

# *My Most Excellent Year*

Translating Narrative Style, Characterization and Cultural Specific Items



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## Introduction

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This thesis studies the different translational problems in the novel *My Most Excellent Year* by Steve Kluger. The novel is part of a series of books created by Lemniscaat named *Made in the USA*, which have been translated into Dutch. All of the books are distinctly American stories and therefore entail many elements that are typical of the American culture, such as baseball and football. These American elements, or culture specific items, pose many translation problems in themselves, but this book has a few extra layers to it. Firstly, there are three main characters and five additional flat characters that all have an extremely distinctive narrative style. Every style differs greatly from the other due to word choice, and the topics that are talked about. Secondly, the manner in which the culture specific items found in this book are intertwined with the personalities of the characters themselves make the problems they create even harder to solve.

Since this book provides so many interesting translational topics, the reflection section of this thesis will be divided into three parts. In order to determine what kind of translation problems can be found in this novel, I will start with an extensive analysis of the source text. Next I will discuss the two most important translation problems, namely style and characterization and what pitfalls a translator can encounter when dealing with them. I will analyze a few existing articles on these subjects and will then state which theories will be applied in what way in this thesis. This theoretical section will be followed by a more practical one in which I will apply the theories in an analysis of the different characterizations and narrative styles of the three main characters, T.C., Augie and Alejandra, and a short analysis of the flat characters, namely Pop, Lori, Mom, Dad and Clint. The fourth part of my reflection will deal with culture specific items, and I will start by analyzing the article Aixelá wrote on this topic. There are

many culture specific items in this book, and since I cannot cover them all I have made a selection of the most interesting ones: baseball, the names of all the actresses and singers Augie constantly talks to or about, and the lines from plays and movies that are frequently quoted.

In the final part of the thesis, all of the theories will be applied when I translate the multiple source texts fragments. I will finalize my thesis by tying up some loose ends in the conclusion.

## 1. A Close Analysis of the Source Text

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### *1.1 Genre – Young Adult*

The series *Made in the USA* is part of a genre that has been created fairly recently, namely the young adult genre. It was created specifically for readers from the age of fourteen to seventeen and I believe it has filled a gap in the market that should have been filled years ago. Having worked in a bookstore for nearly two years, I know how difficult it is to find suitable books for teenagers, because there never existed a genre that was aimed specifically at them. These teenagers were always left in the middle of children's books and adult books. The series fits the mid-teenage profile exactly, because the subjects are all very relatable: the novels deal with teenage troubles like first loves, peer pressure, insecurities, parent-child relationships and even touch upon subjects like abuse and suicide. The authors of the books are not afraid to let their main characters think about feelings most teenagers would never say out loud, which probably also plays a big role in the popularity of the series.

### *1.2 The author – Steve Kluger*

Steve Kluger did an amazing job in creating real and relatable characters for *My Most Excellent Year*. When I visited his website I immediately knew why: the book is highly autobiographical. The fact that his website states he “grew up during the Sixties with only two heroes: Tom Seaver and Ethel Merman” (Kluger, “Biography”) shows that he based both T.C. and Augie's characters on real life experience. The two projects the main characters are working on, T.C.'s ‘Save Buck Weaver’ website and Alejandra and T.C.'s ‘Bring Baseball Back to the Manzanar National Historic Site’ initiative, are actually projects Kluger has

worked on himself. In an interview he did with Harper Collins Publishers on his book *Almost Like Being in Love*, for which he won the 2005 LAMBA Literary Award, he stated that

[t]wenty years ago, I began fighting for Japanese American internment redress, and after the reparations bill was passed, I segued to lobbying for a permanent internment memorial at the Manzanar relocation center site. Once this too came to pass, I went head-to-head with the Department of the Interior to have them restore Manzanar's baseball diamond—which had been left out of the restoration plans—as the single landmark that represented the heart and soul of every one of the displaced Americans imprisoned in those camps between 1942 and 1945. (Kluger, “Steve Kluger on”)

The fact that Kluger is homosexual himself ensures insider knowledge on what is hip and happening in the gay world and which female international star is the new idol. He lives by the rule ‘write what you know’. In an interview he did with *The Bluestocking Society* he stated “95% of all the characters in all of my novels are real people; most of the time, I even use their real names” (Kluger, “Interview”). He is obsessed with baseball and it often plays an important role in his novels, so important it may even be called another character. According to Kluger, “[n]o metaphor invokes the human comedy better than baseball does. In fact, far from being merely a game, it’s an indicator that lets us know what’s just around the corner in our own lives. [...]Baseball reflects our culture and our society the same way a rearview mirror lets you know what’s sneaking up behind you”.

Kluger is also known for his nontraditional use of narrative devices. Harper Collins asked him if he has a particular reason for doing so and he answered that it “helps to establish an intimacy and an immediacy that you just can't get with traditional narrative. The only real challenge is coming up with the storytelling devices peculiar to that particular story and making sure that they cover all bases” (Kluger, “Steve Kluger on”).



### *1.3 My Most Excellent Year*

This novel is no different from the other books in the *Made in the USA* series, except for one major factor: it is extremely upbeat. Kluger focused on all kinds of teenage problems, but did this with an ever-positive approach. His three leading teenagers have to deal with issues such as death, homosexuality, and parental pressure, but Kluger never let them give up on hope, love and friendship. What makes the characters so relatable is the fact that they have the same concerns as every other teenager in the world. For instance, one of the guys sends the following instant message: “Between homeroom and algebra I grew another armpit hair. That makes 9. Do you still only have 6?” (Kluger, *My Most* 25). Not every boy in the world would voice this thought, but all of them are concerned with their bodily developments. The characters each have their own personality, and the fact that the three main characters differ this much is what makes the book a great source text. Their individuality gives them their highly distinct mind set and easily distinguishable narrative style, which cause many translation problems. T.C. for example, is a typical male teenager in the fact that he is obsessed with sports. In his case it is baseball and it returns in many of his narrations. Translating baseball phrases is always a challenge, because the terminology is so specific and unique, and when Dutch is the target language this proves to be an even greater challenge because Dutch has no official baseball terminology. The other leading man of the book is Augie, T.C.’s brother for all intents and purposes. He is as gay as a man can be and his mind is occupied with typical gay thoughts: there is not a chapter in which he does not talk to or about a once famous actress like Judy Garland or Lauren Bacall. He frequently cites lines from songs and movies as well, and these two elements pose two other translation problems. They will be discussed in chapters 4.4 and 4.5. Alejandra is their talented friend who has been raised in a political family: her father is a former ambassador to Mexico and she still keeps in touch with a Secret Service Agent who used to take her to the library so she would still have

some semblance of a childhood. Her narrative style and personality reflect her upbringing: she has a very formal way of writing and conversing, and she never fails to consider every possible solution to a problem. The translator will have to find the perfect degree of formality when translating Alejandra's chapters. The challenges in translating this text will thus come shooting from all angles.

Regardless of its similarity to Kluger's life, *My Most Excellent Year* is a fictional novel. T.C. is the experiencing self, the protagonist, and the central character (Keen 36). It is a consonant narration, because after introducing the story to the reader as a dissonant narrator, or being a self that exists later in time and reflects back, T.C. becomes a "narrating self positioned very close to the experiences". He can be characterized as the main character and the actual narrator, because he introduces the readers to the story by telling them this is the year his life changed forever, and then continues to tell the beginning. However, his two best friends play such an important role in his life that they each tell their own side of the story as independent narrators. The narrative view therefore switches with every chapter and the narrative situation is as follows: there is one narrator-focalizer in every chapter, and two character-focalizers. For example, when T.C. is the narrator-focalizer, Augie and Alejandra are character-focalizers. The flat characters also briefly voice their own thoughts in e-mails, letters and newspaper articles, which makes them character-focalizers as well. Their voices are also all quite distinctive. It is safe to state this book is a clear case of 'heteroglossia' or 'meerstemmigheid'.

T.C.'s narratee is his mother, Augie's changes with every chapter, but is always a famous actress or singer, and Alejandra's narratee is Jacqueline Kennedy. The different natures of the relationships the main characters have with their narratees influence the level of colloquialism in a specific chapter, and may for example also determine how a narratee is

addressed. This may be straightforward in English, because ‘dear’ can also be used for vague acquaintances, but in Dutch there is an enormous difference between ‘Lieve’, ‘Beste’ and ‘Geachte’. The narrator’s story is always subjective and since all of the main narrators are homodiegetic, and to be more precise, autodiegetic narrators who actively participate in the story, they are not all-knowing. An example that shows how clear this is, is the fact that neither T.C. nor Alejandra knows what the other person is thinking or if their feelings are mutual. Since these two tell the reader their story from their own perspective, the reader does not know why Alejandra reacted the way she reacted when T.C. is describing an encounter. Most of the time Kluger found a way to explain this when it was Alejandra’s turn to narrate. A translator should pay extra attention to word choice, because some words are more subjective than others and may give the reader more information about a character-focalizer’s thoughts and feelings than the original author meant to at that point.

The characterization of the characters is implicitly done, i.e. Kluger used ‘telling’ rather than ‘showing’. The narrator of a certain chapter gives the reader information about the other characters by telling the story, and when the narrative point of view shifts, the reader receives information about the other characters from the new narrator.

The story world resembles reality. It more or less starts off post rem, because in the first chapter T.C. introduces the reader to the story by telling in hindsight how in this particular year he “got drop-kicked by a six-year-old and the girl of [his] dreams” (Kluger *My Most* 4), but he does not give any specifics: he does not state how his life has changed or what has changed exactly. So readers do start off with a clean slate, because they do not know how it used to be or how it will turn out. The narrators then get to the actual telling of the story, which is done chronologically. During the story there are many flashbacks, for example

paragraphs where either T.C. or Augie remembers the time when T.C.'s mother was still alive.

It is also interesting to take a look at the many different narrative devices Kluger decided to use in this novel. He used essays, quizzes, instant messenger conversations, e-mails, diary entries, notes that are passed on during classes or in the study hall, news paper articles, petition entries, the private chat on Augie's personal website, student/adviser conferences, letters and telephone calls. Every single text type has its own layout. More than one text type in a book can already create several problems, let alone twelve. It influences the level of formality, lexical choices, use of abbreviations and acronyms, and the number of grammatical errors. These issues are concerns for the translator as well, because it is very important to keep in mind with which kind of text he is dealing with. Grammaticality, for example, is a higher priority when writing an essay than when it concerns an instant message. The different text types used in this novel would also provide an interesting topic for a thesis. However, it is an entirely different one and because there is not enough time or space to dive into this issue as well, I have decided to write a more character driven thesis.

After giving an extensive analysis of the story as a whole, I will now research the problems different narrative styles and characterization cause for a translator. As said before, the theories will then be applied to the characters of *My Most Excellent Year*.

## 2. A Text with Multiple Identities:

### Translating different narrative styles and characterizations

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#### 2.1 Style

It has always been a discussion whether or not style only pertains to written texts. Some say it does and others believe that style can be found in spoken language as well. Personally, I agree with the last theory, since I think every person has his or her own style of conversing.

However, that part of the discussion on style will not be a part of this thesis, because even though it is a highly interesting debate, there is not enough room to discuss it. This part of the thesis will focus on why style pertains to translation. I will start with stating the definition of style according to Mick Short and Geoffrey Leech, since they have discussed all the theories on style in their *Style in Fiction* and have worked these into a clear and applicable definition. I will finish this chapter with a debate on why style is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to translation.

#### 2.1.1 *Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short's definition of 'style'*

Leech and Short start their chapter on the definition of style by discussing the fact that the broadest sense of style, “the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on” (Leech 9), may hold true for many occasions in which style can be found, but it is far too broad to work with. They like to work with a more narrow definition, as do I. They tried to make it narrower by coming up with an analytic approach to style, namely “‘the style of  $x$ ’: (10). According to them, “‘style’ [refers] to characteristics of language use, and correlate[s] these with some extralinguistic  $x$ , which we may call the stylistic domain”. The  $x$  often stands for a certain writer, period or genre, but according to

Leech and Short it is not always possible to attribute the  $x$  to such a general topic: not every statement holds true for all of the elements that make up the  $x$  of a style.

To be able to create a definition of style that is applicable to nearly every aspect of style, Leech and Short have come up with two definitions they decided to name style<sub>1</sub> and style<sub>2</sub>, because they feel “‘style’, like ‘meaning’, is a word which can be used either in a broader or a narrower sense” (Leech 32). The first can also be called the broader sense of style, namely “style as linguistic choice in general”, and this definition is used when “a stylistic characterization of a whole text” needs to be made. Style<sub>2</sub> is the narrower sense, and can be defined as follows: “[s]tylistic choice is limited to those aspects of linguistic choice which concern *alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter*”, or stylistic variation in short. This definition is used when studying how a certain stylistic effect came to be. In this thesis I will be using both definitions: style<sub>2</sub> will function as a tool to be able to see how Kluger has used certain stylistic effects to shape the personalities of his characters, and every aspect of style<sub>2</sub> combined will give me an answer as to how the whole text can be characterized, or how the style<sub>1</sub> of this text can be defined.

Because Leech and Short paid so much attention to the theory that style is optional in their chapter on style, I feel I should also bring up their attitude towards this. Some theorists agree with this view since the content of a text can remain the same when the style may vary. Leech and Short vehemently disagree with them. They believe there are some linguistic choices that can be made grammar wise that “may be designated ‘unmarked’ and ‘neutral’ in contrast to others” (Leech 16), but that style is part of all texts. According to them, style can only be transparent or opaque. I could not agree with them more, because I feel every text has its own style. The choice to write a text *sans* style is a stylistic one as well.

### *2.1.2 How style pertains to translation*

Style can be found in every single text that exists, whether it is seemingly sans style because it concerns a scientific matter, or it exudes style due to a narrator's very abnormal manner of recounting experiences. Style is what makes a text that particular text, it gives it its flavor.

When translating a text, any text, it is important for the translator to analyze the author's style and contemplate whether this text shows deviations from his 'normal' style, because if he fails to do so, he may use certain translation strategies that will destroy this characterizing style, and consequently erase the author's voice from a text.

According to Leech and Short and myself, translating style can be defined by using the stylistic means available in the target language to recreate the same effect as the author's strategies created in the source text, because style lies in "how rather than what is said" (Wales qtd. in Boase 41). As long as the same stylistic effect is created in the end, the translator does not have to use the same strategies. However, this does raise an important question: How far can the translator go? When is using different means to create the same effect going too far? Provided that the translator makes sure a target language strategy fits the style the author has used for that particular source text, and the same stylistic effect is achieved, I feel the translator can make few stylistic mistakes.

One major problem arises when talking about translating style: unless an author has written a book on his personal writing style and provides information about which strategies he uses to ensure a certain effect, his style cannot be officially defined. The definition will always be subjective, because a reader will interpret the strategies in a certain way, and define the style accordingly. It is quite possible that another reader's definition of the author's style is completely different. This issue is linked to translation because the translator is the other

reader. When reading the text, the strategies may have a different effect on the reader/translator than the author intended, which will influence the translator's definition of the author's style, and this view will be passed on in his translation, whether consciously or not. According to both Jean Boase-Beier and Anne Cluysenaar, the translator will have to make an extensive stylistic analysis of the text in order to determine the author's intentions (Boase 36). However, says Boase-Beier, it is not the author's intentions the translator has to focus on, because the effect the author intended to have may not be what he actually created: "what a text actually says, will reveal the meaning to be transferred into the target language" (33). In other words, the reader should not consider what the actual author wanted to convey, but what the implied author expresses. About ten pages later on in her text, Boase-Beier further explains herself by saying

[i]n translation it makes sense to speak of an inferred author. If there is a point in translating, it must be to communicate a source text, in the broadest sense, in another language and situation. Translators thus ... have no choice but to make such assumptions or inferences about what the author meant, if translation is to be possible. Though there is a sense in which, especially for a critically sophisticated reader, it does not 'matter who is speaking' (Foucault 1988:197), it does matter if the reader is also a translator, because who is speaking will influence both initial decisions to translate and, in the act of translation, decisions on how to treat the style of a text.

(38)

In this short fragment Boase-Beier briefly touches upon the fact that the translator must also "make assumptions and inferences about what the author meant". The translator must be fully aware that his conclusions are actually inferences and he should always ask himself the question whether or not they are too subjective. Another ten pages later Boase-Beier makes a final statement on this subject when she says "[t]he point about a stylistic reading of the



source text is that it aims to reach a full and detailed picture of the inferred author's choices, not that it can or wishes to reach facts about an actual author's choices" (50-51). Boase-Beier continues by rightly stating that in order to define the author's style in that particular text, the translator will have to make "a distinction ... between what the words mean in a basic (lexical-semantic) sense [, or the 'utterance meaning'], on the one hand ... and what they implicate [, the 'speaker's meaning'] ... on the other" (Boase 47). The last meaning could also be identified as that of the reader or the translator. The translator should then pay attention to the gradation of these meanings, since there is a difference between determinate and weakly implied meanings.

The view that there are two levels of meaning splits the task of the translator effectively into two: there is the discovery of determinate meaning, embedded in the linguistics of a text, which demands background cultural and linguistic knowledge of the source language, probably augmented by the use of a dictionary or other tools, and there is the necessary sensitivity to the 'weakly implied' or 'second-order' meanings, to be found mainly in style. Perception of these weakly implied meanings, including their effects upon the reader, can hardly be separated from the act of recreation, and it is in the realm of such meanings that much of what stylistics has to say is of special relevance to translation. (37)

I agree with Boase-Beier that the style of the text is mostly found in the second-order meanings and the real challenge for the translator lies in finding a translation that preserves both the determinate and the weakly implied meaning.

However, is it realistic to expect a translator to make an extensive analysis of every text he will ever translate? Will he always be able to make such an extensive analysis before the translation process begins? This is not the time, nor the place, to dive into this debate, but I

did want to point out that this is still an ever-going discussion. As I have said before, I do feel that it is necessary to make such an extensive analysis when translating this particular book, since it contains such an abundance of writing styles. According to some linguistic views, analyzing these styles can tell the reader about the characters' personalities, because "style, through its reflection of choice, is an indication of personality. Because stylistic choice is optional, the style 'tells us something about the person who uses the expression'" (Teleman qtd. in Boase-Beier 53).

I infer that Steve Kluger's general style is informal, and he has used the same style in *My Most Excellent Year*. He may have chosen to give certain characters a formal voice and has done so convincingly, but the manner in which he conveys some particularly emotional experiences is quite informal and light. A detail that helps to create this informal tone is the many different and very relatable narrative devices he used. I believe it is very important that the informal tone is preserved in the translation process, because this is why Kluger's novels are so appealing to the young adult audience: his novels deal with heavy topics such as death, loss, and imperfect families, but they do not leave the reader feeling depressed. I believe Kluger intended to make his audience see they too can survive everything. He grew up "in a home beset by divorces" (Kluger, "Steve Kluger on") himself and found a way to survive. The readers may not be able to deal with their problems by themselves, but there is no shame whatsoever in asking friends and/or family for help. T.C. did not know how to handle his mother's death, but Augie showed him life could still be enjoyable. I think this is the most important message Kluger wanted to convey, and his informal style can be traced back to this. In the interview with Harper Collins Publishers he made a comment that confirms my theory. He said that "presenting families in as many forms as possible is a way of both fixing the past

and giving people ideas on how to repair the present” and he used the many narrative devices to create the intimate feeling to convey his message.

Kluger made it seem like his voice never sounds in *My Most Excellent Year* by making the novel so character driven. He put all his efforts in creating distinctive voices for his narrators so that his message could be delivered by relatable characters, which is why I consider it more important to take a closer look at the narrators’ voices than at the author’s inferred voice.

However, it was Kluger who made T.C. the narrator he is, because he made him express himself in certain ways. The reader learns about his character through his thoughts and his feelings. This is why the next sub chapter is concerned with which tools an author can use to build the personality of his characters.

## 2.2 Characterization

Since every single character in this book has a very distinct personality, I wanted to take a closer look at how Kluger was able to make them so distinguishable, and therefore had to scrutinize their personalities. “The benefit of temporarily isolating characters from their story-matrix lies in the observations that can be made about how writers build out of descriptive, illustrative, and demonstrative passages their invitations to imagine the people who populate story worlds” (Keen 55). At first I thought I had to study the term *mind style* to discover how Kluger was able to create his characters, but after spending some more time studying its definition, I realized this term is too narrow for this endeavor. Mind style only focuses on the mindset of a character and how this influences his or her decisions and view of the world, and a character’s personality entails much more than just a mindset. So I continued my search for a suitable term and eventually found *characterization*. What characterizes a character is not only a state of mind, but also their actions, reactions and speech. In 1983 Shlomith Rimmon

Kenan published her book *Narrative Fiction*, which included an extremely helpful chapter named “Text: characterization”. In this sub chapter I will explain the parts of her theory that can be applied to *My Most Excellent Year*, so I can use it in the analysis of the characters in the next chapter.

According to Rimmon Kenan “[t]here are elements which are most frequently, though not exclusively, associated with characterization, [namely] direct definition and indirect presentation” (59). A direct definition is a direct statement about a character, such as ‘John is very trustworthy’. However, such statements can only be considered as a direct characterization when it is made by the “most authoritative voice in the text” (60). This would be the narrator. Indirect presentation is far less direct, because “rather than mentioning a trait, it displays and exemplifies it in various ways” (61). These ways would be action, speech, external appearance and environment.

Character traits can be exemplified through actions, because as “people drive the action, they necessarily reveal who they are in terms of their motives, their strength, weakness, trustworthiness, capacity to love, hate, cherish, adore, deplore, and so on. By their actions do we know them” (Abbott 131). They may be one-time or habitual actions. Rimmon Kenan states that the different kinds of action show different kinds of character traits. One-time actions “tend to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character, often playing a part in a turning point in the narrative” (Rimmon Kenan 61), but may still show a trait that is fairly characteristic. The trait may even be crucial to the story, since “its dramatic impact often suggests that the traits it reveals are qualitatively more crucial than the numerous habits which represent the character’s routine”. Habitual actions, on the other hand, “tend to reveal the character’s unchanging or static aspect, often having a comic or ironic effect, as when a

character clings to old habits in a situation which renders them inadequate”. The direct definitions and indirect presentations concerned with actions can be divided into three categories, that is: acts of commission (“something performed by the character”), acts of omission (“something which the character should but does not do”), and contemplated acts (is an “unrealized plan or intention of the character”).

Speech also makes up an important part of characterization, because “a character’s speech, whether in conversation or as a silent activity of the mind, can be indicative of a trait or traits both through its content and through its form” (Rimmon Kenan 63). Speech plays an even larger role in this novel, because every character has such a highly distinctive narrative style and “[t]he form or style of speech is a common means of characterization in texts where the characters’ language is individuated and distinguished from that of the narrator” (64). I remembered that Leech and Short also focused on analyzing characters’ speech in chapter six of their *Style in Fiction* and that they used certain questions to do so. I reread the chapter and distilled several questions that I thought to be suitable, because they give information about the different parts that make up a personality. The questions below either are the same questions as Leech and Short used, or are in line with such a question.

- Is the character’s style formal or informal? This question says something about a character’s upbringing or environment. If their speech does not correspond with their age, certain actions that may seem out of character for a child do make sense.
- Are the descriptions detailed or vague? More abstract or concrete? Tactile or visual? And are the descriptions mostly physical or do they pay “attention to the exactness of social relations and qualities of character” (157). The amount of details in a description tells the reader if the character is observant and if he or she is willing to share much information. It tells something about the bond the character shares with his

or her conversational partner. A lack of details may either indicate a very close relationship, because the other person is so familiar with certain stories, he or she does not need much information, or a lack of trust, or they are mere acquaintances. Many details may also indicate a close relationship, because they share everything, or tell the reader they need to catch up, or have just met and want to get to know each other. If the character is observant, the rest of these questions tell the reader what exactly he or she finds important and pays attention to. If a character's descriptions are highly physical, this may indicate he or she only judges people on their looks and not on their personality.

- What are the lexical and syntactic structures like? Are clause structures simple or complex? Do the sentence structures tend to look the same? Does the character use many state verbs (using copula *be*) or is he or she more prone to using verbs of movement? And does he or she use mostly verbs of perception and cognition or verbs of action? Are the verb phrases mostly active or passive (“with deleted agent” (159))? Does the character use many adjectives (non-gradable or gradable? Adverbs of degree?). What is the average length of the sentences? These questions give more information on the level of formality and the amount of details. Scrutinizing the verb phrases gives more information on the degree of formality, and in passive phrases the agent is left out and thus means less shared information. Noun phrases with many adjectives and adverbs are detailed and long sentences also contain more information.
- Does the character use a lot of figurative speech? Metaphors for example? If a character's figurative examples are out of the ordinary, he or she either has a vivid imagination or has a problem with making comparisons.

I believe these questions are relevant to the characters' writing styles in *My Most Excellent Year*, because they focus on parts of personalities that play a large role in this novel and also

give more information on the personal bonds they share. T.C. and Augie for example may not need to share much information because they know each other through and through. These questions are relevant for a translator, because they provide a lot of information on the characters' personalities, which again influences lexical and grammatical choices and may also provide guidelines for translation strategies. There are translators who translate as they go and do not make such an extensive analysis or even read the entire story before they begin, but I believe the answers to these questions can make the difference between a good translation and a translation in which every single character trait is preserved. I do not want to focus too much on the specific translation problems characterization causes in *My Most Excellent Year* because this is part of the following chapter.

The third manner of indirectly exemplifying character traits is external appearance. In the 1800s Swiss philosopher and theologian Lavater developed a theory that stated certain facial features implied certain character traits. Even though this hypothesis was knocked down quickly, "the metonymic relation between external appearance and character-traits has remained a powerful resource in the hand of many writers" (Rimmon Kenan 65). Kluger did not employ this characterization strategy in *My Most Excellent Year*.

The environment a character lives in may also be used as exemplifications of character traits. This may concern either physical surroundings, where a rundown house may represent a character that is mentally deteriorating, or human surroundings, where the criminal activities of a family shows the reader how strongly willed a boy has to be to have been able become a doctor. "As with external appearance, the relation of contiguity is frequently supplemented by that of causality" (Rimmon Kenan 66).

Rimmon Kenan concludes her chapter with a sub chapter called “Reinforcement by analogy”. This part is concerned with analogies between for instance a landscape, names and characters that may reinforce or highlight a certain character trait. However, because analogies play no role in *My Most Excellent Year*, I have decided to merely state Rimmon Kenan pays attention to these exemplifications of character traits, and will not explain this part of her theory.

