedded in linguistics, but also in psychology and other fields. It was relatively recently that Vandaele observed that the difficulty of this task "has driven some desperate scholars to give up on any attempt at defining humour" (153). With this in mind, it might be more fruitful to look at what is more important, even more so in the light of translation: namely, the effect that humour has on the reader. Why is a certain piece of text funny and what are the effects of this?

I want to make a distinction between three types of jokes, taken from Debra Raphealson-West, who in one of her essays distinguishes between linguistic jokes, cultural jokes and universal jokes. Linguistic jokes such as puns are generally most difficult to translate, because

they are based on the source language. Cultural jokes are culture-bound and may not be funny to other cultures, but these are more translatable than linguistic humour. Finally, universal jokes contain instances of humour that are funny to all cultures, as far as you can be certain of such a thing, which makes these the easiest to translate (130). In *The Time Traveler's Wife* I came across universal as well as linguistic jokes. Cultural jokes are not really applicable, since it should be safe to say that the American and Dutch cultures generally find the same things funny.

Raphaelson-West claims that “[i]t is possible to translate humour if you keep in mind that the translation will not always be as humorous as the original. What is essential is to keep the cultural context in mind, to locate the humorous aspect or aspects of the text, and to try to explain or duplicate these aspects” (140). This is exactly what I will be doing in the following chapters.

There are a couple of theories regarding the study of humour that are worth mentioning, the most prominent names being Raskin and Attardo. In 1985, Victor Raskin published *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. His work is a “script-based semantic theory of verbal humour” (99), a script being a chunk of information that is evoked when a reader reads something and then internalises it (81). It is a representation of that reader’s knowledge. When this knowledge conflicts – when there is a conflict between two different scripts that are both compatible to a text – a “script opposition” (or incongruity) is created (99). Raskin gives the example of a joke that can be read in a sexual and non-sexual way: “An English bishop received the following note from a vicar of a village in his diocese: Milord, I regret to inform you of my wife's death. Can you possibly send me a substitute for the weekend?” (106). Such an opposition, the above being sexual/non-sexual, is what creates humour. Other (abstract) examples would be normal/abnormal or possible/impossible.

Salvatore Attardo helped broaden the scope of this theory with the General Theory of Verbal Humour in 1991, together with Raskin himself. The authors claim that jokes may be

broken down into six parameters, or Knowledge Sources. These are: *language, narrative strategy, target, situation, logical mechanism* and *script opposition*. (Attardo and Raskin 297).

In 2002, Attardo applied this model to translation, at which point it becomes more interesting to us. The six parameters are explained as follows: ‘language’ has to do with all the text levels (phonological, phonetic, syntactic etc.) that make up the joke. According to Attardo, “the simplest approach to translation is: substitute language in TL for language in SL” (2002: 187).

‘Narrative strategy’ refers to the way in which a joke is presented, for instance in the form of a question or a riddle. A translator should only use a different narrative strategy if the original format is unknown in the TL. Otherwise, there is no reason to alter this (187). The ‘target’ parameter is only applicable to jokes that ridicule or attack a certain group, person, or a more broad, less-defined party. Further, every joke has a ‘situation’, because all jokes are about something. This can for instance entail the objects, places or participants that are present. This, too, should only be changed when the situation is non-existent in the TL or if the joke does not work for another reason. The final two parameters are more interesting. Humorous texts are often characterised by a unique way of thinking with which the logic of the universe is defied. ‘Logical mechanism’ is the resolution of the incongruity that is inherent to the joke (A & R 1991: 303). In other words, this is the mechanism by which the scripts are opposed. Examples are false analogy and juxtaposition. The aforementioned ‘script opposition’ is the final knowledge source and also the most important one. This is the parameter that was the focus of Raskin's work. Attardo mentions that “two jokes that differ by Script Opposition are, in all likelihood, *different jokes*. Therefore, it follows that the translator should refrain, as far as possible, from changing the Script Opposition” (2002:189). Any humorous text will hold an SO. More practicably noted, “you should find that all the scripts fall under two more general, less specific scripts (...) and that these

scripts are opposite” (Attardo 2007). Essentially, jokes are best translated when all these parameters of the joke are held intact, with the exception of language.

Significantly for me being able to apply this theory to my translation, Attardo claims that his theory can also be applied to humorous texts and not only to stand-alone jokes in general. Humorous texts can be divided into two classes, Attardo says. Some have the structural form of a joke and others consist of a “non-humorous narrative and a humorous component” (2001: 29). The latter is the one that is applicable to *The Time Traveler's Wife*. In longer narrative texts, jokes may have a ‘jab line’ rather than a punch line. These can occur throughout the entire text, while punch lines are found at the end (2001: 82). In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, jab lines are found in the more light-hearted parts of the novel and come in the form of hyperboles, irony and verbal (or language-defined) humour. More on that in chapters three and four.

2.3 Figurative Language

From humour we go into the world of figurative language, a much more serious aspect of this novel. Though at often times humorous, this narrative can also be quite weighty. We see that best in the third translated passage (chapter five).

Diri Teilanyo notes that “[t]he interlingual translation of figurative expressions and idioms is a particularly sensitive task, especially in literary texts where the figurativeness of the language is an inalienable part of the text as a literary piece” (309). Of course, 'figurative language' is a broad term. It involves “a deviation from what competent users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words (...), in order to achieve some special meaning or effect” (Abrams 101). This involves a lot, including humour: think of irony, for instance. It is

also applicable to my translated excerpt where Clare unwittingly deviates from standard language, since she is so young. Here I will be focusing on tropes, which are “figures of thought” that are used figuratively (Abrams 101). The most prominent tropes in *The Time Traveler's Wife* are simile, metaphor and personification. I will include the latter under 'metaphor', since the metaphors used are generally personifying.

2.3.1 Simile

In translation theory, similes have always been overshadowed by metaphors. This is probably why there is no great amount of literature on the translation of similes. Of course, both tropes establish a connection between different things; however, while similes compare two different things explicitly, metaphors do not overtly compare at all. A simile can be defined as “the statement of a similarity relation between two entities, essentially different but thought to be alike in one or more respects, or a non-similarity relation” (Pierini 23). There is a difference between a simile and a regular comparison, which has been explained by Bredin (1998), who claims that comparisons are symmetrical, while similes are not. This means that the subject and predicate can switch places without there being any change in meaning, which is the case with a comparison such as ‘Michael is like Anne’ (Bredin 73). It has to be noted here, though, that Pierini simply calls these comparisons “literal similes” (26). Regardless of whether they can be classified as similes or not, such comparisons are not likely the ones that prove to be challenging in translation.

Now, on the translation of similes. In a somewhat aged but nevertheless interesting essay, Joseph Margolis expands on similes, naming open similes (*Her heart is like stone*) and closed similes (*Her heart is as hard as stone*) (1957: 186). On their translation he says that an open

simile should not be translated literally, since “its logical function is to illuminate certain properties of a given thing; this it does by a dramatically effective comparison” (187).

Thus, the comparison itself can be discarded. Closed similes, on the other hand, specify the common (or uncommon) attributes of the comparison and are therefore more easily translated literally. Patrizia Pierini names a couple of translation strategies for similes:

S1: Literal translation (retention of the same vehicle)

S2: Replacement of the vehicle with a different vehicle

S3: Reduction of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense

S4: Retention of the same vehicle plus explicitation of similarity feature(s)

S5: Replacement of the vehicle with a gloss

S6: Omission of the simile (31).

Since my source text does not include any standard, idiomatic similes that needed to be changed into equally idiomatic similes in the TT, I never needed to resort to drastic measures such as omitting the simile altogether. In chapters three and four I will, however, discuss a number of interesting cases where 1) the simile was combined with an allusion or 2) the simile was of a literary creative kind. In her article, Pierini refers to similes that have a proper name that represents a cultural allusion as the vehicle: “If [the translator] believes that the target readership has the knowledge required, s/he will leave the simile unchanged; if the target readership does not, some modification may be required” (34). Moreover, *The Time Traveler’s Wife* contains quite a lot of 'creative' similes. According to Pierini, these are “usually found in descriptive segments to lend a more accurate insight into the psychological or physical traits of a character”. With this purpose in mind, the translation should reproduce the effect of the creative similes. In literary texts they are usually translated literally (36, 37). Henry’s letter in particular (chapter five) contains a striking amount of these.

2.3.2 Metaphor

While similes compare entities, metaphors link them conceptually. They do not contain any markers such as 'like' or 'as'. With metaphors, too, there is an object and a subject. The subject is often called the 'tenor', the metaphorical term the 'vehicle' and the features the two (implicitly) have in common are the 'grounds' (I am using terms that were coined by I. A. Richards, 1936).

Peter Newmark distinguishes between five types of metaphor: dead, cliché, stock, recent and original. A stock or standard metaphor is defined as “an established metaphor, which in an informal context is an efficient and concise method of covering a physical and/or mental situation both referentially and pragmatically” (108). An example from the text would be “time is short”.

Newmark gives seven translation procedures with regard to translating metaphors:

1. Reproducing the same image in the TL
2. Replacing the image in the SL with a standard TL image which does not clash with the TL culture
3. Translating metaphor by simile, retaining the image,
4. Translating metaphor (or simile) by simile plus sense (or occasionally a metaphor plus sense),
5. Converting metaphor to sense,
6. Deletion,
7. Using the same metaphor combined with sense, in order to enforce the image.

Newmark mentions that the most common way to translate stock metaphors is to “replace to SL image with another established image” (188). Another interesting type of metaphor is what Newmark calls ‘original metaphors’. These contain “the core of an important writer’s message, his personality, and his comment on life” (112) and should be translated literally. These same

metaphors that are created by a writer are called ‘creative metaphors’ by Raymond van den Broeck. He provides a basic law with regard to their translation: “The less the quantity of information conveyed by a metaphor and the less complex the structural relations into which it enters into a text, the more translatable this metaphor will be”. Hence, metaphors like the ones in *The Time Traveler's Wife* that are private/original/creative metaphors “will be more translatable than conventional metaphors to the degree that they are less culture-bound” (Van den Broeck 84).

Now that we have established a distinction between these types of humour, figurative language and the translation theories that apply to them, we are ready to look at the text itself and find out in what ways we can deal with the translation problems that this novel’s style poses. In the following three chapters, I discuss three sections of the novel that all have a different style. I took the first fragment from the beginning of the novel. Hence, it is quite light-hearted and mainly contains interesting cases of humour, along with some figurative language. The second fragment (chapter four) is probably one of the most striking chapters of the novel, stylistically speaking, because it is narrated by a child. It contains no figurative language, but there is definitely humour present. Finally, the third and final fragment comes from the end of the novel and is quite heavy in tone. It is one of those passages that contains similes, metaphors, personifications and literary references – all of which is interesting for a translator to look at.

Chapter Three: Translation Problems – Humour and More

I raise my head and see a red illuminated EXIT sign and as my eyes adjust I see tigers, cavemen with long spears, cavewomen wearing strategically modest skins, wolfish dogs. My heart is racing and for a long liquor-addled moment I think 'Holy shit, I've gone all the way back to the Stone Age'. (29)

3.1 Introduction

It is 26 October 1991. Henry is 28 years old and Clare is 20. At the Newberry Library, Henry and Clare meet. Henry has no recollection of Clare, since it is his future self that will travel back to her childhood, so he has not met her yet in the present. However, he is immediately captivated by her beauty. The two go on a first date.

This passage is part of the first chapter of the book and makes Clare's dedication to Henry clear to the reader. To have the two meet in the present at the beginning of the novel, before the more complex foreshadowing and flashbacks start, establishes and underlines the main theme of their love. A large part of the passage consists of dialogue between Henry and Clare, which is representative of the dialogue throughout the rest of the novel. This excerpt is interesting translation-wise because Henry as focaliser incorporates very witty remarks into his language. This presence of humour can create translation problems when creativity is needed to retain the effect in the target text. After all, humour is part of a very specific linguistic (and cultural) context. The vocabulary in this passage is colloquial and relatively simple. Henry, the narrator and focaliser, is eloquent, sarcastic and witty at the same time. His vocabulary consists of common words, but he occasionally uses playful words and phrasing as well as neologisms, for instance: “librarianese”, “living room-which-is-also-my-bedroom”, and “Chrono-Impairment”. This, to use Nord's term, creates text-specific translation problems. Another aspect of Henry's

use of language is the occurrence of adjectives. The following sentence, which is incidentally a hyperbole, is full of them: “And this astoundingly beautiful amber-haired tall slim girl turns around and looks at me as if I am her personal Jesus.” At one point in the passage, Henry compares Clare to “a massive winning lottery ticket chunk of my future”. This compound adjective is particularly difficult to translate, not only because of the contrastive differences between English and Dutch and the impossibility to translate it more or less literally, but also because of the (implied) meaning of this phrase, which is actually a metaphor. Further, the verbs in this passage are quite striking as well: “*puppied* pages”, “The girl sort of *breathes* 'Henry!' in this very evocative way”, “she is *glowing* at me”, “*wafts* out of the Reading Room”, “*fling* myself into the living room”, “I am practically *hopping* with excitement”, “I *veer* into Clark Street Liquors”, “we *extricate* ourselves from it”, “I *wield* my fistful of keys”. Some verbs are used in surprising combinations; for instance, people don't usually 'waft'. Other verbs ('hopping') refer to movement and activity. In effect, Henry's language becomes both refreshing and playful. It is interesting to note that movement and activity are also a large part of Henry as a character: jogging is very important to him and not being able to walk renders him powerless. Movement, in a way, helps him to grasp the present and stay there. Whether this was intentionally done by the writer can be questioned; nevertheless, these verbs add to the charm and humour of the writing. There are a great deal of humorous hyperboles in this fragment as well, a hyperbole being for instance: “Charisse would pounce on you and stick bamboo slivers under your fingernails until you told all”. Henry responds to this ironically: “I long to be tortured by someone named Charisse, but I can see that you do not share my taste”. Henry uses a couple of similes as well, such as “Egon Schiele look-alike”, “She looks like a Botticelli by way of John Graham”, and “She looks like a waxwork in the candlelight”.