Something that a reader or, in this case, a translator should always keep in mind is that the indirect presentations force him to infer how a character can be characterized. ‘Infer’ adds an important extra factor, namely that the meaning a reader or translator now forms is always subjective. Suzanne Keen, writer of the book *Narrative Form*, explains this:

Normally, readers create fictional characters in their minds by assembling the textual details relayed by the narrator into patterns that seem like people. Thus, fictional characters (and not only those in realistic texts) invite comparison with the real people of a reader’s experience. When a reader judges a character ‘believable’, he or she tacitly calls up his or her knowledge of real people (or, to complicate matters, of other fictional characters in similar fictions). (Keen 57)

In other, more concise words: “different readers may bring different perspectives about how a character is typical” (66). When a translator analyzes a text in order to find out which strategies an author has used to exemplify character traits, he needs to evaluate whether the character traits he attributed to them are not so subjective no other reader would agree with him. It would be helpful to talk to the author and make sure his inferences are right. If this is not a possibility, he might want to contact the client and present his findings to make sure his conclusions are valid.



### 3. Applying the Theories

#### **An extensive analysis of the characters**

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Due to limited time and space, I will not be able to analyze every single text a specific character wrote. Since the characters may evolve during the book, I have randomly selected one paragraph out of every chapter the particular character wrote. That way the analyses should be representative of the characters throughout the entire novel. These fragments can be found in appendix A at the end of this thesis. The analyses of the characters' narrative styles and characterization are intertwined, because character traits influence narrative style in such a way these two cannot be seen separately. The grounds for the statements about characters' narrative styles and linguistic choices can be found in appendix as well. To conclude each character's analysis, I will discuss a translation problem that is specific for that character, because it is caused by his or her characterization and narrative style.

#### *3.1 Main character – T.C. Keller*

T.C. has been raised in a middle-class environment and has grown up to be a loving, funny teenager. Because he has lost his mother at a young age, he knows how important family is and would do anything for them. His altruistic nature shows through in many of his actions. An example is the way he interacts with Hucky. He meets this six-year-old deaf boy on the baseball field and he feels the need to learn sign language so he can befriend and help him. When Augie has an uncharacterizingly insecure moment when he is coming out to T.C. and says: "What would you say if I told you I think I like boys? I mean LIKE boys. I mean the way you like Alé" (Kluger *My Most* 106), T.C. lets Augie know this does not surprise or bother him at all. He makes sure Augie knows he is accepted exactly for whom he is and anyone who has a problem with that will pay for it. The way T.C. tries to pick up Alejandra

tells the reader something about his confidence. There is no doubt about his high self-esteem when he sends her a note saying “I’m considering a relationship with you” (24). Coming across so confident may be a flirt technique, but if he had self-esteem issues he would not have been confident enough to use this technique in the first place. T.C. also played a major role in Augie’s transformation into the confident gay teen he is now. Augie did not use to be the center of attention. Before T.C.’s mom died and they became friends, he was “a professional sideline watcher” (6). He was able to grow up to be a showstopper, because he has a fearless best friend.

T.C.’s middle-class upbringing shows through in his informal tone, which is the first thing that catches the reader’s eye. He uses incredibly colloquial language, which is typical for any teenager. Everything he writes sounds like he is talking to one of his friends, even when he writes to his mother. The fact that he ‘tells’ her “I found out that when girls think you might be gay, you turn into a chick magnet on the spot. It’s like they can’t help themselves – even the ones who tried to smack your face off in fifth grade when you hit on them” (Kluger *My Most* 22), says something about the bond they used to share. In fact, his tone is so informal that the reader immediately notices which word he had to practice using in a sentence, since it is too formal for T.C. to use it of his own accord: “But there’s definitely something spurious going on here that I’m not supposed to be able to figure out” (86). His use of abbreviations and brackets is part of his informality as well. In the paragraphs that were part of the analysis, there are eight occurrences of brackets alone, either as part of a sentence or as an independent clause. Another part of his informal use of language is his love of coarse language. Since this is a novel for young adults, he hardly ever curses, but he does like to refer to body parts. Normally, Cupid hits a person, but as a true teenager, T.C. likes to express himself a little differently: “ever since Cupid shot me in the butt” (86).

Another major part of T.C. his life and narrative style is baseball. This American pastime is a part of everyday American language, and T.C. takes every chance he gets to refer to his beloved sports. He consequently also uses a lot of figurative speech. When he tells his mother about his confusing feelings on hanging out with Alejandra, he says “Alé’s thrown me a breaking curve” (Kluger *My Most* 156). Since ‘throwing someone a curveball’ is a standard expression, this example does not tell the reader anything about his imagination. The way he asks his mother how the process of falling in love went for his parents, does. He asks “did you like each other first? Or [fell] in love first?”, and when he wants to know whether it “both happened at the same time” he asks if “Bucky F. Dent’s home run screw up the usual batting order?”. This is not a standard expression and is thus an indication of his imagination: he is able to link ‘screwing up the usual batting order’ to the way people fall in love. T.C. does not use many metaphors, and this can be explained by his informal tone: using metaphors would be too elevated for him and would not fit his simple style. However, he would not mind if it were a way to refer to baseball. He is very straightforward. His descriptions are always very detailed and concrete. It can even be said they are overly detailed, seeing as many times it would suffice to delete part of the sentence, or the entire the second sentence. There are two examples in the paragraphs I randomly picked, and the best example is the following: “So we followed his lead all the way down Sewall Street, through an outside fruit market, past Brookline Hardware, right up to the double glass doors in front of Toy Mart” (217). Merely stating that they walked all the way down to Toy Mart would have been enough. This part of his style can be accounted for by looking at the recipient of his writings. He directs all his diary entries to his mother. Normally, children do not give detailed descriptions about their day to their parents. Every parent knows questions like ‘How was your day?’ and ‘Where are you going?’ are often answered by a simple ‘fine’ or ‘out’. However, the reader has to keep in mind that T.C.’s relationship with his mother is not normal. She has died nearly ten years ago

and it is normal for T.C. to still want her to be a part of his life. He most likely feels that this can be achieved best by writing to her in great detail, so she knows everything worth knowing about and is even familiar with unimportant details. As a consequence, T.C. does not have a preference for physical descriptions or descriptions that pay “attention to the exactness of social relations and qualities of character” (Leech 157). He uses these according to what the situation demands of him.

The syntactic structures of T.C.’s sentences are fairly simple. He often alternates between short sentences without any subordination and sentences with three or four subordinate clauses. These longer sentences always have a chronological structure and do not give the reader any difficulty understanding what he means. The average sentence length is 16.24 or seventeen words (see appendix B for the calculations). T.C. does not use more adjectives than the average person, which would conflict with his love for details had he not used many adverbs. They are mostly adverbs of degree (‘a lot,’ ‘so much,’ ‘very,’ ‘always,’ ‘all,’ ‘whole lot,’ etcetera) or adjuncts. The adjectives he uses vary between gradable and non-gradable, he does not appear to have a preference for one. He does seem to have a definite preference for state verbs, as he often uses the copula *be* in order to express himself, and he prefers verbs of action over verbs of perception and cognition as well. This can be explained by his age: his language is typical for a teenager seeing as they tend to use a lot of state verbs and verbs of action. An example that is very characteristic of this day and age is ‘And I was like so hung over’. Grown-ups tend to use a verb action here, i.e. ‘And I had an enormous hangover’. T.C. does not use many passive verb phrases and this entirely fits into his tendency to give ample details. Passive verb phrases lack an agent and T.C. never fails to state which person did what exactly.

A translation problem that is specific for T.C.'s narrative style and characterization is his Boston accent. It is not apparent everywhere, but in his introductory essay he says the following: "Since you'd never guess it from looking at me, nobody can tell that words like *because*, *fart*, *there* and *banana* come out sounding like 'becazz,' 'faht,' 'they-a,' and 'bananer' when I say them out loud" (Kluger *My Most* 1). Translating accents is always a source for discussion, because translators have not agreed on the correct way to do it. Some neutralize a character's accent, some turn it into a neutral accent that cannot be traced back to a certain area, and yet others give a character an accent that is specific for a certain region in the target country. Normally, I feel the second option comes closest to a correct representation of the source accent, because it is highly unlikely a boy from Boston will speak as if he lives in Amsterdam for example. However, I had to take Alejandra's objections into account. Nobody in T.C.'s environment criticizes his speech until she comes along. She constantly judges him for sounding so cheap and uneducated. I considered all sorts of dialects for the Dutch T.C. and eventually decided on a somewhat 'Amsterdam' accent, because the consensus in Holland is that this dialect also makes people sound of lower social, and perhaps even financial status. This accent is perfect for the other moment T.C.'s accent is emphasized as well. When he and Alejandra are dancing she makes him say 'Nothing could be finer than to be in Carolina', which he pronounces as "Nothing could be finah than to be in Caroliner" (137). The saying itself is not relevant to the story, but the fact that she makes him say a sentence that will emphasize almost every element of his accent, is. The accent from Amsterdam is ridiculed by the saying 'Ik kan de zon in de zee zien zakken', because people with this accent pronounce the 'z' like an 's'. This works out perfectly, because when T.C. emphasizes his accent himself he says "I sway-ah". The direct Dutch equivalent of 'swear' is 'zweren', which could now be spelled like 'sweer' to reflect the Amsterdam accent. A few lines down Alejandra makes T.C. say "Jackie, I'm out of underway-ah" and I translated this

as “Jackie, m’n seep ‘s op””, because this again emphasizes the pronunciation of a ‘z’ like an ‘s’ and ‘seep ‘s op’ resembles ‘zeepsop’, which is a joke T.C. could make. I translated ‘becazz,’ ‘faht,’ ‘they-a,’ and ‘bananer’ with ‘relahsie’, ‘eigelek’, ‘sondag’ en ‘sakdoek’, because these words reflect the key elements of an Amsterdam accent.

### 3.2 Main character – Augie Hwong

There is a common factor to every single thought that enters the mind of Augie Hwong: he is as gay as a man can be. Where T.C. refers to baseball wherever possible, Augie’s passion is theater: there is not a page where he does not talk about famous actresses or incorporates lyrics from songs or lines from movies into his own life. He even directs his diary entries to these actresses and he addresses them as if they were close friends. He has a nickname for nearly everyone: “Jutes” (Kluger *My Most* 322) for Judy Garland, “Nat” (104) for Natalie Wood, “Angie” (240) for Angela Lansbury, and he calls Lauren Bacall by her real name, which apparently is “Betty” (166). As stated in T.C.’s analysis, Augie was not always as confident. He knows what it is like to be an outsider, so when he sees Alejandra does not fit in, he forces her to have lunch with him, because he knows they will be great friends. His heart is in the right place. He was there for T.C. when his mother died, and even though they may never talk about it, T.C. knows Augie will always support him. When T.C. tells him he likes Alejandra, and Augie figures out Alejandra feels the same way before she knows it herself, he helps them out a little. He is not a person who lets people walk all over him. When, for example, his boyfriend Andy Wexler freaks out about how gay Augie really is, he starts to act like a *gink* and breaks it off. When he finally realizes he has made a mistake and likes Augie for who he is, Augie does not immediately take him back. He makes him work for it, because he knows he deserves a boyfriend who is not ashamed of him.

Augie's tone is informal as well. He also abbreviates verbs and sometimes uses brackets, but this is not comparable to T.C's use of brackets. Part of his informal tone is his love for drama: he tends to exaggerate. Not to the point where he makes up (parts of) stories, but he has a big way of expressing himself. An example is his description of how long the rehearsal of *Kiss Me, Kate* took, namely "we ran longer than the Italian Renaissance" (Kluger *My Most* 115). His use of figurative speech and love of exclamation points and question marks – which he also uses simultaneously – also contributes to this. The example of the Italian Renaissance shows the reader that Augie has a vivid imagination, since this link is fairly far-fetched. Augie does sometimes use metaphors, most often when he talks with or about his boyfriend Andy Wexler and his love for drama and need for poetic expressions take over. He then often uses lyrics from a love song that contain a metaphor, so these metaphors are not too creative.

Since Augie has an eye for detail and loves to point this out to his actresses, his descriptions can be detailed as well. When he is not distracted by Andy Wexler, they can be very concrete and he pays a lot of attention to the physical elements: he paints vivid pictures of what he thinks Alejandra should wear on stage and even talks about sequins, which makes his descriptions both visual and tactile. Every now and then he also pays some attention to the "exactness of social relations and qualities of character" (Leech 157), but again, only when he is not distracted by Andy's eyes or behind. His concentration nearly never fails when he gives an account of what happened on stage that day, but even then Andy is a source of distraction as he points out by saying "AND WHO NEEDED TO SEE ANDY WEXLER IN BASEBALL PANTS A SIZE TOO SMALL??" (Kluger *My Most* 115). His level of detail can be traced back to the bond he believes to share with his favorite actresses. He idolizes them and feels they are close enough to tell them anything. An example is how he chastises Liza Minnelli for having married David Gest: I can't believe you married David Gest [...]. Trust

me. David Gest is a gink. But you can still call me after the divorce if you need to borrow a shoulder. I'd never say 'I told you so' to anybody expect Nicole Kidman" (37). This again tells the reader his imagination is endless.

Augie's lexical and syntactic structures are quite simple. He often formulates sentences that do not exceed the twenty word-mark: the average length of his sentences is 16.47 or seventeen words and nearly every paragraph has one or two peak sentences that run over twenty words – there even are occurrences of 49 or 61 words. Most of his paragraphs are a lot longer than T.C.'s. His sentences do have a recurrent structure: there is often no subordination, but when it does occur, he often uses multiple subordinate clauses within one sentence. An example is "(Brothers also share the same bedroom, but we'd fixed that problem with sleepovers – because you just can't play Galaxy Fighters on the ceiling with colored flashlights unless it's dark.)" (Kluger *My Most* 8). He can be characterized as a rattler. Augie mostly uses predicative gradable adjectives, with every now and then an attributive one.

Before I analyzed his speech I thought it would be rife with adverbs, since this would fit in well with his love for dramatizing, but this is not the case: Augie's use of adverbs is normal and does not strike the reader as out of the ordinary. I can therefore conclude that the drama can be found in semantics and not in syntax. Augie is the opposite from T.C. in that he uses verbs of movement instead of state verbs. This can be accounted for by his dramatic way of expressing himself: state verbs create a far more monotone and dull version of a story when compared to verbs of movement. They make it seem much more exciting and interesting. He does not have a preference for either verbs of perception and cognition or verbs of action. As can be seen in appendix A, he uses them evenly throughout the text. His verb phrases are active, which again can be translated back to his lively way of recounting his story.



A translation problem that is caused by Augie's narrative style and characterization is the trouble a Dutch translator will have with the many names of the actresses, and the lyrics from songs or lines from movies. As it is the case with T.C.'s baseball references, these problems are such an enormous part of the American culture they will be discussed in their own chapters. The actresses will be dealt with in chapter 4.4 and the lines and lyrics in chapter 4.5.

### *3.3 Main character – Alejandra Perez*

Being the daughter of a former ambassador to Mexico, Alejandra grew up as part of the elite and has been taught early on how to converse with senators, presidents and other officials. She is very principled and independent, knows exactly what she wants, and on some level is not afraid to get it. When her father makes her take French lessons, she pretends to go to classes, while actually taking dance classes. However, the thought of her parents, and especially her father, finding out scares her to death. She is afraid she might have to quit, because dancing does not fit her 'daughter of an official' upbringing. When she finally accepts she has feelings for T.C. too, she still keeps her guard up and makes him prove over and over again that he is not joking about his feelings for her. She is fairly judgmental, seeing as she constantly criticizes T.C.'s pronunciation and feels she simply cannot fall in love with a boy with a Boston accent. When Alejandra first attends her new school, she wants to come off as extremely confident and independent, but this attitude only makes her classmates dislike her. She then decides to ask her former personal secret service agent Clint for help. The reader does not see what she wrote to him, but through Clint's letter to her, the reader gets to see that she is fairly insecure and self-conscious. The reader finds out what the reason is for her behavior when she casually mentions in her diary entry that she has been teased in the past.

The description that immediately comes to mind when trying to define Alejandra Perez's narrative style is too formal for her age. She is the total opposite of T.C. Her high class upbringing was so thorough that even in her diary entries she sounds as if she is writing to the President of the United States. In a way she is writing to an official, since she directs her entries to her heroine, Jacqueline Kennedy. I deliberately chose the word 'heroine' and not 'idol', because Alejandra would never idolize someone. She addresses Jacqueline as Jacky, which implies she feels close to her. The fact she does abbreviate her verbs does not fit her formal style. Normally, abbreviations are frowned upon in formal writing, so this might be her way of being informal. At first Alejandra comes across as an overly confident, bragging and nagging girl, but this is far from the truth. Since she did not have the opportunity to enjoy her childhood and play with other children, she is very insecure in social interactions with people her own age. The only person she could ever really confide in was Clint and she therefore has a hard time sharing her feelings with anybody else. Every moment she decides to share some information that she would not share with everyone, she uses brackets. There are three occasions in the chosen excerpts. One occurrence is when she talks about her 'research' on why people are Boston Red Sox fans: "(I discovered no rational clue. Perhaps it's viral)" (Kluger *My Most* 13). She tells Jacqueline this in confidence, since nearly everyone in the Boston region would hate her if she said this out loud. The other time brackets occur is when she tells Jacqueline how people usually mock her: "(that's the way it usually starts)" (67). This information is personal as well, since it concerns her being teased by her former classmates. The last use of brackets in the fragments occurs in her final chapter. She has now loosened up a bit due to Augie, T.C., and Hucky, so she is a little more sarcastic, but she still has her formal tone. When she comments on her co-star's bad breath and the fact that she did not know his mother is a talent agent, she says "(Let's just say that I knew for sure she wasn't a dental hygienist.)" (393). She feels close enough to Jacky Kennedy to tell her this, but tries

to trivialize it by using brackets. In these fragments Alejandra only uses figurative speech once. She is voicing her opinion on Franklin D. Roosevelt when she says he “used the Constitution to light his cigarettes” (192). In this case she uses it to strengthen her opinion. Alejandra does not use any metaphors in the paragraphs I analyzed, but since it is a literary device that fits a formal tone, I think she would use it.

Alejandra’s descriptions are quite detailed and this is especially apparent when she recounts T.C.’s imitation of John F. Kennedy: “I don’t know how long it took him to learn Jack’s moves, his inflections, or the utter conviction of every word he spoke, but when he jabbed the air with a restless right forefinger, the clock instantly turned back forty years” (Kluger *My Most* 133). It would have sufficed to state that his imitation was so striking it seemed like they were watching the real John F. Kennedy, but she chose to describe every single element that made it so amazing. This fits her formal tone of voice perfectly and by giving such a visually rich physical description, she makes it real for the reader as well. Another example is her description of T.C.’s pronunciation: “The voice I’ve laughed at for its overbroad *a*’s and its three-syllable pronunciations of two-syllable words” (133). She has analyzed his pronunciation to the point where she compared the number of syllables he should use to how many he actually uses. Alejandra is also a girl who pays a lot of “attention to the exactness of social relations and qualities of character” (Leech 157). On page 58 she gives a list of boys with the qualities she feels are most characterizing. This may not be a part of the excerpts I chose to analyze, but this is such an important part of her character that it had to be included. I believe she notices these details without conscious thought, and informs Jacqueline of them because she wants to come across as an intelligent person. She has been taught early on that she must always show people how smart she is, because this would reflect well on her high-class parents. Since she had to do this her whole life, it is now an unconscious act.

Due to her formal tone of voice, Alejandra's lexical and syntactic structures are more complex than those of the boys. She uses a lot of subordinate clauses, but Kluger made sure they would not be too complex, because the novel is directed at young adults who are looking for some written entertainment. The average length of her sentences is 19.34 or twenty words. She mostly uses predicative adjectives, and in contrast to the boys, they are generally non-gradable. She also uses many adverbs, and in accordance with her formal tone, many of them are conjuncts. Since state verbs create a more informal tone and simple sentences, she has a distinct preference for verbs of movement. She does not seem to favor verbs of perception and cognition over verbs of action and uses these evenly throughout the chosen excerpts. Her verb phrases are generally active.

The translation problems caused by narrative style and characterization that are specific for Alejandra are connected to her upbringing. She has been raised in a political family and consequently knows a lot about politics. She often refers to political events in American History. An example is "*Be careful, Alejandra. It's the same old Anthony who all but propositioned you on the first day of school. Don't let the suit and tie fool you. He didn't get us out of the Bay of Pigs mess, he didn't insist on a nuclear test ban, he didn't go after Big Steel, and he most certainly did not promise to put a man on the moon. He's just Anthony*" (Kluger *My Most* 137). The Bay of Pigs and Big Steel cause the problems here. Bay of Pigs is a specific occasion in the Cuba crisis. "On April 17, 1961, 1400 Cuban exiles launched what became a botched invasion at the Bay of Pigs on the south coast of Cuba." (Jfklibrary.org). American teenagers are sure to know what this event entailed, because they will have been taught about it in school. Dutch teenagers from the age of fourteen to seventeen, however, probably have not heard of this. In Holland the schools are allowed to decide which subjects will be taught in History, and many of them do not cover American History. The Dutch

audience may have heard of the Cuba crisis, because this was part of the Cold War that influenced the entire world. I therefore decided to generalize Alejandra's specific moment in time to a more known and general moment that Kennedy is said to have solved as well, namely the Cuba Crisis. The other cultural reference is Big Steel. This is the popular name of the United States Steel Corporation, or U.S. Steel. In 1962

Kennedy and his administration were involved in negotiations between the major steel firms and their workers. By the end of March 1962 a deal was cut whereby workers received no wage increase but expanded fringe benefits. With this settlement worked out, Kennedy assumed steel companies would not raise their prices. Two weeks later, however, Roger M. Blough, president of U.S. Steel, went to the White House and handed Kennedy a press release announcing a price hike of six dollars a ton. The other major steel firms immediately followed suit. [...]He responded by attacking the action of steel executives on television and initiated a grand jury investigation on price-fixing in the steel industry. (Encyclopedia.com)

Even the Pentagon and Congress got involved. The Dutch teenagers reading this story will only know of this situation if they have been taught about it in school or if they have read about it themselves, which is quite unlikely because it is not mentioned often in Holland. Big Steel does not immediately tell the reader Alejandra is talking about a company, because 'Big Steel' could also be a nickname. I feel the more general term 'U.S. Steel' is not as ambiguous and I thus decided to translate it accordingly.

### *3.4 The flat characters*

In this sub chapter I will only analyze the speech characterization of Pop, Lori, Mom, Dad and Clint, because they only briefly describe their actions in their correspondence, and analyzing those would result in a flat characterization as well. Their narrative styles, however, are very

distinguishable, so I will analyze how Kluger made them individuals through their speech. In this case narrative style may not be the best definition, since their writings are more written exchanges between friends than actual narration. Since the texts of these characters mostly consist of two or three paragraphs per letter or e-mail, I decided to analyze an entire letter or e-mail per character instead of one paragraph from every text. I feel this will give a representative characterization of their writing or narrative style. The characters are too flat to make noteworthy developments throughout the book.

### *Pop*

Pop is T.C.'s father and has been a single parent ever since his wife died. He has had girlfriends, but no serious relationships. His child has always been his first priority and he is not afraid to ask someone for advice on how to handle him. This someone is nearly always Dad. Pop is a constructor and thus a middle-class man and his social background is reflected in his informal and colloquial writing style: the reader can immediately see T.C. has copied a large part of his father's style. When Pop writes to Lori, some hints of formality can be found, but this is a flirt technique he uses. Another one is irony. Pop has a fairly straightforward narrative style, but he does use figurative speech in this excerpt: he turns the literal meaning of "gluing the houses of Congress together" (Kluger *My Most* 101) into a figurative meaning by adding "(hey, it's about time *somebody* did it)". This again is part of his colloquial style.

There is only one part in this excerpt that needs a description of some sort, namely the description of the model of Washington that Pop and T.C. are making. When he describes this to Lori, he gives an exact number of inches he had to shave off the board in order to get it through the door. A less detailed description would have sufficed, since 'I had to shave a piece off the board just to get it through the front door, so it's only seventy square feet' is

already fairly detailed. I feel he included these details to further tease Lori. She was quite clear before when she e-mailed him he could no longer build enormous projects. This description is physical, and there is no description of “attention to the exactness of social relations and qualities of character” (Leech 157). There are no tactile descriptions in this excerpt, and no use of metaphors either. I feel Pop would use all of these literary devices when he feels they would get a rise out of Lori.

Pop’s syntactic structure is fairly simple: he sometimes uses a subordinate clause, but he never uses as many as Alejandra does. All of his sentences are active. His average sentence length is nineteen words, which is quite high compared to the three main characters. I feel his average probably would have been lower if more sentences had been taken into account, because he normally also formulates sentences of about five words. He uses many adjectives and adverbs when he is teasing Lori. Most of them are predicative and non-gradable, and he uses a conjunct and some disjuncts. In this excerpt Pop uses many state verbs, and no verbs of movement, which again reminds the reader of T.C.’s style. He uses some verbs of perception and cognition, but mostly verbs of action. This use of verbs fits in perfectly in his informal style, since state verbs compose simple, straightforward sentences.

The translation problems that are caused by Pop’s characterization and narrative style are the jokes he constantly makes. Translating jokes and humor in general is always a difficult undertaking, but there is one joke that is particularly complicated. When he is arguing about the landmark project with Lori, Pop says T.C. is “gluing the houses of Congress together (hey, it’s about time *somebody* did it)” (Kluger *My Most* 101). ‘the houses of Congress’ has to be translated in such a way the figurative remark still makes sense, and this creates a problem. The literal translation ‘huizen van het Congres’ does not make sense, because Congress does

not reside in houses, but in the same building. I briefly considered 'gebouwen', but this did not make sense either, because 'gebouwen' has no political meaning whatsoever. I finally came up with 'kamers', because the houses of Congress are sometimes referred to as chambers (The White House). It may seem a bit excessive to be making actual chambers in the Congress building for a scale model, but not for T.C. and Pop. Lori has chastised them before about their enormous and detailed projects, so putting in chambers is a detail they would think of themselves. When they made a replica of Fenway Park they actually put in all the seats as well. The final translation is therefore: 'Tony C lijmt de kamers van het Congres aan elkaar'.

### *Lori*

Lori is the adviser at T.C.'s school and a very responsible one at that. She is interested in Pop, but because she feels it is not appropriate for her to jump into any kind of relationship with the parent of one of her students, she keeps her distance at first and makes him work for it to prove it would not be a fling. When she is finally confident enough it could turn into a serious relationship, she starts to date him. The only times the reader 'hears' from Lori is when she sends an e-mail to Pop. This has a definite influence on her style: it is semi-informal, because she uses fairly formal words, but her manner of composing sentences decreases the formality. When she chastises Pop she is more formal, but when she informs about his dates, says something about their 'relationship' or about T.C. she is more informal. Her formality is a flirt technique as well. Lori does not use any figurative speech in this excerpt, but since her correspondence with Pop contains a lot of jokes and playful jabs, I do not think she never uses it. It would fit well into her playful writing style.