3.2 Universal Jokes

Using Raphealson-West's joke-type distinction, the first universal joke that stands out as such is when Henry comments on Isabelle: "I am halted by Isabelle's voice saying, 'Perhaps Mr. DeTamble can help you,' by which she means 'Henry, you weasel, where are you slinking off to?'" A number of Attardo's six parameters can be applied here, though 'language' is not relevant. 'Narrative strategy' is not exactly applicable, either: since this jab line ("Henry, you weasel, where are you slinking off to?") is incorporated into the narrative, we can say that no specific strategy is applied. Henry simply rephrases Isabelle's words, which does not differ from the main text. The targets of this joke seem to be Isabelle as well as Henry himself; part of the humour is formed by Henry's sense of self-ridicule. The relevant situation comprises the library and Isabelle, Henry's co-worker, who evidently does not like him. Since 'logical mechanism' and 'script opposition' are intertwined, I will discuss these together. The main SO here seems to be friendly/unfriendly. Humour is brought forth because the reader does not expect Isabelle to say a perfectly normal thing and Henry giving such an unfriendly reading to it. As said above, Attardo came to the (quite straightforward) conclusion that none of these parameters, except language, should generally be altered in translation. Most important is that the SO remains intact, so this was what I wanted to ensure for my translation. The jab line holds the joke, so it was important that this would be translated accurately. My translation: "Ik word tot stilstand gebracht door de stem van Isabelle, die zegt: "Misschien kan meneer DeTamble je helpen," waarmee ze eigenlijk bedoelt: "Henry, gluiperd, waar dacht jij heen te gaan?" of course did not change the position of the jab line (it is still at the end of this cluster), the target (there is no reason to change the fact that Henry is making fun of both Isabelle and himself) and the SO (still friendly/unfriendly). I opted for an idiomatic translation rather than try to include 'slinking off', which would become

something like 'naartoe sluipen' or 'uit de voeten maken'. The word 'gluiperd' already contains these meanings, anyway. This joke is elaborated on a few lines later: "I say "Have we met?" and Isabelle gives me a look that says *You asshole.*" The misunderstanding is what creates the humour: Henry presumes that Clare is from his future, but Isabelle simply thinks that the girl is one of Henry's conquests that he's forgotten about. Her dislike for Henry keeps growing.

Another interesting translation difficulty to discuss here is to be found in the following lines:

"Where do you live?" Clare asks.

Uh oh. "I live about two blocks from here, but my place is tiny and really messy right now. You?"

"Roscoe Village, on Hoyne. But I have a roommate."

"If you come up to my place you have to close your eyes and count to one thousand. *Perhaps you have a very uninquisitive deaf roommate?*" (Italics mine.)

This case of humour proved to be difficult for a number of reasons. Firstly, the humorous remark refers back to what Clare says, namely that she has a roommate. By repeating her sentence, but adding adjectives that are very unlikely to be the case, Henry's response becomes funny. Thus, the SO is realistic/unrealistic – I suppose you could view the joke as a kind of hyperbole. The problem here lies not in retaining the SO, but in delivering a suitable jab line, since the underlined sentence is bound to become longer in Dutch and therefore probably not as funny. The combination of the adjectives 'very uninquisitive deaf' with the referral to the roommate simply cannot easily be reproduced in the TT. Dutch does not have a single word that has the same meaning as 'uninquisitive': 'inquisitive' means something like 'nieuwsgierig', but 'onnieuwsgierig' does not exist in Dutch. I did not want to make this sentence much longer than

it was, either. In the end, I decided to translate ‘uninquisitive’ into ‘helemaal niet nieuwsgierig’, after considering ‘ongeïnteresseerd’. Further, ‘Deaf’, the funniest adjective, should remain at the end of the sentence; this is also the word where the emphasis lies. “Is die huisgenoot van jou toevallig heel erg ongeïnteresseerd en doof?” was my first solution; however, much of the humour is lost here, because the previously-mentioned roommate now stands at the beginning of the sentence. It also felt a bit too slick, perhaps. Though this solution is idiomatic, I felt that the humour would be better retained with ‘roommate’ at the end. That is why I changed my translation into: “Heb je toevallig een helemaal niet nieuwsgierige, dove huisgenoot?” When it comes to translating humour, relying on feeling is important, which is why I went for the second option in the end: based purely on feeling, the humorous effect is greater when Clare’s initial remark ‘Ik heb een huisgenoot’ is reproduced as closely as possible in question form. Only in this case will the emphasis remain in the right place – e.g.: ‘Heb je toevallig een *dove* huisgenoot?’ There are more instances of jokes with a clear SO in the text; these can be found in the notes to my translation.

The text further contains a number of hyperboles, which also fall under the header of universal humour. Of course, hyperboles can also be connected to Raskin and Attardo’s idea of script opposition: it can generally be said that a hyperbole creates the SO realistic description/exaggeration, or: realistic/unrealistic. It is important to recognise these hyperboles as such in order to translate them properly. Since the comical effect is created by the exaggeration, this should be maintained in the TT. Henry starts by saying that Clare “looks at me as though I am her personal Jesus”. A bit later on, he mentions that “I am constantly banging parts of myself on inconvenient walls, countertops and furniture”. There are even more hyperboles in the text – I refer to the notes to my translation for that. However, perhaps the most apparent hyperbole is used by Clare. She says that “Charisse would pounce on you and stick bamboo slivers under your

fingernails until you told all”. In order to preserve the humour in my translation, I had to translate this sentence, and in particular the exaggerated verb 'pounce', correctly. The verb I chose was 'zich op je storten', because it is such a visual word. My translation then became: “Charisse zou zich op je storten en bamboesplinters onder je vingernagels steken totdat je alles vertelde”. In this case, a literal translation seems to be perfectly doable, since the hyperbole and humour are retained. Incidentally, Henry responds to this sentence with the only expression of irony in the fragment: “I long to be tortured by someone named Charisse, but I can see that you do not share my taste”. Henry is saying the opposite of what he actually means and therein lies the humour. I translated ‘to long’ into ‘ik kan niet wachten’, but added ‘verlangen’ for ‘taste’, the sentence thus becoming: “Ik kan niet wachten om gemarteld te worden door iemand die Charisse heet, maar ik merk dat je dit verlangen niet met me deelt.” In effect, the aspect of (false) desire is maintained, while ‘ik kan niet wachten’ sounds very idiomatic.

3.3 Linguistic Jokes

Another device of humour that is used here is that of register. Sometimes, Henry uses verbs that are of a different register than the rest of the text, thus creating an incongruity or opposition. Some of these are funny, while others simply make for the playful aspect of the text. An example is “she wafts out of the Reading Room”, where 'waft' is a verb that is not in context with the sentence. In all of these cases, an SO is created. Though I put this category under linguistic jokes, jokes of this type should not be as difficult to translate as the puns that Raphaelson-West mentions as being one of the most difficult things to translate. The register - in this case the verbs - can more easily be replaced by similar Dutch verbs than a pun can be translated. The following occurrences are found in the text. I have filtered out the ones that (arguably) contain humour:

ST	TT	SO
...fling myself into the living room-which-is-also-my-bedroom...	...mezelf...werpen	Normal verb/(overly)active verb (visual humour)
...don all of this...	Aantrekken	Informal/formal
...behold...	Aanschouwen	Informal/formal
...I thrust the roses at her.	Ik duw haar de rozen toe.	Polite/inappropriate
...two cocker spaniel puppies lurking...	...op de loer liggen...	Sweet/threatening
...puppied pages...	puppypagina's	Normal/non-existent past participle
I wield my fistful of keys...	Ik bewerk het slot met mijn..	Normal verb/unfitting verb (in combination with 'keys')

I was able to replace most of these with corresponding Dutch verbs (see figure). One translation problem I was not able to solve is the translation of 'to don'. As with 'behold', the SO created is that of informal/formal register. However, Dutch does not have a similar word to 'don'. I found that 'aantrekken' was practically the only possible solution if I was to retain the formal register switch. Another thing to keep in mind is that since English and Dutch are contrastive languages, the effect of a formal Dutch word on the target audience would be different than the one in the ST. Although 'to don' is a rather formal verb, it is a fairly common word in English, so I had to take care that the incongruity in the TT would not become greater than the one in the ST. You

could say that finding this balance between making a faithful translation and making a readable translation is the main translation problem when it comes to small touches like these. It is this balance that Toury speaks of in his book *In Search of a Theory of Translation*: should a translator move closer to the source text system (“adequacy”) or to the target text system (“acceptability”) (55)? In the end, the humour here is somewhat lost because I removed the incongruity altogether. This, however, is only a small concession, since the entire passage is quite humorous and this particular SO was not very prominent.

The final instance of linguistic humour I will discuss here lies in the following sentences: “The page, which has two cocker spaniel puppies *lurking* in the upper right hand corner, is a list of dates. It begins with September 23, 1977, and ends sixteen small, blue, *puppied* pages later on May 24, 1989” (italics mine). I wanted to retain the aspect of ‘lurking’, since we have seen that this is part of the specific writing style of the passage. However, since ‘lurking’ would become the longer ‘op de loer liggen’ in Dutch, I needed to play a bit with sentence constituents. The main information that needs to get across is the fact that there are dates on the page; the reference to the puppies is an extra remark, so this clause needed to remain subordinate. In order to get a good Dutch sentence, I then had to move the ‘op de loer liggende’ puppies to the end of this subordinate clause. The result: “Op de pagina, waarvan de rechterbovenhoek wordt beslagen door twee op de loer liggende cockerspaniëlpuppy’s, staat een lijst met data.” Another option would have been to remove the ‘lurking’ altogether. This strategy has been applied in the current Dutch translation (see notes). However, I feel that this particular instance of humour can be easily retained – so why remove it? Attardo, too, stressed the importance of retaining SO’s as much as possible. Moreover, the past participle ‘puppied’ or verb ‘to puppy’ does not exist. English readers will immediately understand that the pages all have puppies on them, but this verb trick cannot be done in Dutch. To use a term by Vinay and Darbelnet, I used transposition in this

instance in order to create a similar effect in Dutch. As a result, the past participle has disappeared: I simply expanded the noun itself, thus creating the word ‘puppypagina’s’. Again, I could have naturalized this, but then I would have deleted the stylistic characteristics that are present here. The playful language is now retained and the target audience should be able to connect ‘puppypagina’s’ with ‘pages with puppies on them’.

3.3 Figurative Language

Two similes in this passage contain an allusion, namely: “Egon Schiele look-alike” and “Botticelli by way of John Graham”. I struggled with the first allusion in particular. It is part of a sentence that was not entirely clear to me anyway, because I never could quite figure out why this reference to a “ten-year-old Egon Schiele” is fitting. The sentence reads: “Step Six: look in full-length bathroom mirror and behold angular, wild-eyed 6' 1" ten-year-old Egon Schiele look-alike in clean shirt and funeral director suit.” The goal of this comparison is bringing across Henry's appearance at that moment. Apparently, his features resemble Schiele's. It can be questioned whether the target audience knows who Egon Schiele was (an Austrian expressionist painter – his artistic model was Edvard Munch, famous for “The Scream”). I for one did not know. However, Niffenegger included this allusion for a reason; not unimportantly, she is first and foremost an artist herself and this is not the only art reference in the novel. Tampering with this allusion would be too radical and after all, this is a literary novel. Pierini says that “[w]hen allusions occur in authoritative texts, they are usually translated literally”, giving the example of *Dubliners* by James Joyce (35). It would have been a possibility to add extra information in order to clarify who Schiele was, but that would feel like patronising the reader. It is really up to the reader to make sense of the Egon Schiele reference. An additional translation problem here was one “posed

by differences between the two language systems” (Pierini 35). In the ST, “ten-year-old Egon Schiele look-alike” holds the entire simile: the comparison is marked by the word 'alike'. Dutch, however, cannot be constructed like this, which forced me to make the sentence longer: “Stap zes: in de passpiegel van de badkamer kijken en een hoekige, 1,85 meter lange man aanschouwen die een wilde blik heeft, eruitziet als een tienjarige Egon Schiele en gekleed is in een schoon overhemd en het pak van een begrafenisondernemer.” I used Pierini’s first strategy here: the vehicle is retained, though I needed to unfold the simile, as it were, and transform the sentence syntactically.

The same applies to the allusion to Botticelli and John Graham: if at all possible, I did not want to delete or change anything. As with the previous example, it is important to establish the relevance of the allusion. Evidently, if Clare looks “like a Botticelli by way of John Graham”, Henry compares her to a painting. He even closes the simile by saying what she looks like exactly: “huge gray eyes, long nose, tiny delicate mouth like a geisha”. When I read this reference, Botticelli’s *Venus* came to mind and then I drew a blank. After some research I found out that John Graham was a modernist painter, so Niffenegger seems to be trying to evoke the image of a modernist Botticelli painting. Whether the target audience picks up on this reference or not, this simile is a closed one, which makes matters easier. It is in line with Margolis that it can be translated quite literally, because Henry elaborates on his comparison by naming the specific features that he alluded to. Even if the Dutch audience never heard of John Graham, the image they get is the same – it is spelled out for them. Although the simile in itself posed no real problems, the preposition ‘by way of’ did. My initial translation was: “Ze ziet eruit als een Botticelli van John Graham”. However, this wrongly implies that John Graham is the artist of Botticelli paintings. For the same reason, I could not use the preposition ‘door’, either. This is

why I went with ‘op de wijze van John Graham’. This way, it should be clear that the text refers to Graham’s modernist way of painting and not to him personally.

An interesting metaphor to deal with was one where the adjective is used metaphorically: “I realize that a massive winning lottery ticket chunk of my future has somehow found me here in the present”. The vehicle is “massive winning lottery ticket” and the tenor is implicit. Important is the sense of jubilation and luck associated with this, so the tenor could be something like ‘wonderful’ (although that excludes the aspect of luck). Translating this was tricky, partly because of the compound construction and the fact that it is part of an already long sentence. I saw no possibilities to reproduce a construction such as this one in Dutch, simply because the two language systems are too different in the sense that Dutch has no way of producing compound adjectives like these. I considered using ‘lot uit de loterij’, which holds the same meaning, but in this adjective construction this would sound rather forced. In the end, I replaced the vehicle by ‘groots and prachtig’, the sentence becoming “...besef ik dat een groots en prachtig deel van mijn toekomst me op de een of andere manier in het heden heeft gevonden”. Since the vehicle was an adjective, however, I deleted the entire metaphor in the process. You could say that I used Newmark’s fifth strategy: converting a metaphor to sense. I think this is justified because the implied tenor, the image the reader gets, stays the same.