This excerpt does not contain any descriptions. I can therefore not concretely say anything about Lori's way of describing objects or experiences. I can, however, make assumptions based on the impression that her narrative style gave me while reading her correspondence. Lori is a confident and independent woman and I feel she would use detailed descriptions when she either needs to chastise Pop or put him in his place: she would smother him in details and facts to get her point across. Whether they are tactile or visual would depend on the context. The same goes for paying attention to the physicality or "the exactness of social relations and qualities of character" (Leech 157) in descriptions. Lori does not use metaphors in this excerpt either, but I feel she would use these to make a valid point.

Lori's lexical and syntactic structure are somewhat more complex than those of the main characters, since her vocabulary is more extensive than theirs. Her average sentence length is 16.81 or seventeen words, which is consistent with the sentence length of the other characters. Most of her adjectives and adverbs are predicative and non-gradable. In this excerpt Lori does not use verbs of movement, and does use some state verbs. Most of her verb phrases contain verbs of action and there are quite a lot of verbs of perception and cognition as well. Apart from one occasion of the passive, all of her verb phrases are active. I believe all of this can be explained by the kind of correspondence she has with Pop: the e-mails are playful, yet serious and she often chastises him or tries to convince him she is right. In order to put him in his place she needs to make a solid case and dumbfound him, which will not happen with simple sentences based on state verbs: her sentences should be well-formulated and active to make her sound in control.

The translation problems that are specific for Lori are caused by her characterization, and consequently her narrative style. They are culture specific. Since she is a student advisor she

often refers to the American school system. She mentions both American grade systems, i.e. the different systems they have for the forms and marks. The translations for these source culture elements are not too hard to find. The forms correspond with the former Dutch 'klassen' system, in which 'de 1e klas' is the current 'groep 3' (Expertisecentrum). The website of Leiden University is particularly helpful when it comes to the different grades or marks system, because it gives a clear list:

<b>Dutch</b>	<b>American</b>
10	A Excellent
9	A Very good
8	A Good
7	B Good/Fair
6	C Satisfactory
5	D Not quite satisfactory
1 to 5	F Fail

(Leiden University)

This shows that *My Most Excellent Year* contains all sorts of culture specific items.

### *Dad*

Dad is Augie Hwong's father and has the same middle-class social background as Pop and T.C. He owns a successful bookstore and comes across as a successful parent: he has raised Augie to be a boy who is not afraid to come out to his parents, he merely struggles with how he should do it. When Dad is not sure how to handle a certain 'gay situation' with Augie and needs a fellow father's perspective, he is not afraid to ask Pop for help. Dad's writing style is very informal as well. The only e-mails he writes are directed at Pop and since they are what would be called 'buds', the atmosphere is informal. They do discuss serious topics, for instance Augie's homosexuality and whether Mom and Dad should talk to him about this, but they always mix their seriousness with jokes, playful jabs and funny references to their own

youth. Dad does use figurative speech. He says Pop has only progressed to “sophomore level” (Kluger *My Most* 333) in flirting with Lori, for instance. He also states Lori will either be “ripe” enough to come over to his house or not. This can be figurative, but he can also use the ripening of grapes as a metaphor. He also uses a lot of sarcasm when he answers Pop’s question on whether being alone for the weekend is a valid opportunity to invite Lori over for a “romantic interlude”: “Sure. Just like Nixon’s valid opportunity to invade Cambodia”. His use of abbreviations also fits into his informal style. He even uses brackets once, to add a little, but ‘very important’ side note.

Dad gave a fairly detailed description of how the date with Lori should, because he thinks Pop needs a played-out strategy or else will fail miserably. Consequently, he gives a fairly visual description of how Pop should “smack his forehead” (Kluger *My Most* 333). He also pays attention to “the exactness of social relations and qualities of character” (Leech 157) when he tells him how he to act towards Lori. It is not that he wants to meddle, he wants to help Pop be successful.

Dad’s lexical and syntactic structure also fit perfectly in his informal tone: they are quite simple, since his sentences are not long enough to be complex. The average sentence length is 13.25 or fourteen words, which is quite a bit lower than the average of the other characters. His use of adjectives and adverbs is normal and nearly all of them are predicative and gradable. His use of verbs and the passive does not differ much from the other characters: he mostly uses verbs of action, and some verbs of perception and cognition and state verbs. All of his verb phrases are active. I feel this can be explained by the topic of his e-mail: he needs to tell Pop what to do with Lori and he needs to be as practical, clear and straightforward about it as possible, because he does not consider Pop able to successfully seduce Lori on his

own. In order to do this he needs verbs of action, because they create the most detailed description. He uses the adjectives and adverbs to make sure he covered all the bases.

There is another sports related translation problem besides baseball terminology in *My Most Excellent Year*, namely football terminology. I have ranged this under Dad's problems, because it is his characterization that caused it, even though it is actually Augie who uses all the football terms. Kluger made Dad a football fanatic and Augie uses many terms when he tells Judy Garland he thinks his father would rather have had a son who knows what all the terms entail. Football can be ranged under culture specific items as well, because it is far less popular in Holland as it is in America. The larger part of the Dutch audience would have no clue what the terminology means. However, the characters do not use football as figurative speech, so the only problem is finding the correct Dutch terms. Since there is no official Dutch football terminology, I contacted the *American Football Bond Nederland* and asked them which Dutch terms they used for yardage, lateral pass, down, pass protection, and point spreads. According to Jeroen, the gentleman who answered my e-mail, they simply copy the English term if there is no way to translate the term into Dutch without losing some of its meaning. The correspondence can be found in appendix C at the end of the thesis.

### *Mom*

Mom is Augie Hwong's mother and writes articles for the *Boston Globe* as a theater critic. Because she has seen it all, she is difficult to entertain and nearly never writes a positive review. The fact that she is not afraid to write a ghastly review is one of her entertaining factors. Her writings have two very different target audiences, and therefore could also have a very different tone: she either writes an e-mail to her son or Alejandra, or a review. At first I wanted to analyze one paragraph from an article and one from a letter to Alejandra, because I

felt an analysis of both of her styles would give a more representative characterization of her writing style. However, when I took a closer look at these excerpts, I noticed that her style does not change much when she has a different audience. She is fairly formal on both occasions and the only difference is her tone of voice: as would be expected, it is more loving in the letters to Augie and Alejandra. I therefore decided I would only analyze one excerpt: the *Hello, Dolly!* review.

The article bears Mom's classic formal, harsh style. As stated before, she nearly never likes a play and is not afraid to let the *Boston Globe* reader know this. The first paragraph of this article does not exactly show her dislike of this play, because calling Dolly Gallagher a pimp could be considered as a neutral representation of a character in a play she enjoyed. However, when she continues her review, she makes it as clear as possible she was abhorred by it. She does use abbreviations, which does not fit in the formal style, but this may be part of the style sheet the *Boston Globe* works with. In this paragraph she does not use brackets, and I do not believe she often uses these in her other writings either, since this can be considered informal.

Her description of the clientele Dolly Gallagher has is extensive: "It doesn't matter if you're short, tall, quiet, loud, agnostic, asexual, intelligent, a gibbering idiot, an international terrorist, or the Hillside Strangler" (Kluger *My Most* 251). These details function as a chastisement, because Dolly does not care what her clients look like or if they are criminals or terrorists: she will fix anyone up as long as they will pay her. The description is fairly visual and physical, but Mom also pays some attention to "the exactness of social relations and qualities of character" (Leech 157) by stating Dolly would also fix up "a gibbering idiot, an international terrorist, or the Hillside Strangler". Her description of what Dolly has done to the characters in the story is extensive as well, because she clearly states how many people

were harmed in what way: “By evening’s end, she’s destroyed four lives and three relationships, lied to twenty-six featured players and an entire chorus, and cost at least seven people their respective jobs” (251). This description is very concrete as well. She also uses some sarcasm, because after telling her audience what has happened to all of the characters in the play, she says: “This is a reason to sing?” Again, the details in her description are meant to strengthen her chastisement.

Since Mom has a formal tone of voice I expected her syntactic structure to be quite complex, but this is not the case. She uses some subordinate clauses, but again, Kluger made sure the reader would not have any trouble understanding her. Her formality therefore does not lie in her syntactic structure, but in the lexical decisions she makes. Her average sentence length is 17.09 or eighteen words, which is similar to those of the main characters. As the quote on the previous page shows, Mom uses many adjectives when she wants to make her argument more forceful. Many are attributive, and she does not seem to have a preference for gradable or non-gradable ones. She mostly uses verbs of action, and there are only a few occasions of state verbs. There is only one occasion of a passive verb phrase. This again can be translated back to her formal tone of voice and her audience, since state verbs would create a more simple sentence and the *Boston Globe* is a fairly prestigious paper with a certain tone of voice.

A translation problem that is specific for Mom’s characterization and narrative style is caused by her profession: she is a theater critic and therefore often refers to other plays. These plays themselves do not cause too many problems, since their title can simply be copied. Mom also uses many lyrics in her writings. She does not incorporate them in her own life like Augie does, but there is always a reason to refer to some. An example is when she writes an e-mail to Alejandra:

You're an angel. I've been trying to do something about "I Am Ashamed That Women Are So Simple" ever since I first heard it twenty-two years ago and assumed it was a practical joke. If you're keeping a list, the next horror to be eliminated is that ghastly monkey's paw from *Fiorello!* "I'll Marry the Very Next Man." With lyrics like "Who cares how frequently he strikes me?" and "I'll fetch his slippers with my arm in a sling," even Jack the Ripper would have been embarrassed. (276)

I will not dive into this translation problem here, because it will be dealt with in its own chapter, namely chapter 4.5.

### *Clint*

Clint Lockhart is Alejandra's former personal Secret Service Agent, but he has been and probably always will be more of a father figure to her. Alejandra's descriptions of her parents are contrasted greatly by the letters Clint sends to her: her parents, and especially her father, come across as fairly distant people who always pressure her to act like the perfect daughter, while Clint makes sure she knows she is 'just a kid' and should not be afraid to act like it either. Seeing as Clint Lockhart is a secret service agent, it would be safe to assume his style is formal. However, his loving and friendly bond with Alejandra changes his entire 'tough guy' image: as stated before, he writes to her as a father figure and always helps her out with her social issues. His style is very informal with sentences like "shut up and act like you didn't [understand]" (Kluger *My Most* 72) and "You rock, girl" (73). He also uses a lot of jokes and irony, for instance "Bite the bullet and pretend you're just a kid. (Oh, wait. You *are!*)" (72). This sentence immediately shows that he uses figurative speech as well, and it is the only time Clint uses brackets. Just like all of the other characters, Clint abbreviates his verbs as well, which also corresponds with the informal nature of the e-mails.

His descriptions of how Alejandra should act towards her classmates are quite detailed: he tells her she should ask people for help, even when she does not need it, but he does not tell her how she should do this. He also gives rather detailed descriptions of what kind of stories she should not tell her classmates, i.e. Brad Pitt giving her a kiss or Princess Diana giving her a bracelet, because he probably thinks she does not know what children her age would normally experience. The descriptions themselves are not visual or physical; they are mostly concrete. Clint pays close attention to social relations and how these should be created. I believe he makes semi-detailed descriptions because he does want to point Alejandra towards the right path, but still wants her to figure some of it out by herself.

Clint's syntactic structure is not complex either, since he is writing to a teenager. He knows Alejandra is very capable of understanding complex sentences, but since he wants her to be able to act and feel like a child, I feel he would always keep his tone light and formulate simple sentences. Nearly all his adjectives and adverbs are predicative and non-gradable, and some of his adverbs are conjuncts. The informal nature of his writings can also be seen in his use of verbs: he does not differ much from the other characters in that most of his verbs are verbs of action, and every now and then he uses a state verb and a verb of perception and cognition. He does not use a passive verb phrase in this excerpt.

Clint's characterization and narrative style do not cause specific translation problems. The only real translation problem occurs when he uses figurative speech that is based on baseball as well: "(This is how we've been playing it in the federal government since 1789, and if Bill Clinton hadn't gotten careless we'd still be batting a thousand.)" (Kruger *My Most* 64). The problem is that in Dutch no one would use a baseball reference here. The chapter on translating baseball references will explain the translation strategy I used to translate this.



#### 4. “Fastball, fastball, curve, fastball, slider” (Kluger *My Most* 157):

##### **Translating baseball terminology and other culture specific items**

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Culture specific items may very well occur in every single novel that was ever written, but *My Most Excellent Year* is a special case. The American culture plays an enormous part in this book, because it is set in America and three of the characters have obsessions that are truly American. They are baseball, football and Broadway. All of them are an integral part of the American culture and baseball has even become the national pastime. In order to understand why these elements can be characterized as culture specific items, I will first have to explain this term. I will do this with the help of Javier Franco Aixelá, who wrote an article called “Culture-specific Items in Translation”. After explaining the general problems with translating CSIs, I will take a closer look at the translation of CSIs in this book. I will first analyze the problems with the translation of baseball terminology, followed by the trouble Augie's actresses cause. The third and final CSI that I will discuss is how Augie incorporates lyrics into his own life. Football would have been a great fourth CSI, but since this CSI only plays a minor role in the novel – it is Dad's obsession, but it is only mentioned on three or four pages – and the general difficulties are very similar to those of translating baseball terminology, I have decided to only pay attention to this CSI in Dad's narrative style analysis.

##### 4.1 Aixelá on CSIs

Whenever a text needs to be translated, two languages, and consequently two cultures come into contact with one another. There are always differences between the language systems, but since each culture has its own values, habits, forms of address and classification systems, the two cultures may differ as well. When these two cultures are alike, or “overlap” (Aixelá 53),

the translator will not have many difficulties on top of the ‘standard’ translation issues. However, many complications will arise when the cultures are dissimilar, because “[c]ultural asymmetry between two linguistic communities is necessarily reflected in the discourses of their members, with the potential opacity and unacceptability this may involve for the target cultural system” (54). Some items do not have a direct equivalent, and in these instances it is highly important that the translator has sufficient knowledge of both the source and target culture. These are the items that this chapter will revolve around. The level of translatability, a term coined by Itamar Even-Zohar and further developed by Gideon Toury, increases when the two cultures are more symmetric, and when these two cultures have come in close contact before. Europe for instance, has steadily become more familiar with North-American culture specific items due to Hollywood. Some of these items can therefore be translated more easily.

#### *4.1.1 Defining the term ‘CSI’*

These items that may cause problems in the translation process, may very well not cause any problems elsewhere. The issue arises when they either do not have a direct equivalent in the target culture, when the equivalent has a different value, or when the term is completely unknown. Every language pair and their accompanying cultures have their own set of culture specific items that cause translation problems, because an item that causes problems for one target culture, may be very easily translated into another. Aixelá defines these items as follows: *“Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text”* (Aixelá 58). As said before, no two cultures have the same culturally defined translation problems. However, it is still possible to discern

different types of culture specific items that cause problems between any given culture pair. A description of these different classes of culture specific items will be next.

#### *4.1.2 The different types of culture specific items*

There is a common tendency to identify CSIs with those items especially linked to the most arbitrary area of each linguistic system – its local institutions, streets, historical figures, place names, personal names, periodicals, works of art, etc. – which will normally present a translation problem in other languages. But the constant appearance of textual items which do not seem more arbitrary than the average, and whose nature as a translation problem can only be explained by appealing to an intercultural gap, forces the student of translation to widen his outlook. (Aixelá 57)

According to Aixelá, there are two kinds of CSIs, namely “proper nouns and common expressions (for want of a better term to cover the world of objects, institutions, habits and opinions restricted to each culture and that cannot be included in the field of proper names)” (59). Aixelá further divides proper nouns by means of T. Hermans’ view, who divided them into two categories, namely conventional and loaded.

Conventional proper nouns are those ‘seen as “unmotivated” and thus as having no meaning of themselves’ [...]. Loaded proper nouns are ‘those literary names that are somehow seen as “motivated”’; they range from faintly “suggestive” to overtly “expressive” names and nicknames, and include those fictional as well as non-fictional names around which certain historical or cultural associations have accrued in the context of a particular culture’ (59).

#### *4.1.3 The parameters*

There are multiple strategies a translator can choose from to translate a CSI. This decision making process is influenced by several parameters, and according to Aixelá, a translator has to take four into account. Each parameter is further divided into several ‘sub parameters’. They are stated below.

The first parameter, or the supratextual parameter, concerns all sorts of influences from the outside, and is divided into four ‘sub parameters’. They are “degree of linguistic prescriptivism, nature and expectations of potential readers, nature and aims of the initiators, and working conditions, training and social status of the translator” (Aixelá 65-66). The first one states that there may be an institution in the target culture that wants to preserve certain conventions and therefore prescribes a particular translation strategy. The second sub parameter takes the needs of the audience into account, because their expectations can influence the translator’s decision to use a certain strategy as well. The third pays attention to the initiators, because they might provide the translator with certain guidelines he normally would not have to deal with, and which therefore influence his choice of strategy. The last one concerns the translator himself, because his experience in translating, his schooling, and working conditions may also influence his decision making process. If he is a relatively inexperienced translator, he may not have gained enough self-confidence yet to try certain strategies. He may also be over-confident instead, and not think certain decisions through. On top of that, he may also not know of certain strategies yet. A fast approaching deadline can also cause problems: he might rush and therefore make many mistakes. When on top of that, he does not have any time to revise his own work, he may never notice the mistakes and hand in the translated document full of errors.

The next parameter is the textual parameter, which concerns the text itself. When it is accompanied by an image, the translator may interpret the text differently, which possibly will influence his translation strategies. Another textual parameter is previous translations. These translations may have become so well known, that the culture specific items have turned into institutions, which bars the translator from coming up with new translations. A great example of this parameter are the Harry Potter books, even though the terms in those books are more fictional world specific than culture specific. The third parameter goes hand in hand with the second, since it concerns canonization. A source text may have been canonized and should therefore, according to some, be treated with more respect than popular literature. Many believe every single text should be treated with the same amount of respect though, but this should still be noted as a parameter since there are translators, initiators or institutions that do support this theory.

The third parameter concerns the nature of the CSI itself. The first one, pre-established translations, is similar to the parameter of previous translations in 'The textual parameter': if a socially acceptable translation already exists, it is likely the translator will have to choose the same one. Nowadays, this strategy is often used for the translation of proper nouns. Next is the transparency of the CSI: if its meaning is very transparent and it is safe to assume the target audience will understand it, the translator may choose to conserve it. However, when its meaning is opaque, he may choose between many different translation strategies. These will be discussed in the next sub chapter. Another possibility is that the CSI does have a word equivalent in the target language, but their denotation and/or connotation differs. The translator will then have to decide which strategy is most appropriate. The final sub parameter is "references to third parties" (Aixelá 69): "[t]ransnational CSIs (like institutions shared by several countries) are particularly interesting and usually have very strongly pre-established

translations”, so the translator will have to pay extra attention to these kinds of CSIs. There may also be a CSI in the source text that is foreign to the source audience and part of the target text culture. The author may have explained this CSI by means of for instance intratextual gloss, which could be redundant in the target text. This of course, depends on the context, since this explanation may be an integral part of the story or a character trait of a person in it.

The final parameter, the intratextual parameter, pays attention to how the CSI has been treated in the previous paragraphs. A translator should always analyze the “the textual function [the CSI] plays in the source text, as well as [...] its situation within it” (Aixelá 69), and whether this function differs from the one it has in the target text. Its function, and therefore its treatment, may also differ per paragraph. Another aspect the translator has to keep in mind when deciding on a translation strategy is its relevance. When a CSI plays an important role in a text he might be more inclined towards conservation than when it is only mentioned once and does not provide the reader with information that is key for the understanding of the rest of the text. Recurrence goes hand in hand with relevance: Aixelá states that when a CSI is frequently used in the source text, translators are more likely to choose the conservation strategy. A recurrent element namely always has a function in the text. Then finally, there is the coherence of the text. This is another factor the translator has to keep in mind: when he has decided on a strategy in the first paragraph, he may be inclined to simply use it again when the CSI occurs next. When analyzing a translation, this can be a very helpful element to pay attention to as well, because the explanation of a certain strategy may very well be found in the first occurrence of the CSI.

#### *4.1.4 Aixelá's translation strategies for CSIs*

There are multiple strategies for translating culture specific items, and Aixelá divided them into two classes: they either conserve the CSI, or they substitute it. Below I will list the possible strategies, starting with the conservation category.

There are five strategies that belong to the conservation category, namely repetition, orthographic adaptation, linguistic (non-cultural) translation, extratextual gloss and intratextual gloss. The first strategy is fairly straightforward: using this strategy means that the translator copies (most of) the CSI and uses it in the target text. This does however, have consequences, because a source text term in a target text may have an alienating effect on the audience. The second strategy is very similar, but concerns languages that have a different alphabet: the translator will transcribe or transliterate the CSI and use this 'new' term in his target text. When a translator applies linguistic (non-cultural) translation, he chooses a different term from the source culture that is very close in meaning to the original word, but is more transparent to the audience. An example of this strategy is translating 'Ring Dings' with 'Oreos'. They are both chocolate cookies, but Ring Dings are not available here in Holland, so the audience probably will not know what they are. Oreos on the other hand, are available here and since there is even a television commercial on them, the translator can be fairly certain the audience will be familiar with them. The last two conserving strategies are extratextual and intratextual gloss. The translator now uses one of the conserving methods, but feels it is necessary to give the audience some extra information on the CSI. He either chooses to inconspicuously work this information into the text itself, i.e. use intratextual gloss, or provides it apart from the normal text, either by using brackets or italics, or by entirely separating it from the text by using an endnote, footnote or a glossary. Nowadays translators are more inclined to either repeat, transcribe or transliterate conventional names.

The only time they change this strategy is when there is a pre-established translation. Even though loaded names are translated by means of many different strategies, translators are inclined to one particular strategy as well: “they seem to display a tendency toward the linguistic (denotative or non-cultural) translation of their components, a trend which increases with their expressivity” (Aixelá 60).

The other umbrella term for a group of translation strategies is substitution. The translator now decides to substitute the CSI by another term or phrase. There are six different substitution strategies. The first one is synonymy and it is fairly straightforward: the translator uses a synonym of the original CSI to avoid repetition. The second strategy is ‘limited universalization’. The CSI is too opaque to use it in the target text, so the translator uses a parallel CSI that has the same meaning, but is more transparent, and thus makes it more understandable for the reader. Another substitution strategy is absolute universalization, which means replacing the source text CSI with a “neutral reference” (Aixelá 63), i.e. a term that is neither source culture or target culture specific. Next is naturalization: the translator decides not only to neutralize the CSI, but also substitutes the foreign CSI with a term that is target culture specific. This completely deforeignizes the CSI. The fifth substitution strategy is deletion, which is highly straightforward as well: the translator simply deletes the CSI, because it is “unacceptable on ideological or stylistic grounds, or [he] think[s] that it is not relevant enough for the effort of comprehension required of their readers, or that it is too obscure and [is] not allowed or [does] not want to use procedures such as gloss, etc. [He] therefore decides to omit it in the target text” (65). The final strategy that belongs to the substitution class is autonomous creation. This strategy differs from the previous ones because it also alters the source text: the translator inserts a non-existent cultural reference in the



source text. He either does this of his own accord or is put to the task by his initiators.

Translators can also use multiple conservation strategies at the same time. Examples are

“compensation (deletion + autonomous creation at another point of the text with a similar effect), dislocation (displacement in the text of the same reference), or attenuation (replacement, on ideological grounds, of something ‘too strong’ or in any way unacceptable, by something ‘softer’, more adequate to target pole written tradition or to what could, in theory, be expected by readers). (64)

As said before, different translators may very well use different strategies for the same CSI, depending on the textual factors relevant for each occurrence. However, the translator does have to keep in mind that the text must be coherent, and that different strategies may cause a difference in meaning between the source and target text.

All in all, I feel that Aixelá’s article on how to translate CSIs is an extremely helpful tool in understanding what they are exactly, and which factors may influence the use of strategies. His clear division between the two types of translation strategies for CSIs creates some order in the chaotic endeavor that is translating culture specific items.

#### 4.2 The strategies used in this thesis

I find all of Aixelá’s strategies very helpful, because I believe a clear division between naturalizing and exoticizing strategies is needed to create some clarity in the puzzling world of translation strategies. Aixelá’s strategies are quite extensive, however I did miss the strategy called *calque*. This is a literal translation of the CSI, but this is only possible when the CSI is a compound made up of words that are autonomous units in the target language as well. This strategy may be very helpful if no direct or otherwise helpful equivalent exists in

the target language, but the translator should always see if the new target phrase is not still opaque, because this would cause another problem: the audience still does not know what it means, but is no longer able to look it up in a dictionary because the target text phrase is (practically) non-existent. This strategy was a part of Diederik Grit's article "De vertaling van realia". I therefore reread this article to make sure Grit did not think of other strategies that Aixelá did not include in his list. Most strategies corresponded with Aixelá's, but there was another one of Grit's strategies that was not included in Aixelá's inventory, namely *principle characteristic* (my translation). When there are different elements to the denotative meaning of a CSI, and not all of them can be translated into one word or phrase, the translator has to analyze which of the elements is most important in that context. He will then choose a translation in which this element comes across best and sacrifice the other elements.

Thus, in this thesis all of the translation strategies for CSIs Aixelá listed, and the strategies *calque* and *principle characteristic* from Diederik Grit will be used.

#### 4.3 Translating Baseball Terminology

As stated many times before, *My Most Excellent Year* contains a very challenging culture specific translation problem, namely translating baseball terminology. This may not be characterized as a culture specific translation problem by others, since baseball is played all over the world, but this statement should be nuanced. Even though many countries have their own baseball team that competes on an international level, nowhere on earth is baseball as popular as in America. The obsession most American citizens have with baseball is comparable to the one Dutch citizens, and many other Europeans have with soccer. A consequence of this popularity is the fact that baseball terminology has worked its way into everyday speech. This is also the case in this novel: baseball phrases are both used to recount

baseball matches and in figurative speech. I will start by further explaining the general difficulties with translating baseball terminology, and will then move on to the problems that are specific for this novel.