Chapter Four: Translation Problems – The Girl Who Was Me

I am suddenly consumed by nostalgia for the little girl who was me, who loved the fields and believed in God, who spent winter days home sick from school reading Nancy Drew and sucking menthol cough drops, who could keep a secret. (164)

4.1 Introduction

Clare is six years old and describes how she takes some of her parents' old clothes to bring to the strange man who visited her earlier. This is only the second time in her life she sees Henry. The passage stands out because it is narrated by a very young Clare, making it both fun and interesting to read and translate. Though in the novel it happens only a few times that a young Clare is the narrator, this passage is still representative of the novel: it is quirky, funny, creative and touching. It is also full of an endearing sort of humour, which makes it challenging to translate. Clare's dry account of her day is sure to make the reader smile. The difficulty here would be retaining the endearing mind style of a six-year-old while preserving the humour and pace of the chapter. For instance, typical of Clare's young mind style is that Clare uses words that an adult would not ordinarily choose. In the case of nouns, this means the use of nouns such as "Daddy", "play Frisbee", "play dress up", "to get salmon" and "Mr. Bear". As is to be expected, the language is quite basic with very little use of adjectives besides colours ("white sweater", etc). The most common verbs are 'play', 'say', 'go', 'get' and 'tell'; these are very simple indeed, but do occur frequently, because Clare's narration here basically consists of describing her day by summing up all her activities. Clare does not use many full stops and instead interconnects everything by 'and'. An example: "When I was coming out of the mud room Mark saw me and he said *What are you doing, asshole?* And I said *Nothing, asshole* and he pulled my hair and I stepped on his foot really hard and then he started to cry and went to tell". It is important to retain

this in the TT, since it is part of Clare's humour and charm. Notable is that a high number of these sentences start with a coordinating conjunction like 'and', 'so', 'but' and 'or'; about half of the sentences in this passage do. The fact that a six-year-old is narrating this passage, with her typical use of grammar and syntax, is what makes this passage so wittily narrated. This shift in writing style will be immediately picked up by the reader as such. Clare makes mistakes any child would make, such as saying "getting salmon" instead of 'salmonella': an instance of linguistic humour that needs to be translated properly in order to retain the humour. Clare does not use any figurative language – unless you would include the stock metaphor 'cigarette hole'.

4.2 The Humour of a Six-year-old

Interestingly, while the part that is narrated by young Clare contains humour, it is of another kind than the humour we found in the previous passage. Here, all instances of humour arise from the fact that Clare is so young and speaks so bluntly, as well as from her use of grammar. In a way, Clare's sentences are understatements, since she has a way of simplifying everything. However, script oppositions are not as overtly present as they are in the text that is narrated by Henry. You could say that Henry is trying to be funny, while Clare does not mean to but rather unintentionally makes the reader smile (as most children do). So instead of trying to find 'jokes' in this passage, we can view the entire passage as a humorous one with a punch line at the end, when Clare finally meets Henry again: "And then I was scared". Treating the entire passage as a joke, then, it would have the SO normal narration/child narration. This can also be considered a register switch and is in line with the fact that the general way of narration is what makes this passage funny. Attardo's parameter 'logical mechanism' is applicable here as well. Logical mechanism embodies a certain joke's type of logic and it is Clare's innocent way of thinking

(logic) that adds to the humour. I tried to preserve the humour of this passage by retaining Clare’s style of long sentences and strange leaps in logic. Besides logical mechanism, another knowledge source that is important is narrative strategy. The narrative humour is created by young Clare’s amusing way of putting things.

Though we have just treated this entire fragment as a joke in itself, I will nevertheless point out the cases of humour that stand out. You will see that mostly, they do not have any clear SOs:

ST	SO
I worried all day about pants for the man cause it seemed like he really wanted pants.	?? Understatement, child-like innocence
...because you get salmon.	Linguistic humour. SO: Correct/incorrect
When I was coming out of the mud room Mark saw me and he said <i>What are you doing, asshole?</i> And I said <i>Nothing, asshole...</i>	?? Child narration
and Etta said <i>You two are getting on my nerves</i> and went away so that was okay.	?? Bluntness / understatement
I thought <i>Well, I guess he just made up that he was coming and he didn’t want pants so bad after all.</i>	?? Again, the childlike reasoning is what seems to make this funny.

The main translation problem for this passage is the fact that it reads as if Clare is enthusiastically relating a story, since she more or less writes in the way she would say these things out loud.

Since the humour lies in the typical use of language (the register switch), translation problems are

created: as a translator, you do not want to oversimplify things, but you do want to maintain the style. Decisions like these have to be made about almost every sentence. An example is “Nell was making a soft egg for Alicia and Etta was yelling at Mark cause he didn’t do his homework and played Frisbee with Steve”. Here I needed to decide whether to use ‘omdat hij zijn huiswerk niet had gedaan’ or ‘want hij had zijn huiswerk niet gedaan’. Further, once I had chosen one option I needed to remain consistent, because this ‘omdat/want’ problem keeps reoccurring. In the end my vote went to ‘want’, simply because it is what a child would say. In other instances, however, readability would be compromised had I used sentences that were too childlike. See the following sentence, for instance: “So after dinner I asked Etta if I could go outside and she said did I have homework and I said *Spelling and bring leaves for art class*, and she said *Okay as long as you come in by dark*.” At first, I translated “she said did I have homework” into the literal ‘ze zei heb je huiswerk’. However, this seriously compromises the readability of the sentence, so I decided to just change this into ‘ze vroeg of ik huiswerk had’. Though Clare is only six years old, she is quite capable of forming adequate sentences (although she may forget a comma or two). In trying to find this balance in style, I also took care to retain the many coordinating conjunctions in my translation and ensure that the passage comes across as if Clare is truly relating it to someone. For instance, a great deal of my sentences begin with ‘En toen’.

The sentence “I worried all day about pants for the man cause it seemed like he really wanted pants” is a good example of the endearing sort of humour that is present in this fragment. The second part of the sentence holds the humour, because Clare manages to boil Henry’s discomfort down to the absence of pants. I translated ‘worried’ into ‘denken aan’, because I felt that ‘zorgen maken’ was a bit too strong. My translation then became: “Ik moest de hele dag denken aan een broek voor de man want hij zag eruit alsof hij heel graag een broek wilde”. It was particularly important to retain the simple way of reasoning that Clare applies here. This sentence

also comes back at the end of the passage, when Clare thinks *Well, I guess he just made up that he was coming and he didn't want pants so bad after all*. I translated this into “Ach, hij heeft vast gewoon verzonnen dat hij zou komen en hij wilde dus toch niet zo graag een broek”. Again, I translated ‘want’ into ‘willen’ instead of the more common ‘nodig hebben’. Clare is reasoning that since the man has not shown, he must not want pants at all. She does not take into consideration whether he needs them or not: she simply reasons in terms of wanting or not wanting, which only enhances the comical effect.

There is one pun-like element in this passage, a linguistic joke, namely “Etta won't let us because you get salmon”. Clare means salmonella, and the reader understands this, so her mistake becomes funny. The Dutch equivalent word ‘zalm’ is not as clearly connected to ‘salmonella’ as the English ‘salmon’ is. As a result, if I were to use only ‘zalm’, the joke would not work. This is why, instead of shortening the word, I decided to use it in full, only changing the way it is spelled. Now, the word is written the way a child would: “zalmenella”. The SO correct/incorrect remains, and so does the humour.

Chapter Five: Translation Problems – Just a Figure of Speech

“Kiss me,” Clare says, and I turn to her, white face and dark lips floating in the dark, and I submerge, I fly, I am released: being wells up in my heart. (467)

5.1 Introduction

This passage is near the end of the novel and part of its climax. It is narrated by Clare, but a large part of it is comprised of Henry's letter to her; so indirectly, we hear Henry's voice as well. The events narrated here take place after Henry has died. Clare feels immense grief; she describes how sleep envelops her life and how she is not able to take care of Alba, as all she wants is Henry. Then she reads the letter that Henry has left for her, which instructs her to “stop waiting and be free”, because she and Henry will meet again for one last time, when she is old. This chapter forms the core of the book in the sense that it combines its major themes of longing and love. In a way, Clare did not heed Henry's advice: the book suggests she never truly stopped waiting for him. However, this only proves the point of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, namely that true love exists and that love transcends death. This passage is a very emotional one, filled with metaphors and similes. I encountered at least eight similes and nine metaphors. There are many personifications here as well, an interesting one being “Sleep, seeing a perfect reproduction of himself, comes to be united with his facsimile”. These tropes are what make this passage so interesting. It is important to translate these properly while keeping in mind the emotional effect the passage should have on the reader. Clare is heavily influenced by her emotions here and this is reflected in the language. She speaks in short sentences and mostly in coordinating constructions: “I am past hunger, past vanity, past caring”. It is truly as if she is dead. In contrast, Henry's language is far more embellished. His letter is very cohesive, beautifully written and

adorned with many tropes. It is important to make this difference between Clare's heavily emotion-influenced writing and Henry's letter clear to the target text reader as well. Later, when Clare functions a bit better, her sentences become more accessible, instead of being mere fragments.

5.2 Figurative Language

Most of the similes in this passage are creative ones: "like the narrow center of an hourglass", "like a fat lady swimmer", "like a child", "like a sailor", "like a damaged nerve", "like a dark bird". The difficulty in translating each of these varied greatly. I found the most difficult one to be the fat lady swimmer, because its meaning was the most obscure to me. Henry is comparing the feeling he has of "being buoyed up by time, floating effortlessly on its surface" (this is the topic of the simile) with being "a fat lady swimmer" (the vehicle). The similarity here is the feeling of floating on time vs. floating on water, which a fat lady swimmer would do. This creative simile adds a strong image to the text, but it is not entirely clear where the vehicle comes from. Of course, you could argue that that is not relevant, since the conveyed image is most important, but I could not help but wonder: why a *fat lady* swimmer? A painting by Jennifer Garant⁷ has this name, so this could be another art reference. If so, the simile becomes very culturally influenced, since Garant is an American artist of which Dutch readers will probably not have heard. This poses a problem: should I retain this information and translate it literally, or should I reduce the simile? Choosing for the image that is being conveyed here rather than the means by which it is done, I decided to translate "fat lady swimmer" into "dikke zwemmer". The possible art reference (if any) is lost, but the image stays the same. Though the swimmer is now

⁷ <http://www.discountartoutlet.com/Fat-Lady-Swimmer-Beach-Jennifer-Garant-Art-Print-Framed_p_1504.html> , 1 March 2010.

male instead of female, this should have little impact on the text. It would only seem odd to readers if Henry compared himself to a ‘dikke zwemster’. In effect, this is the only creative simile that I translated by using Pierini’s second translation strategy: replacement of the vehicle with a different vehicle. The impact here should be minimal, though, because the two vehicles are so alike. I used literal translation for all the other creative similes - because they are creative rather than idiomatic, no real obstacles are created.

At one point, Clare uses multiple compressed similes: “I am paper-skinned, gaunt, yellow, ring-eyed, hair matted. I look dead. I want nothing.” These similes (‘paper-skinned’ and ‘ring-eyed’) have no clear comparison markers, but are compressed into the adjectives. The matching properties are immediately clear, however. The problem here is that the translator needs to expand on these similes, since Dutch knows no similar compound construction. I translated ‘paper-skinned’ into “mijn huid lijkt wel van papier”, using Pierini’s first strategy and retaining the vehicle. However, for ‘ring-eyed’ I was forced to reduce the simile to its sense. This idiomatic simile has no Dutch equivalent simile, so I used an equivalent description: ‘Ik heb wallen’. Since we are dealing with an idiomatic simile, not much is lost by doing so.

In this fragment, there is one instance of a simile that holds an allusion. Henry compares himself to Odysseus in his letter to Clare: “What an uncertain husband I have been, Clare, like a sailor, Odysseus alone and buffeted by tall waves, sometimes wily and sometimes just a plaything of the gods”. The simile here is actually Henry comparing himself to a sailor; Henry/Odysseus is technically a metaphor since the comparison marker is absent. Nevertheless, I translated this quite literally as well: “Clare, wat ben ik toch een onbestendige echtgenoot geweest, net een zeevaarder, een eenzame Odysseus die geteisterd wordt door de golven, soms sluw en soms slechts een speelbal van de goden”. The allusion to the Odyssey will not pose any interpretive problems to Dutch readers, I expect. The target readers should have the required

knowledge, so there is no need to alter the reference, which is in line with Pierini. Also, since the metaphor is creative, I could follow Newmark's guidelines and translate it literally.

I encountered a number of interesting metaphors and personifications as well. However, not each and every one of the metaphors present in the text are mentioned here. I had to restrict my classification, because metaphor can comprise so much. When metaphor is every instance where "a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing" (Abrams 102), that is a lot. I could also have included Henry saying "librarianese" in the first passage, and Clare saying "cigarette hole" in the second passage, for instance. Nevertheless, I will deal with a number of interesting cases, most of which combine metaphor and personification. These two are much alike, anyway: if you attribute human qualities to something that is not, a metaphor is automatically formed with these human qualities as the vehicle. In this bit of text, Clare muses: "Sleep is my lover now, my forgetting, my opiate, my oblivion". For the tenor 'sleep' there are four vehicles: lover, forgetting, opiate and oblivion. Luckily, there were no problems in duplicating these metaphors in Dutch, so I could simply transfer the vehicle as well as the tenor. Clare goes on to use the following personifying metaphor: "I make my eyes still under eyelids, I make my mind still, and soon, Sleep, seeing a perfect reproduction of himself, comes to be united with his facsimile". Here 'Sleep' (note the capital) is being connected with a human being, acting at will. I translated this into "Ik maak mijn ogen onbeweeglijk onder hun oogleden, ik maak mijn geest stil, en al gauw komt de Slaap, die een perfecte reproductie van zichzelf ziet, zich herenigen met zijn kopie". Since Dutch has multiple words for "still", I used variation in my translation instead of using the same word twice. I changed "comes to be united" into "komt zich herenigen", which constitutes a change from a passive to an active verb. In effect, the personification becomes even stronger. I am aware of the

fact that a (Dutch) translator should always be careful with personifications; however, the language here is so deliberately poetic that I could not simply delete or alter it.

Speaking of personifications, another interesting sentence is the following: “But you know: you know that if I could have stayed, if I could have gone on, that I would have clutched every second: whatever it was, this death, you know that it came and took me, like a child carried away by goblins”. Besides multiple personifications (clutching seconds, death taking you) this sentence also holds another creative simile. I kept the personification of death in my translation: “wat hij ook was, deze dood, je weet dat hij is langsgekomen en me heeft meegenomen, als een kind dat door kobolden wordt weggevoerd”. Since Dutch necessitates the use of ‘hij’ for ‘it’, the personification is made even stronger. I do not believe this harms the TT in any way, however. Another example is “I inhabit sleep firmly, willing it, wielding it, pushing away dreams, refusing, refusing.” Again, sleep (this time without a capital) almost receives human qualities: how else is Clare able to ‘inhabit’ it and manipulate it? My translation is quite literal: “Standvastig bewoon ik mijn slaap, ik dwing hem af, bezit hem, duw dromen weg, weiger, weiger.” Once again, the presence of ‘hem’ only reinforces the personification.

Finally, there are a few stock metaphors present in this fragment. An example is “time is short”. This metaphor has become an idiomatic expression embedded in the language. I chose to convert this metaphor to sense (“er is denk ik niet veel tijd meer”), since a reproduction would not work due to lack of a Dutch equivalent. Further, when Henry speaks of seeing “the years all present in your face”, he uses another stock metaphor. By 'years' he means the things he can see in Clare's face: lines, experience, proof of the fact that she lived her life. For this I used the Dutch equivalent metaphor “om de jaren in je gezicht te kunnen zien”.

Interestingly, the Dutch translator seems to have misinterpreted this metaphor, since the current translation is as follows: “om na al die jaren je gezicht te zien”. This is a radically different reading of the same sentence – an incorrect reading, in my opinion. For further comparisons with the Dutch translation of this novel by Jeannet Dekker I refer to the notes to my translation.

Chapter Six: Translation

First Passage

HENRY: Het is een gewone dag in oktober, zonnig en fris. Ik ben aan het werk in een kleine vochtgereguleerde (1) kamer zonder ramen op de derde verdieping van de Newberry Library, waar ik een onlangs gedoneerde verzameling van gemarmerd papier aan het rangschikken ben. Het papier is prachtig, maar het werk is saai en ik verveel me en heb medelijden met mezelf. Eigenlijk voel ik me oud, op een manier waarop alleen een achtentwintigjarige dat kan na een halve nacht op te blijven, te dure wodka te drinken en vergeefse pogingen te doen om weer in de gratie te komen bij Ingrid Carmichel. We hebben de hele avond ruziegemaakt en nu kan ik me niet eens meer herinneren waarover. Mijn hoofd bonkt. Ik heb koffie nodig.

Ik laat het gemarmerde papier in een geordende bende (2) achter en loop door het kantoor en langs de balie (3) in de leeskamer. Ik word tot stilstand gebracht door de stem van Isabelle, die zegt: “Misschien kan meneer DeTamble je helpen,” waarmee ze eigenlijk bedoelt: “Henry, gluipeerd, waar dacht jij heen te gaan?” (4) En dit (5) ongelooflijk mooie lange slanke meisje met orangerode haren draait zich om en kijkt me aan alsof ik haar persoonlijke verlosser ben (6). Mijn maag draait zich om. Blijkbaar kent ze mij, maar ik ken haar niet. God mag weten wat ik heb gezegd, gedaan, wat ik heb beloofd (7) aan dit lumineuze schepsel (8), dus ik kan niet anders dan in mijn beste bibliothecaristaaltje (9) te vragen: “Kan ik je ergens mee helpen?” Het meisje zegt min of meer ademloos (10) “Henry!” op een heel indringende manier, wat me ervan overtuigt dat we ergens in de tijd (11) iets fantastisch hebben samen. Dit verergert het feit dat ik helemaal niets van haar afweet, niet eens haar naam. Ik vraag: “Kennen wij elkaar?” en Isabelle werpt me een blik toe die zegt: *Klootzak*. (12) Maar het meisje antwoordt: “Ik ben Clare Abshire. Ik heb je gekend toen ik nog een klein meisje was,” (13) en vraagt me mee uit eten. Verbluft zeg ik ja (14). Ze kijkt me stralend aan, hoewel ik me niet heb geschoren en een kater heb en gewoon niet op mijn best ben (15). We gaan dezelfde avond nog uit eten, bij de Beau Thai, en Clare, nu ze zeker weet dat ze me later weer zal zien (16), zweeft (17) de leeskamer uit. Wanneer ik, verbouwereerd, in de lift sta, beseft ik dat een groots en prachtig deel van mijn toekomst (18) me op de een of andere manier in het heden heeft gevonden, en ik moet lachen. Ik ren door de hal, en

als ik de trap naar buiten afren zie ik Clare, die over Washington Square holt, springend en schreeuwend van vreugde (19), en ik moet bijna huilen en ik weet niet waarom.

Later die avond:

HENRY: Om zes uur haast ik me vanuit mijn werk naar huis en doe een poging mezelf te fatsoeneren. 'Huis' is tegenwoordig een piepklein maar krankzinnig duur eenkamerappartement op North Dearborn, waar ik voortdurend lichaamsdelen stoot tegen hinderlijke muren, keukenkastjes (20) en meubels. Stap één: de van zeventien sloten voorziene voordeur openen (21), mezelf in de huiskamer-die-ook-fungeert-als-slaapkamer werpen (22) en me ontdoen van kledingstukken. Stap twee: douchen en scheren. Stap drie: wanhopig in de diepten van mijn kast staren (23) en langzaam beseffen dat ik niets heb wat echt schoon is. Ik vind een wit overhemd dat nog steeds in de zak van de stomerij zit. Ik besluit een (24) zwart pak, gaatjesschoenen (25) en een lichtblauwe stropdas te dragen. Stap vier: dit alles aantrekken (26) en me realiseren dat ik eruitzie als een FBI-agent. (27) Stap vijf: om me heen kijken en beseffen dat het appartement een puinhoop is. Ik neem me voor om Clare niet mee naar huis te nemen vanavond, zelfs al krijg ik de kans. Stap zes: in de passpiegel van de badkamer kijken en een hoekige, 1,85 meter lange man aanschouwen (28) die een wilde blik heeft, eruitziet als een tienjarige Egon Schiele en gekleed is in een schoon overhemd en het pak van een begrafenisondernemer (29). Ik vraag me af wat deze vrouw mij al heeft zien dragen, aangezien ik natuurlijk niet mijn eigen kleding draag wanneer ik vanuit mijn toekomst in haar verleden terechtkom. Zei ze niet dat ze een klein meisje was? Een stortvloed van niet te beantwoorden vragen schiet door mijn hoofd. Ik sta even stil om op adem te komen. Goed. Ik grijp (30) mijn portemonnee en mijn sleutels en weg ben ik: de deur met de zevenendertig sloten afsluiten (31), met het wispelturige liftje naar beneden gaan (32), rozen voor Clare kopen in de winkel in het portaal, naar het restaurant twee straten verderop lopen, in recordtijd, maar toch nog vijf minuten te laat. Clare zit al aan een tafel en ze kijkt opgelucht wanneer ze me ziet. Ze zwaait naar me alsof ze meeloopt in een optocht.

“Hallo,” zeg ik. Clare draagt een wijnrode fluwelen jurk en parels. Ze ziet eruit als een Botticelli op de wijze van John Graham (33): grote grijze ogen, lange neus, kleine fijne mond als van een geisha. Ze heeft lang rood haar dat over haar schouders valt en tot het midden van haar rug komt. Clare is zo bleek dat ze in het kaarslicht wel een wassen beeld lijkt. Ik duw haar de rozen toe (34). “Voor jou.”

“Dankjewel,” zegt Clare, buitengewoon blij. Ze kijkt me aan en realiseert zich dat haar reactie me verwart. “Je hebt nog nooit eerder bloemen voor me meegebracht.”

Ik schuif aan tegenover haar. Ik ben gefascineerd. Deze vrouw kent me; dit is niet slechts een vluchtige kennis uit mijn toekomst (35). De serveerster verschijnt en geeft ons de menukaarten.

“Vertel,” zeg ik.

“Wat?”

“Alles. Ik bedoel, snap je waarom ik je niet ken? Dat spijt me echt-”

“O nee, dat hoeft helemaal niet. Ik bedoel, ik weet... waarom dat zo is.” Clare gaat zachter praten.

“Omdat dat alles voor jou nog niet is gebeurd, maar voor mij, nou, ik ken je al heel lang.”

“Hoe lang?”

“Ongeveer veertien jaar. Ik zag je voor het eerst toen ik zes was.”

“Jezus. Heb je me vaak gezien? Of maar een paar keer?”

“De laatste keer dat ik je zag, zei je dat ik dit mee moest nemen naar ons afspraakje in het restaurant,” Clare laat een lichtblauw kinderdagboek zien, “dus hier,” -ze geeft het aan mij- “hij is voor jou.” Ik sla het dagboek open op de plek die met een stuk krant is gemerkt. Op de pagina, waarvan de rechterbovenhoek wordt beslagen door twee op de loer liggende cockerspaniëlpuppy's, staat een lijst met data (36). De lijst begint bij 23 september 1977 en eindigt zestien kleine, blauwe puppypagina's (37) later bij 24 maart 1989. Ik tel ze. Er staan 152 data, zorgvuldig opgeschreven met een blauwe balpen in het grote handschrift (38) van een zevenjarige.

“Heb jij deze lijst gemaakt? Klopt alles?”

“Eigenlijk heb jij dit aan me gedikteerd. Een paar jaar geleden vertelde je me dat je de data van deze lijst uit je hoofd had geleerd. Dus hoe hij kan bestaan weet ik niet precies, ik bedoel, het lijkt wel een band van Möbius. Maar de data kloppen wel. Ik gebruikte ze om erachter te komen wanneer ik naar de Weide (39) moest gaan om je te kunnen zien.” De serveerster komt terug en we bestellen: tom kha kai voor mij en gang mussaman voor Clare. Een ober komt thee brengen en ik schenk voor ons allebei in.

“Wat is de Weide?” Ik stuiter bijna van opwinding. Ik heb nog nooit iemand uit mijn toekomst ontmoet, laat staan een Botticelli die me 152 keer tegen het lijf is gelopen.

“De Weide hoort bij het huis van mijn ouders in Michigan. Eén kant grenst aan een bos en aan de andere kant staat het huis. Ongeveer middenin ligt een open plek van zo'n drie meter breed met

een grote steen erin, en als je daar bent kan niemand in huis je zien omdat de grond omhoog loopt en weer afloopt naar de open plek. Vroeger speelde ik daar altijd omdat ik graag alleen speelde en omdat ik dacht dat niemand zou weten dat ik er was. Toen ik in groep drie (40) zat, kwam ik op een dag thuis van school, ging naar de open plek en daar was je.”

“Poedelnaakt en waarschijnlijk aan het overgeven.”

“Je kwam eigenlijk aardig beheerst over. Ik weet nog dat je mijn naam kende en dat je op een nogal spectaculaire manier plotseling weer verdween. Achteraf is het duidelijk dat je daar toen al eerder was geweest. Ik denk dat jouw eerste keer in 1981 was, toen was ik tien. Je bleef maar 'O mijn God' zeggen en naar me staren. Je leek je ook nogal zorgen te maken over je naaktheid, maar tegen die tijd was ik er al min of meer aan gewend dat een oude naakte man op magische wijze uit de toekomst komt en om kleding vraagt (41).” Clare glimlacht. “En om eten.”

“Wat is er zo grappig?”

“In al die jaren heb ik je aardig wat vreemde gerechten voorgeschoteld. Boterhammen met pindakaas en ansjovis. Toastjes (42) met paté en bietjes. Ik denk dat ik deels wilde uitvinden of er ook maar iets was dat je niet zou eten en dat ik deels indruk op je wilde maken met mijn culinaire kwaliteiten.”

“Hoe oud was ik toen?”

“Het oudst dat ik je heb gezien was denk ik ergens in de veertig. Het jongst weet ik niet zeker... misschien rond de dertig? Hoe oud ben je nu?”

“Achtentwintig.”

“Ik vind je er nu zo jong uitzien. De laatste jaren was je vooral ergens voorin de veertig, en ik kreeg het idee dat je best een zwaar leven leidde... Het is moeilijk te zeggen. Als je klein bent lijken alle volwassenen groot en oud.”

“Wat deden we zoal? In de Weide? Dat is een aardig tijdsbestek, wat je daar noemt.”

Clare glimlacht. “We deden van alles. Het hing af van mijn leeftijd en van het weer. Je hebt me veel geholpen met mijn huiswerk. We speelden spelletjes. Maar we praatten vooral veel over dingen. Toen ik heel jong was, dacht ik dat je een engel was en stelde je veel vragen over God. Toen ik een tiener was, probeerde je ik je zover te krijgen dat je met me naar bed ging, maar je gaf nooit toe, wat me natuurlijk alleen maar vastberadener maakte. Volgens mij dacht je dat je mij op de een of andere manier seksueel zou beschadigen (43). Op een bepaalde manier was je heel vaderlijk.”

“O. Dat is vast goed nieuws maar gek genoeg word ik op dit moment toch liever niet als vaderlijk gezien (44).” We kijken elkaar aan. We glimlachen allebei en we zijn samenzweeters.

*

“Waar woon je?” vraagt Clare.

Nee toch (45). “Ik woon zo'n twee straten verderop, maar mijn huis is heel klein en op het moment nogal rommelig. En jij?”

“Roscoe Village, op Hoyne. Maar ik heb een huisgenoot.”

“Als je meegaat naar mijn huis, moet je je ogen dichtdoen en tot duizend tellen. Heb je toevallig een helemaal niet nieuwsgierige, dove huisgenoot?” (46)

“Helaas. Ik neem nooit iemand mee naar huis. Charisse zou zich op je storten en bamboesplinters onder je vingernagels steken totdat je alles vertelde.” (47)

“Ik kan niet wachten om gemarteld te worden door iemand die Charisse heet, maar ik merk dat je dit verlangen niet met me deelt. Kom mee naar mijn stulpje.” (48) We lopen in noordelijke richting over Clark Street. Ik schiet (49) bij Clark Street Liquors naar binnen voor een fles wijn. Als ik terug op straat ben, kijkt Clare verbaasd.

“Ik dacht dat je niet mocht drinken?”

“Hoezo?” (50)

“Dokter Kendrick was daar heel strikt mee.”

“Wie is dat?” We lopen langzaam omdat Clare onpraktische schoenen draagt.

“Hij is je dokter. Hij is een specialist op het gebied van chronostoornissen (51).”

“Leg eens uit.”

“Ik weet er niet veel van. Dokter David Kendrick is een moleculair geneticus die heeft ontdekt - zal ontdekken - waarom mensen een chronostoornis hebben. Het is iets genetisch; hij ontdekt het in 2006.” Ze zucht. “Ik denk dat het gewoon nog veel te vroeg is. Je hebt me ooit verteld dat er over een jaar of tien veel meer mensen zullen zijn met een chronostoornis.”

“Ik heb nog nooit gehoord dat er anderen zijn met deze... stoornis.”

“Zelfs als je nu op zoek zou gaan naar dokter Kendrick denk ik niet dat hij je zou kunnen helpen. En als hij je had kunnen helpen, hadden wij elkaar nooit ontmoet.”

“Laten we daar maar niet over nadenken.” We staan in mijn portaal. Clare stapt als eerste in de kleine lift. Ik doe de deur dicht en druk op elf. Ze ruikt naar oude stof, zeep, zweet en bont. Ik adem diep in. De lift komt galmend (52) tot stilstand op mijn verdieping en we wringen ons eruit

(53) en lopen door de smalle gang. Ik bewerk (54) alle 107 sloten met mijn verzameling sleutels en open de deur op een kier. “Het is tijdens het eten nog veel erger geworden. Ik zal je moeten blinddoeken.” Clare giechelt als ik de wijn neerzet en mijn stropdas afdoe. Ik houd hem voor haar ogen en bind hem achter haar hoofd stevig vast. Ik doe de deur open, leid haar het appartement binnen en zet haar in de leunstoel. “Goed, begin maar met tellen.”