#### *4.3.1 General difficulties*

One of the first general difficulties is that due to the fact that baseball is so very popular in the United States, the American source text audience is far more familiar with baseball terminology than the target audience. Especially in the case of a Dutch audience. Baseball is played in Holland as well, but it is more of an underground sports here: only the most important matches are televised and most of the time they are only broadcasted on an extra sports channel. In countries where the audience is often subjected to baseball terminology and therefore familiar with the terminology, a translator is more likely to choose a conservation translation strategy for figurative speech that is based on baseball terminology, than when the target audience lives in a country such as Holland, where only a handful of people have knowledge of baseball, and on top of that, baseball references are never used as figurative speech. In this case a substitution strategy would be preferred. It is important to look at the context, though. When the book revolves around baseball, as is the case in this novel, a substitution strategy would never be considered because this would severely damage the integrity of the book. However, if the author has only incorporated some references to baseball by means of figurative speech, baseball does not play an important role in the novel, and the audience can be characterized as laymen, a substitution strategy would be preferred.

A second problem with translating baseball terminology is that no official Dutch terminology exists. The probable reason for this is the underground nature of the sports in Holland.

Everybody involved with the sports seems to have their own terms. There is no logic to it

whatsoever. This makes the translation process much harder. The Dutch baseball union has some sort of a normative function, but this still is not an official terminology base. I decided that I would have to use multiple sources to discover if a certain term was in fact used by most people involved with baseball, so those readers with foreknowledge would not be distracted by an uncommon Dutch term. Other sources for Dutch baseball terms would be websites on baseball such as *De Nederlandse Honkbal site*, newspaper articles on matches, books on baseball, and other translations of books with baseball terminology. When trying to understand the terminology, *Honkbal is Amerika, Amerika is honkbal* by Menno de Galan is a very helpful tool. De Galan tries to explain nearly all the different terms there are in baseball, and also notes which terms have worked their way into everyday American speech and how figurative speech should be interpreted. For translational purposes, however, it is not always so helpful. De Galan does not always provide the term that is used in Dutch, but sometimes only gives a description. It is still useful though, because it does explain what the term entails and therefore gives the translator a starting point for his search for the term that is used in Holland.

There is one advantage to the lack of official Dutch terminology: a translator is not bound by certain translations. If for instance, a translation makes the target text seem less spectacular than the source text, the translator can always resort to his or her own imagination and come up with a new term. It will still be important to scrutinize the existing term though, because it may be semi-official, which would make the new term a distraction to the expert reader.

In order to analyze the problems with baseball terminology in *My Most Excellent Year*, I have divided the terms in three main themes: baseball terms with direct equivalents in De Galan's book, baseball terms without direct equivalents and thus require other sources, and figurative

speech by means of baseball terminology. I will check every translation on the site of the *Koninklijke Nederlandse Baseball en Softball Bond* to make sure De Galan's translations are correct. As long as there is no statement that De Galan was incorrect, the reader can assume the *KNBSB* used the same term. I have selected the most interesting problems, since discussing all of them would ensure a sub chapter of a dozen pages. I will give some context with every set of terms so a layman reader of this thesis is also able to understand what the narrator is trying to say at that moment.

#### 4.3.2 *Baseball terms with direct equivalents*

An example of terms with direct Dutch equivalents in *Honkbal is Amerika, Amerika is honkbal* is the different kinds of pitches. In *My Most Excellent Year* T.C. mentions fastballs (Kluger *My Most* 145), curveballs (157), sliders, and sinkers (145) and their translations are all part of De Galan's glossary. They are all translated by means of Aixelá's 'repetition', i.e. the term is the same as in English. Another example can be found on pages 82 and 83, where T.C. tells the reader about George Davis "Buck" Weaver, or The Ginger Kid, and how he got banned from major league baseball. The term that is used here is 'major league'. De Galan explains how Major League Baseball (MLB) is the "umbrella term for professional baseball" (170, my translation) and how it is comprised of the National League and the American League. Since it is the name of an American institution, it is not translated but simply repeated in the target text. I do not want to italicize these English words in the translation, because they are to be expected in a Dutch text that contains baseball references and therefore will not distract the reader too much.

The next few examples of baseball terms with direct Dutch equivalents can be discussed as an explanation of how the game works. The first term, *inning*, occurs on page 97 in the novel. De

Galan discusses it as follows: “Een wedstrijd bestaat uit negen innings, slagbeurten” (149). For this term the repetition strategy was used. The next term has been naturalized, because when someone is ‘at-bat’, it is his turn, or “slagbeurt” (39) as De Galan says. ‘Pitching’ also has a clear equivalent, namely “werpen” (203); another naturalizing strategy. After a pitch, two things can happen and these are the following terms. ‘Stee-rike one’ or ‘strike one’, is a particularly confusing phrase, since ‘strike’ is also part of bowling terminology. In that context it has a positive denotation, since it means the bowler has knocked down all of the pins. In baseball however, it has a negative denotation. When a batter strikes out, it is either a swing and a miss, he does not swing at a pitch that was in fact in the strike zone, or he hits the ball, but it lands in the outfield. Its translation is naturalizing as well: “een slag” (260). The other term, “BALL ONE”, has also been naturalized. When looking it up in the glossary, I did not find ball one, but “ball four”. This means “vier wijd” (44), and the meaning of ball one is thus ‘één wijd’. A final term that has to do with the rules of the game is ‘shortstop’. The translation does not give any problems either, because it is very straightforward: “korte stop” (241).

The next phrase with a direct Dutch equivalent in *Honkbal is Amerika, Amerika is honkbal* concerns a place on the field. T.C. talks about an ‘on-deck circle’ and it too can be found in De Galan’s glossary. He gives the direct equivalent, which is “uitzwaaioplek” (99). A fun fact about this translation is that it makes it seem like it is a place for the batter to cool off after he has hit the field, while it is in fact a place to warm up. So it should really be called the ‘inzwaaioplek’.

### 4.3.3 Baseball terms that do not have direct equivalents

There are many terms that De Galan has not provided a direct equivalent for, but that have been translated by means of a descriptive translation strategy. This is particularly disappointing, since the phrases are not hard to understand, but the exact Dutch translations are somewhat harder to find. These instances thus demand more research to find the correct translation, and I found [www.honkbalsite.com](http://www.honkbalsite.com), *De Nederlandse Honkbalsite* particularly helpful. Again, I checked with the *KNBSB* if they used the same term. If there is no comment, the reader can assume the terms matched. It may seem a roundabout way to find the term that is used in Holland, but since the *KNBSB* is only semi-normative, I considered it necessary to make sure other sources did not use other terms.

The first phrase, ‘two out with two men on’, is not difficult to understand, but it does give the translator some difficulty with prepositions. De Galan only talks about the most straightforward part of the phrase: he states ‘out’ simply means ‘uit’ in Dutch. However, he does not say anything about ‘on’, and this is the problematic part. Is a player still ‘op het veld’, or ‘in het veld’? The correct translation can be found on [www.honkbalsite.com](http://www.honkbalsite.com). When I entered the combination ‘op het veld’ into the site’s search engine, it did not occur once, but there were several occurrences of ‘in het veld’. Examples are “Maar ook de handschoenen van de andere spelers in het veld zijn verschillend”, “De spelers die niet in het veld zijn, zitten in de dug-out”, “Dat team kan punten scoren, terwijl het team in het veld moet proberen dat te verhinderen”, and “De honkmannen staan niet alleen in het veld om hun honk te bewaken”. The examples show the contexts of the ‘in’ occurrences are similar to the context ‘two out with two men on’, and the correct translation is thus ‘twee uit met twee man in’.

The following phrase, ‘the ball clearing left field’, is not hard to understand either, but there is no entry on ‘left field’ in De Galan’s book, and the only entry that concerns some sort of clearing is “clearing the bases” (87). This time [www.honkbalsite.com](http://www.honkbalsite.com) did not have the answer. After I searched the Internet for baseball terminology for a while, I stumbled upon a terminology list from Broadcast Text, a Dutch subtitling company. The list was posted in March 1995, but after comparing some of the terms with De Galan’s translations, the terms used on [honkbalsite.com](http://honkbalsite.com) and on the *KNBSB* site, I concluded the list was still relevant. The entry that was helpful in this situation was “left field mid field / right field = Linksveld, middenveld, rechtsveld”. The translation of ‘midfield’ is incorrect, since this should be ‘midveld’, so I had to check if the other translations were correct. The website of the Domstad Dodgers gave a decisive answer, because they used “linksveld, rechtsveld, midveld” when they described their players’ positions. The remaining problem is the translation of ‘clearing’. Neither the website nor the terminology list provided an answer. I read several baseball reports, but none of them used such a term. I therefore concluded that it is an American baseball term, but it also has a high entertainment factor. The translation I came up with is ‘de bal vloog het linksveld uit’.

The third phrase is similar to the previous phrases in that its meaning does not give any difficulty, but the Dutch equivalent is hard to find. It is ‘circling the bases’. Meaning wise it is self-explanatory: T.C. races around the bases. However, it is unclear how this is called in Dutch. It might be ‘langs de honken rennen’, or ‘alle honken passeren’, or ‘de honken rond racen’. The problem does not only lie in the verb, but also in the preposition. Once again, I had problems finding the correct translation, because neither of the websites, nor the terminology list provided any answers. After reading more baseball reports and not finding any possible translations, I concluded there was no official translation for ‘circling the bases’,



and I therefore decided to use the last translation I came up with, because that is the only one that has the same exciting and enthusiastic sound to it as ‘circling the bases’ does in English.

The next term is fairly logical once its meaning is known. The ‘backstop’ is the wall behind the catcher and the player who is at-bat that separates the field from the bleachers, so the balls will not fly into the audience. De Galan does not give a noun for this phenomenon, but an explanation: “De wand tussen het veld en de toeschouwers achter het thuishonk” (De Galan 41). The translator still does not have a direct equivalent and will once again have to find the answer elsewhere. I eventually found the answer on the site of the *KNBSB* in their manual on the accommodations for baseball diamonds. On page twelve they have an entire entry on the backstop: “De backstop is gelegen achter de thuisplaat [...]. De backstop heeft een minimale lengte van een kwart cirkelboog en loopt bij voorkeur vanaf ...” and so on. The term was also used on [www.honkbalsite.com](http://www.honkbalsite.com), and the translation should thus simply be ‘de backstop’.

De Galan does not state a direct equivalent for the next phrase either. ‘hitting streak’ is explained as “een slagman die in vorm is en een aantal wedstrijden achter elkaar minstens één honkslag heeft, werkt aan een streak” (De Galan 142). The only translation the Internet would give me was ‘slagreeks’ and this sounds less spectacular than ‘hitting streak’. I could not find another translation anywhere else, so this time I had to resort to my own imagination and come up with one that preserved the more or less spectacular sound of ‘hitting streak’. I tried many different phrases, but none fitted the context. ‘slagserie’ was one option, but I dismissed this idea because one of the contests is called The World Series. I briefly considered ‘honkreeks’, but that option is not correct. ‘hitting streak’ means the batter actually hits the ball, and a batter can also go to first base when he does not hit the ball, but the pitcher throws three balls wide. I tried synonyms of ‘reeks’, but ‘periode’, ‘rits’, ‘rij’, and ‘opeenvolging’ did

not have that spectacular sound to them either. I therefore concluded the noun itself cannot provide that element, but should be supported by an adjective. I believe ‘succesvolle’ and ‘spectaculaire’ could both be an option, depending on the context, and they both would help ‘slagreeks’ sound more exciting.

All of the other terms that I felt are worth mentioning, but that I do not have the time or space for, have the same problem: they are fairly transparent in meaning, but not in translation.

Probably due to their transparency, none were incorporated in De Galan’s glossary, so all of them need alternate sources to find their translations. It is safe to assume none of them had a repetition or calque translation strategy, since they were all phrases and not nouns. The websites honkbalsite.com and knbsb.nl have proven to be helpful tools, as has the terminology list from BroadcastText. If these sources cannot provide an answer, a translator will have to resort to his own imagination and come up with a fitting translation himself.

#### *4.3.4 Figurative speech by means of baseball terminology*

The trouble with baseball based figurative speech when translating an English source text into a Dutch target text is that in Dutch, baseball terminology is never used as figurative speech, and conserving this would therefore have a severely exoticizing effect. However, substitution is not an option due to the crucial role baseball plays in T.C.’s narrative style and its importance in the novel as a whole. The translator will thus have to conserve the baseball references and also make the terminology as expert as possible, because T.C. is a baseball fanatic and would not use layman terminology. The only substitution strategy that is possible is Aixelá’s limited universalization, i.e. using another baseball reference as figurative speech that has the same meaning, but can be translated more easily in the context. This would have an exoticizing effect as well, but this can be justified by stating that T.C. is such a baseball

fanatic, he incorporates it in his language himself. However, the reader should be aware of the fact that baseball based figurative speech is not an idiosyncrasy of some boy, but is in fact a major part of the American culture. This is even more important since the book is part of the *Made in the USA* series by Lemniscaat. The translator will thus have to compromise: upholding the integrity of the novel and the reader being aware of the fact that the novel is part of another culture is more important than the consequential alienating effect caused by conserving the baseball references in figurative speech. I have made a selection of all the instances of figurative speech based on baseball terminology in this novel and I will discuss how I would solve the translation problems that occur for each of them.

On page 156 T.C. tells his mother Alejandra is throwing him for a loop, or as he puts it, she has “thrown me a breaking curve” (Kluger *My Most* 154). When I looked up this term in De Galan’s book, I found “breaking ball or pitch: Uitdrukking voor een worp die van het rechte pad afwijkt, door een plotselinge curve van links naar rechts, van rechts naar links of van boven naar beneden” (De Galan 71). After reading the information, I felt breaking curve is somewhat of a pleonasm, since a curveball is “Een door de pitcher geworpen bal die onverwachts een bocht maakt” (79), and ‘breaking’ means the ball curves as well, but this is probably T.C.’s way of stating that the situation is extremely confusing. De Galan also provides information on the figurative meaning of curveball “De uitdrukking is ook buiten het honkbal populair. Betekenis: een onaangename verrassing. ‘He threw me a curve’ betekent: hij leverde mij een rotstreek.” (97). When looking at the context, I feel that T.C. is not saying Alejandra is consciously playing tricks on him, since he continues by saying “The more time I spend with her, the more I want to be with her and the less I think about kissing her” (Kluger *My Most* 156). He is just confused by his own reaction, seeing as T.C. is in love with her and this normally includes wanting to kiss the object of one’s affection. He never expected to be

more confused after spending more time with Alejandra. I feel ‘Alé heeft me een curveball geworpen’ is a correct translation, but at first I feared this would confuse the Dutch target audience. However, the baseball reference does not carry the meaning on its own, because T.C. continues by explaining the situation. I thus concluded my search for a translation with this solution.

The second figurative use of a baseball reference I want to pay attention to is the following: “Mrs. Fitzpatrick bought the magazine for the class to see, and then she passed around Xeroxes of the interview for everybody to take turns reading the T.C. parts out loud. Augie had my voice down perfect (like he shouldn’t by now?), and Lee Meyerhoff hit one over the wall when she decided to work the body language too” (Kluger *My Most* 216). The students are reading the interview *SportsAmerica* did with T.C. about his “crusade to clear Buck Weaver”. Should the translation simply be ‘sloeg er één over de muur’, or should the limited universalization strategy be applied and should it be changed it into ‘scoorde een homerun’, since hitting one over the wall is in fact a synonym of a homerun. After careful consideration I figured ‘sloeg er één over de muur’ would be too confusing and out of context here. They are reading an article that is concerned with baseball, but the actual reading has nothing to do with baseball. An American reader would be able to quickly make the link, but in Dutch baseball references are never used in figurative speech, so even though baseball is a major part of this novel, it will still cost the Dutch reader much more time to make the link. Consequently, I decided to translate ‘hit one over the wall’ with ‘scoorde een homerun’.

The following phrase occurs when Hucky has drawn a chalk pavement picture and is angry because he cannot jump in even though Mary Poppins does it all the time. ““You can’t get pissed off at a chalk pavement picture. It has the home field advantage.”” (Kluger *My Most*

219). At first I felt it was a problem that I do know what this phrase generally means, but I do not see how it applies here. However, after contemplating which translation strategy should be used and what its translation should be, I decided that it is not my responsibility to figure out why Kluger used this specific baseball reference in this context. I will therefore simply translate it with the Dutch term: ‘Die heeft het thuisvoordeel’.

When T.C. and Hucky are about to sneak in the back of a theater to try and meet Julie Andrews, T.C. once again uses baseball based figurative speech: “So just to make sure I had all of our bases covered, I crouched down in front of Hucky and gave him one last instruction” (Kluger *My Most* 368). I knew this phrase is used as figurative speech quite often, but I still looked it up in *Honkbal is Amerika, Amerika is honkbal*: “De uitdrukking is vooral buiten het honkbal populair. Zij heeft een dubbele betekenis: 1) met elke mogelijkheid rekening houden; 2) alles onder controle hebben” (De Galan 95). T.C. uses this phrase here to state that both he and Hucky are prepared for every possible reaction of the security guard at the other side of the door. De Galan did not provide the direct Dutch equivalent and the translation therefore had to be sought elsewhere. The term that the Dutch baseball world uses for this phenomenon is “honken bezetten” (honkbalweek.nl), and the translation should therefore be ‘al onze honken bezet waren’.

#### 4.4 Translating Augie Hwong’s leading ladies

One of the parts of Augie Hwong’s character and narrative style I would like to focus on is all of the famous actresses he constantly refers or writes to. On the face of it, it seems that this is not a culture specific translation problem, but when taking a closer look at the role the names play in this novel, it becomes clear they can be characterized as such. Below I will analyze their function in this novel and the corresponding difficulties. This will be followed by a

discussion of which of the translation strategies could apply to this problem and which one(s) would have my preference.

#### *4.4.1 General difficulties*

The ladies Augie speaks of were once extremely popular actresses and/or singers. Nearly all of them were born in the first half of the twentieth century and most of them were at the height of their success in the 1930s, 40s, 50s and 60s. Today many of them have already passed away, but their reputation remains. With their talents, class and sometimes even scandals, they have worked their way into America's cultural heritage and into the hall of fame of the homosexual community. I asked a twenty-year-old homosexual friend of mine to explain to me why they idolize these women. He told me most names were unknown to him, but he could tell me why he idolizes women like Barbra Streisand, Diana Ross, Cher and the present-day icon Lady Gaga.

These ladies often defend homosexuals and sing about them. They are style icons.

Look at Gaga for example, she is so striking and extreme, which is something gays love to be as well. Most of them are not in everyday life, though. I also think it has to do with 'the ultimate femininity', but I cannot quite explain it. No wait. Look at Diana

Ross. A woman could not wish for more hair, right?! (Imthorn, my translation)

This idolization has gone so far that the names of these women now have a new connotation to them: when a man knows who they are and what they did and is even capable of quoting lines from their movies or lyrics from songs, there is no doubt that he is gay. This may be considered a generalization, but Kluger has used this function in the novel to make sure the reader knows from the very beginning Augie Hwang is as gay as a man can be and that his family and friends know this and accept him completely. The problem with translating this function is intertwined with how well known the ladies are among today's teenagers. The

women are still part of the American culture, because their movies and series still air on American television and high schools also have drama departments that pay attention to them. Due to this level of exposure, American teenagers are familiar with most of the ladies. They will not know every single name Augie uses, but they will be aware of the implications of his near obsession with them. The Dutch target audience will not be as familiar with them, seeing as their level of exposure is far lower: the films and series these ladies played roles in are far less popular in Holland than they still are in America. They are not such a big part of our culture either. After asking a few people of about twenty-two years old, both male and female, whether they knew the ladies that are on the list and none of them could tell me exactly who they were, I was fairly certain the target audience of teenagers of about fourteen to seventeen would not know them either. And that is exactly why these names are culture specific items, because the culture of the source and target audience determines who is familiar with these singers and actresses and who is not.

#### *4.4.2 Translation methods*

Since the target audience will not know the implication of Augie's use of the names, the source text would lose the extra layer of meaning if the names were simply conserved. I therefore contemplated if any translation strategies would ensure the conservation of the names' function in the text. There was one conserving method I briefly considered, namely Aixelá's linguistic (non-cultural) translation, in other words using names of source culture show business women the target audience is more likely to know. This option was discarded quickly though, since there are no other actresses or singers that have been as famous as these ladies and whose names bear the same connotation. In trying to conserve the function the names have in the text, another option would be naturalizing them: using Dutch show business women whose names have the same connotation in Holland. However, there are two

problems with this strategy, the first being the fact that the story is set in America and Dutch fag hags<sup>1</sup> are not known there. The second problem concerns the fact that Augie mentions many names and there are not nearly as many women in Holland whose names bear this connotation as in America. I thus had to conclude that no form of substitution was a possible, which brought me back to the conservation methods.

Since only conserving or repeating the names would not translate their function, I decided to combine two conservation strategies, namely repetition and extratextual gloss. Intratextual gloss was not an option, since there is no way of incorporating extra information in the text without harming the integrity of the story. Augie is an expert on these ladies and their lives and since the person he converses with is always someone who knows about them or has been taught about them by Augie himself, he would never provide more than the essentials every time he speaks of them. Most of the extratextual gloss strategies could be discarded immediately as well: brackets, italics and footnotes would be too distracting, since they would interrupt the reading experience. This left endnotes and a glossary. Because I feel all forms of notes in a text, i.e. an asterisk or an endnote, interrupt a reading experience, I decided endnotes would not be a possibility either and I would combine repetition with a glossary. However, since most readers do not look at the last pages of a book before they start reading it, I would also have to include a translator's note at the beginning of the novel to point out to the readers that there is in fact a glossary that will explain any unknown old Hollywood stars. This note would have to be extremely short as well, since many readers simply skip the introduction to a novel. I feel this solution fits Augie's character perfectly, since he would probably try to educate every 'ignorant' person in his life on these fabulous ladies.

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<sup>1</sup> "heterovrouw die het gezelschap van homofiele mannen zoekt" (Van Dale online). This term has been coined by the homosexual community themselves as a general name for their idols and is in no way demeaning.



#### 4.5 Cry me a river and Color me gone: translating lines from songs or movies

This chapter also revolves around a part of Augie's character that has to do with his near obsession with everything Broadway. Being such a huge fan of all of these plays, movies and series, Augie has repeatedly watched many of them and is now able to quote lines and lyrics at his own convenience. Since his mother writes musical reviews for *The Boston Globe* she is also part of this translation problem. Again, this may seem an odd translation problem to range under culture specific items, but these lyrics have in fact become part of the American theater and movie culture. This chapter will have the same structure as the last one: first I will explain why exactly this is a culture specific translation problem, and I will then discuss the general difficulties and the possible translation strategies that can be used to solve this problem.

##### *4.5.1 General difficulties*

Broadway and old American black-and-white movies have become two independent phenomena in American culture, because the audience has frequently been exposed to both. This may have been on a voluntary basis, when they went to see a Broadway play or went to the movies, or involuntarily, when they came across such a movie on television. It is thus easier for the American audience to get acquainted with the lines. Broadway and its shows are a truly American phenomenon in that the only way to experience it is to travel to New York City and watch a musical. Movies are different in that they can of course be watched all over the world. However, the old American black-and-white movies are not broadcasted as much in Holland as they are in America: the Dutch audience has to make a conscious effort to watch such a movie and is thus not exposed to them as much. Due to this lower level of exposure, the Dutch audience is less likely to recognize which movie a certain line is from, let alone being able to quote them. It is thus culturally determined which audience is more exposed to

these sources of entertainment. Lyrics are different because songs are played all over the world and the level of exposure is higher due to the fact that they are played in shops as well. However, the audience may recognize the lyrics, but this does not mean they will understand what they mean.

The function the lines and lyrics have in the text is what causes trouble in translation paradise. They are not only links to Augie's favorite movies, plays and actresses, and emphasize the fact how obsessed he is with them to be able to quote lines, but Kluger has also incorporated them in the text in such a way that they are an expression of Augie's feelings. It is therefore important that the reader understands what he means by these lines. The following example illustrates the problem. When Augie is waiting for Andy to come over for Thanksgiving dinner and is panic-stricken because he still is not there yet, he thinks: "I've never felt worse in my life. Oh, Andy. Where are you? *Color him gone*. 'It's still early,' Tick whispers into my right ear. 'He'll be here.' *No, he won't. Cry me a river.*" (Kluger *My Most* 176). 'Color him gone' is the final line in the song *My Coloring Book* from Barbra Streisand and *Cry me a river* was originally written to be sung by Ella Fitzgerald in the movie *Pete Kelly's Blues* and has since been covered hundreds of times. It is clear that Augie does not just cite these lines, but actually incorporates them into his train of thought. The question is whether the lines should be translated so their function is preserved and comprehension is guaranteed, or if they should be conserved so that the link to the original movie, play or actress will be preserved?

#### 4.5.2 Translation methods

Translating the lines means using one of the substitution strategies. Simply translating them into Dutch might be an option, since this would resolve the loss of meaning and integrate the songs into the Dutch target text, but it would destroy the relationship with the original source.

The link only exists in English, since in Dutch the phrases are just another strand of words that are randomly put together, and do not remind the reader of any film, play or song. On top of that, Augie lives in America and watches English movies and plays and listens to English songs, so he would never quote them in Dutch. Even a Dutch audience would quote them in English, so this would simply be unreasonable. Synonymy is not an option because there is no synonym to a quote. Neither is absolute universalization, since no play or movie that is of importance to the gay community is culturally neutral. Deletion and autonomous creation would never be an option, since they would harm the integrity of the story. If the quotes were deleted, Augie's character would change, as would introducing non-existing songs. Augie quotes existing lines from these plays, movies and songs for a reason. The only possible substitution option would be limited universalization, because if done correctly, this would not harm the story in any way. If the meaning of a line is too opaque, a translator could use another (famous) line from a song or play that is more transparent. However, he would have to pick a line from a movie or play that is also part of the homosexual 'hall of fame'.

As said before, conserving the English lyrics means conserving the link to a movie, play or song, but it also causes a loss of meaning, since the Dutch target audience may not know what Augie means by this English quote. On top of that, it also has an alienating and quite distracting effect when a character suddenly starts speaking another language. All of these elements make a strong case against any conservation method. However, it is starting to become more normal to mix English phrases with Dutch. Teenagers have been using 'cool', 'chill', and 'relax' for a while now, but these words have been used for so long that they have already become part of the Dutch language and are no longer seen as English words. However, teenagers are still widening their English-Dutch vocabulary with acronyms such as 'BFF' (best friend for life), CU (see you), PLS (please), 2morrow and 2day (tomorrow and

today), BF or GF (boyfriend or girlfriend), LOL (laughing out loud), LMAO (laughing my ass off) and so on, and these are still experienced as fairly exoticizing elements. Dutch singer Gio just released a new song called *Hoe ze loopt* in which he sings “Ik ben down for whatever (ever, ever). Zij en ik together (gether, gether). Ja ik wil d’r hebben, voor mezelf”. Adults may not be as accepting of this development in the Dutch language, but it is safe to assume teenagers are, and since they are the target audience of the book, the English phrases mixed in with the Dutch language may not be as distracting as I first assumed they would be. I thus continued considering the conservation options. Orthographic adaptation does not apply here, so this alternative can be ignored. Simply repeating the lines might be an option, but as stated before, this might cause problems understanding what Augie means by quoting the lyrics. I therefore felt a combination of repetition and some other conservation strategy would be a solution. Intratextual gloss in the form of an explanation is not an option here, since it would be impossible to inconspicuously integrate it in the text: any explanation would feel out of place, since Augie would not be explaining himself to his closest friends and family and most of the time he is only thinking the quotes. The same applies to brackets. However, the English lyrics or lines will have to be set off from the Dutch text by italics, so the reader is less surprised, and thus less distracted, by the sudden change of language. The names of songs, on the other hand, do not, because they should only be between quotation marks. I do not think footnotes or endnotes would be appropriate either, because they be a distraction. Just as with the actresses’ names, I feel a glossary would be most helpful: this way the meaning of the line in the current and original context can be explained properly. Again, this would fit Augie’s character and narrative style, since he would love to educate people on which plays and movies one ‘has to see before dying’ and which quotes should be memorized.