Second Passage

Donderdag 29 september 1977 (Clare is 6, Henry is 35)

CLARE: Vanmorgen stond er op de kalender in pappa's kantoor hetzelfde als wat de man op het papiertje heeft geschreven. Nell kookte een zacht ei voor Alicia en Etta schreeuwde tegen Mark want hij had zijn huiswerk niet gedaan en met Steve gefrisbeed. Ik zei *Etta mag ik wat kleren uit de koffer?*, (55) ik bedoelde de hutkoffer op zolder waar we ons altijd verkleden, en Etta zei *Waarvoor?* en ik zei *Ik wil me verkleden met Megan* en Etta werd boos en zei *Dat het tijd was om naar school te gaan en dat ik weer kon spelen als ik thuiskwam*. Dus ik ging naar school en we kregen rekenen en natuur (56) en taal en na het middageten Frans en muziek en godsdienst. Ik moest de hele dag denken aan een broek voor de man want hij zag eruit alsof hij heel graag een broek wilde (57). Dus toen ik thuiskwam wilde ik het (58) weer aan Etta vragen maar zij was in de stad maar van Nell mocht ik allebei de kloppers van de mixer aflikken, wat nooit mag van Etta want dan krijg je zalmenella (59). En mamma was aan het schrijven en ik wilde weer weggaan zonder het te vragen maar ze zei *Wat is er, lieverd?* dus ik vroeg het en ze zei dat ik in de tassen voor het goede doel mocht kijken en dat ik alles mocht pakken wat ik wilde. Dus toen ging ik naar de waskamer en zocht in de tassen voor het goede doel en ik vond drie broeken van pappa maar eentje had een groot gat van een sigaret erin. Dus toen pakte ik er twee en ik vond net zo'n wit overhemd als pappa draagt naar zijn werk en een stropdas met visjes erop en een rode trui. En ook de gele badjas die pappa droeg toen ik klein was en hij rook naar pappa (60). Ik stopte de kleren in een tas en zette de tas in de kast van de bijkeuken. Toen ik uit de bijkeuken kwam zag Mark me en hij zei *Wat ben je aan het doen, klootzak?* En ik zei *Niks, klootzak* en hij trok aan mijn haar en ik trapte heel hard op zijn voet en toen moest hij huilen en ging het zeggen (61). Dus toen ging ik naar mijn kamer en speelde het televisiespelletje met meneer Beer en Jane waarbij Jane de filmster is en meneer Beer vraagt of ze het leuk vindt om een filmster te zijn en Jane zegt dat ze heel graag dierenarts wil worden maar ze is zo ongelooflijk mooi dat ze wel een filmster

moet zijn en meneer Beer zegt dat ze dan misschien dierenarts kan worden als ze oud is. En Etta klopte op mijn deur en zei *Waarom heb je Mark op zijn voet getrapt?* en ik zei *Omdat Mark zomaar aan mijn haar trok* en Etta zei *Jullie beginnen me op de zenuwen te werken* en ging weer weg, dus dat was wel fijn (62). We aten alleen met Etta, want pappa en mamma waren naar een feestje. Het eten was gegrilde kip met doperwtjes en chocoladetaart en Mark kreeg het grootste stuk maar ik zei er niks van omdat ik de kloppers al had afgelikt. Dus na het eten vroeg ik aan Etta of ik naar buiten mocht en ze vroeg of ik huiswerk had en ik zei *Spellen en voor tekenen moet ik blaadjes meenemen*, en ze zei *Goed, als je maar voor het donker thuis bent*. Dus toen pakte ik mijn blauwe trui met de zebra's erop en ik pakte mijn tas en ging naar buiten naar de open plek. Maar de man was er niet en ik ging een tijdje op de grote steen zitten en toen dacht ik, ik kan maar beter wat blaadjes gaan zoeken. Dus toen ging ik terug de tuin in en vond wat blaadjes van mamma's kleine boom waarvan ze me later vertelde dat het een gingko was, en ook wat blaadjes van de esdoorn en de eik. Dus toen ging ik terug naar de open plek en hij was er nog steeds niet en ik dacht *Ach, hij heeft vast gewoon verzonnen dat hij zou komen en hij wilde dus toch niet zo graag een broek*. (63) En ik dacht misschien had Ruth gelijk want ik had haar over de man verteld en ze zei dat ik het had verzonnen want mensen verdwijnen niet zomaar in het echt, alleen op tv. Of misschien was het een droom zoals toen Buster doodging en ik droomde dat hij nog leefde en in zijn kooi zat maar toen ik wakker werd was Buster er niet en mamma zei *Dromen zijn anders dan het echte leven maar wel belangrijk*. En het begon koud te worden en ik dacht dat ik de tas misschien maar gewoon moest achterlaten en als de man kwam kon hij zijn broek pakken. Dus ik was over het pad omhoog aan het lopen en toen was er een geluid en iemand zei *Au. Verdorie, dat deed pijn*. En toen werd ik bang (64).

Third Passage

Vrijdag 2 februari 2007 (Clare is 35)

CLARE: Ik slaap de hele dag. Geluiden schieten door het huis - vuilniswagen in de straat, regen, een boom die tegen het slaapkamerraam tikt. Ik slaap. Standvastig bewoon ik mijn slaap, ik dwing hem af, bezit hem, duw dromen weg, weiger, weiger (65). De slaap is nu mijn geliefde, mijn vergeten, mijn verdoving, mijn vergetelheid. De telefoon blijft maar rinkelen. Ik heb het apparaat uitgezet dat met Henry's stem opneemt. Het is middag, het is nacht, het is ochtend. Alles

is teruggebracht tot dit bed, deze eindeloze sluimering die de dagen tot één dag maakt, de tijd doet stilstaan, de tijd uitrekt en inkrimpt totdat deze geen betekenis meer heeft.

Soms verlaat de slaap mij en doe ik alsof Etta me wakker komt maken omdat ik naar school moet. Ik haal langzaam en diep adem. Ik maak mijn ogen onbeweeglijk onder hun oogleden, ik maak mijn geest stil, en al gauw komt de Slaap, die een perfecte reproductie van zichzelf ziet, zich herenigen met zijn kopie. (66)

Soms word ik wakker en tast naar Henry. De slaap vaagt al het onderscheid weg: toen en nu, dood en levend. Ik voel geen honger meer, geen ijdelheid, geen bekommering (67). Vanmorgen zag ik mijn gezicht in de badkamerspiegel. Mijn huid lijkt wel van papier, ik ben mager, gelig, heb wallen, klitten in mijn haar. Ik lijk een dode. Ik wil niets.

Kimy komt aan het voeteneinde van het bed zitten. Ze zegt: “Clare? Alba is terug van school... laat je haar binnen, gedag zeggen?” Ik doe alsof ik slaap. Alba's handje streelt mijn gezicht. Tranen lopen uit mijn ogen. Alba zet iets, haar rugzak? haar vioolkoffer? op de grond en Kimy zegt: “Doe je schoenen uit, Alba,” en dan kruipt Alba bij me in bed. Ze slaat mijn arm om haar heen, duwt haar hoofd onder mijn kin. Ik zucht en doe mijn ogen open. Alba doet alsof ze slaapt. Ik staar naar haar dikke zwarte wimpers, haar brede mond, haar bleke huid. Ze ademt zachtjes, ze houdt mijn heup vast met haar sterke hand, ze ruikt naar potloodslijpsels en rozijnen en shampoo. Ik geef haar een kus bovenop haar hoofd. Alba doet haar ogen open, en dan is haar gelijkenis met Henry bijna meer dan ik kan verdragen. Kimy staat op en loopt de kamer uit.

Later kom ik uit bed, neem een douche, eet aan tafel met Kimy en Alba. Als Alba in bed ligt ga ik aan Henry's bureau zitten, en ik open de lades, haal de bundels brieven en papieren eruit, en begin te lezen.

Een brief die geopend moet worden in het geval van mijn dood

10 december 2006

Liefste Clare,

Terwijl ik dit schrijf, zit ik aan mijn bureau in de achterste slaapkamer en kijk naar jouw atelier in de achtertuin, die vol ligt met blauwe avondsneeuw (68). Het ijs heeft alles glibberig en korstachtig gemaakt, en alles is heel stil. Dit is het soort winteravond waarin de kilte van alle dingen de tijd lijkt te vertragen, als het smalle middenstuk van een zandloper waar de tijd zelf

doorheen loopt, maar dan langzaam, langzaam. Ik heb een gevoel dat ik bijna nooit heb, behalve als ik buiten de tijd ben, alsof ik door de tijd word gedragen en als een dikke zwemmer (69) moeiteloos op zijn oppervlak drijft. Deze avond was ik alleen thuis (jij bent bij Alicia's recital in St. Lucy) en had de plotselinge behoefte om je een brief te schrijven. Ik wilde opeens iets achterlaten, voor later. Er is denk ik niet veel tijd meer. Ik heb het gevoel dat al mijn reserves, van energie, van plezier, van volhouden (70), dun en smal zijn. Het zal me niet lukken om nog heel lang door te gaan. Ik weet dat jij dit weet.

Als je dit leest, ben ik waarschijnlijk dood. (Ik zeg waarschijnlijk omdat je nooit zeker kunt weten welke omstandigheden zich voordoen. Het voelt absurd en opgeblazen om je eigen dood simpelweg als een onontkoombaar feit aan te kondigen.) Wat deze dood betreft - ik hoop dat hij simpel, netjes en ondubbelzinnig was. Ik hoop dat hij niet teveel ophef heeft veroorzaakt. Het spijt me. (Dit lijkt wel een zelfmoordbrief. Vreemd.) Maar je weet: je weet dat als ik had kunnen blijven, als ik door had kunnen gaan, ik iedere seconde had vastgegrepen: wat hij ook was, deze dood, je weet dat hij is langsgelopen en me heeft meegenomen, als een kind dat door kobolden wordt weggevoerd.

Clare, ik wil je nogmaals zeggen, ik hou van je. Onze liefde was de draad door het labyrint, het net onder de koorddanser, het enige echte deel van mijn vreemde leven dat ik kon vertrouwen (71). Vanavond heb ik het gevoel dat mijn liefde voor jou meer massa heeft in deze wereld dan ikzelf, alsof die na mij zou kunnen achterblijven en je omringen, beschermen, vasthouden.

Ik vind het een vreselijk idee dat je zou blijven wachten. Ik weet dat je je hele leven lang op mij hebt gewacht, altijd in onzekerheid over hoe lang ik weg zou blijven (72). Tien minuten, tien dagen. Een maand. Clare, wat ben ik toch een onbestendige echtgenoot geweest, net een zeevaarder, een eenzame Odysseus die geteisterd wordt door de golven, soms sluw en soms slechts een speelbal van de goden (73). Alsjeblieft, Clare. Als ik dood ben. Houd op met wachten en wees vrij. Van mij - stop me diep in je weg en ga dan de wereld in en leef. Houd van de wereld en van jouw plaats erin, verplaats je erdoor alsof ze geen weerstand biedt, alsof ze jouw natuurlijke element is. Het leven dat ik je heb gegeven was kunstmatig (74). Ik wil niet zeggen dat je niets hebt gedaan. Je hebt schoonheid en betekenis gecreëerd, in je kunst en in Alba, die zo verbazend is, en voor mij: voor mij ben je alles geweest.

Toen mijn moeder stierf werd mijn vader volledig door haar verteerd. Dat zou ze verschrikkelijk hebben gevonden. Sindsdien wordt iedere minuut van zijn leven getekend door haar afwezigheid,

ontbreekt het bij iedere handeling aan betekenis omdat zij er niet is om er waarde aan te geven (75). En toen ik jong was begreep ik dit niet, maar nu weet ik hoe afwezigheid aanwezig kan zijn, als een beschadigde zenuw, als een donkere vogel.

Ik weet dat als ik zonder jou verder zou moeten leven, ik dat niet zou kunnen. Maar ik heb hoop, ik zie je zorgeloos lopen, met je stralende haar in de zon. Ik heb dit niet gezien met mijn ogen, maar alleen in mijn verbeelding, die foto's maakt, die je altijd heeft willen schilderen, stralend (76). Maar toch hoop ik dat dit ooit werkelijkheid zal worden (77).

Clare, er is één laatste punt, en ik heb getwijfeld of ik je dit wel moest vertellen, want bijgeloof doet me vrezen (78) dat als ik dit vertel, het niet meer zal gebeuren (ik weet het: stom) en ook omdat ik het zojuist steeds heb gehad over niet wachten, terwijl dit er misschien toe leidt dat je langer zult wachten dan je ooit hebt gedaan. Maar ik zal het je vertellen voor het geval je iets nodig hebt, later.

Afgelopen zomer zat ik in de wachtkamer van Kendrick toen ik me plotseling in een donkere gang bevond van een huis dat ik niet kende. Ik stond min of meer verstrikt tussen een stel overschoenen en het rook er naar regen. Aan het einde van de gang zag ik een rand van licht langs een deur, en dus liep ik heel langzaam en stilletjes naar de deur en keek naar binnen. De kamer was wit en werd fel verlicht door de ochtendzon. Voor het raam, met haar rug naar me toe, zat een vrouw die een koraalrode gebreide trui droeg, met lang wit haar dat over haar hele rug viel. Op een tafel naast haar stond een kop thee. Ik moet een geluidje hebben gemaakt, of misschien voelde ze dat ik achter haar stond... ze draaide zich om en zag me, en ik zag haar, en jij was het, Clare, dit was jij als een oude vrouw, in de toekomst. Het was mooi, Clare, er zijn geen woorden voor hoe mooi het was om als uit de dood terug te keren en je vast te houden, en alle jaren in je gezicht te kunnen zien (79). Ik zal je er niet nog meer over vertellen, zodat je het je kunt inbeelden, zodat je het onvoorbereid kunt ervaren als het zover is, want zover zal het ooit zijn, zover zal het komen (80). We zullen elkaar weer zien, Clare. Tot dan: leef met volle teugen, in het hier en nu, in de wereld, die zo prachtig is. Het is nu donker en ik ben erg moe. Ik hou van je, voor altijd. Tijd betekent niets.