All in all, if combined with a glossary, and set off from the Dutch text by italics, I feel repetition is the best solution to this translation problem. However, if the meaning of a certain line is too opaque for the reader to understand and it is possible for the translator to use limited universalization, he should make the reading experience more comfortable by finding a quote that has the same meaning and function, but is still from one of the movies or plays that are loved by the homosexual community.

## 5. Annotated Translations

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### 5.1 T.C. Keller

The first source text is the first chapter – and the introduction – of the novel. It is T.C.’s paper for an English assignment on his ‘Most Excellent Year’. In the second one T.C., Hucky and Mrs. Jordan are getting an ice cream at the carnival. In an attempt to bond, T.C. bought Hucky a purple balloon “and tied the string around his wrist so he wouldn’t lose it” (150) too. Since no one is talking, T.C. decides to tell Hucky a story about Carlton Fisk.

*Source Text 1 – My Most Excellent Year page 1 – 4*

English Assignment  
T.C. Keller, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Ms. Lafontaine’s Class

### MY MOST EXCELLENT YEAR

#### Part 1: My Family

*[Note to Ms. LaFontaine: I didn’t mean to give you a hard time about the title of this assignment, but “My Totally Excellent Year” would have been like so 1995, we’d have been laughed out of Brookline if anybody found out. Especially if these things are going to be attached to our college apps. So in the future, you might want to check with me ahead of time about this kind of stuff. – T.C.]*

Since you’d never guess it from looking at me, nobody can tell that words like *because*, *fart*, *there* and *banana* come out sounding like ‘becazz,’ ‘faht,’ ‘they-a,’ and ‘bananer’ when I say them out loud. I got this from Pop, who’s even worse than I am. One time we took the train

down to New York so he could show me where Ebbets Field and the Polo Grounds used to be, and while we were ordering pizza in Brooklyn and back-and-forthing about who you'd rather have batting cleanup behind you – Pistol Pete Reiser or Charlie Banks – the waitress asked us what country we were from. (Like they've got room to talk in Brooklyn.)

A lot of the snoots on Beacon Hill like to tell you that their ancestors came over with the Pilgrims, but this didn't happen to us Kellers. We came over with the Red Sox. My grandpa's name was Tris Speaker Keller (after the 1907 outfielder they called "The Grey Eagle"), my dad's name is Theodore Williams Keller (world-famous slugger with 'tude in 1940-something), and I even have an Aunt Babe and an Aunt Ruth. (This was a lucky coincidence. They met thirty-eight years ago at a Bobby Kennedy rally in Rockport and they've been together ever since. Aunt Babe swears they would have fallen in love even if Aunt Ruth's name had been Sheba, but I'm not so sure.) Pop couldn't decide whether to call me Rico Petrocelli or Freddy Lynn, but Uncle Yaz had twins that year and beat him to it. That's how I wound up Anthony Conigliaro Keller (another snarly batting champ who got zapped in the face with a fastball in 1967, which somehow turned him into a hero.) And the only one who's allowed to call me Tony C is my dad, because I'm the only one who gets to call him Teddy Ballgame. To everybody else I'm just T.C. Except to my brother Augie, who calls me Tick.

I should probably explain the brother thing, except I don't really remember how it happened. We were in first grade, the Red Sox were in fourth place, and I had a brand-new hole in my heart from losing my mother. But even though Augie and I had never talked to each other before, he was the only one who knew what to say and how to say it. (Everybody else thought they could get away with blowing smoke up my ass about Guardian Angels and Eternal Paradise, like my mother had gone on a Princess Cruise.) Pretty soon we were taking make-believe trips to the planet Twylo and losing our thumbs to alien walnuts, and that's

when I knew for sure that I wouldn't be sad forever. Well, anybody who can pull off something like that for you isn't just a best friend – that's brother territory. So Augie told his mom and dad that they had a new son, and I told Pop the same thing. Screw biology.

Mama died when I was six. She was the one who taught me to believe in magic, but not by reading me books like *The Silver Sorceress of Oz* or Brothers Grimm – she proved it instead. Right after my third birthday, we went to Derry, New Hampshire, for her cousin's wedding, and before we left they gave me a purple balloon that said "Congratulations Bobby and Penny" on it. (Mama's half of the family all has normal names.) Well, when you're three, you just know that a purple balloon is pretty much the biggest thing that's ever going to happen to you – especially when you let go of it on the way back to Brookline and it flies out of the window of your Subaru. My mother finally got me to stop crying by promising that my purple balloon was flying all over Boston looking for me, and that if I watched the sky long enough, it'd see me and come home. So Pop and I stood in the backyard looking straight up for two hours, waiting for it to zero in for a landing. But no snap. Then all of a sudden from inside the house I heard Mama calling out, "T.C.! Come quick! Look who's here!" And damn if my purple balloon wasn't bobbing up and down against the ceiling of our front porch. (I was ten before I figured out that she drove all the way back to Derry, New Hampshire, just to get me another one.)

*Source Text 2 – My Most Excellent Year page 151 – 152*

OCTOBER 22, 1975.

The most important date in New England. Ever. And the reason is Carlton Fisk. It was Game 6 of the World Series at Fenway Park, and the Sox couldn't afford to lose it because that would have been the end of everything. So they hung on for 12 innings with a 6-6 tie until Fisk came to the plate with no one on and nobody out. Then Pat Darcy threw a sinker and Fisk sent it over the wall to New Hampshire.



“You should have seen the fans,” I said, dropping to the grass and pulling him down beside me. “Holy crap, they couldn’t believe it! Want me to show you what they saw?” Figuring I’d better not wait for a “no,” I hopped up onto my feet and crouched over a make-believe home plate – just the way Fisk used to crouch over the real thing at Fenway. Then I took some pretend practice chops just to get Hucky ready, and when I was positive I had him holding his breath, I let loose with a swing that even Fisk would have been proud of. I bounced along the first-base line waving my hands like I was yelling “Stay fair! Stay fair!” to the ball – and as soon as it cleared the Green Monster, I jumped in the air with a “Yes!” and circled the imaginary bases with a victory fist spinning around over my head. Since Nehi’s seen me do my Fisk routine 100 times before, he knew enough to be waiting for me back at the make-believe plate so he could jump all over me. That’s when I checked over my shoulder to see if Hucky had been impressed. Some impressed. While he wasn’t watching, he’d found a sharp rock that he used to cut the string off his wrist, and then just for good measure he killed the purple balloon with it. You could hear the pop in Salem.

By the time we got back to the bleachers we weren’t speaking to each other. Mrs. Jordan went up into the stands to talk to Pop, I picked up my glove and lit out to second base, and Hucky took his usual seat by the on-deck circle. For some like totally clueless reason, I thought this meant we were back on track again. Instead he made me strike out four times.

AND I STILL DON’T KNOW HOW HE DOES IT!

I love you,

T.C.

*Translation*

Opdracht voor Engels  
T.C. Keller, de 5<sup>e2</sup>  
Mevr.<sup>3</sup> Lafontaines les

MIJN ALLERBESTE<sup>4</sup> JAAR

## Deel 1: Mijn familie

*[Een kanttekening<sup>5</sup> voor mevr. Lafontaine: het was niet mijn bedoeling om lastig te doen over de titel van deze opdracht, maar “Mijn super geweldige jaar” zou echt zo 1995 zijn geweest*

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘11<sup>th</sup> grade’ in America equals ‘de 5e’ in Holland. Our ‘groep 3’ is their ‘first grade’. The problem with translating ‘11th Grade’ is the fact the Dutch high school system no longer works with ‘klassen’. Students are simply in ‘de 5e’. The only addition here is the level they study on, i.e. ‘5 Havo’. However, in America the school systems do not work with such levels, but with GPAs. Nowhere in the book is it indicated on what level T.C., Augie and Alejandra study. The only clue the reader gets is at the very end of the book, when they talk about which University they will attend next year, which means they are accomplished enough to be able to attend a University. I thus decided to leave any indication of their level out, and simply translate it as ‘de 5e’.

<sup>3</sup> In America the students always make a distinction between ‘Ms.’ and ‘Mrs.’ when addressing their teachers. In Holland, however, they do not. In high school they simply address them as ‘mevrouw’ or ‘meneer’.

<sup>4</sup> I spent a lot of time wondering whether ‘most excellent’ in the title of this essay, and this book, is a popular expression or a standard phrase. The initial title Ms. Lafontaine came up with is undeniably popular language: ‘totally excellent’. ‘most excellent’ however, is also a very normal expression. T.C. also comments on the fact that these essays will be attached to their college applications, which means it should not be too popular. I thus decided that the translation should not be a popular Dutch expression like ‘allertofste’ or ‘allervetste jaar’, but ‘mijn allerbeste jaar’. I feel this phrase is ‘street’ enough to be used by teenagers, but still acceptable enough to be used by professionals and other grownups as well.

<sup>5</sup> English speaking people often use the phrase ‘note to self’, which, depending on the context, means something along the lines of ‘kanttekening’ or ‘aandachtspuntje’. I feel ‘kanttekening’ is more appropriate here

*dat we Brookline uit zouden zijn gelachen als er ook maar iemand achter was gekomen. Vooral als deze dingen aan onze inschrijvingen voor universiteiten worden vastgemaakt. In de toekomst kunt u dit soort dingen dus misschien beter van te voren bij mij checken. – T.C.]*

Omdat je het nooit zou raden als je naar me kijkt, weet niemand dat woorden als *relatie*, *eigenlijk*, *zondag* en *zakdoek*<sup>6</sup> eruit komen als ‘relahsie’, ‘eigelek’, ‘sondag’ en ‘sakdoek’ als ik ze hardop uitspreek. Dat heb ik van Pap, die is zelfs nog erger dan dat ik ben. Toen we een keer de trein naar New York hadden genomen<sup>7</sup> zodat hij me kon laten zien waar Ebbets Field en de Polo Grounds vroeger waren en we in Brooklyn pizza bestelden en aan het bekvechten waren over wie je liever als vierde slagman<sup>8</sup> zou willen<sup>9</sup> – Pistol Pete Reiser of Charlie Banks – vroeg de serveerster ons uit welk land we kwamen. (Alsof ze daar in Brooklyn wat over mogen zeggen.)

Een hoop van de snobs op Beacon Hill vertellen je graag dat hun voorvaderen met de pelgrims zijn overgekomen, maar dit is niet met ons Kellers gebeurd. Wij kwamen met de Red Sox mee. M’n opas naam was Tris Speaker Keller (naar de buitenvelder uit 1907 die ze “The Grey Eagle” noemden), m’n vaders naam is Theodore Williams Keller (een

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when looking at the context, because it is of course a written essay and T.C. feels Ms. Lafontaine should really pay attention to these kinds of things in the future.

<sup>6</sup> See reflection page 28 and 29.

<sup>7</sup> Tense is less important here than T.C.’s colloquial style.

<sup>8</sup> “cleanup hitter, ook: batting cleanup. De vierde slagman in de opstelling. Doorgaans een krachtpatser, de man die de honklopers met één ferme mep naar het thuishonk dirigeert. Als hij succes heeft veegt hij de honken schoon.” (De Galan 86-87).

<sup>9</sup> I made some small changes in the conjunctions in this sentence, because the rhythm of the Dutch sentence was not working. This way, it flows more easily and the rattling sentence that came about fits T.C.’s style as well.

wereldberoemde slagman<sup>10</sup> met kapsones ergens in de jaren veertig), en ik heb zelfs een tante Babe en een tante Ruth. (Dit was een gelukstreffer<sup>11</sup>. Ze hebben elkaar 38 jaar geleden ontmoet bij een politieke bijeenkomst<sup>12</sup> voor Bobby Kennedy in Rockport en sindsdien zijn ze samen. Tante Babe zweert dat ze zelfs verliefd zouden zijn geworden als Tante Ruth Sheba had geheten, maar dat weet ik nog niet zo zeker.) Pap kon maar niet beslissen of hij me nou Rico Petrocelli of Freddy Lynn moest noemen, maar Oom Yaz kreeg dat jaar een tweeling en was hem voor. Daarom heet ik Anthony Conigliaro Keller (nog zo'n gruwelijke slagman<sup>13</sup> die

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<sup>10</sup> The Dutch language does not have many different ways to express 'slagman', which is why I translated 'slugger' as 'slagman'. The direct meaning of 'slugger' is 'goede slagman' (Van Dale Online), but there is also a figurative meaning: "een krachtpatser. Een slagman die de ballen met kracht het veld in slaat of de tribunes in mept. Sluggers zijn de seksbommen van het honkbal" (De Galan 245). I feel that 'goede slagman' is expressed by the fact that he is world-famous, because he would not be if he were not amazing. The connotative meaning was lost in the translation process, but because this is not applicable here, this loss is acceptable.

<sup>11</sup> The translation of 'lucky coincidence' as 'gelukstreffer' creates a welcome extra sports reference in the source text, which will cancel out a loss of a baseball reference that is highly likely to occur later on in the novel.

<sup>12</sup> I felt it was necessary to add 'politieke' to 'bijeenkomst', because the English 'rally' has a political connotation that 'bijeenkomst' does not have in Dutch.

<sup>13</sup> In Dutch there are not a dozen synonyms for an incredible 'batter' like there are in American, so I had to add an adjective that included this meaning. The source phrase already had an adjective that could either be translated as a negative character trait 'snuwerig' or 'zeikerig' or meant he hit the ball so hard it snarled. I feel 'gruwelijk' expresses both of these meanings and also includes how incredible he was. It is not such a temporarily popular word as some may think, because the first time Douwe Egberts used it in their commercial was in 2004, which means that it had already been used for a while, and kids today still use it.

in 1967 door een fastball<sup>14</sup> in z'n gezicht werd gemept, waardoor hij op een of andere manier een held werd.) En de enige die me Tony C mag noemen is m'n pa, omdat ik de enige ben die hem Teddy Ballgame mag noemen. Voor alle anderen ben ik gewoon T.C. Behalve voor m'n broer Augie, die noemt me Tick.

Ik zou dat van die broer waarschijnlijk even uit moeten leggen, maar ik kan me niet echt meer herinneren hoe dat is gebeurd. We zaten in groep drie<sup>15</sup>, de Red Sox stonden op de vierde plek, en m'n hart was gebroken<sup>16</sup> doordat mijn moeder net<sup>17</sup> was overleden. Maar ook al hadden Augie en ik nog nooit tegen elkaar gepraat, hij was de enige die wist wat hij moest zeggen en hoe hij het moest zeggen. (De rest dacht allemaal dat ze me onzin konden verkopen over beschermengelen en het hiernamaals, alsof mijn moeder op een cruise<sup>18</sup> was gegaan of zo.) Al snel namen we fantasietripjes naar de planeet Twylo en verloren we onze duimen aan alienwalnoten, en toen wist ik zeker dat ik niet altijd verdrietig zou blijven. Nou, iemand die zoiets voor je voor elkaar krijgt is niet alleen maar een beste vriend – dat is je broer. En dus

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<sup>14</sup> See reflection page 60. The same argument goes for all the other balls that are thrown in this translation.

<sup>15</sup> 'First grade' equals 'groep drie'. (Expertisecentrum)

<sup>16</sup> In English people say they have a hole in their heart, but there is no 'hole' equivalent for a broken heart in Dutch. People use terms like 'een gebroken hart' here.

<sup>17</sup> In the English the fact that T.C.'s mother has just died is carried out by the brand-new hole in his heart. I shifted this towards 'doordat mijn moeder net was overleden', because this makes the sentence sound more natural.

<sup>18</sup> A 'Princess Cruise' is also known in Holland as well, because it is an international cruise company. However, when people in Holland talk about cruises they keep it more general: they talk about taking a cruise instead of a Princess Cruise.

vertelde Augie zijn vader en moeder<sup>19</sup> dat ze een nieuwe zoon hadden, en ik vertelde hetzelfde aan Pap. Schijt aan<sup>20</sup> biologie.

Mama overleed toen ik zes was. Zij was degene die me in magie leerde geloven, maar niet door me boeken voor te lezen als *De zilveren Tovenares van Oz*<sup>21</sup> of *De Gebroeders Grimm* – nee,<sup>22</sup> in plaats daarvan bewees ze het. Vlak na mijn derde verjaardag gingen we naar Derry in New Hampshire voor de trouwerij van haar nicht en voordat we weggingen gaven ze mij een paarse ballon met de woorden “Gefeliciteerd Bobby en Penny” erop. (Mamas kant van de familie heeft normale namen.) Nou, als je drie bent, dan weet je gewoon zeker dat een paarse ballon zo ongeveer het mooiste is wat je ooit zal overkomen – vooral als je hem op de weg terug naar Brookline los laat en hij het raam van je Subaru uit vliegt. Mijn moeder had me eindelijk zover dat ik stopte met huilen door te beloven dat mijn paarse ballon overal over Boston rondvloog op zoek naar mij en dat hij me zou zien en naar huis zou komen als ik maar lang genoeg naar de lucht keek. Pap en ik stonden dus twee uur lang in de achtertuin omhoog te kijken en te wachtten tot hij ons zou zien en zou landen. Maar er

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<sup>19</sup> In English the common order is ‘mom and dad’, and in Dutch it is ‘vader en moeder’.

<sup>20</sup> ‘screw’ is not the harshest curse word T.C. could have used here, that would have been ‘fuck’. ‘Fuck’ has a far more powerful impact in America than ‘screw’, which is why I decided to not use something as harsh as ‘rot op’ or ‘flikker op’ (which would be all wrong for another set of reasons in this book), but go with ‘schijt aan’ instead.

<sup>21</sup> Because parents normally do not read to their children from books in foreign languages, I had to either translate the title of this book or replace it with a similar one. This book has not been translated. I decided to simply translate the title because the story itself does not play a role here – it is about a silver sorceress who has lost her Enchanted Hammer and is now coming to take it back – only the title does.

<sup>22</sup> To make the sentence more natural in Dutch, I needed to add ‘nee’ here.

gebeurde geen zak<sup>23</sup>. Toen hoorde ik opeens Mama vanuit het huis “T.C.! Kom snel! Kijk eens wie er is!” roepen. En verdorie, als daar mijn paarse ballon niet tegen het plafond van onze veranda voor het huis stuiterde. (Ik was tien toen ik eindelijk doorhad dat ze alleen maar om een nieuwe voor me te halen helemaal terug naar Derry was gereden.)

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22 OKTOBER, 1975.

De allerbelangrijkste datum in New England. Ooit. En de reden is Carlton Fisk. Het was Game 6 van de World Series in Fenway Park en de Sox konden het zich niet veroorloven om te verliezen omdat dat het einde van alles zou betekenen. En dus hielden ze 12 innings lang met 6-6 gelijkspel vol totdat Fisk aan slag was met niemand in en niemand uit. En toen wierp Pat Darcy een sinker en mepte Fisk hem over de muur naar New Hampshire.

“Je had de fans moeten zien,” zei ik, terwijl ik mezelf op het gras liet vallen en hem naast me neer trok. “Godskanonnen<sup>24</sup>, ze konden het niet geloven! Zal ik je laten zien wat zij zagen?” Omdat ik dacht dat ik maar beter niet op een “nee” moest wachten, sprong ik op en hurkte ik over een fantasiethuisplaat – precies zoals Fisk vroeger over het echte werk in Fenway hurkte. Ik nam wat denkbeeldige oefenslagen om Hucky voor te bereiden en toen ik er zeker van was dat hij zijn adem inhield, liet ik een zwaai los waar zelfs Fisk trots op zou zijn geweest. Ik stuiterde over de eerste honklijn en zwaaide met m’n handen alsof ik “Blijf zo gaan! Blijf zo

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<sup>23</sup> The dictionary did not prove to be any help when I looked for the meaning of ‘snap’ in the sentence ‘But no snap’. I found a lot of occurrences on the Internet, but they did not fit this context either. They mostly concerned snap decisions. I thus looked closely at the context and figured it means something along the lines of ‘nothing happened’. To make the phrase more part of T.C.’s style I finally decided to translate it as ‘Maar er gebeurde geen zak’.

<sup>24</sup> This expression fits in well with the dialect he uses. ‘Godskanonnen’ is only used in the northern parts of Holland.

gaan!” naar de bal schreeuwde – en zodra die de *Green Monster*<sup>25</sup> voorbij was sprong ik de lucht in met een “Yes!” en racete ik de denkbeeldige honken rond met een overwinningsvuist die rond mijn hoofd zwaaide. Aangezien Nehi me mijn Fist-routine al honderd keer had zien doen, wist ‘ie dat hij me op de denkbeeldige thuisplaat op kon wachten om me te bespringen. Op dat moment keek ik over mijn schouder om te zien of Hucky onder de indruk was. Nou, lekker onder de indruk hoor. Toen hij niet keek had hij een scherpe steen gevonden die hij gebruikte om het touwtje van zijn pols te snijden, en toen vermoordde hij de ballon gewoon voor de zekerheid ook nog eens. Ze konden de knal in Salem horen.

Tegen de tijd dat we terug kwamen bij de tribunes praatten we niet meer tegen elkaar. Mevrouw Jordan liep omhoog naar het overdekte gedeelte<sup>26</sup> om met Pap te praten, ik pakte mijn handschoen op en smeerde ‘m naar het tweede honk, en Hucky nam zijn gebruikelijke positie in bij de uitzwaaioplek<sup>27</sup>. Om een of andere echt compleet idiote reden dacht ik dat dit betekende dat we weer op het juiste pad waren. In plaats daarvan zorgde hij ervoor dat ik vier keer een strike out kreeg.

EN IK WEET NOG STEEDS NIET HOE HIJ HET DOET!

Ik hou van je,

T.C.

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<sup>25</sup> At first I thought by ‘the Green Monster’ T.C. meant the field, but after some research on the Internet, I discovered the Green Monster is a nickname for the left field wall at Fenway Park. It was named such because of its height and the fact that it is green (RedSoxDiehard.com). I therefore copied ‘the Green Monster’ since it is an official name. I did italicize it to prepare the reader for its foreign nature.

<sup>26</sup> ‘bleachers’ are in fact ‘tribunes’ without a roof and ‘stands’ are the ones with a roof. In Holland however, we only make that distinction when the situation specifically asks for it, so I translated ‘bleachers’ as ‘tribunes’ and ‘stands’ as ‘het overdekte gedeelte’.

<sup>27</sup> See reflection page 61.



## 5.2 Augie Hwong

In the first fragment Augie writes to Judy Garland to vent. Andy just wrote him an apology letter after he freaked out and said: “Augie, you’re a *guy*. Once in a while you need to remind people before they forget. [...] [You] tell people that in your last life you were the Andrews Sisters. All I’m saying is that sometimes it gets a little intimidating” (Kluger *My Most* 261). Andy is not so confident and open about his homosexuality yet. In the second fragment, Andy comes over for the first time after the fiasco and Augie wants him to work for it. However, Andy and Dad end up having so much fun talking about football, Augie is worried sick in the final fragment that his father would rather have had a son who understands football.

*Source Text 1 – My Most Excellent Year page 309*

# DIVA OF THE WEEK

## Judy Garland

(“How can I ignore the boy next door?”)

Dear Jutes,

I’ve been through a broken heart, I’ve survived the grieving process, and I reclaimed the fragmented pieces of my life better than Fanny Brice did after Nicky dumped her. But then he sends me a forgive-me e-mail quoting Barbra Streisand – and instead of melting again, all I want to do is kick his ass. What’s up with *that*? I’m *so* not cut out for love. The rules are too complicated. No wonder Romeo and Juliet killed themselves after one night together.

I used to think I was a pushover, but you’re the one who taught me the ground rules. Remember how you stood up to John Truitt when you thought he was a bully, even though

you loved him? I probably should have made you my guardian diva right from the beginning, but somehow it seemed so retro. These days gay kids are a lot more wordly. We don't get points for knowing the date of your Carnegie Hall concert (April 23, 1961), when you were born (June 10, 1922), or what you said to Betty Hutton when she replaced you in *Annie Get Your Gun* ("You goddamn son of a bitch"). And we need to rewrite some of the rules together, because *Meet Me in St. Louis* doesn't play the way it used to.

*Source Text 2 – My Most Excellent Year page 311*

Andy came over on Sunday to check out a Patriots game from 1999 that Dad had taped but never seen. This is how my father gets through the off-season without going into withdrawal. He has a whole library of unwatched videos that go back to the '80s. At the rate of one every two weeks from February through July, he's okay until the spring of 2012. Then he needs to start worrying.

It was the first time Andy and I were going to be together since that harrowing Thursday at The Word Shop Café, and because it was supposed to begin snowing later in the afternoon, Dad lit a fire while Mom made popcorn. Normally I'd have made sure to squeeze myself into the love seat next to Andy, but he wasn't getting off *that* easy. (When Dad saw me considering an armchair next to the front door, he said, "Why don't you just sit in the chimney? I can pipe a speaker up there if you want.") Coming over to our house was always a special occasion for Andy, but this wasn't going to be one of those days.

*Source Text 3 – My Most Excellent Year page 313 – 315*

On the other hand, finding something new to be pathological about is what keeps me in business, and I'd been worrying ever since Sunday when I watched him and my father test each other – from the tat soi right up through Mom's orange cakes – on statistics like 1993

yardage and 1998 point spreads and players with long names that didn't have any vowels in them. *Maybe Andy was right after all. Look how much fun Dad is having. Does he wish he had a son who understood football? Sure he does, you gink. Watch the way they're challenging each other about pass protection – whatever the hell that is. Did Dad ever have a conversation like that with you? Oh yeah, right. I can practically hear it. "Hey, Dad – whose idea was Betty Davis's party dress in all About Eve?" "Edith Head, you dope!" No wonder he's so animated. He's finally got a kid he can talk to on his own terms. I'm like SO useless!!*

I made it through the rest of the week on the snake-pit side of gloomy, wondering whether or not they let gay kids in the Peace Corps. ("Why do you want to join, son?" "Because I embarrass my father, sir. I don't know what a down is." "Then why the hell would we want you either??") By Saturday night I was about as well put together as Shirley MacLaine at the end of *The Children's Hour*, lying in my bed and staring at the walls like one of those cable ads for Paxil. Of course, it helps to have a dad who can read you like a book, even if it gets a little irritating once in a while. A guy's got to have *some* secrets.