Henry

6.2 Notes

(1) “humidity-controlled room” posed a problem, since 'humidity control' has no real Dutch equivalent and I could not simply leave this detail out of the translation. In fact, a quick visit to the Newberry Library website confirms the mention of humidity control in the novel: it is vital for the preservation of the library's materials. Air conditioning and dehumidifiers reduce the moisture in the air, but in this instance the humidity needs to be at an exact level. I wanted to retain the pace of the sentence and keep 'kamer zonder ramen op de derde verdieping' a unit as much as possible, which is why I decided in favour of the translation 'vochtgeregeerde kamer'. This way, the sentence runs much smoother than if I used 'kamer waar...'. The existing translation by Jeannet Dekker (hereon after referred to as JD) reads “waar een constante vochtigheid heerst”, but my objection to this is that it comes across as if the room is very humid, constantly.

(2) “a state of controlled chaos” is basically Henry's playful way of phrasing things. This contradiction in terms had to come across in translation, so I translated it into ‘geordende bende’. JD has the more literal “een toestand van beheerste chaos”, but I feel that in this case, the witticism is stronger when you deviate from the ST a bit. Semantically, ‘geordende bende’ is the same as ‘beheerste chaos’. Since ‘bende’ cannot be combined with ‘toestand’, I omitted that part altogether. The result is a more succinct translation that has the exact same meaning.

(3) It is not entirely clear to me what a ‘page’s desk’ is. Googling the term leads to hits that mostly seem to come from this novel itself. This is why I thought it would be best to translate this into the more general ‘balie’.

(4) An example of humour as mentioned in chapter three. I used the idiomatic 'waar dacht jij heen te gaan' instead of a more literal approach. The effect should be the same: Isabelle apparently dislikes Henry and makes him help a visitor. Henry's interpretation of her words should be funny

to the reader. Incidentally, I decided to let Isabelle address Clare with 'je' instead of 'u'. Clare is a young woman, so I think this is perfectly realistic.

(5) Instead of an article, 'this' is used for extra emphasis, creating a very enthusiastic and informal tone of voice, as if Henry is relating this story to someone. I opted for a literal translation and used the Dutch 'dit', because this technique can be applied in Dutch as well.

(6) The comical effect of the hyperbole should be retained, so I stayed close to the source text. I translated 'Jesus' into 'verlosser', which seemed to me the most natural Dutch solution.

Incidentally, this might be a reference to the song 'Personal Jesus' by Depeche Mode, later covered by Johnny Cash. This would definitely fit with the other references to punk rock music that the novel abounds with. However, since this supposed reference is so veiled, my only option was to translate it.

(7) In order to keep the humorous effect of the sentences, my translation must have a good flow. I struggled for a while with "what I have said, done or promised to". In Dutch, these verbs are used in combination with different prepositions. Eventually I chose to change the clause structure and isolate 'wat ik heb gezegd, gedaan' and combine this with ',wat ik heb beloofd aan'. The repetition of 'wat ik heb' only adds to Henry's expression of (humorous) worry, I think.

(8) "luminous creature" is another hyperbole. I translated this literally.

(9) In the source text it becomes immediately clear that 'librarianese' is a language or way of speaking that Henry just made up. For '-ese', I added 'taaltje'. I think 'bibliothecaristaaltje' conveys the same image of 'speaking like a librarian'.

(10) The beautiful verb 'to breathe' as it is used in this context means something like 'to whisper'. I thought 'ademloos', rather than 'fluisteren', brings across this image. Further, 'ademloos' can be combined nicely with the translation of 'sort of': 'zegt min of meer ademloos'.

(11) ‘at some point in time’ could be translated more generally with ‘op een bepaald moment’, but since this a novel about a time traveller, I went for ‘ergens in de tijd’. After all, time is a very different concept to Henry than it is to us. JD makes the sentence more idiomatic, but also more common: “dat we op zeker moment samen echt iets geweldigs moeten hebben beleefd” (17). Henry particularly stresses that at some point in time they must *be having* an amazing thing together. I think this is important to retain in translation.

(12) Isabelle's 'you asshole'-look is another humorous moment – see chapter three. It is the misunderstanding that is funny: Henry knows this girl is from his future (or that he is from her past), but Isabelle simply thinks that the girl is one of Henry's conquests. In my translation I stayed rather close to the source text ('werpt me een blik toe die zegt: *Klootzak*'), because I felt that the humour would be best preserved this way.

(13) ‘Ik heb je gekend toen ik nog een klein meisje was’ is a somewhat odd phrasing of a sentence. However, so is ‘I knew you when I was a little girl’. Clare indirectly emphasises the significant role Henry played in her youth and also makes it clear to him that she knows he is a time traveller.

(14) This novel has many, many commas. Though it would have been possible to translate this sentence into ‘Ik zeg ja, verbluft’, I chose the more aesthetic Dutch way of saying this: ‘Verbluft zeg ik ja.’ On the whole, however, I tried to preserve the commas as much as possible - after all, they do affect the style of the text and fulfil the role of emphasising the thought process.

(15) I wanted to retain this list with the many 'and's, since it is part of Henry’s style.

(16) For “having secured me for later” I chose to be a bit more explicit in my translation than the source text is: 'having secured me for later' is an indirect way of saying 'now that we have a date tonight'. I reflected 'secured' with 'zeker weten' and put more information in my translation. Most

important here was finding an idiomatic solution where the meaning of the sentence was clear to the reader. In the end my translation became: ‘nu ze zeker weet dat ze me later weer zal zien’.

(17) Since people don't usually ‘waft’ out of rooms, this was an interesting problem. As mentioned, Henry tends to use not-so-common verbs for some situations. Being an important aspect of the style, I kept this in my translation. 'zweeft' accurately reflects Clare's happiness and elatedness and retains the unusual verb combination.

(18) This is the worst noun phrase (and metaphor) ever: “massive winning lottery ticket chunk of my future” (see chapter three). Since it would be impossible to translate this by staying close to the source text, I figured it would be best to translate its meaning. I interpreted this as Henry realising this part of his future is massive and a chance in a million: he is very, very fortunate. I believe that with 'groots en prachtig deel van de toekomst', the 'massive' aspect is reflected. Also, 'prachtig' seems to be the essence of what Henry means by 'winning lottery ticket'. My translation is very succinct, but I think that this is the only way to keep the text readable.

(19) I added 'van vreugde', since 'whooping' is something you do out of joy, and the Dutch 'schreeuwen' does not imply this.

(20) Admittedly, 'keukenkastjes' is not the same as 'countertops' - 'aanrecht' would probably be the proper translation. However, since the only purpose of this sentence is to humorously convey how small Henry's apartment is, I used 'keukenkastjes' because this plural sounds better than 'aanrechten' and the effect should be the same.

(21) Henry quite humorously describes the steps he takes once he is home. Since you cannot 'open locks' (sloten openen/sluiten) in Dutch, I translated this with 'de van zeventien sloten voorziene voordeur'. (The number of locks keeps increasing in the text.)

(22) Another striking verb that is all about liveliness and activity, and that is funny, too: 'fling'. I chose 'werpen' for the funny visual it conjures up of the hurried way Henry enters the living-

room. This is also what I visualised when I read the source text. JD has ‘instuiven’, which is a lot less slapstick-like, but admittedly more idiomatic.

(23) Hyperbole.

(24) Perhaps a small change but in need of clarification nevertheless: I changed 'the' into 'een'.

Henry refers back to the clothes he saw in his closet, but I felt that in Dutch this sudden 'the' would feel a bit out of place, while it is only a small adjustment to change the definite article.

(25) A wing tip is a type of shoe, primarily known under this name in the USA. Another term is 'brogues'. Since the formal name does not really matter here and *brogues* do not seem to be that well-known, I searched for another description on the internet and came across 'gaatjesschoenen'.

(26) 'To don' is another verb that is striking here, since it is rather formal. However, I did not translate it with a formal Dutch equivalent, simply because 'aantrekken' seemed to be the only fitting translation.

(27) Hyperbole.

(28) Point 24 is compensated here by my translation of 'behold' into 'aanschouwen'. As a result, this almost becomes another hyperbole due to the exaggerated verb.

(29) For the discussion of this translation problem, see chapter three.

(30) Since all of Henry's actions here are rushed, I translated ‘grab’ into ‘grijpen’ instead of ‘pakken’. This stresses the fact that Henry is in a hurry.

(31) I chose to put the enumeration of Henry's acts in the same form as his previous Steps, since this refers back to that. I assume that the Dutch reader will understand that.

(32) 'Descend' is a bit formal. I considered translating this into ‘afdalen’, but that would make the incongruity bigger in Dutch than it is in the ST. I translated “cranky little elevator” into ‘het wispelturige liftje’: ‘little’ comes back in ‘liftje’ and I felt that ‘cranky’ would be best reflected with ‘wispelturig’ (kuren vertonend).

(33) Another art reference; both were painters. Botticelli lived during the early Renaissance, while John D. Graham was a Modernist painter living in the twentieth century. (There is actually another painter named John Graham, a Scot who lived in the nineteenth century.) I found it difficult to reconcile the two: why did Niffenegger draw this comparison? How is it applicable to Clare's appearance? Perhaps most likely is that she has features of Botticelli's *Venus* as well as Graham's more abstract work. In my translation I deliberately kept things vague.

(34) Henry forcefully gives Clare the roses, which is expressed by 'thrust', another striking verb. I wanted to retain this and chose for the translation 'toeduwen'.

(35) I think 'hegiras' is a strange word to use here. Perhaps it was meant to be a synonym for 'odyssey'? I could have translated it into 'reizen' or 'uitstapjes', but that sounded forced: leaving it out and retaining the 'future' aspect ultimately says the exact same thing.

(36) The puppies are 'lurking' on the page, which is another unexpected verb. I wanted to retain this and used the translation 'op de loer liggen' (see chapter three). The published Dutch translation is as follows: "Op de bladzijde, die in de rechterbovenhoek door twee cockerspaniëlpuppy's wordt opgesierd..." (19) Of course, on the whole this is a very good translation; however, I feel that by deleting Henry's typical word choice, a large deal of the style is lost.

(37) Of course, 'to puppy' is not a verb. I sought another creative solution without the translation feeling unnatural. I think 'puppypagina's' gives off the same image as 'pupped pages', being pages full of puppies. JD has translated this into 'van puppy's voorziene pagina's'. Again, a fine translation, but you could argue that some of the original charm is lost.

(38) I chose to naturalise 'Palmer method'. It is probably not that well-known to the target audience as being a US handwriting system. As a result, this information is lost, but I think this is

a necessary price to pay in order to retain the readability of the text. Andrew Chesterman calls this pragmatic translation strategy ‘cultural filtering’ (*Denken over vertalen* 258).

(39) I simply used a direct translation of 'meadow' here. The Meadow is an important aspect of Clare’s childhood and I think the word (in the source text) gives off this feeling of peacefulness and tranquillity of childhood. 'De Weide' would fit in this description.

(40) Another naturalisation, though I do not think it is very significant. The fact that Clare was in first grade is only mentioned to illustrate her age. With 'groep drie', the reader knows that Clare should be about six years old.

(41) My priority here was retaining the humour and the natural way of conversation. I wanted it to be credible that Clare is saying this and also retain her wit. That is why, for instance, I did not translate 'appear' into 'verschijnen'. The sentence sounds far more natural when Clare simply says 'komen', which is also combined much better with 'uit de toekomst' (komen).

(42) Since Ritz crackers are not a common food item in the Netherlands, I translated this into 'toastjes'. Though essentially the same, the reference to this American type of cracker is lost.

(43) 'warp me sexually' was a bit tricky, since the verb has so many meanings. It is also a very informal word. Eventually I used 'beschadigen' for my translation, which is more neutral but similarly conveys the idea that Clare would be sexually changed/damaged/twisted etc.

(44) Here, Henry is hinting to the attraction between Clare and himself, which is the main thing that should be expressed to the reader. I chose not to translate 'somehow' with ‘om een of andere reden’, but with 'gek genoeg': I think this would sooner be said in conversation.

(45) The English reader immediately knows what Henry means by 'Uh oh', and perhaps the Dutch reader would too, but I nevertheless decided to use another means of expressing Henry's 'worry'. 'Nee toch' should also reflect Henry's worried inner reaction to Clare's question.

(46) See chapter three. After comparing my translation to the one by Jeannet Dekker, I found that they are similar. Hers is as follows: “Misschien heb je een bijzonder ongeïnteresseerde en dove huisgenote?” (25) I also considered translating ‘uninquisitive’ into ‘ongeïnteresseerd’, but felt that ‘helemaal niet nieuwsgierig’ was just that bit more idiomatic. With regard to the humour I would say either choice can be justified. Just as in my translation, the humour in JD’s translation is retained by closely reproducing Clare’s remark “Maar ik heb een huisgenote”.

(47) Hyperbole; see chapter three.

(48) “Come up to my parlor” is an example of irony: A parlour is associated with luxury – it’s a private room where guests can be received. However, as Henry has said, he lives in a “tiny studio apartment”. I felt that a Dutch Henry would say ‘stulpje’ in this instance. Of course, ‘stulpje’ is poor home rather than a luxurious one, but since this word does not apply to Henry’s home either, and ‘stulpje’ is often used as an understatement for a very expensive house, the irony is retained.

(49) 'To veer' actually means to change direction, or 'zwenken'. However, 'ergens naar binnen schieten' seemed to me the most idiomatic translation.

(50) This, of course, cannot be done in Dutch. So instead of using the unnatural 'mag dat niet?', I simply translated the sentence into 'Hoezo?'

(51) A neologism: “He’s a big expert on Chrono-Impairment”. In this context, this soon becomes a plural form and when I decided to use 'stoornissen' it only seemed logical to add 'chrono' and remove the capitals. In effect, Henry's disease has a less formal name, but it is still clearly a 'time disorder'. I was able to translate it more or less literally.

(52) Initially I translated the onomatopoeic 'clang' into 'met een bons', but 'clang' refers to a metallic type of sound. That is why I used 'galmen' in my translation.

(53,54) Both 'extricate' and 'wield' are interesting verbs. These verbs are very visual and I thought they were quite witty. For my translation I took care to use verbs that equally stand out: “we wringen ons eruit” and “ik bewerk het slot”.

(55) I decided to keep the italics here, because it makes the passage stand out even more. Clare's entire style here is affected by her youthful writing and the italics are a part of this. I assume that publishers have a final say in this - in the Dutch translation, the italics have been removed. If it were my decision, however, I would keep them in the text.

(56) After some searching I discovered that mealworms are sometimes used in (American) schools as a science project for elementary school children. Since this item is only a small part of Clare's list of the day's activities, I decided it would be best to naturalise it into something that is more familiar to Dutch readers: the subject 'natuur'.

(57) This is quite the endearing statement. It is in this childlike reasoning that the humour lies (see chapter four). I tried to preserve the simplicity and the humour therein as much as possible.

(58) Normally, this 'het' would not be allowed, since it is not in any way literary or proper language: what does it refer to? However, a child *would* say such a thing, which is why I used it.

(59) I could have translated 'salmon' into 'zalm', but since the Dutch word is further removed from 'salmonella' (one syllable, to be exact), I thought it would be better to have Clare corrupt the word somewhat.

(60) Admittedly, not all of these sentences are equally readable. I tried to remain consistent throughout the passage, but I purposely kept some sentences grammatically incorrect. After all, that is what constitutes the style here. Nevertheless, I tried to make sure that, though some sentences might be grammatically incorrect, the overall readability would not be compromised.

(61) If I am not mistaken, this is how children would say that he snitched in Dutch (ik ga het zeggen hoor!)

(62) Again, the humour. You could view this as an understatement, or just as an expression of bluntness. I think 'dus dat was wel fijn' is as funny as 'so that was okay', since the understatement/bluntness is still there.

(63) Clare concludes that since Henry is not there, "he didn't want pants so bad after all". This strange way of reasoning has an endearing effect. I kept the translation simple with "hij wilde dus toch niet zo graag een broek".

(64) Clare's final 'en toen'. A final note on the JD version of this passage: Although the quality of the translation is high, apparently there was the need to clarify things. Commas have been added and sentences have been split up. An example of added commas and sentences: "Of misschien had ik het gedroomd, net als toen Buster doodging en ik droomde dat hij niets had en in zijn kooi zat, maar toen ik wakker werd, was Buster er niet. Mama zei: 'Dromen zijn anders dan in het echt maar wel belangrijk.'" As I said before, I found it hard to find a balance between readability and retaining the source text style. JD's choice is very valid, but I decided against it: I feel that, since this is one of the chapters in the novel that have a truly original, eye-catching narration, it would be a shame to diminish it.

(65) It is apparent throughout this passage how Clare feels. Her emotions influence the writing style - so naturally I tried to retain this as much as possible in my translation. In a way, this part is dreamlike: not only does Clare talk about sleep and dreams, her language becomes more intangible, too. I deleted all the present participles in this sentence, in order to suit Dutch standards. Other than that, I retained the many commas and the repetition of 'weiger', since all of this only enhances the otherworldly effect of the sentence.

(66) I liked this personification very much and did not want to remove it. In fact, I enhanced it by changing "comes to be united with" into 'komt zich herenigen met': this translation is a purposeful act, while the English in the source text is not.

(67) I think that ‘Ik voel geen honger meer, geen ijdelheid, geen bekommering’ most accurately reflects the emotions that resonate from the original “I am past hunger, past vanity, past caring”. Clare has become emotionless. I intentionally did not use a more literal 'ik ben de honger voorbij'. My initial translation was ‘Ik heb niet langer honger, ijdelheid of bekommering; however, the repetition of ‘past’ is lost here, which makes the sentence a great deal less powerful.

(68) I had not intended to split this sentence up, but I felt that this one sentence would have had too many clauses in Dutch. The comma between 'die vol ligt met...' and 'het ijs heeft...' needed to become a full stop in order to keep the sentence grammatical. Also, “blue evening snow” can be interpreted in two ways: either ‘blue’ refers to ‘evening’, or it refers to ‘snow’. I assumed that Henry is saying that the snow looks as if it were blue and translated the phrase literally into ‘blauwe avondsneeuw’.

(69) Why a 'fat lady swimmer'? This could be another art reference, since a work by Jennifer Garant (who should be fairly well-known, at least in the United States) is called *Fat Lady Swimmer*. The painting is one of a series. This was a particularly difficult thing to translate, because since it is part of a simile the reader's attention is drawn to this comparison. In the end, I decided to translate 'fat lady swimmer' into 'dikke zwemmer'. The image is that Henry is floating on a surface and whether he is a fat *lady* swimmer or not should not matter to the reader.

(70) By 'duration' Henry means the ability to stay, either in the present or alive. As he himself says, he cannot hold on much longer. This was a tricky one to translate. I first translated ‘duration’ into ‘vasthouden’, thinking of Henry grasping life. I finally changed this to ‘volhouden’, though unfortunately it does not quite have the same meaning and clarity as ‘duration’ does.

(71) “Our love has been the thread through the labyrinth, the net under the high-wire walker, the only real thing in this strange life of mine that I could ever trust”. In the case of this creative

metaphor, I was able to stay quite close to the source text. The “thread through the labyrinth” is an allusion to the Greek myth of Daedalus and the minotaur, but this should be clear to the Dutch public as well.

(72) I decided not to translate ‘patch of waiting’ (as in: a period, time or spell). If I did, I would need to include another ‘wachten’ (e.g. 'periode van wachten') and I did not like the way that read. My sentence now reads ‘Ik weet dat je je hele leven lang op mij hebt gewacht, altijd in onzekerheid over hoe lang ik weg zou blijven’. This is basically what Henry says, only I used the strategy paraphrase (Chesterman 253).

(73) This is another allusion combined with a simile and a metaphor, and an important one at that, since the Odysseus reference keeps reoccurring. When you look at the theories by Pierini (relating to allusions) and Newmark (relating to creative metaphors), there is no need to make great changes here.

(74) “ I have given you a life of suspended animation”. ‘Suspended animation’ would literally mean ‘schijndood’, but of course I could not use this term. Since Henry is trying to say that he basically put Clare’s life on hold, I translated the word into ‘kunstmatig’. JD’s translation reads: “Ik heb je een leven vol spanning en wachten geboden”. I have seen that she tends to translate freely in many occasions, and this often benefits the translation, but in this instance I feel that the original meaning has become lost entirely.

(75) I found it difficult to translate “because she was not there to measure against”, because the meaning of this clause was not clear to me. JD opted for the following: “omdat hij die niet met haar kan delen” (489). However, I decided in favour of “omdat zij er niet is om er waarde aan te geven”. The way I see it, every action loses its meaning because his wife is no longer there to express the way *she* experienced it or how she feels about it.

(76) Here, the imagination almost becomes a character in itself, the personification is so strong. I did not change any of this. What I did change, was the ‘vision’ that Henry mentions in the previous sentence. ‘I have this vision of you walking unencumbered’ is not the same as a literal ‘ik zie je in een visioen zorgeloos lopen’, which is why I translated this into ‘ik zie je zorgeloos lopen’. In effect, I had to change ‘I hope that this vision will be true, anyway’. More on that below.

(77) Firstly, I made a separate sentence of this clause. Sentences in this novel are long and full of coordinating conjunctions, and I retained this most of the time, but in this case I felt that a separate sentence would improve the readability and also emphasize this final remark. Henry is saying that although he has only seen Clare like this with his imagination, he hopes that she will someday be as happy as he imagines her to be. Because I deleted ‘vision’ earlier, I had to make changes in this sentence as well. I feel that ‘werkelijkheid worden’ best summarizes what Henry is trying to say. JD’s solution was: “maar ik hoop dat dit beeld waarheid zal worden”.

(78) ‘superstitiously afraid’ requires some creativity on the translator’s part. I wanted to include both the aspect of superstition and worry. I considered ‘bijgeloof maakt me bang’, but that sounds clunky and also a bit dramatic. In the end, I went with ‘bijgeloof doet me vrezen’.

(79) “to see the years all present in your face” is a (stock) metaphor. Though a lot of stock metaphors need to be translated by replacing the ST image with another image, in this case the Dutch expression holds the same image. Strangely, then, JD translated this metaphor into “om na al die jaren je gezicht te zien”. The ‘years’ Henry speaks of are removed and consequently the sentence has a whole different meaning. A real pity, since this passage forms the emotional centre of the novel.

(80) Tricky was “so you can have it unrehearsed when the time comes, as it will, as it does come.” I think that in a way, Henry is playing with the relativity of time: the time comes, it will

come, but it is also happening right now. The main point, however, is the message that the time will come – it will truly happen. This is why my translation reads ‘...ervaren als het zover is, want zover zal het ooit zijn, zover zal het komen.’”

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

He is coming, and I am here. (518)

Studying *The Time Traveler's Wife* was interesting; translating it was a challenge. The novel does not really lend itself to be pigeon-holed; it contains elements from science fiction, drama and romance and blends these together in a story that has greatly differing stylistic qualities. It already has two narrators; when one of these is occasionally a child while narrating and the other speaks through the pages by means of a letter, interesting changes in style are to be found.

This chapter is by no means conclusive, but I hope that my findings are interesting nevertheless, even though they can only be applied to this particular novel. After looking closely at three excerpts from the novel, what I found and focused at were two aspects of this novel's style that are significant and also pose translation problems: humour and figurative language. Translating humour is fun to do, since it allows the translator to be creative, but this is also where the difficulty lies. Raphaelson-West's joke-type distinctions and Attardo's Script Oppositions helped me identify the various instances of humour in *The Time Traveler's Wife*. There were a lot more than I expected there to be. By identifying the SOs that were present, I gained more insight into what produced the actual humour and came across hyperboles, linguistic jokes and more. The second excerpt I translated, which had young Clare as the narrator, was basically one big instance of humour, one big Script Opposition. You can treat the passage in itself as a (linguistic) joke, thus revealing the SO normal narration/child narration. This turned out to be what makes it different from the first passage I picked out: while Henry is trying to be funny (as far as you can say such a thing), Clare's humour is unintentional. When humour stems from a strange narration that is intertwined with the source language, theories on humour such as Attardo and Raskin's are

no longer applicable. The problem rather lies in reproducing the off-beat, charming and endearing writing style.

Secondly, I became aware of the great amount of tropes in the language of this novel. I divided these up into similes and metaphors and tried to make sense of them by using theories by Pierini and Newmark. The final passage that I looked at contained most of these, since the writing there is so emotional. In general I found that creative similes and metaphors are not necessarily the ones that pose the greatest translation problems. Rather, stock metaphors and idiomatic similes pose greater challenges, simply because they are so imbedded in the source language. Differences between source and target language are what make translation difficult, after all. Further, (similes that hold) allusions are found throughout this book. In my translation I encountered allusions to Schiele, Botticelli, John Graham, The *Odyssey*, the myth of Daedalus and the minotaur and possibly a Jennifer Garant painting. (Or perhaps I am reaching here.)

The overall writing style of this novel is fast and accessible but can also be touching and quite heavy. This makes the novel all the more refreshing. The novel's themes along with its literary allusions and original writing style are what make this novel more than a chick flick or a simple romantic drama. I hope that the excerpts I translated reflect this. There is yet a lot left to be said about (the translation of) this book; it is simply full of interesting things. Niffenegger can write as a female or male narrator of all ages, with a great sense of humour and poetic qualities, which I truly consider to be a great feat. Hopefully my translation somewhat adds to the translation of this novel and the translation theory that is already out there. In any case, I hope that this study of the novel has made it clear that this is very much a novel worthy to be studied. Romantic novels are not necessarily of interest to women only; this particular one contains plenty of interesting material to wrap your head around.

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Appendices: Source Text Fragments

1. Page 9-13 and 17-18

HENRY: It's a routine day in October, sunny and crisp. I'm at work in a small windowless humidity-controlled room on the fourth floor of the Newberry, cataloging a collection of marbled papers that has recently been donated. The papers are beautiful, but cataloging is dull, and I am feeling bored and sorry for myself. In fact, I am feeling old, in the way only a twenty-eight-year-old can after staying up half the night drinking overpriced vodka and trying, without success, to win himself back into the good graces of Ingrid Carmichel. We spent the entire evening fighting, and now I can't even remember what we were fighting about. My head is throbbing. I need coffee. Leaving the marbled papers in a state of controlled chaos, I walk through the office and past the page's desk in the Reading Room. I am halted by Isabelle's voice saying, "Perhaps Mr. DeTamble can help you," by which she means "Henry, you weasel, where are you slinking off to?" And this astoundingly beautiful amber-haired tall slim girl turns around and looks at me as though I am her personal Jesus. My stomach lurches. Obviously she knows me, and I don't know her. Lord only knows what I have said, done, or promised to this luminous creature, so I am forced to say in my best librarianese, "Is there something I can help you with?" The girl sort of breathes "Henry!" in this very evocative way that convinces me that at some point in time we have a really *amazing* thing together. This makes it worse that I don't know anything about her, not even her name. I say "Have we met?" and Isabelle gives me a look that says *You asshole*. But the girl says, "I'm Clare Abshire. I knew you when I was a little girl," and invites me out to dinner. I accept, stunned. She is glowing at me, although I am unshaven and hung over and just not at my best. We are going to meet for dinner this very evening, at the Beau Thai, and Clare, having secured me for later, wafts out of the Reading Room. As I stand in the elevator, dazed, I realize that a massive winning lottery ticket chunk of my future has somehow found me here in the present, and I start to laugh. I cross the lobby, and as I run down the stairs to the street I see Clare running across Washington Square, jumping and whooping, and I am near tears and I don't know why.

Later that evening:

HENRY: At 6:00 p.m. I race home from work and attempt to make myself attractive. Home these days is a tiny but insanely expensive studio apartment on North Dearborn; I am constantly banging parts of myself on inconvenient walls, countertops and furniture. Step One: unlock seventeen locks on apartment door, fling myself into the living room-which-is-also-my-bedroom and begin stripping off clothing. Step Two: shower and shave. Step Three: stare hopelessly into the depths of my closet, gradually becoming aware that nothing is exactly clean. I discover one white shirt still in its dry cleaning bag. I decide to wear the black suit, wing tips, and pale blue tie. Step Four: don all of this and realize I look like an FBI agent. Step Five: look around and realize that the apartment is a mess. I resolve to avoid bringing Clare to my apartment tonight even if such a thing is possible. Step Six: look in full-length bathroom mirror and behold angular, wild-eyed 6' 1" ten-year-old Egon Schiele look-alike in clean shirt and funeral director suit. I wonder

what sorts of outfits this woman has seen me wearing, since I am obviously not arriving from my future into her past wearing clothes of my own. She said she was a little girl? A plethora of unanswerables runs through my head. I stop and breathe for a minute. Okay. I grab my wallet and my keys, and away I go: lock the thirty-seven locks, descend in the cranky little elevator, buy roses for Clare in the shop in the lobby, walk two blocks to the restaurant in record time but still five minutes late. Clare is already seated in a booth and she looks relieved when she sees me. She waves at me like she's in a parade.

"Hello," I say. Clare is wearing a wine-colored velvet dress and pearls. She looks like a Botticelli by way of John Graham: huge gray eyes, long nose, tiny delicate mouth like a geisha. She has long red hair that covers her shoulders and falls to the middle of her back. Clare is so pale she looks like a waxwork in the candlelight. I thrust the roses at her. "For you."