"Aug," he asked, tucking me in. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." I shrugged, so obviously not fine. *Why are you wasting your time with me? Your son wouldn't know a lateral pass if he was sitting on one.*

"You sure nothing's the matter?" he repeated. The sigh that shook my whole body was actually a little much – even for me.

"I'm positive." That was when he knew it was time to sit down on the edge of my bed and think for a really long minute. Which is what he did. And suddenly his eyes arched up like he had it all figured out, so he kind of half smiled and leaned in to kiss me good night.

"Don't worry," he promised confidently, reaching for the lamp on my night table to switch it off. "Boyfriends and girlfriends fight all the time. It's part of being in love."

"That's not it," I blurted. Dad's hand froze in midair and the lamp stayed on.

“Oh. Uh, well – ” He sat up straight again and tried another road. “‘Stage fright is normal when you’ve got a big part’?”

“Nope.” Well, by now he knew he was really stuck between a rock and a hard place. Usually he gets it on the first whack, and once in a while it takes two, but this was a whole other solar system. So he stood up and began pacing back and forth in front of my *All About Eve* action figures. The way his eyes were lowered and his forehead was concentrating, you could tell that he was replaying everything that had happened since just before I started acting weird. Meanwhile, I was getting sleepy. Being neurotic takes a lot of hard work. I really needed him to wrap up his performance so I wouldn’t zonk out in the middle of my finale. Then on the third lap he stopped dead in his tracks and frowned.

“Oh, no,” he mumbled, more to himself than to me. He sat back down in a hurry and ran his hand across the top of my hair. “Augie, listen to me. If I’d had a kid who liked football, we’d have driven Mom crazy eight years ago. I got *exactly* who I wanted.”

“Even if – Even if I never heard of a play-action pass before?” I stammered.

“You dopey rock-head. That’s what son-in-laws are for! Now, is there anything *else* that’s not bothering you?”

“No,” I admitted sort of sheepishly. “That was all.” When he switched off the lamp and kissed me good night for real, I turned over on my side – just the way Hucky does with Shut-the-Door – so he wouldn’t see how relieved I was.

“I love you, Dad.”

“I love you too.”

Translation

# DIVA VAN DE WEEK

## Judy Garland

(“How can I ignore the boy next door?”)<sup>28</sup>

Lieve<sup>29</sup> Jutes,

Ik heb een gebroken hart doorstaan, ik heb het verwerkingsproces overleefd en ik heb de versplinterde stukjes van mijn leven beter bijeen geraapt dan Fanny Brice deed nadat Nicky haar dumpte. Maar dan stuurt hij me een “vergeef me”-e-mail waarin hij Barbra Streisand citeert – en in plaats van weer te smelten, wil ik hem alleen maar een rotschop geven. Waar slaat *dat* nou weer op?<sup>30</sup> Ik ben *zo* niet gemaakt voor de liefde. De regels zijn te ingewikkeld. Geen wonder dat Romeo en Julia al na één nacht samen zelfmoord pleegden.

Vroeger dacht ik dat ik gemakkelijk in te palmen was, maar jij bent degene die me de grondbeginselen heeft geleerd. Weet je nog hoe je tegen John Truitt in ging toen je dacht dat hij een pestkop was, ook al hield je van hem? Ik had je waarschijnlijk meteen vanaf het begin

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<sup>28</sup> See reflection chapter 4.5 *Cry me a river and Color me gone: translating lines from songs or movies* on page 70.

<sup>29</sup> Augie always addresses his ladies as if they were his close friends. He probably feels that way as well. So I felt he would never begin his letter to Judy Garland with ‘Beste’ or ‘Geachte’. He could only start with ‘Lieve’.

<sup>30</sup> “What’s up with *that*?” is a phrase that is used throughout the book. It always expresses frustration, disbelief and incomprehension. I feel every aspect of this phrase is preserved in the translation ‘Waar slaat *dat* nou weer op?’.

al mijn beschermdiva moeten maken, maar op een of andere manier leek dat zo retro. Homo's<sup>31</sup> zijn tegenwoordig veel wereldwijzer<sup>32</sup>. We scoren geen punten als we weten wanneer je concert in Carnegie Hall was (23 april, 1961), wanneer je geboren bent (10 juni, 1922), of wat je tegen Betty Hutton zei toen ze jou verving in *Annie Get Your Gun* ("You goddamn son of a bitch"<sup>33</sup>). En we moeten samen wat van de regels herschrijven, want *Meet Me in St. Louis* is niet meer hetzelfde<sup>34</sup>.

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Andy kwam op zondag langs om een wedstrijd van de Patriots uit 1999 te kijken die papa had opgenomen maar nog nooit had gezien. Zo komt mijn vader zonder ontwenningverschijnselen de seizoensstop door. Hij heeft een hele bibliotheek aan niet bekeken video's die teruggaan tot de jaren tachtig. Als hij van februari tot en met juli één wedstrijd per twee weken kijkt, overleeft<sup>35</sup> hij het tot de lente van 2012. Daarna moet hij zich zorgen gaan maken.

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<sup>31</sup> I did not feel 'kids' added an important element to 'gay kids' here, so I simply translated it as 'homo's'.

<sup>32</sup> I briefly considered 'van de wereld', but quickly discarded it because it makes it seem like the kids are more often inebriated, whether by alcohol or drugs, and this is far from what Augie is saying.

<sup>33</sup> See reflection chapter 4.5 *Cry me a river and Color me gone: translating lines from songs or movies* on page 70.

<sup>34</sup> By saying 'because *Meet me in St. Louis* doesn't play like it used to' Augie wants to express how things have changed and *Meet Me in St. Louis* does not have the same meaning or attraction for him anymore. I believe 'is niet meer hetzelfde' expresses the same feeling in Dutch.

<sup>35</sup> I decided to translated 'he's okay' with 'overleeft hij het', because either Augie's father is such a football addict he needs to have a 'fix' every two weeks, or Augie has once again dramatized something. 'overleeft' fits perfectly in either situation. It is probably a little bit of both, seeing as Dad and Andy are constantly talking statistics.

Het was de eerste keer dat Andy en ik weer samen zouden zijn sinds die afschuwelijke<sup>36</sup> donderdag in The Word Shop Café en omdat het aan het einde van de middag zou gaan sneeuwen, stak papa de openhaard aan terwijl mama popcorn maakte. Normaal had ik mezelf zeker weten naast Andy in de loveseat<sup>37</sup> geperst, maar zo makkelijk kwam hij er niet vanaf. (Toen papa zag dat ik een stoel naast de voordeur overwoog, zei hij “Waarom ga je niet gewoon in de schoorsteen zitten? Ik kan wel een speaker naar boven richten als je dat wilt.”) Bij ons thuis langskomen was altijd een bijzondere gelegenheid voor Andy, maar dit zou niet zo’n dag worden.

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Aan de andere kant is iets nieuws vinden om onredelijk over te doen datgene wat me draaiende houd en ik maakte me al sinds zondag zorgen toen ik hem en m’n vader elkaar van de tatsoi helemaal tot en met mama d’r sinaasappelcakejes had zien testen over statistieken als terreinwinst<sup>38</sup> in 1993 en puntenverdeling in 1998 en spelers met lange namen zonder klinkers. *Misschien had Andy toch gelijk. Kijk dan hoeveel plezier papa heeft. Had hij liever een zoon gehad die football wel begrijpt? Natuurlijk, goof<sup>39</sup>. Kijk dan hoe ze elkaar uitdagen*

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<sup>36</sup> ‘afschuwelijk’ is not the direct equivalent of harrowing, but I feel this change is justified by the fact that Augie has a very dramatic way of telling stories. ‘schokkend’ and ‘aangrijpend’ do not have the same dramatic feeling in Dutch that ‘harrowing’ does in English, and ‘afschuwelijk’ does.

<sup>37</sup> Nowadays ‘loveseat’ is also often used in Dutch furniture speech. For example “Broadway Loveseat Pellini. Comfortabele loveseat om samen van (elkaar) te genieten.” (Eijerkamp).

<sup>38</sup> See reflection page 43.

<sup>39</sup> According to Augie, T.C. made up the word ‘gink’ a few years ago: “If he invented a word like *gink*, it was part of every kid’s vocabulary by the end of recess” (Kluger *My Most* 6). The reader is never told what it means exactly, but is able to figure out its meaning by looking at the context: something along the lines of

*over pass protection – wat dat in godsnaam ook mag zijn. Heeft papa ooit zo'n gesprek met jou gehad? Ja hoor, natuurlijk. Ik kan het al bijna horen. “Hey, Pap – wie z'n idee was Betty Davis d'r avondjapon in All About Eve?” “Edith Head, domoor!” Geen wonder dat hij zo opgewekt is. Hij heeft eindelijk een kind waarmee hij over zijn eigen onderwerpen kan praten. Ik ben echt ZO nutteloos!!*

De rest van de week was ik zo goed als klaar voor het gekkenhuis en vroeg ik me af of ze homoseksuele tieners tot het Vredeskorps zouden toelaten. (“*Waarom wil je je bij ons aansluiten, jongen?*” “*Omdat ik mijn vader in verlegenheid breng, meneer. Ik weet niet wat een down is.*” “*Waarom zouden wij je dan in godsnaam wel willen??*”) Tegen zaterdagavond was ik er zo ongeveer net zo vreselijk aan toe<sup>40</sup> als Shirley MacLaine aan het einde van *The Children's Hour*: ik lag in mijn bed net als iemand uit één of andere antidepressivareclame<sup>41</sup> naar de muren te staren. Natuurlijk helpt het om een vader te hebben voor wie je een open

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‘fool’, ‘idiot’ and ‘dude’ or the Dutch ‘sukkel’, ‘gast’ or ‘idioot’. I looked it up in the dictionary, just to make sure it was not in fact a real word. I did find it and it means “kerel, gast, (slordige) vent, rare kwast/snuiter/goof” (Van Dale Online). Because some of these words actually match the inferred meanings, I felt I needed to translate *gink*. ‘snuiter’ means ‘zonderling’, which does not fit in T.C.’s style at all. I had never heard of ‘goof’ before and when I looked it up I found out that it is an informal way of saying ‘jongen’. I feel this does fit in T.C.’s style: it is informal and ‘goofy’ which is typical of him.

<sup>40</sup> ‘vreselijk aan toe’ is not a direct equivalent of ‘well put together’ and it also causes a shift from feeling ‘well’ to ‘horrible’, but it does fit Augie’s dramatic style perfectly.

<sup>41</sup> Since “Paxil” is unknown to me, I looked it up on the Internet. On Wikipedia I found the following information on it: “Paroxetine is een antidepressivum dat sinds 1991 internationaal op de markt is. Het wordt verkocht onder de merknamen: Paxil® in de Verenigde Staten en Europa, Seroxat® in UK, Nederland en Volksrepubliek China” (Wikipedia). In Holland there are no advertisements for anti-depressants on TV, so I could not choose a Dutch ad with international values that the reader would recognize. I therefore neutralized it into “en staarde net als iemand uit één of andere antidepressivareclame naar de muren”. I also changed the punctuation of the sentence in order to translate the gerunds ‘lying’ and ‘staring’.



boek bent, ook al is het af en toe nog wel eens irritant. Een man moet toch *wat* geheimen hebben.

“Aug,” vroeg hij, terwijl hij me instopte. “Is alles oké?”

“Prima.” Ik haalde m’n schouders op, zo overduidelijk niet prima. *Waarom verspil je je tijd aan mij? Je zoon zou nog geen laterale pass herkennen als hij er bovenop zat.*

“Weet je zeker dat ‘r niks aan de hand is?” herhaalde hij. De zucht die mijn hele lichaam deed schudden was eigenlijk een beetje te – zelfs voor mij.

“Absoluut.” Op dat moment wist hij dat het tijd was om op de rand van mijn bed te gaan zitten en een poosje na te denken. Dat deed hij dan ook. En plotseling sperde hij zijn ogen open<sup>42</sup> alsof hij het allemaal precies doorhad, glimlachte half en leunde naar me toe om me welterusten te kussen.

“Maak je geen zorgen,” beloofde hij vol overtuiging, terwijl hij naar de lamp op mijn nachtkastje reikte om ‘m uit te zetten. “Vriendjes en vriendinnetjes hebben zo vaak ruzie. Het hoort bij het verliefd zijn.”

“Dat is het niet,” flapte ik eruit. Papas hand bleef middenin de lucht hangen en de lamp bleef aan.

“O. Eh, nou – ” Hij ging weer rechtop zitten en probeerde een andere optie.

“Plankenkoorts is normaal als je een grote rol hebt?”

“Nope<sup>43</sup>.” Nou, tegen die tijd wist hij dat ‘ie echt klem zat<sup>44</sup>. Meestal slaat ‘ie de spijker meteen op z’n kop en af en toe heeft ‘ie twee pogingen nodig, maar dit was een heel

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<sup>42</sup> In Dutch eyes cannot arch up on their own account, the person in whose sockets the eyes are has to be the agent.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Nope’ has become a part of Dutch vocabulary as well. Teenage kids now say it in and out of season. This phrase also makes the English phrases Augie tends to use stand out a little less.

ander zonnestelsel<sup>45</sup>. Hij stond dus op en begon voor mijn actiefiguren van *All About Eve* te ijsberen. Aan de manier waarop hij z'n ogen neersloeg en z'n voorhoofd geconcentreerd stond, kon je zien dat hij alles terugspeelde wat er vanaf vlak voordat ik raar was gaan doen was gebeurd. Ondertussen begon ik slaap te krijgen. Neurotisch zijn is veel werk. Hij moest nu wel snel een eind aan zijn optreden breien zodat ik niet middenin mijn finale als een blok in slaap zou vallen. Tijdens zijn derde ronde bleef hij opeens stokstijf staan en fronste.

“O, nee,” mompelde hij, meer tegen zichzelf dan tegen mij. Hij ging snel weer zitten en aaide met zijn hand over mijn haar. “Augie, luister eens goed naar me<sup>46</sup>. Als ik een kind had gehad dat van football hield, zou Mama acht jaar geleden al gek van ons zijn geworden. Ik heb *precies* gekregen wie ik wilde.”

“Zelfs als – Zelfs als ik nog nooit van een play-action pass heb gehoord?” stamelde ik.

“Jij met je betonnen kop. Daar zijn schoonzonen toch voor! Nou, is er nog iets *anders* dat je niet dwars zit?”

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<sup>44</sup> I could not find a literal translation of ‘stuck between a rock and a hard place’ anywhere. I thus looked at the context and figured it should mean Dad does not know where to find the answer. He does not know a solution to this problem. A Dutch way of expressing you cannot find a solution is ‘klem zitten’, which means the ‘stuck’ implication is preserved as well.

<sup>45</sup> A direct translation of ‘this was a whole other solar system’, ‘dit was een heel ander zonnestelsel’ comes across as extremely unnatural, because in Holland people never refer to the universe or solar systems when they talk about how unusual something is. However, this phrase is unnatural in English as well. They normally talk about ‘a whole different story’. As a result I felt I could preserve this typically dramatizing Augie phrase.

<sup>46</sup> Since ‘listen to me’ is a very authoritative way of expressing oneself, I added ‘goed’ to ‘luister eens naar me’ to create the same compelling phrase.

“Nee,” gaf ik soort van schaapachtig toe. “Dat was alles.” Toen hij de lamp uitdeed en me nu echt welterusten kuste, draaide ik me op mijn zij – precies zoals Hucky met Deur-dicht<sup>47</sup> doet – zodat hij niet zou zien hoe opgelucht ik was.

“Ik hou van je, Papa.”

“Ik hou ook van jou.”

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<sup>47</sup> At first I simply translated ‘Shut-the-door’ as ‘Doe-de-deur-dicht’, but this was far too long. I then thought of how nearly every parent in the world tells their child to close the door, because they have forgotten once again. This not some long sentence like ‘Doe de deur dicht’, but simply ‘Deur dicht!’.

### 5.3 Alejandra Perez

In order to impress Alejandra, T.C. has performed John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech at the talent show, and he has left her completely dumb-founded and in awe at how much he resembled Kennedy. In the first fragment Alejandra writes in her diary to tell Jacqueline Kennedy everything that happened after this. In the second fragment Alejandra writes her how she finally gave in to her feelings for T.C. after receiving his Christmas present.

*Source Text 1 – My Most Excellent Year page 137 – 139*

Dear Jacqueline,

Augie's parents and Anthony's father took us to Bartleby's for our own version of a post-Oscar party, along with Lee – my resident alibi for the evening – and the inevitable Andy Wexler. (Augie "sort of asked" Andy if he wanted to join us, and Andy "sort of said yes.") Bartleby's is smack in the middle of Kenmore Square and it's almost always a safe call for hamburgers, celebrations, and Stevie Nicks – especially on a night like this.

"Say Kenmore Square", I insisted.

"Kenmaw Sqway-ah," replied Anthony automatically.

"Say 'Nothing could be finer that to be in Carolina.'"

"Nothing could be finah than to be in Caroliner."

"You're doing that on purpose."

"I'm *not*. I sway-ah."

We were out in the middle of the dance floor, and I'm still not entirely sure how we got there. An hour earlier I'd been ready to kiss off my shoes for the rest of my life, but shortly after we'd been seated, Anthony looked up awkwardly from a Coca-Cola and blurted, "Um, do you want to dance?" – and there was no way I could have turned him down. It was probably the "um" that did it. Men become vulnerable when they're unsure of themselves,

and “vulnerable” is the new “hot”. Besides, Alanis Morissette was blaring through the speakers, so I had an entirely different set of reasons for saying yes. Really. I did. (I also pretended not to notice the high five that Anthony and his father exchanged behind my back. They’re all such children.) Which is how we wound up shimmying shoulder to shoulder on the parquet floor while I tested the limits of his suddenly legitimate Kennedy accent.

“Just say it!”

“Okay! ‘Jackie, I’m out of underway-ah.’”

“You think that’s the way they sounded behind closed doors?”

“Oh, right. Like I’m *so* sure she did his laundry.” By now Alanis had given way to k.d.lang, and we were drenched in swirling colored lights. Aqua is a dangerous shade for anyone who doesn’t want to get too close to Anthony – it brings out everything it shouldn’t: his teal blue eyes, how well he moves his body, how little it takes to make him smile, and how effortlessly he can be charming when he leaves the gray T-shirts and Gap easy fits at home. *Be careful, Alejandra. It’s the same old Anthony who all but propositioned you on the first day of school. Don’t let the suit and tie fool you. He didn’t get us out of the Bay of Pigs mess, he didn’t insist on a nuclear test ban, he didn’t go after Big Steel, and he most certainly did not promise to put a man on the moon. He’s just Anthony.*

Meanwhile, Lee had gotten so fed up watching Augie and Andy staring dejectedly at the D.J. and each other like two sock-hop wallflowers who’d just dropped in from the 1950s, she grabbed them by their respective arms and dragged them out onto the floor with us.

“*Somebody’s* going to dance with me,” she warned them, hiding her game plan behind a frown. Only then did they remember they had feet. Augie was the better hooper, but once Andy had loosened up, he got prolific fast. Never give your boyfriend an edge, even when he’s not officially your boyfriend yet.

“Dude,” insisted Andy, pulling Augie toward him, “show me how you did that.” By the third verse, Lee had them boogeying face-to-face and getting used to the fact that they were doing just fine without her – which of course was the whole idea. Only then did she edge over to where Anthony and I were trying out a new lockstep that we’d both seen on *American Idol*.

“Well, *that* only took ten minutes,” she mumbled into my ear. “Do you think they realize they’re actually dancing with each other?”

“Probably on some primal level,” I whispered back. “But don’t tell them that.” Lee thought about it for a minute before she shrugged in agreement.

Correction. They’re not teal blue. They’re azure.

Fondly,

Alejandra.

*Source Text 2 – My Most Excellent Year page 262 - 263*

Dear Jacqueline,

In 1951, everyone knew you as Black Jack Bouvier’s radiant daughter. You’d gone to all of the best schools, you’d studied with the most gifted professors at the Sorbonne, and you were as dainty and delicate as a porcelain Southern belle who hadn’t heard of the Civil War yet. Then Charlie Bartlett introduced you to a young senator named John F. Kennedy, who wasn’t exactly paparazzi bait yet. In fact, he was so minor league when he first winked at you, I’m surprised you didn’t make him wait in the lobby. And yet something clearly happened to transform the fluttery Ms. Bouvier into a national legend, because twelve years later the *London Evening Standard* wrote: “Jacqueline Kennedy has given the American people from this day on one thing they have always lacked – majesty.” That difference could only have been Jack.

Suddenly I find myself following in your footsteps, and frankly (no offense), who needs it?? In September, I owned academic honors from the most respected academies in Washington, D.C., and Mexico City, I'd made friends with some of the most well-known people in the world, and I had the answers to just about any question put to me. Now I'm writing letters to Mary Poppins and trying to build a baseball diamond in a wasteland. And I don't even know *why*!!

It was his Christmas present that did me in. If I'd thought the "sway-ah" had compromised my resistance to its limits, I was in for an even ruder shock – and opening Augie's gift first only set me up for it. Underneath the wrapping, I found a silver-framed 1948 photograph of Patricia Morison singing "So in Love With You Am I" in the original Broadway production of *Kiss Me, Kate*, along with an inscription that read: "This is just the beginning. Merry Christmas. I love you. Augie." So I was already weepy when I discovered that his brother had managed to track down an out-of-print hardcover rarity that's escaped me for two years: *The Burden and The Glory: The Speeches and Hopes of John F. Kennedy*. Beneath the black and gold cover, he'd written on the flyleaf: "For Alé. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. Love, Anthony." Know what got me? It wasn't the quote from the inaugural address, and it certainly wasn't the "Love" (boys apply that word just as liberally to lizards and auto parts). It was the "Anthony." He *hates* being called Anthony – which is precisely why I began using it in the first place. I thought it would chase him away, but I was wrong. Who knew it was such a strong and honorable name after all?!

*Translation*

Beste<sup>48</sup> Jacqueline,

Augie z'n ouders en Anthony z'n vader namen ons mee naar Bartleby's voor onze eigen versie van een Oscar-afterparty, samen met Lee – mijn logeeralibi<sup>49</sup> voor de avond – en de onvermijdelijke Andy Wexler. (Augie had Andy “zo ongeveer gevraagd” of hij met ons mee wilde en Andy had “zo ongeveer ja gezegd”.) Bartleby's ligt precies in het midden van Kenmore Square en het is bijna altijd een goede plek<sup>50</sup> voor hamburgers, festiviteiten<sup>51</sup> en Stevie Nicks – vooral op een avond als deze.

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<sup>48</sup> I found translating ‘dear’ exceptionally hard in Alejandra’s case. Due to her formal upbringing, she would know how to keep her distance to such influential people and address them as ‘Geachte’ in Dutch. However, the nature of these letters is quite personal, which would make ‘Beste’ more likely. On top of that, I do not think she would gush about her crush on T.C. so much if she did not have a close relationship with that person, which would make her address Jacqueline as ‘Lieve’. I believe her gushing rules out ‘geachte’, but ‘lieve’ is still too personal, because this would make her ignore her upbringing, something she is never capable of.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Resident’ normally means something along the lines of ‘inwonende’, but this does not fit the context here. Alejandra either means Lee is sleeping over at her house, or she is sleeping over at Lee’s house. I am guessing she stays over at Lee’s, because that way she would not have to explain anything to her parents about performing in the show. I therefore translated ‘resident alibi’ as ‘logeeralibi’.

<sup>50</sup> If a place is ‘a safe call’ it means you are sure to have a good time there, so I chose to translate it as ‘een goede plek’, because if a place is ‘een goede plek’ for something in Holland, you have had positive experiences in the past. I briefly considered ‘een goede tent’, but this would only have been fitting if this was T.C.’s chapter.

<sup>51</sup> ‘celebrations’ could also be translated as ‘feestjes’, but this is too informal for Alejandra’s taste. If she had wanted to say ‘parties’ she would have said so, but she chose celebrations, whether consciously or not. I therefore translated it as ‘festiviteiten’.



“Zeg Kenmore Square<sup>52</sup>,” drong ik aan.

“Kenmoor Skwaer,” antwoordde Anthony automatisch.

“Zeg ‘Ik kan de zon in de zee zien zakken’<sup>53</sup>.”

“Ik kan de son in de see sien sakken.”

“Dat doe je expres<sup>54</sup>.”

“*Echt* niet. Ik sweer ‘t.’”

We stonden midden op de dansvloer en ik weet nog steeds niet helemaal zeker hoe we daar waren gekomen. Een uur eerder stond ik nog op het punt om mijn schoenen voor de rest van mijn leven vaarwel te kussen, maar kort nadat we een tafel hadden gekregen had Anthony opgelaten vanaf een cola omhoog gekeken en er “Eh, wil je dansen?” uitfloopt – en ik had hem echt met geen mogelijkheid kunnen afwijzen. Het kwam waarschijnlijk door de ‘eh’. Mannen worden kwetsbaar wanneer ze onzeker zijn en ‘kwetsbaar’ is het nieuwe ‘lekker’. Daarnaast galmde Alanis Morissette door de speakers dus ik had hele andere redenen om ja te zeggen. Echt. Ik meen het. (Ik deed ook net alsof ik niet zag dat Anthony en zijn vader elkaar achter mijn rug een high five gaven. Het zijn allemaal zulke kleuters.) Zo kwamen we dus al schouder aan schouder dansend<sup>55</sup> op de parketvloer terecht terwijl ik de grenzen van zijn plotseling legitieme Kennedy-accent testte.

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<sup>52</sup> I did not change the phrase Alejandra makes T.C. say here, because ‘Kenmore Square’ refers to the place they are at in this moment, which makes it relevant to the story. On top of that, Kenmore Square would be called the same in Dutch. I thus made T.C. pronounce the phrase in a Dutch way in the next sentence.

<sup>53</sup> See reflection page 28.

<sup>54</sup> Here I considered ‘expres’ and ‘met opzet’ as a translation of ‘on purpose’. ‘met opzet’ fits Alejandra’s formal style better, but does not fit the rhythm of the sentence. I therefore decided ‘expres’ is a better fit in this case, even though it is somewhat less formal.

<sup>55</sup> The ‘shimmy’ is a dance that was popular in America in the early 1900s, so it is safe to say most Dutch teenagers who live in 2010 do not know what kind of dance this is. Because it is not relevant to the story

“Zeg het gewoon!”

“Oké! ‘Jackie, m’n seep ‘s op’<sup>56</sup>.”

“Denk je dat ze achter gesloten deuren zo klonken?”

“O, natuurlijk. Alsof ik zo zeker weet dat zij z’n zeep voor ‘m kocht.” Inmiddels was Alanis overgegaan in k.d. lang en verdronken wij in wervelende gekleurde lichten. Turkoois is een gevaarlijke kleur voor iedereen die niet te dicht bij Anthony wil komen – het laat alles naar voren komen dat niet naar voren zou moeten komen: zijn hemelsblauwe<sup>57</sup> ogen, hoe goed hij beweegt, hoe weinig ervoor nodig is om hem te laten glimlachen, en hoe moeiteloos hij charmant kan zijn wanneer hij de grijze T-shirts en de ‘easy fit’ Gapspijkerbroeken<sup>58</sup> thuis laat. *Pas op, Alejandra. Het is dezelfde Anthony die je zo ongeveer een oneerbaar voorstel deed op de eerste schooldag. Laat het pak en de stropdas je niet voor de gek houden. Hij heeft ons niet uit de Cubacrisis<sup>59</sup> gered, hij heeft niet op een verbod op kernproeven aangedrongen,*

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what kind of dance they are doing and ‘shimmying’ is simply too distracting, I decided to generalize it and translate it as ‘al dansend’.

<sup>56</sup> See reflection page 28 and 29.

<sup>57</sup> Alejandra uses two different types of blue-green to describe T.C.’s eyes: teal blue and azure. ‘azuurblauw’ is used in Dutch, but the only translation for ‘teal’ is ‘blauwgroen’. I thus had to come up with a Dutch blue-green color that would contrast the ‘azuurblauw’. ‘azuur’ is often associated with the sea, so I therefore decided to translate ‘teal’ with ‘hemelsblauw’.

<sup>58</sup> When a person talks about jeans in Holland, they normally do not include information on the type of fit they wear. It is just ‘spijkerbroek’. However, it is important here to include ‘easy fit’, because it shows how T.C. never really pays a lot of attention to his clothes, and Alejandra likes the clothes he has on that night. Because Gap is a brand of jeans that is unknown in Holland, I did add ‘spijkerbroek’ to make sure the reader knows she is talking about his jeans.

<sup>59</sup> See reflection page 35.

*hij ging niet achter U.S. Steel<sup>60</sup> aan en hij heeft al helemaal<sup>61</sup> niet beloofd om een man op de maan te zetten. Hij is gewoon Anthony.*

Ondertussen was Lee het zo zat om Augie en Andy terneergeslagen naar de dj en elkaar te zien staren als twee muurbloempjes op een schoolfeestje<sup>62</sup> die net uit de jaren vijftig waren komen vallen, dat ze hen bij hun respectievelijke armen greep en ze met ons de vloer op sleurde.

“*Iemand* gaat met me dansen,” waarschuwde ze, terwijl ze haar strategie achter een frons verstopte. Pas toen herinnerden ze zich dat ze voeten hadden. Augie was de betere danser<sup>63</sup>, maar toen Andy wat meer ontspannen was, pakte hij het snel op<sup>64</sup>. Geef je vriendje nooit het voordeel, zelfs als hij nog niet officieel je vriendje is.

“Gast,” drong Andy aan, terwijl hij Augie naar zich toe trok, “laat zien hoe je dat deed.” Tegen het derde couplet had Lee het voor elkaar dat ze samen stonden te dansen<sup>65</sup> en begonnen ze gewend te raken aan het feit dat ze het zonder haar ook prima deden – wat

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<sup>60</sup> See reflection page 36.

<sup>61</sup> I changed the emphasis in this sentence from ‘*did not*’ to ‘*helemaal niet*’, because that is where the emphasis naturally lies in the Dutch sentence.

<sup>62</sup> The dictionary did not help to find a translation for ‘sock-hop’ at all, but on the Internet I found out that ‘sock hop’ was in fact an informal dance in the gym at high school in the 1950s and 60s. Dances were always attended in formal wear back then, and a sock hop was one where people could wear informal clothes to and meant all of them danced in their socks. We do not have such a funny dance history in Holland, so I could only translate it as ‘schoolfeestje’. (<http://tucsoncitizen.com/retroreflections/2010/07/05/the-sock-hop/>)

<sup>63</sup> ‘hoofer’ actually means ‘beroepsdanser’ in Dutch. However, this does not fit the sentence whatsoever, so I decided to translate it as ‘danser’.

<sup>64</sup> The direct translation of ‘prolific’ is ‘vruchtbaar’ or ‘met overvloedige resultaten’, and in this context it means Andy is quickly catching on. I thus translated it as ‘pakte het snel op’.

<sup>65</sup> See note 55.

natuurlijk het hele idee was. Pas toen kwam ze langzaam de kant op waar Anthony en ik een nieuwe *lockstep*<sup>66</sup> probeerden die we allebei bij *American Idol*<sup>67</sup> hadden gezien.

“Nou, *dat* duurde maar tien minuten,” mompelde ze in mijn oor. “Denk je dat ze doorhebben dat ze zowaar met elkaar dansen?”

“Waarschijnlijk op een of ander dierlijk niveau,” fluisterde ik terug. “Maar zeg dat maar niet tegen ze.” Lee dacht er even over na en haalde toen instemmend haar schouders op.

Correctie. Ze zijn niet hemelsblauw. Ze zijn azuurblauw.

Liefs,

Alejandra.

Beste Jacqueline,

In 1951 kende iedereen je als de stralende dochter van Black Jack Bouvier<sup>68</sup>. Je had op al de beste scholen gezeten, je had met de meest begaafde professoren aan het Sorbonne gestudeerd en je was zo gracieus en gevoelig<sup>69</sup> als een Zuidelijke schone van porselein die

<sup>66</sup> The dance move ‘lockstep’ has no Dutch equivalent, so I used the English word as a calque. It is clear for the reader that the lockstep is some kind of dance move, and it is not important to know what the move actually entails, the importance lies in the fact that T.C. and Alejandra are trying to do this move together.

<sup>67</sup> In Holland the *American Idol* concept is televised as *Idols*. However, *Idols* is not known in the U.S., which is still where this story is set, and the Dutch versions of T.C. and Alejandra might have been able to see *American Idol* if they had an enormous cable package. I thus decided to use *American Idol* in the translation.

<sup>68</sup> I changed the order of the sentence, because the rhythm of ‘Black Jack Bouvier z’n stralende dochter’ is unnatural. ‘de stralende dochter van Black Jack Bouvier’ is more natural.

<sup>69</sup> I thought it was important here to preserve the alliteration: ‘dainty and delicate’ became ‘gracieus en gevoelig’.

nog niet van de Burgeroorlog had gehoord. Toen stelde Charlie Bartlett je voor aan een jonge senator genaamd John F. Kennedy, die nog niet echt voer voor de paparazzi was. Hij was zelfs zo onbelangrijk<sup>70</sup> toen hij voor het eerst naar je knipoogde dat ik verbaasd ben dat je hem niet in de lobby hebt laten wachten. En toch is er ongetwijfeld iets gebeurd om de fladderende mejuffrouw Bouvier te veranderen in een nationale legende, want twaalf jaar later schreef de *London Evening Standard*: “Jacqueline Kennedy heeft het Amerikaanse volk vanaf deze dag iets gegeven dat ze altijd ontbeerden – allure”. Dat verschil kan alleen maar Jack zijn geweest.

Plotseling treed ik in jouw voetsporen<sup>71</sup>, en eerlijk gezegd (en dit is niet kwaad bedoeld), wat is hier nou zo geweldig aan<sup>72??</sup> In september bezat ik academische onderscheidingen van de meest gerespecteerde middelbare scholen in Washington, D.C. en Mexico City, was ik bevriend geraakt met een paar van de meest bekende mensen op de wereld en had ik het antwoord op zo ongeveer elke vraag die aan me werd gesteld. Nu schrijf ik brieven aan Mary Poppins en probeer ik midden in een woestijn een honkbalveld aan te leggen. En ik weet niet eens *waarom!!*

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<sup>70</sup> At first I thought ‘minor league’ meant something along the lines of ‘beneden jouw stand’, but this could not have been true, since the Kennedys were already an important political family. I then figured out Kluger meant he was not worth noticing yet, i.e. ‘onbelangrijk’.

<sup>71</sup> In order to create a natural Dutch sentence, I did not translate ‘I find myself’. This phrase does not have such an important meaning here, and the idea is also expressed with ‘plotseling treed ik in jouw voetsporen’.

<sup>72</sup> A literal translation of ‘who needs it’ makes no sense in Dutch. I felt that if Alejandra had thought everything about being in love was great she would not object at all. However, there is a down side to it, for instance the fact that she is now concerned with far more trivial things than before. Love should be mind-blowing, so I felt an exclamation like ‘wat is hier nou zo geweldig aan??’ fits this context perfectly.

Zijn kerstcadeau heeft me uiteindelijk ingepakt. Als ik al dacht dat de ‘sweer’ mijn weerstandsvermogen tot in het uiterste had aangetast, zou ik nog wat heftigers gaan beleven – en Augie z’n cadeau als eerste openen maakte me alleen maar zwakker. Onder het cadeaupapier vond ik een zilverkleurige lijst met daarin een foto van Patricia Morison uit 1948 die “So in Love With You Am I” zong in de oorspronkelijke Broadwayproductie van *Kiss Me, Kate*, met een opschrift dat las: “Dit is nog maar het begin. Vrolijk kerstfeest. Hou van je. Augie.” Ik was dus al sentimenteel<sup>73</sup> toen ik ontdekte dat het zijn broer was gelukt om een zeldzame, uitverkochte hardcover te achterhalen die ik al twee jaar lang niet had kunnen vinden: *The Burden and The Glory: The Speeches and Hopes of John F. Kennedy*. Onder de zwart met gouden voorkant had hij op het schutblad geschreven: “Voor Alé. Laat ons nooit uit angst onderhandelen. Maar laat ons nooit angst hebben om te onderhalen. Kus, Anthony.” Weet je wat me raakte? Het was niet het citaat van de inauguratierede en het was zeker niet de “Kus” (typisch iets voor jongens om niet over gevoel te beginnen, maar het lichamenlijk te maken<sup>74</sup>).

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<sup>73</sup> I considered ‘huilerig’ here, but I felt ‘sentimenteel’ fits Alejandra’s formal style far better.

<sup>74</sup> I had a lot of trouble with the translation of ‘love’ and the following link to lizards and auto parts: ‘boys apply that word just as liberally to lizards and auto parts’. In America people throw the word ‘love’ around in a far less meaningful way than people say ‘liefs’, its direct equivalent in Holland. When a boy ends a letter with ‘liefs’ it means a lot, which creates a huge connotation difference between ‘love’ and ‘liefs’. On top of that, in Dutch you cannot say ‘liefs’ to lizards or auto parts, which meant I could not simply translate ‘boys apply that word just as liberally to lizards and auto parts’ either. The other endings in Dutch are ‘groetjes’, ‘tot ziens’, ‘met vriendelijke groet’ and ‘kus’. I felt the three first options were too distant. ‘love’ may be simple to say in America, but if he had wanted to be more distant he could also have ended his letter with ‘best’ or ‘see ya’. I felt I could work with ‘kus’, because in relationships this is the greeting people use before saying ‘Ik hou van je’, three little words that many girls are always waiting for. I thus finally decided to translate ‘love’ as ‘kus’, and

Het was de “Anthony”. Hij *haat* het om Anthony genoemd te worden – wat precies de reden is waarom ik er ooit mee ben begonnen. Ik dacht dat het hem weg zou jagen, maar ik had het verkeerd. Wie had geweten dat het tegen alle verwachtingen in toch zo’n krachtige en eervolle naam was?!

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turned the lizard comment into ‘typisch iets voor jongens om niet over gevoel te beginnen, maar het lichamelijk te maken’.

#### 5.4 The Flat Characters

##### *Lori and Pop*

After T.C.'s counselor Lori has asked T.C. to come to her office to talk about his B+ grades and why he needs algebra in his life, T.C. makes a quick pit stop in the boys' room where he calls his father to ask him how he should answer the question. During their conversation, it becomes very clear to Lori that Pop has helped T.C. out, so she sends him an e-mail.

*Source texts – My Most Excellent Year page 32 – 35*

#### **Laurents School**

Brookline, Massachusetts

*VIA E-MAIL*

Dear Ted,

Please. You've got to stop bailing Anthony out of a leaky skiff. "It teaches me how to weigh variables." Did he call you on his cell or are you hot-wired directly into his head?

While we're here, I need to warn you that their first out-of-class projects are going to be assigned in three weeks. They're studying the history of the nation's capital and they'll be asked to build models of their favorite landmarks. Let's not have a replay of fourth grade. A 200-foot Washington Monument that lights up in eighteen different colors won't be greeted with a sense of humor.

Know what? I'm in charge of 91 kids, and you're the biggest discipline problem I've got.

Lori



KELLER CONSTRUCTION  
BOSTON \* GLOUCESTER \* WALTHAM

*ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION*

Dear Lori:

First of all, how do you know he doesn't have a crush on you? Maybe the B+ thing is a way to guarantee that you'll call him into your office at least once a month for a one-on-one. When you think of it, it's a pretty provocative ruse for a kid.

Second of all, Tony C did all of the work on the planetarium and the map. I just helped out with the odd jobs like hammering, nailing, building motors, and painting. Period.

Third of all, if you'd finally agree to go out with me, I wouldn't have to subvert the entire school system just to get you to send me notes. Like father, like son. And I'm only half kidding. This is the first time since Nikki died that I've found someone who might actually be able to coax me back onto the field of play. So you'd better think about it unless you want a life-sized replica of the Iwo Jima statue (in bronze).

Ted

P.S. Besides, we've had one date already. So it's out there.

**Laurents School**

Brookline, Massachusetts

*VIA E-MAIL*

Dear Ted:

*What's* out there? That wasn't a date, it was a chance encounter at Starbucks. And I paid for both Fraps.

Anthony doesn't have a crush on me and you know it. He idolizes his father, who – improbably – earned a B.A. from B.U. with a B+. But that was 1974. It's 2003. "A" is the new "B+."

I'm not going out with you because I'm your son's adviser. But if I weren't, I might. Unless you were serious about the statue. Then you'd be out of luck.

– The Field of Play

KELLER CONSTRUCTION

BOSTON \* GLOUCESTER \* WALTHAM

*ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION*

Dear F.O.P.:

Don't worry about Tony C. He knows how to go for the gold when it's time. So does his dad.

TK

*Translation*

**Laurents School**

Brookline in Massachusetts

*VIA E-MAIL*

Beste<sup>75</sup> Ted,

Alsjeblieft. Je moet echt ophouden met Anthony uit de brand helpen. “Het leert me hoe ik variabelen tegen elkaar af moet wegen.” Heeft hij je met zijn mobiel gebeld of heb je een directe verbinding met zijn hersens?

Nu we toch bezig zijn, moet ik je waarschuwen dat ze binnen drie weken hun eerste buitenschoolse projecten zullen krijgen. Ze bestuderen de geschiedenis van de hoofdstad van ons<sup>76</sup> land en ze zullen worden gevraagd om schaalmodellen van hun favoriete monumenten te maken. Ik wil geen herhaling van groep 6<sup>77</sup> hebben. Een Washington-monument van zestig meter<sup>78</sup> dat in achttien verschillende kleuren oplicht zal niemand grappig vinden.

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<sup>75</sup> Translating ‘dear’ as ‘lieve’ here can never be considered an option because Lori and Pop are playfully flirting with each other by remaining semi-formal. ‘lieve’ would be a far too personal header. ‘beste’ does preserve this semi-distanced tone.

<sup>76</sup> I added the ‘ons’ because ‘nation’ implicitly tells the reader Lori is talking about their country and ‘het land’ is far more general. On top of that, ‘onze hoofdstad’ would not have been an option either, because that could also mean the capital of their state. I did not think ‘natie’ was appropriate, because in Dutch you do not talk about your country by saying ‘natie’.

<sup>77</sup> First grade is ‘groep 3’, which makes fourth grade ‘groep 6’.

<sup>78</sup> A foot is 0.3048 meters, which makes 200 foot 60.96 meters. I rounded it down to ‘zestig meter’ to make the number as whole as 200 feet was.

Weet je wat? Ik ben verantwoordelijk voor 91 kinderen en jij bent het grootste disciplineprobleem dat ik heb.

Lori.

KELLER CONSTRUCTIES

BOSTON \* GLOUCESTER \* WALTHAM

*ELECTRONISCH BERICHT*<sup>79</sup>

Beste Lori,

Ten eerste, hoe weet je dat 'ie niet verliefd op je is? Misschien is het 7.5-geval<sup>80</sup> wel een manier om te garanderen dat je hem minstens één keer per maand voor een één-op-ééngesprek naar je kantoor roept. Als je erover nadenkt, is het best een uitdagende list voor een kind.

Ten tweede, Tony C heeft al het werk aan het planetarium en de kaart gedaan. Ik heb alleen met de klusjes als hameren, spijkeren, motoren bouwen en verven geholpen. Klaar.

Ten derde, als je nou eindelijk eens met me uit zou gaan, zou ik niet het hele schoolsysteem omver hoeven werpen alleen maar om ervoor te zorgen dat je me berichtjes stuurt. Zo vader, zo zoon. En dat meen ik maar half. Dit is de eerste keer sinds het overlijden van Nikki dat ik iemand heb gevonden die misschien zowaar in staat zou kunnen zijn om me het speelveld

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<sup>79</sup> In Dutch people do not send 'electronische overdrachten' or 'verzendingen'. They send 'electronische berichten'.

<sup>80</sup> A 'B' in the American grade system equals a '7' in the Dutch grade system (Leiden University). Since an 'A' equals an '8' or higher, a 'B+' would be an '7.5'.

weer op te krijgen. Ik zou er dus maar goed over nadenken als ik jou was<sup>81</sup>, tenzij je een levensgrote (bronzen) replica van het Iwo Jimastandbeeld wilt.

Ted

P.S. Trouwens, we hebben al een date gehad. Mensen weten het al<sup>82</sup>.

### **Laurents School**

Brookline in Massachusetts

*VIA E-MAIL*

Beste Ted,

*Wat* weten ze al? Dat was geen date, dat was een toevallige ontmoeting bij Starbucks. En ik heb beide Frappuccino's<sup>83</sup> betaald.

Anthony is niet verliefd op me en dat weet je best. Hij verafgoedt zijn vader, die – hoe onwaarschijnlijk ook – met een 7.5 een Bachelordiploma aan Boston University heeft gehaald<sup>84</sup>. Maar dat was 1974. We leven nu in 2003<sup>85</sup>. “8” is het nieuwe “7.5”.

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<sup>81</sup> I added the ‘als ik jou was’ because it fits perfectly in the semi-threatening tone Pop is trying to convey.

<sup>82</sup> I feel by ‘It’s out there’ Kluger meant to say it is not a secret they like each other, and this is also portrayed by ‘Mensen weten het al’.

<sup>83</sup> In America it is known that ‘Frap’ is the abbreviation of ‘Frappuccino’. In Holland however, it is not. There are some Starbucks franchises in Holland as well, so the audience would know what a Frappuccino is. If they do not, the ‘appuccino’ will tell them it is some sort of coffee. I therefore decided to use the whole term in Dutch.

<sup>84</sup> The ‘earned a B.A. from B.U. with a B+’ wordplay is lost here. I did not find a way to preserve or replace it.

Ik ga niet met je uit omdat ik de studieadviseur van je zoon ben. Maar als ik dat niet was, zou ik het overwegen. Tenzij je dat over het standbeeld meende. Dan heb je pech gehad.

— Het speelveld

KELLER CONSTRUCTIES

BOSTON \* GLOUCESTER \* WALTHAM

*ELECTRONISCH BERICHT*

Best Speelveld,

Maak je geen zorgen over Tony C. Hij weet hoe hij voor de winst moet gaan wanneer de tijd rijp is. Zijn vader ook.

TK

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<sup>85</sup> I feel 'We leven nu in 2003' gets Lori's sarcastic tone far better across than 'Het is 2003'.

*Dad*

This is the first time the reader hears Dad. He has e-mailed Pop to ask him for advice on how to handle the fact that they all know Augie is homosexual, but he still has not come out yet.

*Source text – My Most Excellent Year page 53*

### **The Word Shop**

BROOKLINE'S FAVORITE BOOKSTORE

**E-Memo From the Desk of**

Craig Hwong

Heya, Teddy.

This comes under the heading “Father-to-Father Communication: Insecurity,” so keep it under your hat because I have my kung fu image to maintain.

Augie’s almost fifteen and about three steps away from Adolescent Hell – but he still hasn’t told us he’s gay yet. He couldn’t possibly think it would make any difference to us. Wei and I have been encouraging him to be himself ever since he memorized *Annie Get Your Gun* at the age of two and told his grandma Lily, “got no diamond, got no pearl, still I think I’m a lucky girl.” I mean, it’s not like we need a road map.

Should I bring it up to him or leave it alone? He’s at the age where kids discover puppy love, and I’ve always looked forward to commiserating with him about *my* first crush. (Her name was Wendy and she smelled like aluminum foil. Remind me to tell you the whole story when Wei and the kids are in another state.)

Craig

*Translation*

## **The Word Shop**

BROOKLINES FAVORIETE BOEKWINKEL

**E-Memo vanaf het bureau van**

Craig Hwong

Hey daar, Teddy,

Dit valt onder de noemer “Vader-tot-vadercommunicatie: onzekerheid”, dus houd het onder de pet want ik heb mijn kungfu-imago hoog te houden.

Augie wordt bijna vijftien en is ongeveer drie stappen verwijderd van puberhel – maar hij heeft ons nog steeds niet verteld dat hij homo is. Hij kan onmogelijk denken dat het ons ook maar iets uit zou maken. Wei en ik hebben hem gestimuleerd zichzelf te zijn vanaf het moment dat hij *Annie Get Your Gun* op tweejarige leeftijd uit zijn hoofd had geleerd en “*got no diamond, got no pearl, still I think I’m a lucky girl*”<sup>86</sup> tegen zijn oma Lily zei. Ik bedoel, het is niet alsof we een gebruiksaanwijzing nodig hebben.

Moet ik het bij hem ter sprake brengen of moet ik het met rust laten? Hij heeft de leeftijd dat kids kalverliefde ontdekken en ik heb er altijd al naar uitgekeken om het met hem over *mijn* eerste verliefdheid te hebben. (Ze heette Wendy en ze rook naar aluminiumfolie. Help me herinneren je het hele verhaal te vertellen als Wei en de kids in een andere staat zitten.)

Craig

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<sup>86</sup> This is a line from the song “I’ve Got the Sun in the Morning” from *Annie Get Your Gun*.



*Mom*

Both of Mom's source texts are reviews about a musical production. They speak for themselves.

*Source texts – My Most Excellent Year pages 45 and 112*

**The Globe**

***THEATRE***

***My Fair Lady Returns to Boston***

BY LISA WEI HWONG

... and at this point in Act I, we're forced down the lowest rung of the social ladder, where the economically less fortunate are given their own anthem in "With a Little Bit of Luck" – a song designed to show us how much fun it is to be poor, in much the same manner that Stepin Fetchit proved for all time that African Americans were the toasts of the town as long as they tripped over their own feet and said things like, "Mah, mah, mah, dis sho' is a crazy bunch of folks." And if Henry Higgins is not the most reprehensible character ever written for the stage, that's only because somewhere, somehow, someone is composing a musical biography of Ronald Reagan.

**The Globe**

***THEATRE***

**"WHAT'S THE USE OF WOND'RING?"**

**A New *Carousel* at Merrimack**

BY LISA WEI HWONG

Nice songs to beat your wife to. Attend at your own risk.

*Translation*

**The Globe**

***THEATER***

***My Fair Lady* keert terug naar Boston**

DOOR LISA WEI HWONG

... en op dit punt in de eerste acte worden we van de allerlaagste trede van de maatschappelijke ladder afgeduwd, waar de financieel minderbedeelden hun eigen lofzang krijgen in “With a Little Bit of Luck” – een lied dat bedoeld is om ons te laten zien hoe leuk het is om arm te zijn, ongeveer op dezelfde manier als hoe Stepin Fetchit voor eeuwig bewees dat zwarte Amerikanen<sup>87</sup> sterren waren zolang ze maar over hun eigen voeten struikelden en dingen als “*Mah, mah, mah, dis sho’ is a crazy bunch of folks*”<sup>88</sup> zeiden. En als Henry Higgins niet het meest aanstootgevende<sup>89</sup> personage is dat ooit voor het podium is geschreven, komt dat alleen doordat er ergens om een of andere reden iemand<sup>90</sup> een muzikale biografie van Ronald Reagan aan het componeren is.

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<sup>87</sup> First I wanted to translate ‘African Americans’ as ‘afro-amerikanen’, but I realized this is an enormous Anglicism. In Holland we never talk about ‘afro-amerikanen’. Personally, I would never call them ‘zwarte Amerikanen’, so I do feel awful for writing this, but many Dutchmen do. Even the dictionary explains ‘Afro-Amerikaan’ as “zwarte inwoner van de VS” (VanDale Online).

<sup>88</sup> I did not translate this sentence, because it illustrates the accent African Americans used to have.

<sup>89</sup> ‘reprehensible’ is quite a strong word in English, but ‘berispelijk’ is not at all in Dutch, which is why I came up with the strong ‘aanstootgevend’.

<sup>90</sup> The wordplay of ‘somewhere, somehow, someone’ is lost here. I did not think preserving the commas here was an option, because that would harm the rhythm of the Dutch sentence.

**The Globe**

***THEATER***

**“WHAT’S THE USE OF WOND’RING?”**

**Een nieuwe *Carousel* in het Merrimack**

DOOR LISA WEI HWONG

Mooie nummers om je vrouw bij te slaan. Bijwonen op eigen risico.

*Clint*

The reader does not actually read that Alejandra has contacted Clint, but the content of his letter makes this clear. Apparently, she is very afraid her father will find out she has been studying Dance instead of French, and she wants Clint to give her advice on how to handle the situation.

*Source text – My Most Excellent Year page 64*

**United States Secret Service**

**Washington, D.C.**

Clint Lockhart

Agent

Hey, Princess.