"Thank you," says Clare, absurdly pleased. She looks at me and realizes that I am confused by her response. "You've never given me flowers before."

I slide into the booth opposite her. I'm fascinated. This woman knows me; this isn't some passing acquaintance of my future hegirl. The waitress appears and hands us menus.

"Tell me," I demand.

"What?"

"Everything. I mean, do you understand why I don't know you? I'm terribly sorry about that--"

"Oh, no, you shouldn't be. I mean, I know...why that is." Clare lowers her voice. "It's because for you none of it has happened yet, but for me, well, I've known you for a long time."

"How long?"

"About fourteen years. I first saw you when I was six."

"Jesus. Have you seen me very often? Or just a few times?"

"The last time I saw you, you told me to bring this to dinner when we met again," Clare shows me a pale blue child's diary, "so here," -- she hands it to me -- "you can have this." I open it to the place marked with a piece of newspaper. The page, which has two cocker spaniel puppies lurking in the upper right hand corner, is a list of dates. It begins with September 23, 1977, and ends sixteen small, blue, puppyed pages later on May 24, 1989. I count. There are 152 dates, written with great care in the large open Palmer Method blue ball point pen of a seven year old.

"You made the list? These are all accurate?"

"Actually, you dictated this to me. You told me a few years ago that you memorized the dates from this list. So I don't know how exactly this exists; I mean, it seems sort of like a Mobius strip. But they are accurate. I used them to know when to go down to the Meadow to meet you." The waitress reappears and we order: Tom Kha Kai for me and Gang Mussaman for Clare. A waiter brings tea and I pour us each a cup.

"What is the Meadow?" I am practically hopping with excitement. I have never met anyone from my future before, much less a Botticelli who has encountered me 152 times.

"The Meadow is a part of my parents' place up in Michigan. There's woods at one edge of it, and the house on the opposite end. More or less in the middle is a clearing about ten feet in diameter with a big rock in it, and if you're in the clearing no one at the house can see you because the land swells up and then dips in the clearing. I used to play there because I liked to play by myself and I thought no one knew I was there. One day when I was in first grade I came home from school and went out to the clearing and there you were."

"Stark naked and probably throwing up."

"Actually, you seemed pretty self-possessed. I remember you knew my name, and I remember

you vanishing quite spectacularly. In retrospect, it's obvious that you had been there before. I think the first time for you was in 1981; I was ten. You kept saying 'Oh my god,' and staring at me. Also, you seemed pretty freaked out about the nudity, and by then I just kind of took it for granted that this old nude guy was going to magically appear from the future and demand clothing." Clare smiles. "And food."

"What's funny?"

"I made you some pretty weird meals over the years. Peanut butter and anchovy sandwiches. Pate and beets on Ritz crackers. I think partly I wanted to see if there was anything you wouldn't eat and partly I was trying to impress you with my culinary wizardry."

"How old was I?"

"I think the oldest I have seen you was forty-something. I'm not sure about youngest; maybe about thirty? How old are you now?"

"Twenty-eight."

"You look very young to me now. The last few years you were mostly in your early forties, and you seemed to be having kind of a rough life. . . . It's hard to say. When you're little all adults seem big, and old."

"So what did we do? In the Meadow? That's a lot of time, there."

Clare smiles. "We did lots of things. It changed depending on my age, and the weather. You spent a lot of time helping me do my homework. We played games. Mostly we just talked about stuff. When I was really young I thought you were an angel; I asked you a lot of questions about God. When I was a teenager I tried to get you to make love to me, and you never would, which of course made me much more determined about it. I think you thought you were going to warp me sexually, somehow. In some ways you were very parental."

"Oh. That's probably good news but somehow at the moment I don't seem to be wanting to be thought of as parental." Our eyes meet. We both smile and we are conspirators.

(...)

"Where do you live?" Clare asks.

Uh oh. "I live about two blocks from here, but my place is tiny and really messy right now. You?" "Roscoe Village, on Hoyne. But I have a roommate."

"If you come up to my place you have to close your eyes and count to one thousand. Perhaps you have a very uninquisitive deaf roommate?"

"No such luck. I never bring anyone over; Charisse would pounce on you and stick bamboo slivers under your fingernails until you told all."

"I long to be tortured by someone named Charisse, but I can see that you do not share my taste. Come up to my parlor." We walk north along Clark. I veer into Clark Street Liquors for a bottle of wine. Back on the street Clare is puzzled.

"I thought you aren't supposed to drink?"

"I'm not?"

"Dr. Kendrick was very strict about it."

"Who's he?" We are walking slowly because Clare is wearing impractical shoes.

"He's your doctor; he's a big expert on Chrono-Impairment."

"Explain."

"I don't know very much. Dr. David Kendrick is a molecular geneticist who discovered - will discover why people are chrono-impaired. It's a genetic thing; he figures it out in 2006." She sighs. "I guess it's just way too early. You told me once that there are a lot more chrono-impaired

people about ten years from now."

"I've never heard of anyone else who has this -- impairment."

"I guess even if you went out right now and found Dr. Kendrick he wouldn't be able to help you. And we would never have met, if he could."

"Let's not think about that." We are in my lobby. Clare precedes me into the tiny elevator. I close the door and push eleven. She smells like old cloth, soap, sweat, and fur. I breathe deeply. The elevator clangs into place on my floor and we extricate ourselves from it and walk down the narrow hallway. I wield my fistful of keys on all 107 locks and crack the door slightly. "It's gotten much worse during dinner. I'm going to have to blindfold you." Clare giggles as I set down the wine and remove my tie. I pass it over her eyes and tie it firmly at the back of her head. I open the door and guide her into the apartment and settle her in the armchair. "Okay, start counting."

2. Page 44-45

Thursday, September 29, 1977 (Clare is 6, Henry is 35)

Clare: The calendar on Daddy's desk this morning said the same as the paper the man wrote. Nell was making a soft egg for Alicia and Etta was yelling at Mark cause he didn't do his homework and played Frisbee with Steve. I said *Etta can I have some clothes from the trunks?* meaning the trunks in the attic where we play dress up, and Etta said *What for?* and I said *I want to play dress up with Megan* and Etta got mad and said *It was time to go to school and I could worry about playing when I got home.* So I went to school and we did adding and mealworms and language arts and after lunch French and music and religion. I worried all day about pants for the man cause he seemed like he really wanted pants. So when I got home I went to ask Etta again but she was in town but Nell let me lick both the beaters of cake batter which Etta won't let us because you get salmon. And Mama was writing and I was gonna go away without asking but she said *What is it, Baby?* so I asked and she said I could go look in the Goodwill bags and have anything I wanted. So I went to the laundry room and looked in the Goodwill bags and found three pairs of Daddy's pants but one had a big cigarette hole. So I took two and I found a white shirt like Daddy wears to work and a tie with fishes on it and a red sweater. And the yellow bathrobe that Daddy had when I was little and it smelled like Daddy. I put the clothes in a bag and put the bag in the mud-room closet. When I was coming out of the mud room Mark saw me and he said *What are you doing, asshole?* And I said *Nothing, asshole* and he pulled my hair and I stepped on his foot really hard and then he started to cry and went to tell. So I went up to my room and played Television with Mr. Bear and Jane where Jane is the movie star and Mr. Bear asks her about how it is being a movie star and she says she really wants to be a veterinarian but she is so incredibly pretty she has to be a movie star and Mr. Bear says maybe she could be a veterinarian when she's old. And Etta knocked and said *Why are you stepping on Mark?* and I said *Because Mark pulled my hair for no reason* and Etta said *You two are getting on my nerves* and went away so that was okay. We ate dinner with just Etta because Daddy and Mama went to a party. It was fried chicken with little peas and chocolate cake and Mark got the biggest piece but I didn't say anything because I licked the beaters. So after dinner I asked Etta if I could go outside and she said did I have homework and I said *Spelling and bring leaves for art class,* and she said *Okay as long as you come in by dark.* So I went and got my blue sweater with the zebras and I got the bag and I

went out and went to the clearing. But the man wasn't there and I sat on the rock for a while and then I thought I better get some leaves. So I went back to the garden and found some leaves from Mama's little tree that she told me later was Ginkgo, and some leaves from the Maple and the Oak. So then I went back to the clearing he still wasn't there and I thought *Well, I guess he just made up that he was coming and he didn't want pants so bad after all.* And I thought maybe Ruth was right cause I told her about the man and she said I was making it up because people don't disappear in real life only on TV. Or maybe it was a dream like when Buster died and I dreamed he was okay and he was in his cage but I woke up and no Buster and Mama said *Dreams are different than real life but important too.* And it was getting cold and I thought maybe I should just leave the bag and if the man came he could have his pants. So I was walking back up the path and there was this noise and somebody said *Ouch. Dang, that hurt.* And then I was scared.

3. Page 501-504

Friday, February 2, 2007 (Clare is 35)

CLARE: I sleep all day. Noises flit around the house—garbage truck in the alley, rain, tree rapping against the bedroom window. I sleep. I inhabit sleep firmly, willing it, wielding it, pushing away dreams, refusing, refusing. Sleep is my lover now, my forgetting, my opiate, my oblivion. The phone rings and rings. I have turned off the machine that answers with Henry's voice. It is afternoon, it is night, it is morning. Everything is reduced to this bed, this endless slumber that makes the days into one day, makes time stop, stretches and compacts time until it is meaningless.

Sometimes sleep abandons me and I pretend, as though Etta has come to get me up for school. I breathe slowly and deeply. I make my eyes still under eyelids, I make my mind still, and soon, Sleep, seeing a perfect reproduction of himself, comes to be united with his facsimile.

Sometimes I wake up and reach for Henry. Sleep erases all differences: then and now; dead and living. I am past hunger, past vanity, past caring. This morning I caught sight of my face in the bathroom mirror. I am paper-skinned, gaunt, yellow, ring-eyed, hair matted. I look dead. I want nothing.

Kimy sits at the foot of the bed. She says, "Clare? Alba's home from school.. .won't you let her come in, say hi?" I pretend to sleep. Alba's little hand strokes my face. Tears leak from my eyes. Alba sets something, her knapsack? her violin case? on the floor and Kimy says, "Take off your shoes, Alba," and then Alba crawls into bed with me. She wraps my arm around her, thrusts her head under my chin. I sigh and open my eyes. Alba pretends to sleep. I stare at her thick black eyelashes, her wide mouth, her pale skin; she is breathing carefully, she clutches my hip with her strong hand, she smells of pencil shavings and rosin and shampoo. I kiss the top of her head. Alba opens her eyes, and then her resemblance to Henry is almost more than I can bear. Kimy gets up and walks out of the room.

Later I get up, take a shower, eat dinner sitting at the table with Kimy and Alba. I sit at Henry's desk after Alba has gone to bed, and I open the drawers, I take out the bundles of letters and papers, and I begin to read.

A Letter to Be Opened in the Event of My Death

December 10, 2006

Dearest Clare,

As I write this, I am sitting at my desk in the back bedroom looking out at your studio across the backyard full of blue evening snow, everything is slick and crusty with ice, and it is very still. It's one of those winter evenings when the coldness of every single thing seems to slow down time, like the narrow center of an hourglass which time itself flows through, but slowly, slowly. I have the feeling, very familiar to me when I am out of time but almost never otherwise, of being buoyed up by time, floating effortlessly on its surface like a fat lady swimmer. I had a sudden urge, tonight, here in the house by myself (you are at Alicia's recital at St. Lucy's) to write you a letter. I suddenly wanted to leave something, for after. I think that time is short, now. I feel as though all my reserves, of energy, of pleasure, of duration, are thin, small. I don't feel capable of continuing very much longer. I know you know.

If you are reading this, I am probably dead. (I say probably because you never know what circumstances may arise; it seems foolish and self-important to just declare one's own death as an out-and-out fact.) About this death of mine—I hope it was simple and clean and unambiguous. I hope it didn't create too much fuss. I'm sorry. (This reads like a suicide note. Strange.) But you know: you know that if I could have stayed, if I could have gone on, that I would have clutched every second: whatever it was, this death, you know that it came and took me, like a child carried away by goblins.

Clare, I want to tell you, again, I love you. Our love has been the thread through the labyrinth, the net under the high-wire walker, the only real thing in this strange life of mine that I could ever trust. Tonight I feel that my love for you has more density in this world than I do, myself: as though it could linger on after me and surround you, keep you, hold you.

I hate to think of you waiting. I know that you have been waiting for me all your life, always uncertain of how long this patch of waiting would be. Ten minutes, ten days. A month. What an uncertain husband I have been, Clare, like a sailor, Odysseus alone and buffeted by tall waves, sometimes wily and sometimes just a plaything of the gods. Please, Clare. When I am dead. Stop waiting and be free. Of me—put me deep inside you and then go out in the world and live. Love the world and yourself in it, move through it as though it offers no resistance, as though the world is your natural element. I have given you a life of suspended animation. I don't mean to say that you have done nothing. You have created beauty, and meaning, in your art, and Alba, who is so amazing, and for me: for me you have been everything. After my mom died she ate my father up completely. She would have hated it. Every minute of his life since then has been marked by her absence, every action has lacked dimension because she is not there to measure against. And when I was young I didn't understand, but now, I know, how absence can be present, like a damaged nerve, like a dark bird.

If I had to live on without you I know I could not do it. But I hope, I have this vision of you walking unencumbered, with your shining hair in the sun. I have not seen this with my eyes, but only with my imagination, that makes pictures, that always wanted to paint you, shining; but I hope that this vision will be true, anyway.

Clare, there is one last thing, and I have hesitated to tell you, because I'm superstitiously afraid that telling might cause it to not happen (I know: silly) and also because I have just been going on about not waiting and this might cause you to wait longer than you have ever waited before. But I

will tell you in case you need something, after.

Last summer, I was sitting in Kendrick's waiting room when I suddenly found myself in a dark hallway in a house I don't know. I was sort of tangled up in a bunch of galoshes, and it smelled like rain. At the end of the hall I could see a rim of light around a door, and so I went very slowly and very quietly to the door and looked in. The room was white, and intensely lit with morning sun. At the window, with her back to me, sat a woman, wearing a coral-colored cardigan sweater, with long white hair all down her back. She had a cup of tea beside her, on a table. I must have made some little noise, or she sensed me behind her...she turned and saw me, and I saw her, and it was you, Clare, this was you as an old woman, in the future. It was sweet, Clare, it was sweet beyond telling, to come as though from death to hold you, and to see the years all present in your face. I won't tell you any more, so you can imagine it, so you can have it unrehearsed when the time comes, as it will, as it does come. We will see each other again, Clare. Until then, live, fully, present in the world, which is so beautiful. It's dark, now, and I am very tired. I love you, always. Time is nothing.

Henry