No, I don't think you'll start an international incident if your father finds out what you're really studying at your Bastille there. Kids are allowed to switch their majors whenever they want. But do *not* lie to him. Tell him that you love the Lycée and make sure he knows you're also pulling straight A's in French. The implication is that you're pulling straight A's in French *at* the Lycée, but you never said that. (This is how we've been playing it in the federal government since 1789, and if Bill Clinton hadn't gotten careless we'd still be batting a thousand.)

Xoxo,

Clint

*Translation*

**United States Secret Service**

**Washington, D.C.**

Clint Lockhart

Agent

Hey, Prinses.

Nee, ik denk niet dat je een internationaal incident veroorzaakt als je vader erachter komt wat je nou echt leert op dat Bastille. Kinderen mogen hun hoofdvak veranderen wanneer ze willen. Maar je moet *niet* tegen hem liegen. Zeg tegen hem dat je het Lyceum geweldig vindt en zorg ervoor dat hij weet dat je ook negens haalt voor Frans. Zo impliceer je dat je negens haalt voor Frans *op* het Lyceum, maar dat heb je nooit gezegd. (Zo spelen we het spelletje al sinds 1789 in de federale regering<sup>91</sup>, en als Bill Clinton niet onvoorzichtig was geworden zouden we nog steeds een slaggemiddelde van duizend hebben.)

xoxo<sup>92</sup>,

Clint

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<sup>91</sup> 'federal government' cannot simply be translated as 'overheid', because in America every state has its own government and its own laws. On top of that, the country also has a national government, which is what Clint means in here.

<sup>92</sup> I considered translating 'xoxo' as 'Kus&knuffels', but then I remembered the hit series *Gossip Girl*. This show is about wealthy teenagers in New York City that is also broadcasted in Holland and is watched by the same target audience. The theme song is shown at the beginning of every episode and ends with 'xoxo, Gossip Girl'. I can thus be certain that the intended Dutch audience is at least acquainted with this phrase, and may even use it themselves.

## Conclusion

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As happens with all theses, this one will be finalized by a conclusion. I may have needed many more pages to achieve my goals, but I have hopefully written a coherent thesis that pays attention to many of the aspects that make *My Most Excellent Year* such a wonderful novel: how the differences in narrative style and characterization came to be and the problems they cause, many of which were culture specific items. I have read many works on narrative style, but found most of them did not pay attention to how these different narrative styles come to be in novels, i.e. how the different personalities were characterized. I was glad to find the work of Shlomith Rimmon Kenan. I often resorted to her work when I was analyzing the different characters in *My Most Excellent Year*. Javier Franco Aixelá's work proved to be very helpful when it came to culture specific items. I feel adding the two strategies from the work of Diederik Grit resulted in a exhaustive and coherent tool for analyzing the translation problems with CSIs in this novel. I also hope I was successful in coming up with solid solutions. I can conclude that Steve Kluger has a wonderful narrative style of his own, which does pose many, however enjoyable translation problems when his novel is translated into Dutch.

I had heard many horror stories from my fellow students on writing the thesis itself, mostly on writers block, so I when I first started writing I was afraid I would experience this as well. I am glad such problems never occurred and it was a fairly pleasant journey for me. However, I was extremely glad when I could finally translate again and was once again reminded of why I decided to enroll in this Masters program. It is amazing when the culmination of your work is a reassurance of the fact that what you set out to do with your life is something that you love.

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## Appendix A – The Analyses Fragments

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State verbs

Verbs of movement

Verbs of action

Verbs of perception and cognition

Adjective/adverb

*T.C. Keller*

I'm five weeks older than Augie is but he's a lot smarter than I am except that he doesn't know he's gay yet. I don't see how he couldn't. I guess he figures that because he loves women like Audrey Hepburn and Judi Dench so much, he's automatically going to wind up with one. (Shh. What he really loves is their clothes.) But Augie is the best at everything he does and I'm betting that once he puts 2+2 together, he'll have a steady boyfriend before I even get this new girl Alejandra to think about kissing me. Of course, once in a while he gets called things like "fag," and since we're brothers, sometimes I do too. But the kids who say it usually aren't around for very long. Besides, I found out that when girls think you might be gay, you turn into a chick magnet on the spot. It's like they can't help themselves – even the ones who tried to smack your face off in fifth grade when you hit on them. So I go with the flow. I'm easy that way. (22)

But there's definitely something spurious going on here that I'm not supposed to be able to figure out. Back in the old days (like last month), it would have gone right over my head – but ever since Cupid shot me in the butt, nothing gets by me anymore. This morning in the middle of our jog, me and Pop were sitting on the grass across the Charles River from

Lowell House (from our **favorite** spot we can see the street corner where you let him kiss you for the **first** time). That's where we **usually** discuss the women in our lives and tell each other what we're **doing** wrong. (86)

Alé's **thrown** me a **breaking** curve that I don't know how to handle. The more time I spend with her, the more I want to **be** with her and the less I think about kissing her. Pop says he knows why, but that I have to figure it out for myself or it won't mean **anything**. (Glinda said the same thing to Dorothy at the end of *The Wizard of Oz* about the **red** shoes, and it pissed me off then too.) Did you and Pop like each other first? Or did you fall in love first? Or did they both happen at the same time? Or did Bucky F. Dent's home run screw up the **usual** batting order? (156)

Tuesdays **are** when we **always** to **go** to Amory Park and **re-play** Game 3 of the 1918 World Series (unless it's snowing, and then we just sit in The Word Shop Café and draw pictures of it.) I'm Wally Schang, Hucky **is** Stuffy McInnis, and I **get** to **single** him home from third. But today Hucky had other ideas. Once we'd hit the sidewalk in front of the Deaf Institute, he grabbed my hand and began yanking me in the **opposite** direction, while Nehi pulled the bottom of my pants leg toward the park. (I felt like Play-Doh.) I should have known better. Nobody argues with Hucky when his mind **is** made up. So we **followed** his lead all the way down Sewall Street, through an outside fruit market, past Brookline Hardware, right up to the **double glass** doors in front of Toy Mart. That's when I had to put on the brakes. *Uh-oh. Look at that face. He's wearing "cute and hopeful" all of a sudden. Remember, T.C. – you're the grown-up. If you have to play Bad Cop, it comes with the turf.* (217-218)

We left for Plum Island right after the run-through ended – and since Pop and Lori hadn't been there, Alé and Augie sang them **all** of the songs in the show during the forty-five minutes it took us to drive north through Massachusetts. I signed as many of the words as I could for Hucky, but they left me in their dust back in Lynn. All I remember is that while I was trying to keep up with “We open in Venice,” I got confused between the sign for *open* and the sign for *fart*, so it came out a **whole lot different** that Cole Porter meant it to.

(297)

We found two seats in the Club Coach and waved to Augie and Alé as the train began to move. *Bye! We're going on an adventure!* But as soon as they slipped out of our view and got replaced by an **empty** platform and the rail yard, the smile fell of my face and the bottom of my stomach felt like it had just dropped onto the outbound tracks. Whenever Augie is with me, I never have to worry about being brave. Now he was back *there*. Why couldn't he have come with us?? Then I remembered Pop's **favorite** words from *Apollo 13*. “Failure is not an option.” (**Actually**, we use it for **other** things too. “Onions are not an option.” “Diarrhea is not an option.” “Cavities are not an option.”) So I decided that at least for a day, fear was not an option either.

(365)

Pop and Lori have been “together-together” for two years. (This differs from *regular* together because now when they have dinner, Lori calls it a date and not a coincidence.) I hope they wait until Augie and I are in college before they **actually** get married. I mean, I can **definitely** picture her as my mother, but seeing my adviser in a bathrobe is still a concept I haven't been able to wrap my mind around. Even if she *does* drag Pop down to the **empty fifty-yard-line** seats during halftime.

(402)

*Augie Hwong*

Meanwhile, Tick and I **were** so **busy** making plans, I didn't even **notice**. Who had the time? On **any** day **in particular**, we **were** **pirates, aliens, cops, dino hunters, and brothers**. But it **was** "brothers" that **turned** out to be **a lot tougher** than it **looked**. Once we'd **thought** about it, we **figured out** that brothers **tell** each other **all** of their secrets, **buy** each other **cool** birthday presents that nobody else would **think** of, **yell** at each other and not **mean** it, and always **believe** each other no matter how **dumb** it sounds. (Brothers also share the **same** bedroom, but we'd **fixed** that problem with sleepovers – because you just can't **play** Galaxy Fighters on the ceiling with **colored** flashlights unless it's dark.) So **going** by the rules, we already **were** brothers. The **only** thing we didn't have was the **same** parents to call Mom, Dad, or Pop. (8)

I can't **believe** you married David Gest and didn't **check** with me first. All he **wanted** was your money and to **find out** if your mother sang "Over the Rainbow" when she **put** you to bed so he could **tell** his **tacky** friends about it. Trust me. David Gest **is** a **gink**. But you can still **call** me after the divorce if you need to **borrow** my shoulder. I'd never **say** "I **told** you so" to anybody except Nicole Kidman. (37)

**Tech** rehearsals **went** as well as the *Titanic* did. Ricky Offitt accidentally **bit** the reed off his saxophone in the middle of "In the Mood" and **wound up** with splinters in his tongue. Tick won't let anybody **find out** about his **secret** JFK monologue until the night we **go** on (our **cover** story **is** that he's **doing** the "Friends, Romans, and countrymen" speech from *Julius Caesar*, which **is** about as believable as William Shakespeare **playing** center for the Celtics), so he **made up** for it by **forgetting** **three** verses of "Casey at the Bat." In **today's** version, Casey **came up** to the plate with nobody on base, which **defeats** the **whole** purpose since who

gives a shit whether Mudville loses 4-2 or 4-3? And Stu Merliss **thought** it would be **really funny** if he **farted** on every downbeat. It so **wasn't**. **In the meantime**, Alé **timed** the **whole** thing to **make sure** that we **came in under** an hour, but with all the screwups we **ran** longer than the **Italian Renaissance**. **I'm getting** out of this business before it **eats** me alive. No money in my budget for sequins, no crowd-pleaser to **bring down** the curtain with, AND WHO NEEDED TO **SEE ANDY WEXLER IN BASEBALL PANTS A SIZE TOO SMALL??** (115)

“**Not bad**,” he **conceded**, as we **were making** our way up the aisle. You have to **understand** what this **means coming** from my brother, who **thinks** Rodgers and Hammerstein **is** a furniture store. “**Not Bad** – T.C. Keller” **is** an ad quote that would have **kept it running** on Broadway for twenty-three years. (186)

“Oh, my God,” he **blurted, jumping** to his feet. “Talk about synchronicity!” There **was** a scene just like this one in *Muriel's Wedding*. (“Deirdre Chambers! What a coincidence!”) I didn't **believe** it then, and I didn't **believe** it now. Tick and I **swapped fish-eyes** with Mom and Dad, and then I **whispered** to my brother, “How long do you **think** they've been **planning** this?” Tick **listened** for a second to how **fast Pop was talking**, and then **turned** back to me. (257)

“Jutes, you're the actress. You probably could have **improvised some kind of** an answer without even **breaking** a sweat. But all I have to my credit so far **is** “**Too Darn Hot**” and a pair of **blue** tights. I don't **know** how to **think** on my toes yet. I **stink** without a script. I need lines! What's there to **tell** about the **Tooth Fairy??** She **flies** through the window, **leaves** cash, and peace out – she's **gone**. It's not like she ever had a Who's Who bio in *Playbill*. So

how *was* I supposed to *answer* him?! But then Hucky *gave* me just the clue I'd been *looking* for. (322-323)

I *figured out* something in **ninth** grade that I should have *known* at six, when I *chose* a brother who could *teach* me how to be Augie Hwong. **Up until then**, I *was* definitely the **wrong** actor for the part (Lea Salonga would have been *so* much more **appropriate**), but we *worked* with what we had. And after Tick *brought* Hucky into our lives and I *watched* what *happened*, I *figured out* that it's not just the people we *love*, but the people we *let love* us *back* who *show* us how high we can really *soar*. (391)

*Alejandra Perez*

So **naturally** Papa *retired* as ambassador to Mexico when I *was* fourteen because Harvard University's **history** department *made* him an offer he couldn't *refuse*. We *sold* the houses in Mexico City and Washington, D.C., *emancipated* all of the serfs, and *moved* into one of the **loveliest** homes in Brookline, Massachusetts. The rest of that summer *was taken up* with *visiting* the museums, *walking* the Freedom trail, *learning* how to *ride* the T, and *trying* to *figure out* what these people *saw* in the Boston Red Sox. (I *discovered* no **rational** clue. Perhaps it's **viral**.) (13)

I've never *met* anybody like Augie Hwong in my life. By 11:30 in the morning on my **first** day of school, I'd been *written off* by an **entire** classroom as a **nose-in-the-air** name-dropper who had no place on the **ninth grade** A-list. Then Augie *grabbed* my arm in the cafeteria line and *insisted* that it would *ruin* his adolescence if I didn't have lunch with him. **At first** I *thought* he was *mocking* me (that's the way it **usually** starts), but he *was* **quite**



serious. It **turned out** that he had an **entire** roster of **celebrity** names that he **needed** to **run** through in the event I **knew** any of them **personally** – and over an **inedible** dessert of **cling** peaches, we finally **discovered** common ground. Who else but Augie **would light up** to **learn** that Judy Dench **wears** pantsuits to **opening night** parties? Who else would **care**? Which **is probably** why I **surprised** myself by **revealing** a **few** things that I'd never **told another breathing** soul before. Me, of all people. (67)

Oh, my God, Jacqueline. Nobody **was prepared** for the Kennedy Inaugural. I don't **know** how long it **took** him to **learn** Jack's moves, his inflections, or the **utter** conviction of **every** word he spoke, but when he **jabbed** the air with a **restless right** forefinger, the clock instantly **turned** back **forty** years. "*We **observe** today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom.*" Then he **zeroed** in on the "**pay** the price, **bear** any burden" passage, and there **were actually** gasps **running** through the audience – like an **undergrounded electrical** current. More than anything else it **was** the voice. The voice I've **laughed** at for its **overbroad a's** and its **three-syllable** pronunciations of **two-syllable** words has **deepened** so **gracefully** over the **last two** months, I never **noticed** how much he's **come** to **sound** like your husband. Even *you* would have been **fooled**. And when he **reached** the finish, the ovation **began** while he **was** still **delivering** "**knowing** that **here** on earth God's work must truly be our own." That's when he **turned** toward the **downstage** wing, **stared directly** into my eyes, and **ended** on a shrug and a **sheepish** grin that was **pure** Anthony. (133-134)

**Consider** yourself **fortunate** that Jack's **most serious** offense **was** not **getting rid** of his **girlfriend's** panties before you **found** them under the **love** seat. **Tacky**, but at least **ironic**. **Instead**, you **might have been married** to Franklin Roosevelt, who **ended** a Depression,

revived the economy, won a two-ocean war, and used the Constitution to light his cigarettes.

Without even *blushing*: (192)

“Honey, we can’t work around it.” She shrugged and signaled Mr. Disharoon to cue the number. By now, the other kids had gotten wind of what was going on, and rehearsals promptly stopped dead in their tracks for the next twenty minutes as entire armies formed on both sides of the Continental Divide. Predictably, all of the girls stood behind me and Lee as their leaders, while most of the boys backed up the dentally challenged Keith as theirs. (273)

I’ve never apologized to a fictitious character before, but having seen your biography nearly a dozen times in the past month, I hope you’ll pardon my earlier judgment in 1996. Perhaps I ought to have given you more than a fifteen-minute chance – yet even at the age of seven, I simply couldn’t accept umbrellas as a believable means of air travel. I was wrong. However, I do wish that you’d had some trick in your carpet bag for those of us who already know how to keep our rooms neat and whose mothers aren’t necessarily early-twentieth-century suffragettes. We could use a little help with some of our own problems too. (335)

After putting up with my leading man’s stagnant breath for three consecutive nights in *Kiss Me, Kate*, I was somewhat surprised to discover that his mother was a talent agent. (Let’s just say that I knew for sure she wasn’t a dental hygienist.) She offered to represent me after *Kate* closed, and twelve weeks later I had my Equity card. But *Bye Bye Birdie* turned out to be a stroll in the park compared to what Augie and Hucky had put me through first. (393)

*The flat characters*

*Pop*

KELLER CONSTRUCTION  
BOSTON \* GLOUCESTER \* WALTHAM

*ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION*

Dear Lori:

Assuming there **was** even a **shred of** truth to such a **spurious** rumor (and there **isn't** – I **had** to **shave twelve** inches off the board just to **get** it through the **front** door, so it's only **seventy square** feet), you might **want** to **reserve** judgments until you **see** the **finished** product. Tony C **is downstairs** right now **playing** with the Vietnam Wall and **gluing** the houses of Congress together (hey, it's about time *somebody did* it). **Besides**, if you **really didn't want** us to **turn** in an **entire** city, **all** you **had to do was have** a hamburger with me and you'd **have gotten** a **six-inch** Jefferson Memorial instead (without the **cherry** blossoms either). In hindsight, **can't** you **see** how **easy** that would have **been**? The defense **rests**.

By the way – who the hell **is** Hannah?

Ted

P.S. Did you like the “spurious”? It's my son's vocabulary word this week and it's contagious.

Lori

**Laurents School**  
Brookline, Massachusetts

VIA E-MAIL

Dear Ted:

**Floor-level Celtics** seats **are** the **private** property of the people who **own** them, even when they don't **show up**. **Sneaking** downstairs at halftime and **sitting** in the **empty** ones **is** no different than **breaking** into a **neighbor's** house to **use** the **swimming** pool while the neighbors **are** out of town. **See** if you can **finger-spell** M-I-S-D-E-M-E-A-N-O-R. We should have been **arrested**.

**As of this morning**, I have **half** a faculty and an **entire ninth** grade at **various** stages of proficiency in American Sign Language – and it's not even on the curriculum. The teacher's don't have a choice. **Learning** it **is** the only way they can **figure out** what the kids **are saying**.

Clayton Landey **claims** that he's never **seen** anybody **pick up** ASL as quickly as Anthony has, which probably **accounts** for the **overall** change in his grades. Including **yesterday's** algebra quiz, his GPA **is** 98. **Evidently**, American Sign Language **drains** all of the energy necessary to **keep** the lid on a **B+** average. Please don't **say** "I told you so." Just because you **wear** "stubborn" **well** doesn't mean you'd **look good** in "smug."

Lori.

Dad

## The Word Shop

BROOKLINE'S FAVORITE BOOKSTORE

E-Memo From the Desk of

Craig Hwong

Hey, Teddy.

Sure. Just like Richard Nixon's **valid** opportunity to **invade** Cambodia. **Are** you *whacked*?

You're still at **sophomore** level. The **only** one who **gets** to **invite** Lori over for a **romantic**

Lori interlude **is** Lori. So **take** her out to dinner and **make sure** she **knows** you're alone for the weekend. (But do *not* **be obvious** about it. **Her radar could have prevented World War II.**)

Then **halfway** through the **decaf** cappuccinos, **smack** your forehead when you **suddenly**

"**remember**" that you **forgot** to **feed** Nehi before you **left**. **Explain** how sorry you **are** that

you've got to **cut** the evening **short**, but **promise** you'll **make** it up to her **next time**. Period.

She'll either **invite** herself over or she won't. If she doesn't, it **means** she **wasn't ripe** yet

anyway. If she does, you're on your own.

Andy **kissed** Augie on Sunday, and now we keep **misplacing** our son. Half an hour ago I

**found** him **sitting** in a **broken** armchair in the basement with a **blank** stare on his face. And he

couldn't **remember** how he'd **gotten** there.

Craig

Mom

**The Globe**

***THEATRE***

***Hello, Dolly! at the Harborside***

BY LISA WEI HWONG

It doesn't matter if you're **short, tall, quiet, loud, agnostic, asexual, intelligent, a gibbering idiot, an international terrorist, or the Hillside Strangler** – Dolly Gallagher Levi will **fix** you up with a partner whether you **want** one or not. For a fee, of course. That's because she's a **matchmaker**. If she **were working** Tremont Street after 7:00 p.m., she'd be **called** a **pimp**.

\* \* \*

Here's a woman so **greedy, so avaricious, and so lacking any sense of propriety**, she **drove** her husband Ephraim to an **early** grave – and now, presumably without a hobby, she **appears determined** to **cast** a far wider net. By evening's **end**, she's **destroyed four** lives and **three** relationships, **lied** to **twenty-six featured** players and an **entire** chorus, and **cost** at least **seven** people their **respective** jobs. This **is** a reason to **sing**?

\* \* \*

Jerry Herman's **always-endearing** melodies should not **mislead** anyone into **thinking** that *Hello, Dolly!* **actually deserves** him. Herman – a **national** treasure – **is** perhaps the **only** composer now or ever who could just as **easily leave** an audience **humming** the Nuremberg Trials. And boy, does *Dolly!* **need** him. All it would **take is** a score by Stephen Sondheim to make you **want** to **kill** yourself.

Clint

United States Secret Service

Washington, D.C.

Clint Lockhart

Agent

Princess, Augie **isn't** your **only** friend, he's your **first** friend. The CIA **calls** guys like him **keepers** because they **have** the kind of **20/20** intuition that could **read** **somebody's** character through a **concrete retaining** wall. Everybody else **needs** a **few** markers along the way.

Including you. So **try** these **for starters**:

1. Don't **talk** about the kiss from Brad Pitt or the bracelet Princess Di **gave** you or anything else that **belongs** in *People* magazine. **Bite** the bullet and **pretend** you're just a kid. (Oh, **wait**. You **are**!)
2. **Every couple of** days, **ask** someone **sitting** next to you to **explain** a **quiz** question that you didn't **understand**. And if you **did** **understand** it, **shut** up and **act** like you didn't. You'll **be** **surprised** how **fast** the word **spreads**: "She's human!"
3. **At least once a week**, **try** to make a mistake. And on the **off-chance** you **discover** the world hasn't **exploded**, **make** another one.

You **rock**, girl. But you **need** to **give** everybody else a chance to **find** that out.

Xoxo,

Clint

## Appendix B – Calculating Sentence Length

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T.C.	AUGIE	ALÉ	POP	LORI	DAD	MOM	CLINT
23	13	24	51	19	1	38	10
6	4	26	25	32	9	5	25
26	14	36	38	11	3	5	9
8	15	5	11	30	16	14	2
35	49	3	3	6	16	38	5
20	29	10	8	15	7	28	24
12	9	32	5	26	8	6	9
21	16	24	10	8	22	16	2
24	13	19		18	23	24	2
6	33	40		7	1	6	20
4	2	18		13	8	17	13
18	5	4			10		10
30	17	20			7		11
43	12	4			12		13
18	9	4			22		3
13	24	7			8		13
23	61	41					
20	29	13					
26	15	27					
8	3	8					
7	31	38					
9	12	6					
13	29	26					
37	13	26					
16	29	24					
6	19	5					
36	9	28					
4	3	3					
5	11	6					
10	2	10					
31	3	37					
9	11	26					
1	25	30					
4	17	31					
9	4	3					
5	15	33					
12	19	12					
42	10	30					
22	5	13					
44	3	17					
20	8	24					
1	12						



5	12						
44	8						
13	12						
5	28						
7	28						
9	41						
5							
8							
5							
5							
5							
15							
9							
20							
46							
14							
<b>GEMID DELD 16.24 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 16.47 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 19.34 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 18.87 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 16.81 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 13.25 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 17.09 WOOR DEN</b>	<b>GEMID DELD 12.75 WOOR DEN</b>
17	17	20	19	17	14	18	14

## Appendix C

### Correspondence with *American Football Bond Nederland*

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**“Informatie Aanvraag.” E-mail to *American Football Bond Nederland*.  
1 December, 2010.**

Geachte heer/mevrouw,

Ik volg de Masteropleiding Vertalen Engels-Nederlands aan de Universiteit van Utrecht en ik ben op het moment bezig met mijn scriptie. In mijn brontekst komen ook een aantal footballtermen voor en ik wilde vragen of u mij misschien kunt helpen met de Nederlandse termen. Het gaat om de termen

yardage, terreinwinst klopt redelijk

lateral pass, lateraal gegooide bal

down, poging

pass protection, niet echt kort te vertalen, het verdedigen van de spelverdeler zodat deze de tijd heeft de bal te gooien

pointsreads, punten verschil alhoewel ik hier het zinsverband mis.

Op het moment heb ik voor de eerste drie termen een vertaling gevonden, namelijk terreinwinst, laterale pass en down. Kloppen deze termen?

Ik hoop dat u mij kunt helpen.  
In ieder geval bedankt en met vriendelijke groet,

Anouk ter Velde

**“Re: Informatie Aanvraag.” E-mail to Ter Velde.  
1 December, 2010.**

Hallo Anouk,

De "vrije" vertaling heb ik in je mail achter de woorden gezet.  
Helaas is niet alles zo maar te vertalen zodat het nog het zelfde inhoud. Een makkelijk vertaling kan het hele tekst stuk uit verband trekken.  
Ik hoop dat je er iets mee opschiet.  
Zo niet dan mail maar weer terug.

Jeroen

**“Re: Re: Informatie Aanvraag.” E-mail to *American Football Bond Nederland*.  
1 December, 2010.**

Beste Jeroen,

bedankt voor het snelle antwoord! De uitleg helpt mij sowieso al. Ik neem aan dat er in Nederlandse wedstrijdverslagen e.d. niet gebruik wordt gemaakt van een uitleg van deze termen. Worden dan gewoon de originele Engelse termen gebruikt? In het verhaal worden ze namelijk gebruikt door een vader en een vriendje van zijn zoon en zij zijn beide footballfanaten, waardoor zij alleen maar 'experttermen' gebruiken.

De context van point spreads is als volgt: "since Sunday when I watched him and my father test each other on statistics like 1993 yardage and 1998 point spreads".

Hartelijk bedankt!

Groet,  
Anouk

**“Re: Re: Re: Informatie Aanvraag.” E-mail to *Ter Velde*.  
1 December, 2010.**

Hay,

Door de jaren heen komen er elk jaar wel een 2 a 3 vragen over vertalingen binnen, binnenkort vraag ik om in de aftiteling van films te worden gemeld als medewerker vertaling ;-)

De paar verslagen die er zijn worden inderdaad niet alle woorden letterlijk vertaald. Onze oosterburen vertalen echt ALLES en dat trekt werkelijk alles uit zijn verband en is niet aan te horen :-)

De termen/woorden die niet te vertalen zijn worden letterlijk overgenomen, bv down, pass en je voorbeeld pass protection.

Die amerikanen hebben het zo goed voor elkaar dat een enkel woord een heel verhaal kan betekenen in een andere taal.

Dat soort woorden moet je ook gewoon overnemen.

In het geval point spreads zou ik inderdaad "punten verschil(en)" gebruiken. Succes en ik hoop dat je scriptie goed word beoordeeld :-)

Jeroen